

*Maulana  
Abul Kalam Azad*



*Subhash C Kashyap  
Editor*

## **THE BOOK**

**This volume explores the illustrious career and achievements of one of the eminent freedom fighters and architects of India's democratic system, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. As a scholar, thinker, freedom fighter, educationist, parliamentarian and Union Minister, he left his indelible mark in every area he chose to tread in life. This work, consisting of four parts, touches upon various facets of this multi-dimensional personality. An image of Azad as a leader with rational and scientific outlook with unwavered commitment to Hindu-Muslim unity and a united India emerges from various articles written by eminent academicians and men in public life. Azad's speeches will provide the reader with insights into the vision that the Maulana had about the future of India's intellectual and cultural life.**

**This volume should be of interest of laymen and scholars alike interested in the history of our freedom movement and in the life and work of the men and the events that made our freedom possible.**

**ISBN 81-214-0357-X**

**Rs. 200**



**Maulana  
Abul Kalam Azad**

*Published for*  
**The Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi-110001**



**Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**

# **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**

*A Centenary Volume*

*Edited by*

**DR. SUBHASH C. KASHYAP**  
*Secretary-General, Lok Sabha*



**NATIONAL**

**NATIONAL PUBLISHING HOUSE**

**23, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002 (India)**

*Branches*

**Chaura Rasta, Jaipur**

**34, Netaji Subhash Marg, Allahabad-3**

*First Published : December 1989*  
**© Lok Sabha Secretariat 1989**

**Published under rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and  
Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha (Sixth Edition)**

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**ISBN 81-214-0357-X**

**Printed in India by Saraswati Printing Press, A-95 Sector 5, Noida-201301  
Computer-set by Kompute India E-37 Rajouri Garden, New Delhi and Published  
by National Publishing House 23, Darya, Ganj, New Delhi-110002**





## Foreword

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Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies a distinctive position in the history of our Freedom Movement. An erudite person, Maulana Azad was one of the few Philosopher-Statesmen our nation has been gifted with. Emotionally and intellectually he was very close to both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. During the Freedom Movement and in the years immediately following Independence, he was closely associated with crucial decision making in the country.

Maulana Azad was a man with a mission. His greatest mission in life, perhaps, was Hindu-Muslim unity and the unity and integrity of the country. He detested partition of the country. Once it became a reality, he wanted to minimise its damage for both the sides by encouraging linkages at various levels between the two countries.

He opened up many new paths for the people of the sub-continent. As free India's first Minister for Education, realizing that communalism originates in the minds of men, he laid emphasis on secular education and intellectual enlightenment. Maulana Azad gave a rational interpretation to religion. Religion to him was an ideology of compassion, tolerance, love, brotherhood and spiritual enlightenment.

Maulana Azad was an intellectual *par excellence*. His prodigious knowledge, pursuit of excellence in life, sharp and luminous intellect, steadfastness of purpose, his view of life, politics, religion, public morality and incisive world view will continue to inspire the generations to come.

This volume, brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat on the

occasion of his birth centenary celebrations, is a manifestation of the nation's gratitude to the memory of this illustrious son of India. I am sure it will be found to be of interest by the common man, scholars and men in public life interested in the history of our Freedom Movement and in the personalities and events that shaped that history.

BAL RAM JAKHAR

# Preface

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At different periods in history our nation has been blessed with many a visionary and sagacious leaders. 1968-89 marks the birth centenary of a few such great sons of India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of them. He was an erudite scholar, thinker, freedom fighter educationist, parliamentarian and administrator. He left his indelible mark in every area he chose to tread. A great humanist, the Maulana was also an outstanding scholar of oriental learning. As one of the chief architects of our freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Azad, along with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, constituted the trio, that laid down the foundations of a secular democratic polity for India.

Our nation owes a lot to the memory of this great patriot. Through this publication the Lok Sabha Secretariat joins the rest of the country in paying homage to the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on the occasion of his birth centenary celebrations.

The volume consists of four Parts. Part one gives a profile of Azad and tries to project an integral view of his life and work.

Part Two carries a series of articles written by eminent men in public life who have had the privilege to know or work with Azad during his life-time. These articles, woven with personal reminiscences and narrating some of the thus far untold incidents, it is hoped, would be read with great interest and would help the readers understand and appreciate Azad better.

Maulana Azad was an eloquent speaker. His persuasive and

powerful addresses inspired millions to plunge into the struggle for freedom. His speeches in the Constituent Assembly and later in Parliament as Minister for Education provide us with insights into the vision that the Maulana had about the future of India's intellectual and cultural life. Excerpts from some of his speeches are given in Part Three.

Maulana Azad was a universally respected leader. Common men, leaders and scholars from across the world joined in paying glowing and touching tributes to Azad at the time of his death. Excerpts from these tributes are given in Part Four.

There are opinions and observations in this book which may appear controversial. While stating that it is not an intended consequence, it should be added that the views expressed are purely personal and the conclusions are the results of each author's own analysis. Discerning readers may also come across some repetitions in the text. In a publication of this kind carrying contributions from different authors it is difficult for the editor's pen to delete such repetitions without affecting the tune of argument in the respective articles.

We have received substantial help and encouragement from various sources in the preparation of this volume. We are obliged to Dr. Balram Jakhar, the Honourable Speaker of Lok Sabha, for inspiration and guidance in bringing out this work and for his Foreword. Acknowledgements and thanks are due to all the eminent contributors to this volume. All of them, despite their otherwise hectic engagements, responded favourably to our request and made their valuable contributions to the publication.

On the occasion of his birth centenary celebrations we dedicate this volume to the memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in all humility, with the hope that this would supplement the nation's efforts in perpetuating the memory of this great patriot among the present and future generations.

New Delhi  
17 June, 1989

SUBHASH C. KASHYAP  
Secretary-General, Lok Sabha

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*PART ONE*

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# **A PROFILE**

# Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: — A Profile

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In the galaxy of the patriots and heroes of India's freedom struggle, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies a distinctive position. He was a savant statesman and the tallest among the nationalist Muslims who, challenging the two-nation theory propounded by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, fought for a united India. Along with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad comprised the famous trio that carried out the negotiations to usher in freedom and laid the foundations of a secular society in India.

Born on 11 November, 1888, in an orthodox family of Maulana Khairuddin and to his Arab wife, Aliyah, as one of their five children, Ghulam Muhiyuddin Ahmad, who came to be known later as Abul Kalam Azad, had combined in him scholarly pursuits, sturdy independence of character and a distinct mental bent towards unworldliness.

Maulana Azad took pride in tracing his birth from an ancestor who earned a name for himself during the reign of Emperor Akbar. One of his ancestors, Maulana Jamaluddin was a contemporary of Akbar the Great. 'I am the ninth or tenth in paternal descent from Shaikh Jamaluddin', Azad said to Mahadeo Desai, one of his earlier biographers, '... I can say that there



wasn't one of my ancestors, but was noted for his learning and sufism'.

Maulana Munnawaruddin, father of Azad's grand mother, got frustrated at the conditions prevailing in the country during 1855. He decided to migrate to Hedjaz. On his way to Bombay, he passed through Bhopal. Sikander Begum, the ruler of Bhopal, was so impressed by his sermons that she prevailed upon him to stay on there. During the revolt of 1857 he made his way into Bombay and died there during 1858-59. Azad's father, Maulana Khairuddin, who had accompanied Maulana Munnawaruddin to Bombay, however, continued his journey to Hedjaz. He had already finished his education in India and hence was able to derive the maximum benefit from the teachings of the scholars at Mecca and Medina.

Azad's parents exercised considerable influence in the formation of his character and personality. Maulana Khairuddin was a learned scholar and a Master of theology. He was the only Indian Muslim scholar of the time to have been selected to teach the tenets of Islam in the holiest Muslim seminary of the world. His mother too belonged to a family of scholars of Mecca.

Azad was only thirteen when his father got him married to Zuleikha Begum, the daughter of Aftabuddin Ahmad, an admirer of Maulana Khairuddin. According to his sister Fatima Begum, Azad kept crying at the time of his marriage, 'why am I being taken to the women's apartment'. Zuleikha Begum also had a good schooling in Urdu and Persian and knew elementary Arabic. She was an accomplished lady, well-versed in household affairs and was of a very hospitable nature. She took good care of Maulana Azad and evinced keen interest in his books and writings.

Maulana Khairuddin remained in Hedjaz for about 20 years before he paid his first return visit to India in 1887. After that he continued travelling between India and Hedjaz till 1897 when he was persuaded by his disciples and followers to come back to India and accept to be the Imam of Calcutta, the then capital of British Indian Empire. In Mecca, Azad and his brother, Abu Nasr, studied together and before they left in 1897, they had completed their study of the Quran and had learnt the

fundamentals of Arabic, Urdu and Persian from the prominent scholars of the day.

On his return to Calcutta, Azad's education was continued with the help of local teachers. He was given rigorous training in all fields of Islamic knowledge by tutors chosen and closely supervised by his father – thus enabling him to complete Daras-i-Nizamiah when he was only fifteen years old, taking only one-third of the normal time for completing this course. By 1905, when he was only seventeen years old, he had attained so much proficiency in Islamic learning that he was recognised as a trained theologian among the Muslim scholastic circles.

Immensed in the closed world of learning, Azad longed for an escape from the unusually rigorous scholastic atmosphere and to become a free man. He could not get peace by just reading Islamic history and theology and preaching it to faithfuls. During this period he also got an exposure to the writings of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who patronised the Aligarh school which was known for its pro-colonial modernism which Azad later sought to contest from a rationalist angle.

Maulana Khairuddin, scholar as he was and known for his learning and piety, had great aspirations for his son. Young Azad was provided classical education in theology, jurisprudence and philosophy within the confines of the orthodox Muslim faith. Azad also had opportunity to visit the famous Al-Ashar university in Cairo during this period. However, Azad was determined to charter out his own course in learning. He realized that his traditional education needed to be backed up by modern learning which, in turn, necessitated the knowledge of English. He acquired it by way of extensive reading.

Azad started writing poems and literary and political articles for Urdu Newspapers and journals at a very early age. At the age of twelve, he became a publisher and issued in 1900, a poetic journal called *Nairange-Aalam* which continued for eight months. At sixteen he started editing his own paper, *Lisan al Sidq* which aimed at promoting social reform, development of Urdu and cultivation of literary taste. His association with Maulana Shibfi, a renowned scholar, in 1904, widened his social and literary interests. He cultivated his natural talent for writing at home

itself. The influence of Shibli and Syed Ahmed Khan's writings acted as a further stimulant which found its concrete expression in the unending flow of literary output that India was to see in the years to come.

He was not a conformist writer. Azad refused to be tied to inherited beliefs and declined to succeed his father as a religious perceptor. He became a questioner of things taken as established by others. All these things made him so popular at a very early age that people meeting him for the first time were shocked at his tender age and had to be reassured that they were meeting the real Maulana Azad. This was mainly due to the fact that Azad had acquired fame through his journalistic writings and had impressed people as much by his lofty and inspiring message as by his interpretation of Islam.

Politically, the first major turning point for Azad came after the partition of Bengal, when he rejected the mainstream of the Muslim middle class, which wanted partition and considered the colonial government as its benefactor. Repudiating it, he associated himself with the anti-British Movement and even joined some of the secret radical groups which arose in the aftermath of the partition. He came in contact with Sufi Ambaprasad and Ajit Singh in Punjab and Aurobindo Ghosh, Shyam Sunder Chakravorty and Lala Har Dayal, all leaders of the militant anti-colonial movement in the country.

In 1908, after his father's death, his visits to France and some Islamic countries, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Turkey had a profound and decisive influence on Azad's political thinking. While abroad, he met a number of groups, the young Turks, the Arab Nationlists, and the prominent leaders of the Pan-Islamic Movement, who wanted to throw away the yoke of imperialism to free the Arab Countries.

He was influenced by the writings of Jamal-al-Din Afgani (1837-97) a Pan-Islamist modern reformer who regarded European countries as enemies of Islam. He also met the Iranian revolutionaries fighting against the Qajar autocracy and the followers of Afghan Shaikh Muhammad Abduh and Saeed Pasha and the supporters of Mustafa Kamal Pasha. He was apprised of the programmes of the young Turks. These Indian, Arab Turkish,

Irani and Afghani revolutionaries vividly demonstrated their anti-imperial attitude, to Azad.

They lamented over Indian indifference to their struggle for freedom. All these experiences also motivated him in plunging into the political arena. He found a new world astir with ideas of liberty, progress and revolutionary Islam. He noticed that the Muslim world was facing various kinds of threats. Italy had conquered the province of Tripoli in 1911. The Baikan States were determined to dismember Turkey. Morocco had yielded to French yoke and Russia threatened Iran. Turkey was encircled by Russia, England and France. These events deeply affected Azad.

In India too, the Muslim community was going through a serious ideological crisis at the turn of the century. Earlier, during the last quarter of the 19th century, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan tried to persuade the Muslim elite that its political future lay in adopting a liberal outlook at the same time as it adopted a co-operative attitude towards British Imperialism in the sub-continent. However, this call for an alliance with imperialism was totally unacceptable to large sections of the Muslim community in India, particularly among the elite and the popular classes. Young Maulana Azad, in common with leaders like Mohammed Ali and Shaukhat Ali, Wazir Hasan and others, represented those within the Muslim community who challenged this concept of Islamic modernism in alliance with Imperialism, propounded by Sir Syed. These leaders looked upon Great Britain as an alien power bent upon humiliating Islam in Asia at the same time as it sought to undermine the spiritual and secular status of Islam within the Indian sub-continent.

It was at this juncture that Azad launched his Urdu Weekly *Al-Hilal* on 1 June, 1912, when he was only 24. He believed that only by educating the ulema, the learned in Law and in theology, there would emerge a nucleus of dedicated and idealistic elite which can act as a lever for the moral and intellectual regeneration of the Muslim community. With the launching of *Al-Hilal*, Azad shot into the National Movement. He gave fearless and powerful expression to his nationalist ideas through the journal. The basic intent of *Al-Hilal* was to launch a vigorous attack not only on the colonial distortions of our history but more

on the pro-colonial modernism of the Aligarh school, which had poisoned the minds of the Modernist Muslim intelligentsia.

*Al-Hilal* held out the message of nationalism to the Muslim elite as well as the popular classes and urged them to join other communities in the struggle for the liberation of the country.

A distinguished theologian, as he was, his journal carried authentic interpretation of the basic teachings of Islam, more from a nationalist angle. There is no issue of the paper which does not elaborate upon, interpret or illustrate either some Koranic interpretation or highlight the noble sacrifices of the martyrs who had laid down their lives in defence of Islam. However, Islam, as understood by Azad, was quite different from that professed and propounded by his father. With his rational, inquisitive and independent mind, he was opposed to conformism which demanded unquestionable acceptance of the views of the former teachers. He claimed that he never tried to imitate anyone and carved out his own course which others felt tempted to follow. Through the pages of *Al-Hilal*, Azad conveyed to the Muslim masses that Islam contains the noblest principles of individualism, social action and self sacrifice and called for a crusade against injustice and suppression. Though Islam was the foundation of his thought, it was not the Islam as interpreted by the conformists but as understood by him from his long and vigorous learning.

*Al-Hilal* became immensely popular among the Muslim intelligentsia within a short period. Its circulation had reached 29000 by 1914, when the Government confiscated the *Al-Hilal* Press after two years of continuous publication. Through his discussion of the plight of Turkey and the portraits of some of the prominent Egyptian and Afghan personalities, he propagated the message of liberty. He never spared an opportunity to attack Sir Syed's notion of collaboration with the British Raj. He believed that the Muslim notion of loyalty to the British was uncalled for, and that such a service attitude was undignified and unworthy of any self-respecting people. Azad took the view that by their crafty policy of divide and rule, the British had made Hindus and Muslims antagonistic to each other. Azad suggested to his people that the right course for both the communities was to fight the British to prevent them from bringing ruination to their country. *Al-Hilal* was also critical of the Muslim League, its aristocratic



leadership and its style of functioning. The journal inspired the educated Muslims to awaken to a new political sense.

