



Shri M. J. Akbar was born on 11th January 1951 in Telinipara, West Bengal. He completed his Bachelor of Arts in English at the Presidency College in Kolkata. He is married to Smt. Mallika Akbar and has two children, a daughter, Mukulika and a son, Prayaag.

Shri M. J. Akbar is a distinguished writer who has authored several internationally acclaimed books, mainly on the Indian subcontinent's complex history and the turbulent interaction between faith and definitions of nationalism. They include *India: The Siege Within*; *Nehru: The Making of India*; *Kashmir: Behind the Vale*; *The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict between Islam and Christianity*; *Tinderbox: the Past and Future of Pakistan*; and *Blood Brothers*, a novel. In addition, there have been four collections of his columns, reportage and essays. His books have been translated into many languages.

His contribution to contemporary debate has been widely acknowledged. Among other things, in 2004, he was named a member of the Forum of Islamic Scholars and Intellectuals set up by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah to draft a ten-year charter for Muslim nations at a special conference in Mecca. In March 2006, he joined The Brookings Institution in Washington, as a Visiting Fellow in the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy towards the Islamic world. He also serves as Chairman of the trust for the Calcutta Muslim Orphanage.

Shri M. J. Akbar has also had an illustrious career as a journalist and editor. In 1976, he launched, as Editor, India's first weekly political news magazine, *Sunday*, which quickly became a household presence. He started two daily newspapers: *The Telegraph* in 1982 and *The Asian Age* in 1994. He has served as the Editorial Director of *India Today*, *Headlines Today* and as the editor of the *Deccan Chronicle* and *The Sunday Guardian*.

Shri M. J. Akbar entered public life in 1989, when he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kishanganj, Bihar. He went back to media in 1993, and returned to public life in March 2014, when he joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and became the party's national spokesperson. He was elected as MP to the Rajya Sabha from Jharkhand in July 2015. In July 2016, he was elected for another term as MP from Madhya Pradesh.

He assumed charge as the Minister of State for External Affairs on July 6, 2016.

A brief sample of reviews indicates the acclaim for his books:

"I was soon captured by the tale and kept on reading it with interest. It is a fascinating and wonderfully written story. I enjoyed it very much,"-**Dr. Henry Kissinger, Former Secretary of State, United States, on "Blood Brothers"**

"How graphically and skillfully the real problems are described...the book is likely to have a considerable influence both in India and Britain" -**Michael Foot on "India: The Siege Within: Challenges to a Nation's Unity"**

"A skillfully crafted family saga down three generations packed with information of events in the country and the world, particularly changing Hindu-Muslim relations. It could be a textbook on how to write, mix fact, fiction and history. It is beautifully written; it deserves to be in Category A1" - **Khushwant Singh on "Blood Brothers"**.

"An unbelievably sophisticated work that is terribly daring... An innovative and lucid religious history of ideology, idolatry, betrayal and violence"-**Seymour Hersh, Pulitzer Prize winner, on "The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the conflict between Islam and Christianity"**

"...I have rarely come across a book that contains so much of everything that Islam has given to the world, told so artistically with the creative ability for which Akbar is famous. No wonder the book has created a storm both among the intellectuals and in the marketplace here and abroad" - **Dr Rafiq Zakaria on "The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the conflict between Islam and Christianity"**

"To understand the complex forces - religious, political, and historical - that have fuelled the fervor for Jihad, read this book"- **Fareed Zakaria on "The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the conflict between Islam and Christianity"**

"A truly magnificent book.... should be read by every Indian who is concerned about the unity of his country"- **Prof. Ravinder Kumar on "Nehru: The Making of India"**