

Two sides to the 1947 partition



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Whether you are an Indian or a Pakistani, at one point or another, a simple question might have whizzed through your mind like a bullet: What if India was never partitioned and Pakistan was never created?

The several reasons including the oppression and discrimination against Muslim minorities within India were what led to the creation of Pakistan. Such reasons are exactly why it would not be wrong to say that the Two Nation Theory, followed by the partition was not just a mere division but truly a sign of freedom as well as independence for us Muslims.

If things continued the way they were when the idea of fighting for a separate nation initially spread, yes, the lives of the Muslim community within India could have been terrible. Just like the "Achoot," the Muslims still would have been denied their rights related to education and work. Of course, we would not want to live in a country where Muslims were not allowed to attend quality schools or where they were not given a chance to form an adequate percentage of the government or where they could not own industries that generated high revenues.

I am certain no Muslim would wish to be living in a state where they had to pretend being a non-Muslim in order to eat at a high-class fancy restaurant. Not only this, but it is also possible that we would still get killed for slaughtering a cow and eating beef. Most of all, yes, there is a chance that if Pakistan was not created, Muslims would still not be allowed to practice Islam openly.

However, have you ever wondered what good could have been possible if Pakistan was not created? What if over time Indians actually became more

open-minded, the power of social media grew (kind of like now) and things actually began to change positively? Have you ever thought about how over time, maybe people would have learnt accepting each other for who they actually are?

Considering how despite of having the white color in our flag, even today Pakistanis discriminate against minorities such as the Christian community, it feels like maybe if we were living in India we would have been comparatively more considerate as human beings. Maybe, just maybe, we would have learnt to love and share a little more.

After all, we cannot deny that even Pakistani school/college history textbooks misrepresent facts related to India and the partition. Maybe if Pakistan was not created, our children would not be growing up today hating the words “Indians” or “Hindus” and chanting hurls at them after each cricket match. Oh and maybe we as the Muslim community were a bit more united, regardless of our sects. Maybe instead of Shias willing to massacre Sunnis and vice versa, we would be standing up against the unjust towards Muslims together. Maybe we would have been a nation strong enough to not let any other foreign power to intervene in our matters. Just maybe!

Have you ever looked at the possibility that if Pakistan was not created and we were still living with Hindus as one nation, we would have had a more diverse culture? We are borders apart and yet, many of our customs and traditions overlap. There is so much to explore and so much that we could learn from the other nation. From music to theatre and from fine arts to regional festivals, maybe we could have celebrated all of it together. Can you

not imagine Iqbal's "Sarey Jahan Sey Acha" being the national anthem of our country and all of us singing it together? Anchal Malhotra, in her book "Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory" beautifully sums it all up by writing that:

"I have grown up listening to my grandparents' stories about 'the other side' of the border. But, as a child, this other side didn't quite register as Pakistan, or not-India, but rather as some mythic land devoid of geographic borders, ethnicity and nationality. In fact, through their stories, I imagined it as a land with mango orchards, joint families, village settlements, endless lengths of ancestral fields extending into the horizon, and quaint local bazaars teeming with excitement on festive days. As a result, the history of my grandparents' early lives in what became Pakistan essentially came across as a very idyllic, somewhat rural, version of happiness."

Not only this, but have you ever wondered how our country could have progressed at a better pace if all the funds that we spend keeping up our guards against each other were utilized in other sectors such as education or public health? Maybe we could have focused on other important issues than fighting over who Kashmir belongs to geographically. Maybe we would also have not lost all the lives we did during the partitioning days themselves. Anchal, in her book "Remnants of a Separation," narrates a heart-wrenching experience of those days by writing that, "Every time the train stopped at a station, we would all hold our breath, making sure not a single sound drifted out of the closed windows. We were hungry and our throats parched. From inside the train we heard voices...saying, "Hindu paani," and, from the other

side, “ Muslim paani.” Apart from land and population, even the water had now been divided.”

Yes, I am patriotic Pakistani and no, I am not stating that I wish Pakistan and India to merge together once again. After all the differences we have developed over the years being two different nations, more like two juveniles competing with each other, maybe it is best for us to keep our paths separate. All I am saying is that the 1947 partition was a victory, but let’s say that it was an incomplete one. As Sneha Kanta writes in poetry collection named the Synechdoche, “ It was too loud for hope; it was too silent for victory.”