It is significant that all these moves and various political activities of Azad were initiated before the emergence of Gandhiji on the political horizon. Advent of Gandhiji into the National Movement and Azad's meeting with him had crucial bearing on the future course of the Movement. Azad met Gandhiji on 18 January, 1920 at the residence of Hakim Ajmal Khan in the presence of Lokmanya Tilak and Ali brothers. Personally also, it was a turning point in Azad's life. Azad was meeting someone who could understand his language and perception and with whom he could share his aspirations and agonies.

Before his meeting with Gandhiji, he defined collective identity of the Muslim community in terms of Islam and defined and visualised a safe and legitimate place for the Muslims within the sub-continent. In Gandhiji he found institutional support for his political stand. The Khilafat Movement, and later the Non-Cooperation Movement, was to provide a broader platform and offer more serious challenges to Azad's budding political career.

Azad, with his belief in international Islamic Brotherhood, was concerned with the socio-political problems of the Muslims all over the world. When the British Empire threatened the Turkish Caliphate, which, according to Azad was the symbol of unity of the Muslim world, Azad wanted to mobilize the Indian Muslim opinion in support of the Caliphate. The programme of Hindu-Muslim co-operation visualised by Gandhiji diverted the Khilafat Movement into the channel of the Nationalist Movement. With the involvement of the Congress under Gandhiji and Azad's leadership, the Khilafat Movement reached out to all sections of the Muslim society, and mobilised them as an elemental force which shook the edifice of British rule to its very foundations.

Yet another turning point in Azad's political career was marked by the Non-Cooperation Movement launched under the leadership of Gandhiji. It was during the Non-Cooperation Movement that he began to think of Hindus and Muslims as forming one nation. Until this time Azad was a member of both Congress and the Muslim League. But after the League at its

session of 1921, denounced the Civil Disobedience Movement, Azad along with several other prominent Muslim leaders, left the League for good.

He exhorted the Muslim masses to join the freedom struggle by giving a religious justification for the Movement: 'For the Hindus working for independence might be a patriotic gesture, but for the Muslims it is a religious duty'. In the 1920s, Azad was, to a large extent, responsible in sanctifying the Hindu-Muslim partnership and in drawing more and more Muslims to the folds of the Congress, thus enhancing the momentum of the Freedom Movement.

In 1923, at its Delhi Session, he was elected President of the Indian National Congress at the age of 35, becoming the youngest Congress President to date. He was an ardent protagonist of Hindu-Muslim unity. On his election, he said:

"If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the heights of the Qutab Minar: 'Discard Hindu-Muslim Unity and within 24 hours *Swaraj* is yours', I will refuse *Swaraj* but will not budge an inch from my stand. If *Swaraj* is delayed it will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be the loss of our entire human world".

During this period he also came into contact with Jawaharlal Nehru and established a personal rapport with the latter which continued for the rest of his life. Azad drew inspiration from his association with Gandhiji and Nehru and inspired them too in turn. He had nothing but ungrudging praise for Nehru and also touched on the points where they agreed to disagree. Both of them didn't hide anything from each other and were equally aware of the evil designs of the British in sowing the seeds of communal discord in India which subsequently led to the trauma of partition.

The National Movement entered a new phase in the 1930s posing a novel challenge to men like Azad who were wedded to the concept of a united India. After the heady days of the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement, Hindu Muslim unity proved unequal to the challenge of devising a constitution acceptable to all the classes and communities within the country.

Indeed, although the 1930s again witnessed a country-wide agitation against British imperialism, Muslim participation in the agitation was not as conspicuous a feature of resistance as was true a decade earlier. Maulana Azad was the most prominent among the Muslim leaders who remained loyal to the cause of a united Hindu-Muslim struggle against British imperialism at this crucial juncture.

At a time when many Indian Muslims led by the Muslim League were crying for partition, Azad stood up in defence of the unity of the sub-continent. When the Congress launched the Satyagraha Movement in 1930, Azad was again arrested. He was a party to every direct action launched by the Congress during the course of the Freedom Struggle and spent 11 years of his life in British jails. He accepted the most challenging assignment of his life when he took over the presidentship of the Indian National Congress at its Ramgarh Session in 1940. Gandhiji, whose nominee, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, lost to Subhash Chandra Bose, wanted to have a consensus candidate. The entire left in the Congress with the exception of M.N. Roy supported Azad. Mahatma Gandhi observed thus on Azad's election: '... that he (Azad) is, today, the supreme head of the Indian National Congress, has deep meaning...'

Shortly before Azad presided over the Ramgarh Session of the Congress in 1940, Nehru said of him:

'...he is not the type of man who likes the rough and tumble of politics. He is very sensitive and rather avoids crowds and publicity. He lacks a certain vital energy. In a wider world he is rather out of place as he thinks on political lines and hardly at all on social or economic lines... In the Muslim world of India he is tremendously in advance. Probably he is the ablest among the Muslim divines. Most of them are afraid of him because he can floor them in any argument. His knowledge even of the scriptures and traditions is very great.'

It was this greatness that Maulana carried to the office of the President of the Congress at a crucial juncture. He said on his election:

Eleven hundred years of common history (between Hindus and the Muslims) have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of life which has escaped this stamp. Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language, our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they acted and reacted on each other and thus produced a new synthesis... This joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the times where this joint life had not begun. If there are any Hindus amongst us who desire to bring back the Hindu life of a thousand years ago and more, they dream, and such dreams are vain fantasies. So also if there are any Muslims who wish to revive their past civilisation and culture which they brought a thousand years ago from Iran and Central Asian they dream also and the sooner they wake up the better. These are unnatural fancies which cannot take root in the soil of reality. I am one of those who believe that revival may be a necessity in a religion but in social matters it is a denial of progress.

This thousand years of our joint life has moulded us into a common nationality. This cannot be done artificially. Nature does her fashioning through her hidden processes in the course of centuries. The cast has now been moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible. No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity. We must accept the logic of fact and history and engage ourselves in the fashioning of our future destiny.

It should be noted that these observations were made at a time when fanatic elements had already started weaning the Muslim masses away from the National mainstream. This is an analysis coming out of what Nehru said, 'a mind as keen as razor's

edge' and of 'strong commonsense' with 'a vast fund of knowledge'.

His tenure as Congress President was longest in its pre-independence history. He presided over the Congress during the most crucial phase of the struggle. It was under his presidentship that the All India Congress Committee passed the famous 'Quit India Resolution' and gave the call of 'Do or Die'. The Movement was ruthlessly suppressed by the British Government and Maulana Azad, along with the rest of the Congress leaders, was arrested and put behind the bars.

On his release in 1945, he was entrusted with the most delicate task of negotiating with the British and the Muslim League for transfer of power to Indians. He negotiated with Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India. Later, at Shimla, he led the Congress delegation in talks with the Cabinet Mission headed by Sir Pethwick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India. He wanted to have a dialogue with Mohammed Ali Jinnah who, in his characteristic arrogance, brushed him away and refused to talk to one he considered as the 'Congress Show boy'.

However, he pulled through these turbulent times. He had to face the might of the apologists of the British Raj as well as the proponents of the vivisection of the sub-continent. He did it with equanimity and stoicism and without losing poise or dignity. Maulana Azad carried the Congress with him through these historic six years with matchless grace and distinction. He also consistently tried to heal the rift between the Congress and the League. If he failed, it was not for want of trying or for lack of political skills. The communal schism baffled even the great Mahatma, who attempted in vain in the 1940s to achieve what he successfully did during the Khilafat and the Non-Cooperation Movements.

Maulana was an intellectual 'par excellence' and a political giant. Above all he was an uncompromising patriot. Though he had to suffer incarceration and torture in British jails, his spirit remained unbowed. He had to move from jail to jail - from Alipur in Calcutta to Naini in Allahabad, Meerut, Gonda, Moradabad, Ahmednagar and Delhi. But the sensitivity of his

intellect remained intact. He did most of his writings during these jail days.

Azad lost his wife, Zuleikha Begum, when he was detained in the Ahmednagar Fort in the wake of the Quit India Movement. Describing his return to Calcutta after his release, Azad says in his Autobiography *India Wins Freedom*, which generated some controversy in recent days:

As the car was crossing the Howrah Bridge, my mind moved back to the days of the past. I remembered the day when three years ago I left for Bombay to attend the meetings of the Working Committee and the AICC. My wife had come up to the gate of my house to bid me farewell. I was now returning after three years but she was in her grave and home was empty. I remembered the lines of Wordsworth:

'But she is in her grave and oh  
The difference to me'.

I told my companions to turn the car, for I wished to visit her grave before I went home. My car was full of garlands. I took one and placed it on her grave and silently read the *Fateha*.

This was perhaps the greatest hardship Maulana Azad had to bear during the course of the struggle for the country's freedom.

\* When partition came about, Maulana Azad and his nationalist Muslim followers were heart-broken. Azad's dream of a United India was shattered and he was a broken man. But he kept a brave face and in his loyalty to his political colleagues, he never lamented in public. However, he took pride in identifying himself as an Indian as well as a Muslim. For him there was no dichotomy between the two. When the Pakistan Resolution was passed at Lahore under the leadership of Jinnah, Azad said:

'I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this

splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim’.

Indeed he was an indispensable part of this noble edifice, namely India. When the Muslims of India were deeply worried about their future within the country after the partition of the sub-continent, Maulana Azad, in his characteristic statesman-like manner, reached out to them and helped in infusing confidence and faith in being Indians. Reminding his co-religionists of the disastrous role played by fanatic leaders who propounded the two-nation theory and thus betrayed the cause of composite nationalism, he urged them to address themselves anew to the task of creating for the Islamic world a ‘place dignity’ in the new order of things. In an inspiring address to the Muslims in 1948 he said:

‘I am not asking you to seek certificates of loyalty out of the fear of the ruling power or to live as camp followers, as you did during the days of foreign domination. Let me remind you that some of the bright signs and symbols that you discern today in India, as a heritage of the past, were contributed by our own forefathers. Don’t forget them. Don’t forsake them. Live like their worthy inheritors. Realise that if you yourself are not willing to run away no power on earth could make you do so’.

Maulana Azad held a position unique in several ways. He was emotionally and intellectually close to both – Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. He was closely associated with crucial decision making since the twenties. With the dawn of freedom in 1947, his was a natural choice to be in the Cabinet. He was the Minister of Education during 1947-52 and Minister of Education, and Natural Resources and Scientific Research from 1952-58. His influence on the process of policy making was immense. He was Nehru’s comrade-in-arms during the days of the freedom movement and was one of his closest confidante and adviser in the Cabinet.

Maulana Azad was a great educationist too. His standing as an outstanding scholar of Oriental learning was demonstrated in moulding the educational system of the country in the immediate post-independence years. It was he who established the University Grants Commission, and launched the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) which has now come up to play a significant role in the academic growth of the country. The three Akademies – Sahitya Akademy, Lalit Kala Akademy and Sangeet Natak Akademy – to promote art, music and literature were his ideas. He assisted Pandit Nehru in setting up the Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and many a chain of Science Laboratories in India.

As the Minister for Education he insisted that both the Union and the States must share responsibility in promotion of education. He appointed the University Education Commission in 1948 and Secondary Education Commission in 1952. Between 1947 and 1958, on his initiative, the budgetary allocation for Education was raised fifteen-fold.

A Leader is defined as a person who knows the way, who shows the way and who goes the way. Azad was one of those who went the way carrying his people with him, and thus obtained a legendary fame in his lifetime itself – a feat earned by only a few statesmen. At a time when it was in the understanding of most Muslims of India that it is an offence against religion to be both a nationalist and a Muslim, Maulana Azad showed us how one could be both at one and the same time. His greatest contribution perhaps lies in the fact that he was chiefly instrumental in converting a passive and sometimes collaborationist section of the Indian society to become a very active and vocal opponent of the British Raj.

Any realistic assessment of Maulana Azad's contribution to Modern India will not be complete unless we look into the manner in which he reached out to his co-religionists, during the freedom movement and after the advent of freedom, and persuaded them to play a constructive role in shaping the destiny of the newly liberated State. It is here that the relevance of his religious philosophy, his standing as an inspiring writer and scholar and the philosophical basis of his nationalist outlook come.



Azad's writings reflect a synthesis of his political/nationalist philosophy and his religious philosophy based on secularism. Though they are saturated with a religious fervour it is easy to discern the secular message from between the lines. He wanted to act as a scholar disseminating ideas through the instrumentality of his writings, among the Muslim religious teachers whom he regarded as natural leaders. He thought that it was the educated class that ought to be educated first so that they could influence the behaviour of the general public.

Azad took to poetry writing at the age of ten and when he was only sixteen, he started editing his own paper. Azad's mind was intensely imaginative and highly romantic. He was endowed with tremendous intellectual and mental capacities. Josh Malihabadi, the noted Urdu Poet and writer, once told Azad: 'You actually belong to our tribe. Your uniform is still lying with us. Why did you put on the livery of politics?' Despite the underlying truth of Josh's remark, the contribution of Azad to literature and learning is of no mean significance. It was through his writings that he reached out to the masses.

Among his writings, *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* published in 1931, occupies the pride of place. It was essentially a commentary on the sacred text of Islam, which he used to demonstrate the moral legitimacy of India as a homeland for the Muslim Community in the sub-continent. He desired to co-ordinate the teachings of Islam with the principles of human welfare and for this it was necessary to cleanse the Islamic principles of the myths and superstitions which had crept into them. *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* turned out to be a highly successful commentary as it reflected Azad's amazingly vast store of knowledge, his clarity of mind, his phenomenal memory and his extra-ordinary power of expression and communication. Commenting on the fundamental unity of all religions, Azad wrote in *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*:

The fundamental concept of all religions is belief in the existence of God. All the religions teach the same truth and the worship of God is ingrained in human nature. Thus differences in religion are created (only) by three factors; dispute over the attributes of God, differences in modes of worship, and differences in religious laws. These differences

are created by time circumstance, by environment. None doubts the existence of God.

Discussing the unity of religions and oneness of God, he said:

The tragedy is that the world worships words and not meanings, and even though all are seeking and worshipping but they quarrel with one another and differ on mere names. Once the veil of names is lifted and the real meaning being the same is brought out, all quarrels would cease.

Next to *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, *Tazkira* is the most important book written by Azad. It represent the first chapter of his autobiography, though he stopped proceeding further in autobiographical lines after writing about his great ancestors. However, it contains revelations about Azad's life, more about his turbulent youth, presented in romantic style. *Tazkira* was the first book of Azad to be published. It also discusses religion, philosophy, logic, history, Shaikh Wasti, Imam Ibne Taimiyya – two great Islamic scholars, the life of the prophets and various other topics. *Ghubar-e-Khatir* is Azad's last book before he wrote his autobiography *India Wins Freedom*. After writing it, the pre-occupation with politics gave him no time for writing. It is a collection of letters, written as pastime, when he was detained in the Ahmednagar Fort, to Nawab Sadr Yar Jung Babibur Rahman Khan Sherwani – a renowned theologian with the Nizam's Government at Hyderabad, which were never posted. These letters convey, in balanced and dignified manner, the essence of Azad's mature experience. Besides revealing various things about himself, implicitly or explicitly, it also describes how prisoners spent their days in Ahmednagar jail. He also attacked religious superstitions and rituals and the conflicts between the creeds. There is no better or more reliable source for any biographer of Azad than *Ghubar-e-Khatir*. It carries details about Azad's personal bio-data, his family history his education, his psychological make-ups and the motivations that shaped his character.

