

Book Review

Fatimah Jinnah: Hayaat aur Khidmaat (Urdu)

Dr. Agha Hussain Hamadani

National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research

(Centre of Excellence), Quaid-i-Azam University,

Islamabad, 1999.

192pp. Price: Rs.200/=

Mohtarma Fatimah Jinnah (1893-1967) was unquestionably one of the most fascinating, striking and remarkable personalities of our national history. Possessed of excellent qualities of a promising Muslim woman, she had started her public career with distinction. She had soon won her name and fame as the most sincere, faithful and closest companion and comrade of her illustrious brother, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948).

During the Quaid's heroic struggle for Pakistan, Mohtarma Fatima played varied but constructive roles. She vigilantly looked after the Quaid's personal and domestic affairs, by acting as the vigilant caretaker of Quaid's health, food and lodging, keeping him quite free from personal and domestic worries and anxieties. On the other hand, she helped and assisted the Quaid during the most crucial political situations. The fact is that she always remained a constant source of help and encouragement in the most of perilous hours of Quaid-i-Azam's dynamic struggle for freedom, which he had frankly admitted on the eve of the achievement of Pakistan.

Not only this, quite trained in the political traditions of her distinguished brother, Mohtarma herself played a distinctive role in promoting and advancing the cause of a separate and independent Muslim state in South Asia. She took active part in organising the Muslim women throughout the subcontinent, especially the All-

India Muslim Women Students' Federation, which played an admirable role in furthering the cause of the Pakistan movement. She made stormy tours throughout India in order to awaken and inspire Muslim women and to convince them to take active and enthusiastic part in the struggle for freedom.

After Pakistan's creation, Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah's role was even more admirable. She continued to serve the nation as an inspiring patron, guide and sympathiser. She strongly stood for promoting the principles of moderation, fraternity, social justice and Islamic democracy. She was one of the greatest critics and detractors of unjust and undemocratic traditions and steps taken by vested interests in Pakistan. Therefore, she voiced her opposition to certain steps taken by Ayub Khan, then President of Pakistan, which on her part was a great contribution to establish democratic traditions on sound footings.

Precisely speaking, Mohtarma Jinnah's role during and after the Pakistan movement, was quite appreciable and also remarkable. She stands forth as one of the very few striking and influential personalities in the whole range of our national annals. It is a matter of great regret that a person of that stature has received scant attention of our scholars and historians.

Fatima Jinnah: Hayaat awr Khidmaat, the book under review, is a fairly good study that has at least brought mother of the nation out of the wilderness into the scholarly world. Not only there is a need felt to make the account of her life and works more authentic in Urdu, but also a biography of Fatima for English readers is also need of the time.

The book is generally well-planned and is divided into several chapters touching on all important aspects of her life. From its study she appears before us as a very dynamic, inspiring and fascinating personality who had surely great impact on contemporary history. In this well-written, well-documented and well-researched book, the author seems to have consulted almost everything available on the subject. With the opening up of Fatima Jinnah Papers an authentic piece of research should be a top priority with the scholars.

But taking as a whole, the book under review makes a good study. The general reader and researcher can both benefit from it. It can surely be considered as a good starting point for further research pursuits on the life and works of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah.

Sher Muhammad Garewal