

Thomas jefferson



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Thomas Jefferson Thomas Jefferson, one of the foremost historical figures of the United States and the architect of the Declaration of Independence, has been the reason for hot debates in the modern rethinking of the history. There have been a number of writings on the most notable characteristic feature in the life of this genius Founding Father of the land - this feature of his character has been the contradiction has expressed in his views and practical actions. He was evidently seen as contradicting over his proclamations in favor of the slaves and his actual practice of possessing slaves for his personal use. In fact, the same historical figure who penned the words "all men were created equal" owned 200 slaves and more importantly violated his republican political philosophy during his presidency. There have been varied views on the question of the contradictions seen in the greatest of the American Fathers. However, one most justified position to hold would be to see Jefferson taking a part in the American trait of being in conflict rather than perceiving him as a marked contradicting figure. Such a position is partly on the basis of the contradictory views and conclusions on the contradiction of Jefferson, the one time political giant of our Nation and partly on the awareness of American trait of conflicts.

Thus, it is of pertinent value to comprehend the interpretations of the historians who consider Jefferson as a person of contradictions. According to Christopher Hitchens who writes of how historians view Jefferson, "it would be lazy or obvious to say that he contained contradictions or paradoxes. This is true of everybody, and of everything. It would be infinitely more surprising to strike upon a historic figure, or indeed a nation, that was not subject to this law. Jefferson did not embody contradiction. Jefferson was a contradiction, and this will be found at every step of the narrative that goes

to make up his life. (Hitchens, 2008). It has ever been remarked that Jefferson was in two minds about slavery throughout his career which can be seen as evidence for his conflicts. On the one hand, as a young politician, he held his views for the prohibition of slavery in new American territories and, on the other, he never freed his own slaves which made him a contradiction in himself. The significant question ever have been " How could a man responsible for writing the sacred words " We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal" have been a slave owner? He never resolved his internal conflict on this issue." (Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826): A Life in Brief. 2008). It can evidently be seen that contrary to his views, he owned slaves and had strong belief in the superiority of the White.

However, in spite of such critical views, the same person who is charged of owning slaves remarkably wrote in favor of slaves and even possessed a slave mistress which the icon-worshipping historians have twisted and denied over time. To be clarifying, Jefferson who seems to be contradicting has only expressed the American trait of being in conflict. " Acknowledging the role of contradiction also allows Americans to recognize and accept painful paradoxes in their history like the fact that Virginia was, not by accident, both the cradle of slavery and of our democracy. Above all, it will allow us to accept that...African-Americans and European-Americans both wittingly and unintentionally influenced each other in the process creating a civilization that is neither purely black nor white, but an ecumenical synthesis that drew its energy and its greatness from the very contradictions of the past and the mighty struggles to overcome them." (Patterson, 1998).

In the final conclusion it becomes evident that Jefferson, the " American Sphinx," needs to be understood, rather than a personal contradiction in

him, as paradigmatic of American national condition which favored the trait of being in conflict. “ In the shortfall between his ideals and his actions, in his willingness to abandon ideology for pragmatism, and his strong belief in individual rights without a correlated advocacy of all individuals rights, Jefferson illuminates both the most admirable virtues and the most grievous failings of the American spirit.” (Thomas Jefferson). Therefore, Jefferson is proved to be a national heritage rather than a national disaster.

Reference

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