He believed that the religious laws were outdated. As such, they were to be adjusted with the times.

Commenting on orthodox religious judges, Azad writes:

During the 1300 years after the advent of Islam the pen of the religious judges has been like a naked sword. Thousands of persons have been killed because of their pronouncements. At any given point in the history of Islam, there are countless examples to show that whenever a ruler indulged in bloodshed, both the pen of the religious judges and the sword of military commander served him most loyally...

Azad was essentially a writer whose love for the past of Islam was stamped with a healthy passion and romance. His thoughts transcended the limits of time. He mastered the good of the past and gave a message for the future. He passed through stages of immense intellectual struggle, through stages of intense dogmatism, then scepticism followed by denial and repudiation and then a real rapprochement. He says:

There is no positive conviction of my heart which was not pricked by all the thorns of doubt and there is no belief of my soul which has not passed through all the tests of unbelief and denial.

The search for the essential forms the basic vision of Azad. According to him the unity of religion is the great truth which forms 'the primary basis of the Quranic call. Everything else that the Quran presents rest on it'. He complains that 'no other truth of the Quran has been kept so deliberately out of sight than this'. He believed that the aim of every religion was to gather those who stood divided. In his own words:

'The unity of man is the primary aim of religion. The message that every prophet delivered was that mankind were in reality one people and the one community, and there was but one God for all of them.... But curiously the followers of each religion disregarded the message, so much so, that every country, every community and every race resolved

itself in to separate entity and raised groupism to the position of religion....'

His books and writings are fairly large in number. These include:

- (1) *Elam-e-Haq*, (2) *Musalman Aurat*, (3) *Taza Mazamine-Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, (4) *Masala-i-Khilafat aur Jaziratur Arab*, (5) *Qaul-e-Faisal*, (6) *Khutbat-e-Azad*, (7) *Taqarur*, (8) *Navadir-e-Abul Kalam*, (9) *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, (10) *Tazkira*, (11) *Azad Ki Kahani*, (12) *India Wins Freedom*, (13) *Ghubar-e-Khatir*, (14) *Karawane Khayal*, (15) *Naqshe Azad*, (16) *Makatib-e-Abul Kalam*, (17) *Faisla-e-Muqaddama-e-Jama Masjid, Calcutta*, (18) *MalirKotla Ka Niza*, (19) *Sarmad Shahid*, (20) *National Tahrik* (MS), (21) *Alberuni aur Gughrafiae Aalam* (MS) and (22) *Mutafarriq Khutut* (MS).

Maulana Azad was a patriot, a leader, a philosopher-statesman and a great scholar. By his profound learning and 'luminous intelligence', he did a real good job for Islam, by clearing it of the dust of prejudice and bigotry which had gathered up on it during the eleven hundred years of its history in India. He was a rightful inheritor of all the thought movements of the past. In the unfolding of his intellectual life and in the evolution of his thought, we find staged the whole history of Islamic thought. He was one of the very few acquainted with the philosophies of India and had deep insight into the various religions of the world and could isolate the real and essential from the spurious.

Reminding of Azad's unique intellectual achievements, Pandit Nehru said:

...He was great in many ways. He combined in himself the greatness of the past with the greatness of the present. He always reminded me of the great men of several hundred years ago about whom I have read in history, the great men

of the Renaissance, or in a later period the encyclopaedists who preceded the French Revolution, men of intellect and men of action. He reminded also of what might be called the great quality of olden days – the graciousness, a certain courtesy of tolerance or patience which we sadly seek in the world today .... It was the strange and unique mixture of the good qualities of the past, the graciousness, the deep learning and toleration and the urges of today which made Maulana Azad what he was.

C. Rajagopalachari regarded Azad as 'one who represents the keen understanding and synthetic ideology of the Great Akbar'. Rajagopalachari had all praise for Azad's liberal outlook.

The other philosopher-statesman and a contemporary of Maulana Azad, Dr. Radhakrishnan had this to say about him:

The Maulana stood for what may be called the emancipation of the mind free from superstitions, obscurantism and fanaticism. This mind should be free from narrow prejudices of race or language, province or dialect, religion or caste. It is only then that it is a civilised mind. He worked for the ideals of national unity, probity in administration and economic progress. In a philosophical vein, the Maulana points out that 'to find out the meaning of life and existence is the purpose of the philosophical quest. We may not succeed in finding it out but the pursuit of the quest is its own reward'. Those who follow the path never tire because it is both the way and the destination'.

His devotion to Indian National Movement was the result of the new religious awakening. It was out of his deep understanding of the fundamentals of Islamic thought that he was able to question Pakistan's religious basis itself. Azad wrote in *India Wins Freedom*:

'It is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different'.

The birth of Bangladesh in 1971 perhaps confirmed Azad's reasoning.

On 22 February, 1958 the Nation mourned the death of this distinguished scholar and philosopher statesman who had the courage of conviction to preach unity of mankind, at a time when religion was used by fanatic elements to separate man from man and ideals of nationalism were used to separate nations from nations. Announcing his death in the Parliament, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

'We mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core. The word 'luminous' is perhaps the best word I can use about his mind. When we miss and when we part with such a companion, friend, colleague, comrade, leader and teacher, there is inevitably a tremendous void created in our life and activities'.

Perhaps the nation today could look for inspiration to the social ideals which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad propounded as an enduring basis of sanity in relations between classes and communities which still carry over the prejudices of the past.

**AZAD AS OTHERS SEE HIM**

# Abul Kalam Azad: A Perfect Musalman and a Perfect Nationalist

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*Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma\**

Maulana Azad was closely associated with the evolution of a secular ethos and establishment of parliamentary democracy in our country. He was one of the most prodigious nation-builders among a truly great and unique band of highly talented national leaders.

To appreciate Maulana Azad's work for national integration it is necessary first to understand the mind of the Maulana. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who knew Maulana Azad intimately over many years, had described it in his own exquisite way. Panditji had said that Maulana Azad was 'A man of luminous intelligence and mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core'. 'Luminous' perhaps is the best word to describe his mind. This evaluation of Maulana Azad's mind

\* Vice President of India. Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration', held under the auspices of the Indian Parliamentary Group on 11 November, 1988.



remains with posterity as from perhaps the foremost world thinker of the time. It is an appraisal which must be given due weightage in any estimate of the true value of the ideas and thoughts that emanated from Maulana Azad and went on to influence the national environment.

As an individual, Maulana Azad was one of the finest products of Islamic culture. Educated in his childhood and youth according to the orthodox educational pattern by eminent scholars and devines in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, language and literature, Islamic theology, philosophy and metaphysics, Maulana Azad had completed the entire course of Dars-e-Nizamiah by the age of sixteen. This is an intellectual feat that still remains unsurpassed. He was an extraordinary individual who combined in himself a supremely brilliant intellect and vast knowledge and wisdom from a very early age and who then turned his attention to major political issues concerning our country.

In the context of national integration it is noteworthy that Maulana Azad's standpoint was based on the solid foundation of spiritual, philosophical and religious knowledge and contemplation of the highest order. In religion, Maulana Azad found rational answers to many complex problems, including the intensely complicate political issues which he had to deal with increasingly. Maulana Azad's rationalism rose from the power and inspirational quality of his religion Islam. He had described those who do not use their God-given power of reasoning as 'Munkarini-Haq' (Deniers of Truth). In Volume-II of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, Maulana Azad said: 'It is God's immutable law that if you do not open your eyes, they will be covered, as it were, by a black curtain. If you do not use your ears, you will become like the deaf. If you refuse to think, the light of reason itself will become dim and obscure'. This statement by Maulana Azad is particularly relevant for the purpose of understanding the quality of his rationalism so evident in his *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, a work which is perhaps the most outstanding contemporary interpretation of Islamic thought. Unlike most other theologians, Maulana Azad accumulated and developed his faith not by inherited belief but by subjecting every particle of any system of thought to intense examination, analysis and evaluation. One of the very moving and

indicative passages in *Tazkirah* is an account of his experience with agnosticism. He said:

‘From the very first day, I have refused to be content with what my family, my education and my society gave me. I have never been bound by fetters of tradition in any direction and the thirst for Truth has never deserted me. There is no conviction in my heart which the thorns of doubt have not pierced, no faith in my soul which the thorns of doubt has not been subjected to all the conspiracies of disbelief.

Thus, whatever this highly sensitive, philosopher came to believe, or accept, had, and has, a greater value. It is no wonder that one such as Maulana Azad was the obvious choice for the position of Imam-i-Hind, or a leader of India not only in view of his profound, objective, understanding of the teachings of Islam but his deep studies of the tenets of all other major religions.

It is important therefore, in the context of national integration and our national destiny, to remind ourselves of what Maulana Azad said in regard to religious intolerance. In his *Tarjuman* Maulana Azad uses the very first words in the Quran Sharif, Al Fatiha, to explain the rationally and spiritually appropriate position. Referring to the Al Fatiha, Maulana Azad asks: ‘What will be the mental attitude of a person who sincerely believes in the letter and spirit of such a prayer?’. And he explains:

Such a person passionately chants the glory and praise of God – not a God claimed as their own by different races and nations and creeds, but the beneficent creator of the entire universe, whose mercy and compassion encompass the whole human race. Then he prays for God’s grace to follow the right path, the only favour his tongue is prepared to ask. And what is this right, this straight path? Is it the path of some particular nation or race? Or some particular group? No, it is the common path which all the great religious leaders of mankind, all the truth loving and truth seeking men and women of the world have trodden, whatever the

age or race to which they belonged. Likewise he prays to be shielded from the path of transgression or wrong. But there, too, there is no reference to any particular race or creator or nation but to the ways of all those who have fallen from grace and been led astray. Thus what he passionately desires is the universal good of all mankind. What then is the kind of mould in which the mind of such a person will be cast? He will worship the God of universal compassion and grace and will in no sense be a man fettered by prejudices of race or any other exclusive groupings. He will be a man endowed with spirit of universal humanism.

This interpretation of Al Fatcha is quite relevant for our consideration. Azad says that a true person will worship the God of universal compassion and grace and will in no sense be a man fettered by prejudices of race or any other groupings. He will be a man endowed with the spirit of universal humanism.

Maulana Azad emphasised in his writings a categorical imperative in the Quran Sharif, 'There is no nation or part of the world but has had its Prophet, and that we must either accept them all or reject them all for they are messengers of the same God or Allah or Parameshwar'. He added:

'In the advancement of nations, there is no greater hindrance than narrow mindedness. It is our duty to keep ourselves free from this disease in this new era of Independence which has just begun. There is no other disease so dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. It makes its appearance in every field of thought and action. Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of religion it appears in the form of blind faith, and wants to deceive us in the name of orthodoxy. In learning and culture it makes an appeal to us in the name of narrower concepts. It behoves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names.'

These perceptions, of universal humanism, which form the tissue of secular thought are largely accepted now. This is indicative of the advancement that has taken place over the last forty years, in the process of national integration. Gradually, but

on a vast scale, people have been imbued with and reminded of the true meaning of concepts contained in their religious and spiritual thought. All this has made the nation stronger and the national ethos more vital and strength-giving. If we cast our minds back to the decades which preceded Independence, and Partition the picture that comes to ones mind is a vitiated one. The atmosphere had been steadily poisoned by deliberate imperial policy, implemented with diabolical finesse till neighbour had been turned against neighbour, brother against brother and an ethos of humanism, thousands of years old, had been over-turned by frenzied communalism.

In such a context, the Maulana's thought and words shone forth bringing men to their senses thus impelling a nation to recover its true identity. As Congress President, in his Presidential Address, at the 53rd session of the Indian National Congress held at Ramgarh in March 1940, Maulana Azad had made statements which must be reckoned to be of permanent value in the context of national integration. He declared:

'I am a Musalman, and am proud of the fact. Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance... I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure is incomplete... Just as the Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam... Thousands of years of joint life has moulded and destiny has set her seal upon it... No fantasy or artificial scheming to separate and divide can break this unity'.

Maulana Azad was a perfect Musalman and therefore a perfect nationalist.

As a scholar, writer and thinker, as a party activist, parliamentarian and Minister, as a trusted friend of Jawaharlalji, as a guide par excellence of the Indian people, Maulana Saheb strove with exceptional courage of conviction for national integration. Would that he had been heeded more, India would not have had to face the kind of problems as are existing today

The history of our times would then have been a source of greater pride to all of us.

There is so much about him that one can seriously reflect upon.

We pay our respectful homage to this great humanist and nation-builder.

## **The Maulana: A Consistent Defender of Secularism**

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*H.K.L. Bhagat\**

Maulana Azad was one of the tallest leaders that the Indian struggle for Independence – the Indian Revolution – produced. However, his contribution was not confined to the struggle for Independence alone. It extended to the post-independence restructuring of India on certain fundamentals which were the corner-stones of democracy, secularism and world peace.

Broadly speaking, these were the corner-stones on which they wanted to build India and this is what came during the freedom struggle. All the corner-stones are equally important for the country. If even one of these foundation-stones is weakened, the whole fabric is weakened. But one corner-stone which I wish to emphasise for which Maulana Saheb stood in defence consistently facing even the severest attacks, during the Freedom Movement and after, from his co-religionists, is the corner-stone of secularism which has generally been vulnerable. The entire

\* Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Information and Broadcasting. Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration'.

nation has contributed towards the creation of these corner-stones irrespective of political affiliations. But this corner-stone of secularism has been attacked from time to time.

Communalism has proved to be the worst bane of Indian politics. Gandhiji's assassination was a case in point. What has been quoted about Maulana Saheb by Gandhiji and by Panditji is more relevant today than before. One's weakness or one's enemy is narrowness in social outlook. Communalism has attacked India more than once and it continues to attack us and weaken the polity. Though the common man in India is largely prompted by the spirit of tolerance and harmony, there have been many developments which have contributed to the weakening of this spirit of tolerance and harmony. There has always been a tendency to exploit the situation and generate communal tension out of it. Maulana Saheb, particularly being a holy man in that sense, knew and understood religion much better. He was more religious than many others. He described religion in sharp contrast to many others who butchered religion and created all sorts of problems. Maulana Azad always emphasised that India is a country which can stand on the pillar of harmony. That is to be safeguarded. It is not for nothing that all the national leaders emphasised it from time to time. That is what Maulana Saheb followed both in words and deeds. It is even more necessary today. The need to convey the message of secularism, of sanity in relationship between individuals and groups, to the children, young men and to the whole country is imperative.

Every Indian has a duty to save this country, and its fundamentals for which the Maulana's voice was very very strong. He was tall in thought, tall in action and is remembered by the country with reverence and respect and he will continue to be remembered as such. It is a matter for introspection for us to see how much we are trying to achieve it. India's Independence struggle need to be taught and projected much more, in more ways than one, as a thing which is sacred and precious is exposed to dangers and we have to save it from that.

## **Azad: A Revolutionary in Politics and a Rationalist in Religion**

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*Prof. S. Nurul Hasan\**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a great Indian, a determined freedom fighter and one of the makers of modern India. Maulana Azad as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote of him, 'was a strange mixture of medieval scholarsticism of 18th century rationalism and the modern outlook'. Having completed his Islamic education that he received from his father and other learned scholars of Calcutta, Azad was influenced on the one hand by the rationalist outlook of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and on the other hand by the revolutionary urge of the Wahhabis, who were keen to overthrow the fetters of British Imperialism. He totally rejected the pro-British thinking of the Aligarh School and of the newly founded All India Muslim League. At the same time he established links with the revolutionary movement against the partition of Bengal. This partition was part of the British Imperialist intrigue intended to weaken the Hindus of Bengal who were in the forefront of the struggle for freedom. The British had

\* Formerly Governor of West Bengal and presently Governor of Orissa. Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration'.



also hoped that it would create a permanent schism between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Unfortunately, many of the revolutionaries felt that the Muslims were obstacles to the attainment of Indian freedom. To dispel this misconception Maulana Azad met Shri Aurobindo, a number of times. He also came into contact with the famous revolutionary Shyam Sunder Chakravorty who introduced him to the other revolutionaries. At first, these revolutionaries did not have full faith in Maulana Azad but later they too became his devotees. By 1908, at his instance, secret revolutionary centres were established in several parts of Northern India and in Bombay. In 1908, Maulana Azad went on an extended tour of Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. There also he had established contacts with various revolutionary groups and Nationalist Movements including with the followers of Mustafa Kamal Pasha.

Maulana himself wrote:

Contact with these Arab and Turk revolutionaries confirmed my political beliefs. They expressed their surprise that Indian Muslims were either indifferent to or against the nationalist demands. They were of the view that the Indian Muslims should have led the nationalist struggle for freedom and could not understand why they were mere camp followers of the British.

I was more convinced than ever that the Indian Muslims must co-operate in the work of the political liberation of the country.

To bring the Muslims into the anti-imperialist struggle for liberation along with their non-Muslim brethren, Maulana Azad established a weekly paper at Calcutta, called *Al-Hilal*, the first number of which was published in June 1912. The publication of *Al-Hilal*, said Maulana Azad, 'marks the turning point in the history of Urdu journalism. It achieved unprecedented popularity within a short time'. The First World War having broken out, the *Al-Hilal* press was confiscated in 1915. After 5 months, he started a new journal called *Al-Balagh*, but even this was closed down by the British in April 1916. Maulana Azad was interned in Ranchi and remained there till December 1919. He met Gandhiji for the

first time early in 1920 and was immediately influenced by that great person.

It was at the Khilafat Conference held at Meerut that Gandhiji first proclaimed from a public platform his programme of Non-Cooperation. Maulana Azad followed him and gave him his unqualified support. A Special Session of the Congress was held in September 1920 to consider the programme of action prepared by Gandhiji. Soon afterwards Maulana Azad was arrested along with C.R. Das. A little later, they were joined in Alipore Central Jail by Subhash Chandra Bose. On being released in January 1923, Maulana Azad found sharp differences of opinion appearing among the Congress leaders between the no-changers and pro-changers. A Special Session of the Congress was held in September 1923 at the initiative of Gandhiji. Maulana Azad, then only 35 years of age, was asked to preside over the Session. At this Congress Session Maulana revealed that quality which remained characteristic of him for the rest of his life: He could always find a way out of a difficult situation provided there was no compromise with imperialist rule.

During the Salt Satyagraha, Maulana was one of the principal supporters of Gandhiji. He was arrested and remained in jail for about a year and a half. By this time Maulana had become one of the recognised leaders of the Indian National Movement. When the Congress formed Ministries after the 1937 elections, Maulana Azad was made a Member of the Parliamentary Board by Jawaharlal Nehru, the then President of the Indian National Congress, along with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Babu Rajendra Prasad. Alarmed at the rise of the Congress, and the failure of traditional British dependents like the National Agriculturist Party in U.P., the British gave their backing in various ways to the Muslim League.

The Muslim League's main propaganda against the Congress was that it was national only in name. It appointed a Committee which presented a report making wild allegations about the 'unfair' treatment meted out to Muslims and other minority communities by Congress Governments. Maulana Azad examined these charges and he later recorded: 'I can speak from personal knowledge that these allegations are absolutely unfounded. This

was also the view which was held by the Viceroy and the Governors of the different Provinces'.

Early in 1940, at the Ramgarh Session, Maulana Azad was elected President of the Indian National Congress for the second time. This was a Session held soon after the Muslim League Session at Lahore, which proclaimed the creation of Pakistan as their objective. Maulana refuted and rebutted that argument. He appealed to the Muslims of India to get rid of the minority complex and to enter fully into the main stream of Freedom Struggle.

In his Presidential address he said:

Do we Indian Muslims view the free India of the future with suspicion and distrust or with courage and confidence? If we view it with fear and suspicion, then undoubtedly we have to follow a different path. We are then forced to tolerate the existence of a third power... If we are convinced that for us fear and doubt have no place and that we must view the future with courage and confidence in ourselves, then our course of action becomes absolutely clear. We find ourselves, in a new world which is free from the dark shadows of doubt, vacillation, inaction and apathy and where the light of faith and determined action and enthusiasm never fails.

The partition of India broke Maulana's heart. He expressed his disagreement even with his close associates and those whom he loved. But partition was the price India paid for her freedom. Maulana Azad became the first Education Minister of free India and remained so until his death on 22 February, 1958. What sustained him throughout his public life was his faith in India and in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Maulana Azad wrote:

We gave our wealth to her and she unlocked the doors of her own treasures to us. We gave her what she needed most, the most precious of gifts from Islam's treasury — the message of democracy and human equality. The acceptance of unity in diversity has been her motto throughout the ages.

According to Maulana Azad, Gandhiji gave a new message in the context of the modern age. His message to the Indian people was of tolerance, goodwill and love for all. The divergence can exist side by side without conflict and we can solve one of the most difficult problems of the modern world with the spirit of tolerance and large hearted approach.

## Maulana Azad: The Great Integrator

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*M. Thambi Durai\**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad earned wide admiration and esteem not only as a profound theologian, a keen intellectual, an eloquent speaker, and a powerful writer but also as one noted for his fervent patriotism and devotion to just causes.

Among the leading personalities of the present century who have influenced and left a deep effect on the minds of the Indian Muslims, Maulana Azad is prominent. In the political field his achievement was comparatively more definite, positive and permanent. He represented a trend of composite nationalism and till his death he was the champion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Although Maulana Azad started his political career as a religious leader (Alim), his faith in nationalism, as Gandhiji described it, was 'as robust as his faith in Islam'. He was as devoted to his religion as he was to the ideal of the liberation and Independence of his country. Indian nationalism as envisaged by Azad was democratic and secular.

\* Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha. Adapted from the Speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration'.

Azad attached great importance to communal harmony and to him Hindu-Muslim unity was essential for bringing freedom. However, he said that, if he had to choose between *Swaraj* and Hindu-Muslim unity, he would choose the latter; for if *Swaraj* was delayed it would be a loss to India, but if Hindu-Muslim unity was delayed it would be a loss to entire mankind.

When he addressed a provincial meeting of the Khilafat Movement at Agra on 25 October, 1921, he had even gone to the extent of characterising 'Hindu-Muslim co-operation as the covenant of the Prophet Mohammed entered between the Muslims and other residents of Medina for the purpose of establishing a working alliance for common defence'. Azad used the preamble to the covenant to bring home to the Muslims his own version of composite and united nationalism. He used the key phrase '*Ummat-i-Wahida*' for a Joint-Hindu-Muslim nation. Azad interpreted *Ummat-i-Wahida* as one nation. He believed that in spite of religious, racial and other differences, India was one nation. Azad's idea of composite nationalism aimed at the creation of an indivisible and permanent nation (*Ummat-i-Wahida*), comprising all Indians irrespective of caste, creed or religion. During the course of his historic Presidential address at the Ramgarh Congress Session in 1940, Azad proudly professed his being a Muslim with 1300 years' glorious tradition, but he was equally emphatic when he said:

'With all these feelings, I possess another sentiment which the realities of my life have created and from which the spirit of Islam does not check me. It is that I am proud of the feeling that I am an Indian and part of the indivisible and united nationality of India'.

Thus Azad dreamt of a composite nationalism with complete harmony among all the sections of the people, while retaining their individuality.

Azad's philosophy of religion was rational. He regarded the reasoning faculty in man as the noblest of his faculties. Reason is the driving force which leads to 'an endless vista of progress', Azad was a rationalist but his rationalism did not clash with his belief in religion; rather he drew strength and inspiration from it.

He held that religion would never lose its importance in the development and satisfaction of the human spirit. Unlike philosophy and science, religion supplies faith to man. This shows that his view of Islam was flexible, liberal, tolerant and above all 'humanitarian'.

To remember Maulana Azad and to contemplate on his thought is much more than a matter of gratitude for the people of India. Along with Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, the Maulana was a leading luminary who lit the path of Indian nationalism. Today when this path is sought to be thrown into darkness and oblivion it has become absolutely necessary to go back to the pathfinders.

A study of the development of Maulana's thinking will give one an idea of how a mind steeped in religion and its lore not only reconciled itself with secular nationalism but gave to it the glow of that passion and compassion of humanity which frees it from chauvinism and makes it a fit and healthy force to understand and serve the entire human kind.

Maulana Azad was a personality which in its plenitude of feeling and wisdom made no petty distinction between man and man. He was, and always remained, a devout and learned Muslim and yet, probably because of that, he came to the realisation of the essential unity of Truth in whatever form it might find expression. Consequently, he saw the various religions and philosophies of the Orient and the Occident not as conflicting competitors but as essentially complementary to one another as instruments of service to humanity. In this he stands side by side with Gandhiji.

Many of the co-religionists and compatriots of the Maulana were not able to comprehend the truth and wisdom of his stand. He had, therefore, to undergo tremendous suffering caused by unwarranted misunderstanding and suspicion. That he held fast to his beliefs and principles is evidence enough of his deep faith in them as also of his unwavering character. He, therefore, stands as beacon light for the upholders of that concept of composite nationalism which the Maulana described as the *Ummat-i-Wahida*.

Strengthening this *Ummat-i-Wahida* is all the more necessary today. Unity of various sections of Indian community is vital for

our survival as a nation. It would, therefore, be foolish for us to be complacent. Unity, like liberty, demands eternal vigilance, particularly in a country like India which has to take long and rapid strides on the road to further progress.

Maulana Azad's objective in life or the one ideal he cherished most can be very well expressed in verse by the great Turkish poet, Maulana Rumi, who while addressing 'man' said:

नू बराये वस्ल करदन आमदी।  
न बराये फस्ल करदन आमदी।

(You have come into the world to bring people together, not to cast them apart)

Maulana Azad believed that his mission in life was to bring people together and not to do any thing which was likely to keep them apart. He lived fully up to his ideal. And history bears eloquent testimony to his deeds.

Dr. Radhakrishnan while paying tributes to Maulana Azad on his death on 22 February, 1958 said:

'Maulana Azad was a great scholar, a self-sacrificing patriot and a statesman. He worked hard for the unity of India. He was a devout Muslim and an ardent patriot... He made no difference between a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a Christian. He believed that all those who were in this country belonged to one country. The national spirit was the driving force of his life. He was an apostle of national unity and communal harmony'.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was truly an embodiment of national integration. He worked for national unity, probity in administration and economic progress. The only way in which we can honour his memory is for us to adopt these ideals and ask ourselves every day whether in our acts we are promoting integrity in administration, we are promoting economic progress of our country. If the answers to the above are in the positive, Azad's message and work have not gone in vain. Let us dedicate ourselves to work for the ideals which the Maulana lived for.



## Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Revolutionary Thinker

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*Dr. Najma Heptulla\**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad belongs to that rare band of individuals who combine in themselves both scholarship and sacrifice. Son of Maulana Khairuddin, who was a *sufi pir*, Azad was born in Mecca where his father had migrated after the Indian revolt of 1857. A few years later, at the request of his followers, Maulana Khairuddin returned to Calcutta from Hedjaz. Azad's mother was an Arab lady of noble lineage. Azad's initial education was on traditional lines and was strictly under the supervision of his father. He was, in fact, a child prodigy whom later the world has seen flowering into an intellectual giant with a deep philosophical bent of mind. At the age of sixteen, Abul Kalam Azad completed the course of *Dars-e-Nizamiah* which was indeed a rare intellectual feat. Apart from Islamic theology Azad was very well versed in Urdu, Arabic and Persian. Describing him 'a brilliant young-man', Jawaharlal Nehru says about Maulana Azad in the '*Discovery of India*' that while yet in his teens he 'had

\* Deputy Chairperson, Rajya Sabha.

become well-known for his Arabic and Persian scholarship and deep learning’.

As a young boy Maulana Azad was exposed to the writings of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and found much sense in the views of Sir Syed who was advocating that Muslims should take to modern education.

Maulana Azad, with his inquisitive mind, was a non-conformist and would accept the customs or beliefs only if he found that they stood to reason. Unlike the other Muslim leaders of the day he had travelled widely and came to know many nationalists and revolutionaries of the Arab world. ‘Soaked in Islamic tradition and with many personal contacts with prominent Muslim leaders and reformers in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Iran, he was powerfully affected by political and cultural developments in these countries’.

Though Maulana Azad was quite impressed by the modern approach of Sir Syed Ahmed, he did not, however, approve the way his followers were pursuing his teachings. Azad was not opposed to modern education but he did not like the idea that Muslims should support the British. ‘Whether Muslims or Hindus’, said Azad, ‘we share the common destiny and to fight the British we would have to unite’. This view did not find much support from his co-religionists. Though in minority, believing that he had to pursue the truth relentlessly, Azad remained steadfast and espoused the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Through his fiery eloquence and revolutionary writings first in *Al-Hilal* and later in *Al-Balagh*, he roused Muslims from their political apathy. His literary style was unparalleled and his message too, like his literary style, was new and profound. Maulana was seeing ahead of his time and the British naturally saw a great danger in the unity thesis advanced by him. His press was confiscated and later he was interned. In 1919, after his release from the Ranchi Jail, Azad met Mahatma Gandhi. He saw that Khilafat movement had offered a great opportunity to unite Hindus and Muslims. Azad, a fiery speaker, inspired Hindus and Muslims alike to work together

\* *Discovery of India* by Jawaharlal Nehru.

to fight the British. Speaking at Bengal Khilafat Conference in 1920, Azad said:

'Truth is one and the same everywhere, but it has various dresses. And our misfortune is that the world worships "terms" and not their meaning'.

Hindu-Muslim unity was so dear to his heart that in 1923 when he was just 35 years of age, as Congress President he proclaimed:

'If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the heights of the Qutub Minar: 'Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within twenty four hours *Swaraj* is yours', I will refuse *Swaraj* but will not budge an inch from my stand. If *Swaraj* is delayed it will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be the loss of our entire human world'.

As President of the Indian National Congress Azad brought understanding between those who wanted to enter the Central Legislature and those who were opposed to it. As a great synthesiser of opposites, it was the Maulana who accomplished this marvellous task with consummate dexterity.

The urge for national unity impelled him to take a stand opposed to the Muslim League. He found no truth in the two nation theory propounded by the Muslim League. India to him was a home of composite culture. He respected Indian culture not only because he was part of it but also because he was fully aware that Islamic heritage is a dominant part of it. Once referring to this heritage, he said at a forum of the Indian National Congress:

'Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of our life which has escaped this stamp'.

The purpose of religion is to make one a good human being. Such a person Maulana would describe as *Mard-i-momin*, a man of faith. While commenting on the opening verses of the holy *Quran*, he described *Mard-i-momin* in terms of his moral ethical and spiritual qualities.

A profound scholar of Islamic philosophy and Muslim theology, Maulana Azad gave the most outstanding interpretation to the teachings of the holy *Quran* which are contained in the book published under the title *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*. His interpretation of Quranic verses clearly indicates that he had a revolutionary mind and would never subscribe to the traditionally held beliefs unless they stood the test of reason. Maulana would never agree to what was taught by Mullas and Orthodox Muslim theologians. He was a creative genius who relied on many cultural sources which had their origin in our country and took the best of our various religions which exist in India. He believed in the fundamental unity of all religions. This essential unity and universality of religion is depicted by him in *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* when he says:

'Here is a person singing in the praise of his God. But the Lord he praises is not the Lord of any particular race, community or religious group, but the Lord of all the world, *Rabbul Alimean*, the source of sustenance and mercy... The path that he (person who is chanting the glory and praise of God) has in view is the royal road which the founders of all religions and all faithful people have treaded notwithstanding the time or the country they belonged to'.

Though essentially a religious person, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a scientific outlook. This made him look at the events of history with a catholicity of mind. Because of this secular and spiritual outlook of the Maulana, Jawaharlal Nehru thought it fit to allocate the portfolio of education, natural resources and scientific research to him. After independence, Maulana Azad became India's first education minister and held the portfolio of natural resources and scientific research from 1952. This portfolio he held till his death in February, 1958. Maulana Azad worked for the promotion of technical and scientific education. He was of the

opinion that there was no dearth of talent, scientific or otherwise, in the country and that it only needed proper education, training and encouragement. Inaugurating the Kharagpur Institute of Higher Technology in August 1951, he said:

‘One of the first decisions I took on assuming charge was that we must so improve the facilities for higher technical education in the country that we could ourselves meet most of our needs. The larger number of our young men who had been going abroad for higher training could have received such training in the country itself. Indeed, I looked and still look forward to the day when the facilities for technical education in India will be of such a level that people from abroad will come to India for higher scientific and technical training’.

Maulana Azad wanted that education in India should be made both national and adequately financed. He wanted same kind of education to be imparted throughout the country. Elaborating this idea a little further and offering his comments and suggestions on article 266-A of the draft Constitution, Azad wrote on 28 April, 1948:

‘If it can be secured that education throughout India follows the same general pattern, we can be sure that the intelligentsia of the country will be thinking on similar lines. This would be a better check against the dangers of fragmentation than any centralization of Government or concentration of power in the hands of the Central Authority’.

Giving effect to what Maulana had wished to do some forty years back, the New Education Policy lays stress on establishing a uniform pattern of education throughout the country. Maulana Azad also wanted to accord first priority to education in India because ‘all our plans for the development of free India will ultimately depend upon the quality of our human material’. He shared a scientific vision with Nehru and was instrumental in the reorganisation of the All India Council of Technical Education which was to set up a chain of national laboratories throughout

the country. University Grants Commission was also set up during his tenure as Minister. Being a man of art and culture, Maulana Azad was closely connected with the activities of UNESCO almost from its inception. He was also instrumental in setting up the Sahitya Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi, the three famous organisations which are devoted to the promotion of literature, art and culture in the country. To establish our relations with other countries of the world at the cultural level, Maulana Azad helped in setting up the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. In recent years, under the leadership of Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, the Council has played an important role in promoting Indian culture abroad. 'Festival of India' organised in various countries and 'Aapaa Utsav' organised in various parts of the country, have, in fact, created an understanding of the Indian culture in the minds of people living in other countries and have brought our people closer to each other by building a bridge of understanding between them.

I am related to Maulana Azad. My grandmother was the elder sister of the Maulana. I have heard a number of childhood stories of Maulana Azad from my grandmother which go to prove that he was a 'born great'. When he was about ten years of age he used to stand at a height and would tie a cloth around his head and would proclaim to his brother, sisters and other childhood friends, 'Look, there is so much of crowd here before me and I am addressing this gathering as the Maulana of Delhi. I am the Maulana of Delhi'. When his sisters would tell him that there was no crowd before him, he would say 'No, you do not know. What I said was true. I am the Maulana of Delhi, I am the Maulana of Delhi'. Right from his childhood Maulana Azad believed in truth and remaining straight and honest. Once his father sent Maulana Azad and his sisters to the farm house of one of his friends. Maulana liked the place. He was very fond of custard-apple. One day he went to bazaar and bought some custard-apples. When his sister and my grand mother saw him with the custard-apples, she felt very bad about it thinking that Azad must have picked them up from the farm without the permission of the owner of the farm. She, therefore, admonished him for doing a wrong act. Azad felt so bad that he got angry and started throwing all the custard-apples in a well in the farm itself.

Looking at this, the sister said, 'What are you doing?' Azad replied, 'You think that I have stolen these custard-apples. Am I a thief?' And he started weeping bitterly while explaining to her that he had bought them from the bazaar. Hearing this, my grandmother, his sister, felt sorry for her behaviour and praised him for his uprightness and sense of truth.

Maulana Azad was full of compassion. Love and forgiveness were important aspects of his personality. Once his servant died. The wife of that servant now wanted to go back to her village. Maulana gave her money and assured her of whatever help she wanted from him. Some other servants in the household found that this lady had with her a lot of gifts which her husband had stolen from Maulana's house. They reported the matter to Maulana and, in fact, showed some of the articles which actually belonged to him. After hearing quietly what his servants had to say, Maulana told that the one who had died had already committed a sin and he would be judged by Allah. He would not like to judge anybody and said that the woman be allowed to take everything with her. This story speaks eloquently of the compassion which Maulana had in his heart. There is another episode which tells us about his tolerance and gentlemanliness. As Minister of Science, Maulana Azad had his office in the South Block in New Delhi. It was his habit to go to his house for lunch in the afternoon. It was a very hot day. Summers in Delhi those days were very hot and unbearable. When his peon found that Maulana Sahib had gone for lunch, to avoid heat in the verandah, he sat underneath the big table of Maulana Azad thinking that it was a safe place and nobody would detect him there. Soon he was fast asleep. After sometime he heard some sound in the room. To his surprise he found that Maulana Azad had already entered the room. Afraid of the Minister, he immediately left the room and was sure that he would be punished for his act. After sometime, Maulana Azad called him. Fear was writ large on his face. Maulana told him that he should not be afraid of him (Maulana) and that he (Maulana) was sorry for having disturbed him in his sleep and permitted him to go elsewhere to sleep for it was still lunch hour.

When he was Minister, he had come to our house in Bhopal. He asked me as to how I was doing in my studies. My

mother replied that I was doing very well in my studies. I was a child then. He asked me as to what I wanted to become. I told him that I wanted to become a doctor. He commended my choice of the profession but told my mother that I should be allowed to choose my own career and in case I wanted to become a doctor then my mother should see to it that I should choose that career not merely for adding a medical qualification after my name but for pursuing it as a profession as well. 'Nation spends lot of money in making young boys and girls doctors and we should not allow their talent and training to waste by not permitting them to pursue their profession. Girls, particularly after marriage, leave their profession and become housewives. This is bad', he said. This shows clearly that he always thought of the good of the country and of its progress and prosperity.

He was indeed a great man. He represented the great composite culture of India. He shared the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru who was 'overwhelmed' by the 'vast erudition' of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In fact, like the two life sustaining rivers of India — the Ganges and the Jamuna — Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad provided us ideals which help India stand today in the world as a secular, socialist and democratic republic.



## Azad: A Great Visionary and a Sagacious Leader

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*S.M.H. Burney\**

Maulana Azad was a many-splendoured, multi-faceted personality. He was at once a great scholar, a distinguished writer, a powerful orator, an ardent patriot, a zealous freedom fighter and a great leader with tenacious determination, a rare sagacity and vision. His mission was for national integration and unity of the country. It is a paradox of history that a great scholar born and brought up in a Muslim family, soaked in Islamic principles and steeped in deeply religious and mystical pursuits becomes an impassioned advocate for nationalism while Mohammad Ali Jinnah with thoroughly Western education and outlook should align himself with conservative and obscurantist elements and espouse the cause of separatism. Maulana Azad was a strange combination of scholastic rationalism and also a modern outlook. Through his writings in his famous journals *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, and through his moving speeches he caused a sensation in Muslim intellectual circles and created a ferment in the minds of the

\* Chairman, Minorities Commissions.

Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration'.

younger generation. He wanted to rouse the people of his own community to join the national mainstream and fight unitedly with his brethren for the freedom of the country. This is one of his great contributions. In fact, there are two contributions of Maulana which are outstanding. One is, his contribution in the field of practical politics and that is to bring the Muslims to join the freedom movement. That is a great achievement which history has inscribed in golden letters and the other is his theory or doctrine of unity of all religions.

Azad writes in *Al-Hilal*:

It is certain that a day will come when a political revolution would have taken place in India and the bonds of slavery which the country had put on of its own accord would have been slashed by the winds of freedom sweeping through the twentieth century. At that time, after this would have happened, suppose a history of India were to be written. Do you realise what would be written about a group of 70 million persons? It would be inscribed that there was an unfortunate and ill-fated community which always served as an obstacle in the way of the country's progress, a blight for the country's cause, a stumbling block in the way to freedom, a play-thing in the hands of the covetous rulers, a pack of cards for the pleasure of the foreigners, a grievous scar on the brow of India and a piece of stone in the hands of the Government with which it tried to crush the aspirations of the country.

Further on he says:

'No doubt there will be a chapter which will say that India did forge ahead towards the goal of freedom and progress and the Hindus did pay with their lives for it. But when the bugle was blown on the battlefield, the Muslims went and hid themselves in the caves. When the Hindus called them, the Muslims sealed their lips. When the country was smarting under unjust laws, it was the Hindus who carried on a crusade and the brave Muslims not only refrained from jumping into the fray but shrieked like demented persons

that those who had joined the struggle, were rebels.

The future historian will write that ultimately whatever had to be, did happen. No nation could remain a slave during the twentieth century and none did remain so. But the world will remember that whatever happened rebounded to the credit of any community but the Muslim.

It was a very brave statement to have been made at that point of time. An Urdu poet has stated:

यह दौर भी देश है तारीख की नज़रों ने,  
लमहों ने खता की थी सदियों ने सज़ा पाई।

He fought all his life for Hindu-Muslim unity, for, he had realised early in life that it was only through the combined efforts of the two communities that India could be emancipated. In support of his call for Hindu-Muslim unity, he quoted both the *Quran* and the Sunna and whatever that maybe, the *Quran* supported the struggle for freedom for any country and any nation.

His appeal to the Sunna is about a particular incident in the Prophet's life. The Prophet had made a covenant with the people of Madina and asked them to be 'umma wahida', viz., one nation, regardless of religion. Azad argued that if the Prophet could do this to oppose the enemies of Islam in Madina, why should not Indian Muslims join hands with Hindus in opposing the British authorities. He went to the extent of saying: 'for Muslims to do this is an act of religion'.

Azad also interpreted that the Prophet was negotiating a treaty of peace not with the Jews alone but also with Pagan tribes. In his address at Vishwa Bharati, Shanti Niketan, on the inauguration of the Central University on 20 September, 1951, Azad emphasised that Tagore's conception of God rises above all narrow limitations of race, religion or creed and observed that the term '*advaita*' (non-dualism) translated into Arabic would read as

'*wahdahu la sharik*', the one who had no second, which is the highest affirmation of the monotheistic belief.

Even after Independence, he decried what he called growing 'disease of narrow mindedness'. He believed that every kind of culture, every mode of living should be allowed to flourish. For him, diversity was essential for unity.

He was a great believer in the composite culture of India. In the context of Indian culture, 'composite' would mean that wide and general movement in thought and feeling which emerges gradually from the intermingling of different groups and communities as a result of the impetus given to it by changes in social, economic and political life. As Firaq said in a beautiful couplet:

सरज्जमीने हिन्द पर अकवायं आलम के फिराक,  
कत्रफिले बसते गये, हिन्दोस्ता बनता गया।

The history of composite culture is thus a record of our reactions in terms of shared thoughts and feelings to the changing conditions of life. Composite culture is a process, not a conclusion, an experience, not an abstract concept. It is a habit, not a pose. It is not a dogma but a paradigm.

A noted Indian political scientist, Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan has pointed out that Indian culture, if properly examined, would show that it is marked by three clearly identifiable causality linkages, *i.e.*, continuity, assimilation and synthesis which bind the texture of Indian society. And as Tagore has said: 'Unity does not mean uniformity'. And this is what Maulana Azad believed. He believed in the path of co-existence of religions, maintenance of separate identity of minorities and yet emerging synthesis of all these cultures.

In the realm of thought, his greatest contribution was the idea of unity of all religions, and its propagation. This doctrine also required an unmatched boldness, an unflinching faith in the correctness of his own stand and a remarkable breadth of outlook

The exposition of this doctrine is found in his *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, a monumental commentary on the Holy Book. Particularly, his commentary on *Surat-al-Fatiha* deserves to be read carefully. Here he brings into sharp focus the theme of the unity of all forms of world religions and the uniformity of the message of all the prophets. While explaining the duty of a Muslim in the matter of enjoining the good, he emphasised that a Muslim should not expect that everyone would agree with him:

'In all that a Muslim does, it should be a rule of action that he helps whoever may be doing good, even if a non-Muslim or an opponent, and avoid helping whoever may be doing evil if a Muslim and a companion... if even an idolator honour and worship God in his own way, he should not be shown disrespect, for the honour and worship of God is, in any event, the honour and worship of God'.

Finally, in summing up Maulana Azad's contribution towards promotion and strengthening of national integration, Dr. Zakir Husain's tribute to him is most significant:

'In my opinion, the greatest service which the Maulana did was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One separates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other, the true spirit of religion, brings people together; it creates understanding. It lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. It implies belief in unity, in the essential unity of things'.

In conclusion it would be appropriate to quote these couplets in Urdu which are relevant in the present situation:

नकारण कलकश ने हमको अजब नकल वद कल सुझाया,  
हजार गरबिह में आसमां हो मगर ये तारे बहम रहेंगे,  
चमन में रे हमनशीं अगली बिकायतों की बिकायतें क्या,  
कलें जो कदे बिजा के छोके न तुम रहेंगे न हम रहेंगे।

## **Abul Kalam Azad: A Beacon of Light for the Future Generation**

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*M.S. Gurupadaswamy, M.P.\**

Abul Kalam Azad, an important figure in the Indian Freedom Struggle, a scholar of great ability and eloquence, was born in Mecca in 1888 and died in Delhi in 1958 while he was a Minister and close colleague of Jawaharlal Nehru in his Cabinet. His tomb is in an enclosed garden surrounded by a stone wall near Jama Masjid which is not very far from the historic Red Fort. The location is appropriate as it reminds us of the story and the eventful part of the Mughal and the British Empires.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad by any reckoning was a remarkable figure of eminence with great enduring qualities of grace and unostentatious dignity willing always to serve the cause of the people and the freedom of the country. He was a scholar trained in the true Islamic values and culture with a keen openness of mind for modern Western thought and civilisation.

\* Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Though he was a product of a long line of Muslim divines who had served the Mughuls and then migrated to Mecca he never lost sight of the innovative trends of the present and the future.

Azad's effective public career began with the launching of *Al-Hilal* in 1912 whose main object was to arouse Indian Muslim masses to the cause of India's struggle for freedom. Then followed another journal *Al-Balagh* (1915-16) and his biographical work *Tazkira* written during his internment in 1916. In the year 1920 he came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and joined the Indian National Congress. He always held the view that Muslims of India, while maintaining and protecting their religion based on *Quran* should think and act on the notion and belief that Hindus are their brothers. He also denounced the wrong view held by many of his co-religionists and others that Islam is an unchangeable and rigid ecclesiastical system that has to be implicitly obeyed. He ridiculed the idea that Muslim principles of democracy are drawn from the French Revolution. In an article, he said that the Prophet came at a time when human rulers were virtually worshipped and introduced a new system of democracy. He listed five basic principles of the French Revolution and claimed that every-one of them had already been present in Islam for centuries:

1. Sovereignty is with the people, and not hereditary or personal.
2. All human beings are equal.
3. The President of the country, in Islamic terms, the Imam or Khalifa, is appointed by the people. He has no essential superiority over others.
4. All decisions must be made in consultation with able councillors.
5. The treasury is the property of the people.

Azad's association with the Congress and particularly of Mahatma Gandhi convinced him beyond doubt that India had to remain united comprising all areas and religious faiths, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsees. He believed that Hindu, Muslim unity should remain a first priority. Mutual misunderstandings between them must be done away with. The political demands of the freedom movement made this question all important. Though his thinking on Muslim religion and politics

seemed compartmentalised, he showed, however, pragmatic concern for reality and compulsion. He pleaded for joint action and common platform for Hindus and Muslims to oppose the British imperialism and to liberate the country.

The Muslim League was one target of attack for what he considered as its lack of faith in democracy and freedom. He resented the fact that it was under the influence of a few rich Muslims who were loyal to the British. He sometimes complained that the Congress leadership was not following a sagacious line on the Muslim League and rather showing inconsistency and wavering attitude.

Maulana Azad had staked his whole political career on the hope of a free and united India. For him partition was a total anathema and total undoing of what he stood for. Religious fanaticism and communal hatred in his view were the vicious daggers drawn against the very soul of the nation. He, therefore, was inclined to accept the Cabinet Mission's proposals and perhaps shared Lord Wavell's desperate wish to bring the warring factions together. He was so saddened and embittered by the partition of the country that at a huge meeting of Muslims of India at Lucknow shortly after Independence, he said 'what was not to have happened has happened. We have now to think of the future'.

As a Minister of Education he devoted to the future shape of things to come and envisaged the various possibilities for the country:

Today India is free. She can have any kind of mental mould she pleases. Will it be exclusive or will it be inclusive which has been the characteristic of Indian culture throughout the ages? ... In the advancement of nations there is no greater hindrance than narrow-mindedness. It is our duty to keep ourselves free from this disease in the new era of independence.

Azad's death came unexpectedly and was sudden. In February, 1958 he fell in his bathroom and broke his hip. Thereafter he suffered a stroke and died on 22 February, 1958. His life was not a blaze of glory but holds lessons for the nation.



The element of greatness which adorned his career would be a beacon light for the future generations to come. His response to critical situations in India's history of freedom will ever remain unique.

## Abul Kalam Azad: A Balancer of Conflicting Faiths

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*Justice M.H. Beg\**

Napolean said: 'More the change, the same repeats itself'. But it does not repeat itself in the same circumstances. Therefore, as the problems with which Maulana Azad was confronted are the problems which confront us today, doubt has to be expressed about the extent of national integration that we have been able to achieve over the years. We still don't freely exchange ideas in the way in which free people should. Maulana's thought itself was based on a proper balancing of Hindus and Muslims. Maulana put his overwhelming weight towards what he thought was right no matter who opposed it, no matter what came in his way, no matter even if it was Jinnah who propounded the idea. Whereas Jinnah was after power. Maulana was not. On the other hand Maulana opposed Jinnah as he considered it right that India should receive its freedom and that we should step up and stand by like brave men; such right choice is the greatness of Maulana. He made the right choice, not that he believed in balancing. We

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Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration.'

have moved from that stage from which Maulana tried this trick of balancing, which Jinnah had foisted upon us, though, not very honestly. When he achieved Pakistan, he also said, 'Hindus and Muslims will live here like brothers'. Pakistanis, like us, believe in secularism and in equality of all. It is difficult to discern the differences, if any, between us and the Pakistanis. They also belong to the same race and the same culture. Culture is communicable knowledge. We are not different in communicable knowledge from those who live across the border. Essentially the people are not different. It is the leadership which erred and divided us. Maulana did not err. He spotted the error and pointed it out.

We are confronted with fundamentalism as it is called, fundamentalism that is opposed by super fundamentalism; which propagates that you believe in one thing and nothing else. Beyond a point our intelligence fails. Even the intelligence of the greatest scientists fails to account for the universe. It is at that stage that we start imagining and there the differences of religion start. So, we have to go to the source and attempt at unity applying the doctrine Maulana had propounded. His doctrine was based on the principle of the essential unity of all religions. On his election as Congress President, he said:

Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our ideas, our manners and customs, the innumerable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavour. There is indeed no aspect of our life which has escaped this stamp. Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language; our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they acted and reacted on each other and this produced a new synthesis. Our old dress may be only seen in ancient pictures of by-gone days; no one wears it to-day. This joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the times when this joint life had not begun.... If there are any Hindus amongst us who desire to bring back the Hindu life of a thousand years ago and more, they dream, and such dreams

are vain fantasies. So also if there are any Muslims who wish to revive their past civilisation and culture.

His attempt was to convince all of us that we are all part of one nation and that we represent one and the same culture and that it is in unity that our strengths lies. Of course, diversity is there but it has to be confined to the individual level. At the societal level unifying factors should dominate. Unfortunately many in India, today, don't seem to be giving due weightage to the need for unity. That is why we think of reviving the Maulana as one of the great integrators, a great leader of our nation, one whose lead should have been followed, by Muslims and by one and all.

The concept of 'integration' doesn't seem to be properly understood today. This is a discipline which is necessary in order to enable us to march forward. Maulana was one of those few who laid down the principles of unity and integrity which are necessary for marching ahead. He found in narrow-mindedness the greatest obstacle to national integration. So if we want to progress, we should follow the Maulana; follow his spirit and understand what he said.

Unfortunately he did not live long enough to witness all that had unfolded in the post-independence period. It is important for India today to stand unitedly in the name of what the Maulana was saying; to avoid the great catastrophe which awaits if we do not. Appeal for national unity is the message that permeates his philosophy. He laid emphasis on the need for a joint endeavour between the various communities for joining everything in life, in order to live together. That is the essence of Maulana.

## Maulana Azad: An Uncompromising Fighter for Justice and Truth

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*Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan\**

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said that the Maulana was a man of luminous intelligence, of mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core. Praising Maulana for being President of the Congress for six years, Sardar Patel gave him the credit for bringing us closer to freedom in the second half of the 1940s.

Maulana was sagacious and rational. His knowledge was encyclopaedic in philosophy, Islamic ideology and culture. He had unparalleled courage and was an uncompromising fighter for justice and truth and was always ready to make sacrifices for them. Maulana contributed substantially in making India world's largest secular democracy.

\* Member, Minorities Commission.

Adapted from the speech at the Symposium on 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration'.

Maulana Azad was among the great stalwarts who fought the British to win Freedom for India. With Gandhiji as the leader, he fought alongside Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and a host of other leaders. He was the longest-time President of the Pre-Independence Indian National Congress – from 1940-1946.

Maulana proudly preached that we should take pride in being Indians as we are the inhabitants of one of the world's most ancient lands and civilizations. He insisted that we are Indians first and only then Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsi or whatever one's community or religion was. All his life Maulana preached Hindu-Muslim unity and consistently opposed whatever caused dissension between them. He considered Hindus and Muslims as the two eyes of Mother India and urged them to learn from each others Scriptures or from any other religion. As every religion preaches good thoughts, good words, good deeds religion should essentially be considered a purifying and a unifying force.

Religion is for the revelation or for the realisation of man's peace of mind, and is not a mere belief for conformity, creed or dogma. It should be a unifying rather than a disruptive element as it has become today. Maulana told his co-religionists that prayer is a power for peace, not for passion and that Islam taught unity among people, not discord. It considers all people equal and thus projected national integration. Without religious unity there can be no harmony and without harmony, no happiness. In his effort to clear the air of confusion surrounding the various belief systems Maulana endeavoured to explain that religion was not a mystery. He believed in the universality of God. Allah is not the God of a particular group of people but of all mankind and that mankind is all but one family – the family created by God to live in peace and harmony with one another.

The disease of distrust among nations, communities and castes is the bane of our civilization. In order to live in a world as an integrated whole, it was necessary to banish the four Ms – Misgivings, Mistrust, Misunderstandings and Misinterpretations and replace these negative qualities with confidence – building for espousing the noble cause of nation building and for building a world of peace, such as the world's greatest apostle of peace, Mahatma Gandhi, wanted and along with peace, of development,

such as the Father of Planning, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, visualised. But in order to achieve this, there must be national integration at home and international integration in the rest of the world as Panditji and Indiraji aimed, yesterday and as Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi are aiming at today.

But integration can come about only if there is democracy. Democracy can be a reality only if there is freedom. Freedom can have a meaning only if there is humanity with a sense of love and understanding, sympathy and tolerance. Without tolerance there can be no peace and without peace there can be no unity and without unity there can be no progress.

Maulana Azad firmly believed in the unity of the nation. As he said, he would have subscribed to the poetic view, that unity is the sacred symphony, the silver link, the silken tie which tied heart to heart, and mind to mind, in body and soul combined.

Maulana was against the division of the country. He wanted an undivided India — not a broken India — which broke Gandhiji's heart too. He vehemently opposed Jinnah who championed the division of India. Maulana envisioned a united Indian nation that would act as a vanguard in the struggle against Western enslavement and oppression. Like Panditji, the Maulana visualised a new world of free nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, politically free of colonialists and imperialists, free from economic exploitation, of these self-same colonialists in camouflage sucking out the life-blood of these new countries, liberated but relegated to ruin, plunged into the graveyard of poverty.

Fortunately, we rose above it all in our country by our stability, our solidarity, our commitment to secularism and socialism, and by allowing complete freedom of worship without the state being attached to any particular religion. We believe in the hospitality of faiths and the accommodation of convictions and because of our deeply embedded spirituality, we have been able to absorb the shocks of history over the centuries.

Our endeavours have always been that the people of different creed and convictions should not be set against each other but should be joined with one another so that they can jointly combat the forces of evil. Maulana knew that a free people

representing a variety of cultures, languages and creeds had to be woven into one nation, into one people so that they could be free and equal partners in national life, its politics, production processes, defence, commerce, education, arts and also in the art of self-expression.

We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We must cultivate a value system which looks beyond self-interest. If integration means unity, what do we understand by secularism? Indiraji had given the answer. It means that which entitled every Indian to pursue his own belief, but it also requires that he extend the same right to persons of other religions. Without secularism there cannot be freedom of expression or real democracy or equality of openings or opportunities for all, and most important of all, social justice without which economic opportunities lose their value. Maulana had held identical views in these matters. He strongly urged all Indian Muslims to participate in the movement for emancipation and work towards that goal. Despite some aberrations such as the ones we are experiencing today in different parts of the country and with the diverse communities, religions, languages, our people living from the Himalayas in the North to the sea level of the Indian Ocean in the South, are comparatively united. It is indeed a historical phenomenon. We are far better off than say, Quebec in Canada, Scotland, Ireland, the Basque and several other countries in Africa and Latin America, and West Asia, where there have been national upheavals. We are definitely free from them. At any time of danger to the borders of our country or elemental catastrophes in the States, the people instantly unite, forgetting all their differences.

But integration should not stop with lip service. It has to rise from the depth of the heart meaningfully. Indiraji had said that freedom and unity cannot be taken for granted. Eternal vigilance is the price of our integrity as it is of all liberties. That vigilance is perhaps more required today than ever before. For this purpose we need to close the gap between our rhetoric and idealistic assumptions and between commitments, and achievements.

Indira Gandhi had said: 'shed hatred; not blood'. Maulana said that education should develop character, not hatred.



A study of comparative religions is vital and essential and so is the need for the manifestation of knowledge. Lack of integration or unity is often caused by lack of knowledge and out of ignorance. It generates doubts and suspicions and superstitions which in turn play havoc with the society.

Communication gap leads to needless misunderstanding and consequent trouble. It is, however, a redeeming feature that in the midst of communal trouble, there are striking examples of the manifestation of brotherhood when we see representatives of one community go to the rescue of persons belonging to the other even at the risk of their own lives. Such instances should be properly projected by the press and the politicians instead of indulging in inflammatory writings and speeches.

Political rivalries, rumour mongering, settling old scores, personal feuds, grudges and grouses, bringing in anti-social elements into communal tension prone areas — all these are among the instigating factors for starting communal convulsions. There are other causes too. The wide gap between the haves and have nots, which Maulana had recognised, is one of them. The denial of social justice is yet another factor. Class and caste distinction in treatment are other serious trouble makers and tension creators.

Electoral reforms are needed to uproot communal discord and to de-link religion from politics. Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution may require to be amended to minimise the role of communal sentiments which often influence elections. Perpetrators of communal disturbances should be severely punished and its victims promptly compensated. In this context it would be appropriate to refer to Indiraji's Fifteen Point Programme for protection and welfare of minorities. It provides for safeguarding the interests of such people who comprise between 17 and 20 per cent of the population.

National integration and national development are complementary to each other. Weakening of one would adversely affect the others. We must never tire of harping on the same string, namely the melody of harmony in humanity instead of the malady and malaise of ill-will among mankind.

## Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and National Integration

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*Sushila Nayar\**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a veteran freedom fighter and first Education Minister of free India, was a great scholar, a poet, a thinker and a great nationalist leader who endeavoured to foster the nationalist spirit among his co-religionists and promoted Hindu-Muslim unity and national integration all his life. His personality and life extended beyond national boundaries. He was truly an internationalist.

Born in a family of renowned scholars and sufi religious teachers, he had his education at home first and then at Al Azhar university in Cairo.\*\* But he was really a student all his life and was happiest with his books.

His father had shifted to Mecca after the 1857 uprising to escape the indiscriminate butchery by British soldiers. There he married an Arab woman who came of an equally eminent

\* Dr. Sushila Nayar, Chairman, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.

\*\* This is factually incorrect as Jawaharlal Nehru later corrected while paying Tributes to Maulana Azad in the Lok Sabha on 24 February, 1958.

scholarly family. Abul Kalam Azad was born in 1888 on 11 November in Mecca as the youngest of five children. His mother knew only Arabic which was the language spoken in their home. His father was well versed in Arabic, Persian and Urdu and wrote many scholarly books. He educated his children in the traditional manner. Though an orthodox Muslim, he was modern enough to provide the same education to his three daughters as he gave to his two sons.

Arabic was Maulana's mother tongue, but from his father he learnt Persian and Urdu and had therefore a good grounding in these languages when, at the age of ten, he came to India with his father in 1898. His father was a *sufi pir* with a large following all over India. He came to Bombay in 1898 for medical treatment. His followers entreated him to stay on. He agreed and settled in Calcutta.

There Azad was not sent to any school but was taught by his father with the help of other Arabic scholars selected by him. His progress in studies was phenomenal. *Dars-e-Nizami*, a full course in Arabic and Persian — languages, philosophy, logic arithmetic, geography and history — which takes a very good student ten years and an average student fourteen years to complete, young Abul Kalam completed in just four years. He had of course the advantage of a thorough grounding in Arabic before he came to India. He also began to impart his learning to others. A part of the curriculum of *Dars-e-Nizami* is a kind of teachership course. No course was regarded as complete and no certificate of *Alim* was issued unless and until the candidate had proved his capacity to teach the same course to a number of pupils. Young Abul Kalam became a pupil-teacher at the age of twelve.

He was an impatient teacher and one day he rudely scolded one of his students, an elderly man, because he had not at all understood what the Maulana had explained to him in great detail. When his father learnt about it, he took his son to task and made him apologise to the old man. His father was a strict disciplinarian. 'Proud before the rich, humble before the poor, this is true etiquette,' he taught his children.

He was opposed to English and all things Western but he wanted his son to be a great scholar and sent him to Al Azhar

university in Cairo at his own expense, where he studied for two years from 1905 to 1907 and also travelled about in Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

Maulana Sahib told his biographer Mahadev Desai, 'My father was of a severely retiring temperament. He had thousands of disciples who would come to see him, but I never saw him go out to call on anyone except on the Prophet's birthday or the Id, and on those days too the visit was confined to only one disciple'. There was a stern simplicity about everything in the house. He had an utter dislike of things modern, and there was no furniture but a mat on which guests of the highest to the lowest station in life were invited to sit. Among these were the Nawabs and the son of Tipu Sultan. Said Maulana Sahib, 'Dreading modern civilisation as he did, giving us children any British training was farthest from his thoughts'.

## II

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had led the standard of revolt against the forces of conservatism and made fervent appeals to the Muslim community to go in for a study of English and modern science. He came to exercise tremendous influence on young Azad who read all of Syed Ahmed's book. Later, however, Azad felt that Syed Ahmed's advice to Musalmans to be loyal to the British and to keep aloof from the Congress and the Hindu was wrong.

He taught himself English by reading the Bible in Urdu and English and later by reading newspapers with a dictionary in hand. He records 'It was only after the death of my father in 1909 that at the instance of a friend I began to learn English with the help of a grammar and a dictionary'. 'But,' adds the Mualana, 'I am not sorry that my father did not send me to an English school. I lost nothing and I think I gained much from having to depend on my own resources to learn the English I needed to learn. I saved plenty of time and energy and learnt only the things I should'.

Maulana Azad wrote poetry and contributed learned articles to newspapers from the age of twelve or even earlier. Azad was his pen name as a poet which he retained. He was like his father in many things, 'capable of disagreeing with the leading ulema,

eloquent preacher, sympathetic towards Shias and non-Muslims, given to meditation and much study, generous, impeccably dressed, self possessed..... calm in adversity..... like father like son,' writes Ian Henderson Douglas, whose scholarly thesis is the basis of one of Maulana's best biographies.

### III

Maulana Azad's public career began with the first issue of *Al-Hilal* in 1912. Its primary objective was to take away the Muslims from the path of loyalty to the British Government, on which Sir Syed Ahmed, the founder of Aligarh Muslim University, had led them. Maulana had been deeply stirred by the sacrifices of the revolutionaries of Bengal and the movement of Swadeshi and boycott of British goods launched as protest against the Partition of Bengal. The Reunification of East and West Bengal in 1911 had greatly encouraged the patriots. Maulana was keenly aware of the difference between the Bengal patriots who were willing to sacrifice their young lives for the freedom of India, and the slavish mentality urged upon Muslims by Sir Syed and others, which was fully exploited by the British Government. He wanted to arouse the Indian Muslims to effective action in the struggle for political freedom. *Al-Hilal* was fearless and carried on a campaign of education and criticized British policy fearlessly during the war. The Government came down on it with a heavy hand. It confiscated the paper's security and asked for a heavy fresh security, as a result of which the paper had to be closed down in 1914. It had been a very successful and popular paper, its paid subscribership having risen to 11000 within six months of its start. Azad started another paper *Al-Balagh*, which also had closed down in 1916 when he was interned in Ranchi. He was released in 1920 after four years.

This was a turning point in his life. In 1920 he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi and plunged into the Khilafat movement. He became a staunch advocate of non-cooperation with the British Government. He convinced Mussalmans and Muslim religious leaders that they must join the Congress in the struggle for freedom, that the future of Hindus and Muslims lay in working together for the common cause of India's

independence. The goal at that time was Home Rule within the Empire.

He toured the length and breadth of India, sometimes in the company of Gandhiji, and sometimes with C.R. Das and sometimes with others. As a result of these activities, both C.R. Das and Maulana Azad were arrested towards the end of 1921. They were tried and C.R. was sentenced to six months' and Maulana Azad to one year's imprisonment. Maulana Azad was very fond of his cigar, but he never smoked in jail.

In his statement before the court, Maulana Azad said that in his view the greatest proof of the truth of his religion was that 'it is another name for the teaching of the rights of man'.

'I am a Mussalman' he said, and by virtue of being a Mussalman it had become his religious duty to work for these rights. It was his duty as a man and as an Indian, 'and religious injunctions have imposed upon me the same duty'.

Islam never accepted as valid 'a sovereignty which is personal or is constituted of a bureaucracy of a handful of paid executives' he said. 'Islam constitutes a perfected system of freedom and democracy. It has been sent down to get back for the human race the liberty which has been snatched away from it'. Monarchs, foreign dominations, selfish religious pontiffs and powerful sections had alike misappropriated this liberty of man. They had been fondle nursing the belief that power and possessions spelled the highest right. The moment Islam appeared, it proclaimed that 'the highest right is not might, but right itself. No one except God has got the right to make serfs and slaves of God's-creatures. All men are equal and their fundamental rights are on par'. He only was greater than others whose deeds were most righteous of all.

The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Khalif, said Maulana Sahib, was a perfected conception of democratic equality, and it could only take shape with the whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and election. 'This is the reason why a sovereign or President of a republic is like a designated Khalif. Khilafat literally means nothing more nor less than a representation, so that all the authority a Khalif possesses, consists

in his representative character, and he possesses no domination beyond this representative authority'.

'If then Islam defines it as a duty of Mohomedans to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation, it is perfectly superfluous to add what under Islam would be the ruling given about a foreign bureaucracy'. If today there was to be established in India an Islamic Government, Maulana Saheb added, but if the system of that Government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, 'then to protest against the existence of such a Government would still be my primary duty as a Mussalman. I would still call the Government oppressive and demand its replacement'.

In the last twelve years he had been continuously training his community and his country to demand their rights and their liberty, he said. He was only eighteen years old when he first started speaking and writing on this theme. He had consecrated his whole being to it and had sacrificed the best part of his life, the whole of his youth, 'to my infatuation for this ideal'. For four years he had suffered internment, but during his internment even, he had never desisted from inviting people to this national goal. 'This is the mission of my life and if I live at all I elect to live only for this single purpose'. Even as the Quran says, 'My prayers and my observances and my life and my death are all for my Lord, the God of the Universe'. Gandhiji congratulated him on his statement and quipped: 'It deserved a sentence of penal servitude for life'. Jail going was an honour for all freedom fighters, the higher the sentence the greater the honour.

#### IV

Maulana Saheb came out of jail in 1923. Gandhiji was still behind the bars. He found the Congress split in two camps, the 'pro changers' who wanted to enter the legislatures which had been set-up under Morley Minto reforms and the 'no changers' who stood firm by the pledge of fourfold non-cooperation — boycott of schools and colleges, boycott of law courts, boycott of British goods and boycott of Government services. The 'pro changers' said they would offer non-cooperation from within the

legislatures and embarrass the Government. The 'no changers' held that council entry would be a futile exercise and in any case their pledge not to co-operate with the British Government precluded participation in the elections. Maulana Saheb had to use all his persuasive skill and ingenuity to bring the two factions together. He made them agree to allow those who wanted to enter the legislatures to go their way while those who stood by non-cooperation would continue to non-cooperate and concentrate on constructive work. A special session of the Indian National Congress was held in 1923 at Nagpur under Maulana's presidentship which endorsed the compromise formula. Gandhiji was released in 1924 following an attack of appendicitis in jail, which required emergency surgery. He fully endorsed the formula evolved by Maulana Azad. He knew that those who wanted to go to the councils would be disillusioned before long, and that is exactly what happened.

Mustafa Kamal Pasha had come to power in Turkey. The Khilafat issue was dead. Those reactionary communal elements who were opposed to Hindu-Muslim unity all along, now had their chance to come up. Hindu-Muslim riots took place in number of towns in several provinces. The Kohat atrocities were particularly gruesome. Gandhiji decided to undertake a twenty one days fast as a penance for the sins of his countrymen.

Gandhiji started the fast at the residence of Maulana Mohammad Ali. Dr. Ansari brought him over to his own place in Daryaganj. He and Maulana Azad held similar views. There were many meetings of the two communities. It seemed nothing would come out of it. Both communities were suspicious of one another. But Maulana Azad's eloquence carried the day. He appealed to the Muslims fervently. If they really prayed, the music would not disturb them. It touched Malaviyaji and an agreement was reached on the vexed problem of cow sacrifice and music before mosques.

Gandhiji broke his fast after 21 days and plunged into constructive work and collection of one crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund which was used for the propagation of Khadi. Maulana took part in constructive work as well as in the subsequent Satyagraha movements.



During the Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta in the year 1925 or 1927, writes Mahadev Desai, when everyone who actively helped in restoring peace had to carry his life in his hand, the Maulana went about the length and breadth of that vast city, pleading with Hindus at one place, arguing with his co-religionists at another, and desperately trying to limit the area of disturbance. He told Mahadev Desai, 'In a thickly populated Hindu locality Mussalman tailors from a distant locality used to come every day and earn their living. I proceeded to the place, no less than sixty to seventy tailors had been harboured by the Hindus in a Hindu house, but they dared not go home through areas where hooliganism was still rampant. I thanked the Hindus for saving these people's lives, put them all in lorries and escorted them home. There were Hindus in a similar plight in Mussalman localities. A Mussalman had sheltered thirteen Hindus (eleven men and two women) in his house. At the dead of night there were no *tongas* (horse carriages) to be had and no taxis. I appealed to the municipal corporation for a taxi, put the refugees in the taxi and sent them to their homes. For three days and night I had no rest or peace. At about midnight one day I received a note from Asansol to the effect that certain people had left the place for Calcutta two days before for a certain destination, but there was no news of them. I sought them out, sent news to their relatives, and saw that they got back home safe.'

Maulana also worked for the propagation of Khadi and dressed in meticulous white Khadi.

A tall, erect and stately figure and with eyes that flashed intelligence and inspired awe, the Maulana remained one of great figures like Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M.A. Ansari, who represented in their lives the best in Islamic culture. There was a polish and refinement of manners that compelled respect wherever he went. There was also a reserve which did not make it easy for any one to class him with some of those leaders who were accessible to everyone. His deep learning and insatiable appetite for knowledge, combined with his contemplative temperament made it impossible for him to go and mix with the masses.

Many Muslims followed him till the end. For the Congress, after the death of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari and with

the Ali brothers joining the Muslim League, Maulana Sahab became the sole guide with regard to all matters concerning Muslims.

In 1921, the Maulana was pressed by the religious leaders, the *ulema*, to agree to become the *Imam*, the supreme spiritual head of all Musalmans. He did not agree. He was soon arrested and put in prison. After his release, in 1923 the offer was repeated but he declined it. He had found a different avenue of self-expression and service to his country and his community. He endeavoured to provide for them the much needed political and secular leadership through his speeches and in his writings. He was maligned by Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League in later years. But he refused to hit back. He had accepted non-violence as the means of winning India's freedom. Non-violence was not a creed with him as it was with Mahatma Gandhi. But he practised it in his own life with regard to his detractors.

## V

The acceptance of the partition of India was the greatest defeat for Maulana Azad. It was the negation of all that the Maulana had tried to uphold and convey to the Muslims of India. It made him very sad. In his presidential address to the Nagpur Congress in 1923, he had said that the ability of Hindus and Muslims to live together was essential to the 'primary principles of humanity within ourselves'. Almost twenty years later, when he again addressed the Congress from the presidential chair, at Ramgarh, he repeated this as an absolutely fundamental premise. 'I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have inherited Islam's glorious tradition of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy. The history and teachings of Islam, its art and letters, its culture and civilisation are part of my wealth and it is my duty to cherish and guard them. But, with all these feelings, I have another equally deep realisation, born out of my life's experience, which is strengthened and not hindered by the Islamic spirit. I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood, a vital factor in its total makeup, without which this noble edifice will remain incomplete. I can never give up this sincere claim'.

On the eve of Independence many in Delhi kept a vigil on 14 August, 1947 to welcome the new Dominion of India at midnight, 'an ecstatic vigil of the kind that India had never known before and would never know again, Freedom at last' records Mosley in his *Last Days of British Raj*. But there was one among them who could not share their joy. One observer noticed the sad face of Maulana Azad, to whom the occasion was something of a tragedy, 'sticking out from the sea of happy faces like a gaunt and ravaged rock'.

There was another man who did not share the general glee. Gandhiji was sitting in riot-torn Calcutta to heal the wounds, to wipe the tears and bring back sanity to the angry Hindus and Muslims and purge their hearts of insane hatred, through his silent self suffering.

## VI

Maulana Azad became the first education minister in 1947. He did his best to keep education free from religious prejudices and to make it truly secular. He laid great emphasis on social education and hoped that it would enable Indians to learn about their rights as well as their responsibilities as citizens of a free country.

He had long since recognised the necessity of religious pluralism in India. Hindus and Muslims were both Indians. This idea was an integral part of his conception of what it meant to be an Indian Muslim. In free India he felt the need of these ideas even more.

In a speech on 2 November, 1949 he said:

The acceptance of unity in diversity has been (India's) motto throughout the ages. The essence of this principle is a large and wise hearted toleration in which differences are recognized and given their due. The Indian genius has always recognised that truth has many facets and conflict and hatred arise because people claim a monopoly of truth and virtue'.

The concept that truth has many facets led him to approve of Dr. Radhakrishnan's explanation of the 'miscellaneous character of Hindu religion,' as showing 'a refined sense of true humility and sympathetic understanding'. Dr. Radhakrishnan said

that the Hindu 'did not possess the pride of the fanatic that his was the one true religion. If a god satisfied the human mind, in its own way, it is a form of truth'. Azad too had hinted something like this in his *Tarjuman*. Similarly, says Douglas, he could treat Gandhiji's teaching as a part of the spiritual succession of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

At the inauguration of Tagore's Vishwa Bharati as a central university, Azad emphasised that 'Tagore's conception of God rises above all narrow limitations of race, religion or creed'. He added that the term 'Advaita', non-dualism, translated into Arabic would read '*Wahdahu-la-Sharik*', the one who has no second, which is the highest affirmation of the monotheistic belief. Thus Maulana Azad, a staunch Muslim, had a broad vision which he tried to impart to Indians to bring about national integration.

Maulana Azad's last major public address was delivered in February 1958 shortly before his death. In his address as President to the General Association of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, he recalled how when the Council was founded in 1950, its first division concerned relations with the Middle East, Turkey and Egypt. Its work had resulted in those countries recognizing that India is not only a Hindu land. He then welcomed the representative from Pakistan, attending the ICCR for the first time 'I hope this marks the further strengthening of the ties of friendship between our two countries. We have been separated on political grounds, but we have been one people and our cultural life is such that it cannot be divided without loss to both'.

Douglas says, 'This might be described as Azad's dying wish. The unity of the sub-continent was written on his heart'. We in India know this. We have to realise it in our lives.

## Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Tribute

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*Raj Bahadur\**

The background story of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's ancestry and the name, fame and distinction that quite a few of his ancestors, including his father, had earned for themselves throughout the Islamic world as religious divines and scholars was unmatched and universally recognised. Maulana Saheb's own record as a scholar was no less glorious and distinguished.

Though the Maulana was born in a family steeped in religious traditions he was singularly free from all traces of pride and prejudice or inhibitions on religious grounds. Throughout his life he passionately yearned and strove to bring about harmony and better understanding between various communities in the country, particularly between the Hindus and the Muslims. He wondered that, 'If religions express a universal truth, why should there be such differences and conflicts among men professing different religions? Why should each religion claim to be the sole repository of truth and condemn all others as false?' He has gone

\* Former Union Minister

on record to say that in his mind 'this unrest continued' and 'I longed to find a solution of my doubts. I passed from one phase to another and a stage came when all the old bonds imposed on my mind by my family and upbringing were completely shattered. I felt free of all conventional ties and decided that I would chalk out my own path... I decided to adopt the pen name "Azad" or "Free" to indicate that I was no longer tied to my inherited beliefs'. This brought about a revolution in his life and he became a revolutionary in the real sense of the term.

However to his great dismay he discovered that while the Hindus of Bengal had taken a leading part in Indian political awakening, the revolutionary groups there were recruited exclusively from the Hindu middle classes and the Muslims were treated with suspicion. He found that the British were 'using the Muslims against India's political struggle and the Muslims were playing the Government's game'. He has recorded that the Lieutenant Governor of the newly created East Bengal named Bamfield Fuller openly said that 'the Government looked upon the Muslim community as its favourite wife'. As such the Hindus of Bengal had begun to feel that Muslims were against political freedom and against the Hindu community.

This was the atmosphere and the predicamental situation, when as a young man, the Maulana joined one of the revolutionary groups, through his friend and comrade Shyam Sunder Chakravorty. It took him time and effort to gain the confidence of his new friends, the revolutionaries. But after that he never looked back, and long before Gandhiji came back to India and entered the political scene, the Maulana had plunged head-long into the political struggle of the country. He launched his first journal the *Al-Hilal* in June 1912 which became the first Urdu journal that struck a new note and preached strong nationalism. It attracted a wide circle of readers and created a revolutionary stir. It had to pay the price for this by the confiscation of its press. The Maulana then set up another press, the '*Al-Balagh*' and started publishing a journal under the same name. This too was confiscated and the Maulana was interned from Calcutta in April 1916. The Governments of Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bombay imposed a ban on his entry into these Provinces. He went to Ranchi in Bihar, where too he was interned

after some time and remained in detention till the end of 1919. It was then that Gandhiji appeared on the Indian political scene. Thus the Maulana's fight for freedom had begun years before Gandhiji launched his campaigns and programmes. A pen-picture of the Maulana drawn by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in his *Discovery of India* is reproduced here verbatim. It faithfully and picturesquely portrays Maulana's personality, character and role in our freedom struggle.

*Al-Hilal* was started by Abul Kalam Azad, a brilliant young man of 24, who had received his early education in Al Azhar University of Cairo and while yet in his teens, had become well known for his Arabic and Persian scholarship and deep learning. To this he added a knowledge of the Islamic world outside India and of the reform movements that were coursing through it; as well as of European developments. Rationalist in outlook and yet profoundly versed in Islamic lore and history, he interpreted scripture from a rationalist point of view. Soaked in Islamic tradition and with many personal contacts with prominent Muslim leaders and reformers in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Iran, he was powerfully affected by political and cultural developments in these countries more probably than any other Indian Muslim. The wars in which Turkey became involved aroused his intense interest and sympathy. And yet his approach was different from that of the older Muslim leaders. He had a wider and more nationalist outlook which kept him away from the feudal and narrowly religious and separatist approach of these older leaders and inevitably made him an Indian Nationalist... The older conservative leaders among the Muslims did not react favourably to all this and criticized Azad's opinions and approach. Yet not even the most learned of them could easily meet Azad in debate and argument even on the basis of scripture and old tradition, for Azad's knowledge of these happened to be greater than theirs. He was a strange mixture of medieval scholasticism, eighteenth-century rationalism, and the modern outlook... The tradition of Aligarh College was, however, different and conservative, both politically and socially. Its trustees came from among the princes and big landlords, typical representatives of the

\* This is factually incorrect as Jawaharlal Nehru later corrected himself, while paying tributes to Azad in the Lok Sabha on 24 February, 1958.

feudal order. Under a succession of English Principals closely associated with Govt. circles, it had fostered separatist tendencies and anti-nationalist and anti-Congress outlook...

Abul Kalam Azad attacked this stronghold of conservatism and anti-nationalism, not directly but by spreading ideas which undermined the Aligarh tradition. This very youthful writer and journalist created a sensation in Muslim intellectual circles and though the elders frowned upon him, his words created a ferment in the minds of younger generation.

Thus while the conservative tradition of Aligarh fostered separatist tendencies and anti-nationalist and anti-Congress outlook, Maulana Azad remained firmly rooted in his nationalist ideals and objective of communal understanding and unity. He rejected outright the two-nation theory adumbrated by Jinnah and his Muslim League. When confronted with the demand for Pakistan, he declared from the roof-top 'as a Muslim I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it'. And he added 'if it can be shown that the scheme of Pakistan can in any way benefit Muslims I would be prepared to accept it myself, and also to work for its acceptance by others. But the truth is that even if I examine the scheme from the point of view of the communal interests of the Muslims themselves, I am forced to the conclusion that it can in no way benefit them or allay their legitimate fears'. He passionately pleaded for a dispassionate consideration of the consequences which will follow 'if we give effect to the Pakistan Scheme'. He said 'if the country was partitioned, the Muslims will awaken overnight and discover that they have become aliens and foreigners' in their own homeland, 'where they had been living for almost a thousand years and built up well known centres of Muslim culture and civilization.' He added 'the basis of Pakistan is the fear of interference by the Centre in Muslim majority areas, as the Hindus will be in a majority in the Centre' and to allay that fear he disclosed that he had succeeded in making the Congress accept his formula according to which full autonomy would be assured to the provinces alongwith vesting of all residuary power



in the Provinces. Unfortunately Maulana Sahib's pleadings and protestations made little impact on the bigoted and frenzied followers of the Muslim League.

On his part Maulana Sahib did not ever compromise or water down his inveterate opposition to the two nation theory or to the very concept of Pakistan and the division of the country. But it is a fact of history now that even our topmost leaders, including Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, ultimately yielded and willy-nilly reconciled themselves to the partitioning of the country. Even so, Maulana Azad continued to remain firm as a rock in his opposition to the vivisection of the motherland. In this situation even Mahatma Gandhi acquiesced in the inevitability of partition though he refused to accept or recognize it for himself.

Many years later I once chanced to hear Maulana Sahib expressing his distress at the futility of the division of the nation on the basis of religion in his inimitable way in the following words:

بھائی کیا پانی کو تلوار سے دو ٹکڑوں میں کاٹا جاسکتا ہے

(Brother can water be cut in twain by a sword?)

These words underlined his deep faith in the indivisibility of the people of India who he firmly believed, constituted one nation. As later events amply demonstrated never did he recoil from this stand, nor did he ever adjure himself on the issue of partition.

On the other hand Jinnah had to repent and forswear himself on the creation of Pakistan. Certain newspaper and journals have carried the story of his acute frustration and remorse after Pakistan came into being. It has been reported that during his last days when he was ill, Jinnah once shouted at Liaquat Ali Khan, who had gone to him to enquire about his health. Addressing Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah exclaimed: *You have started thinking of yourself as a big man. You are nothing. I have made you Prime Minister of Pakistan. You think you have made Pakistan. I have made it. But I am now convinced that I have committed the biggest blunder of my life. If now I get an*

*opportunity, I will go to Delhi and tell Jawaharlal to forget about the follies of the past and become friends again'.*<sup>50</sup>

Maulana Sahib's commitment and devotion to the cause of unity and harmony between the two major communities, and for the forging and strengthening of bonds of understanding and sympathy between the people of India and Pakistan did not subside or abate even after the partition. He continued to cherish the faith that if this objective could be attained it would constitute a step towards greater understanding among the peoples of the world. With a view to attain this ideal, as the first Education Minister of free India, he set-up the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, to serve as an instrument for the achievement of enduring friendship and close cultural relations between India and other countries, particularly between the people of India and Pakistan, by strengthening the existing bonds of a common composite culture between them.

Maulana's life story is a saga of selfless service, suffering and sacrifice and of a total dedication to the cause of the country's freedom. During the course of the freedom struggle, which for him covered a period of about forty years between 1908 and 1947, he was imprisoned innumerable times, spending long periods in jail, and suffered hardships and privations. His wife and his sister expired while he was in imprisonment in Ahmadnagar Fort, and the British Govt. did not extend to him even the ordinary human treatment and courtesy of a temporary release on parole to enable him to be near the bedside of his dying wife and sister. One can easily imagine the excruciating agony that he must have undergone under the circumstances. But he bore all this with a philosophic calm and resignation and when after more than three years of incarceration he came out of the Ahmadnagar Fort, he only uttered the aphorism 'Ordeal is to life as fire is to gold'. I read this wise and inspiring message of his in jail where and when I was undergoing a trial on a charge of sedition U/sec.124-A. These words touched me deeply and inspired me to turn down an offer of the State Government to release me from Jail if I accepted to be externed from Bharatpur. I quoted these words of Maulana

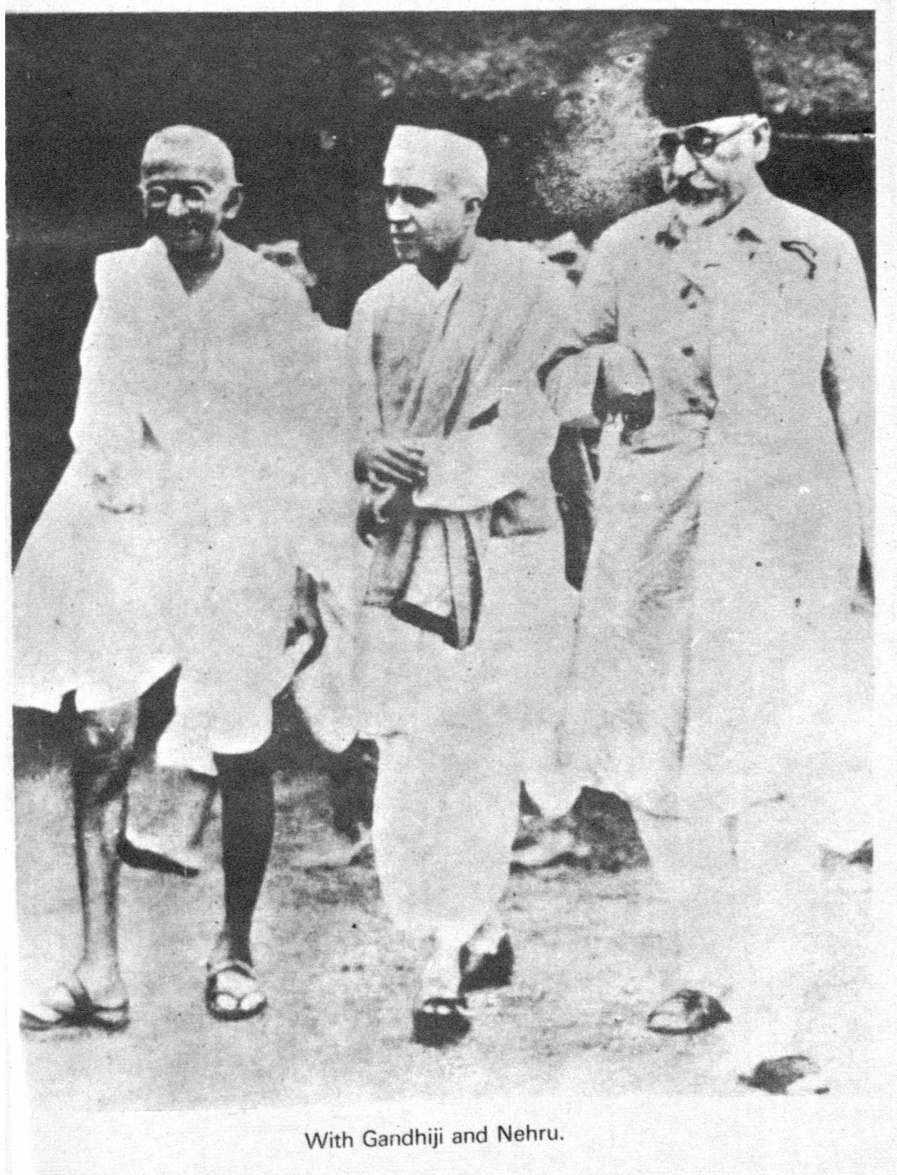
<sup>50</sup> Indian Express 19.7.1988, p. 8 and Muslim India July 1988, p. 331 — source: Frontier Post, Col. Elahi Bux — Report by Mohammad Yahya Peshawar, 25 January, 1987.

Sahib in my reply to the State Government declining their offer of conditional release from Jail.

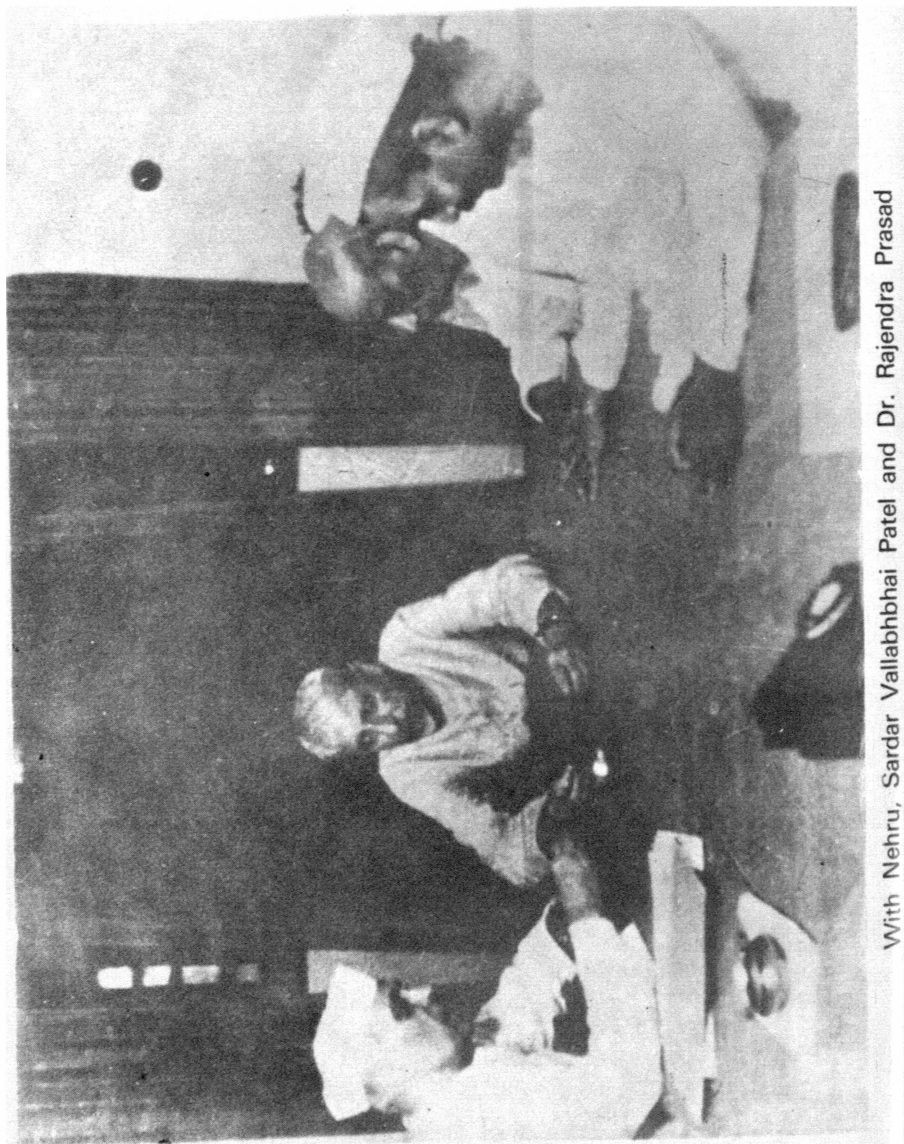
Maulana Sahib's transparent nationalism and his deep commitment and dedication to the cause of the freedom of our motherland, coupled with his cherished ideal and objective of communal unity and harmony, would always serve as a beacon light to guide the footsteps of the coming generations, and as a fountainhead of inspiration for service and sacrifice in the cause of the motherland.

In the present situation, when our country is confronted with a multitude of problems and perils, one may wistfully wish to imagine how would have Maulana Sahib reacted to these problems and crises had he been in our midst today. He would have indubitably watched with consternation and dismay the various ills from which our country suffers today. He would have been particularly distressed to find that the monster of communal tensions, conflicts and confrontations has once again raised its ugly head in various parts of the country; and in some parts secessionists and separatists are even threatening to disrupt and destroy the very fabric of unity and integrity of the country and are compounding their mischief by heinous acts of terrorist violence.

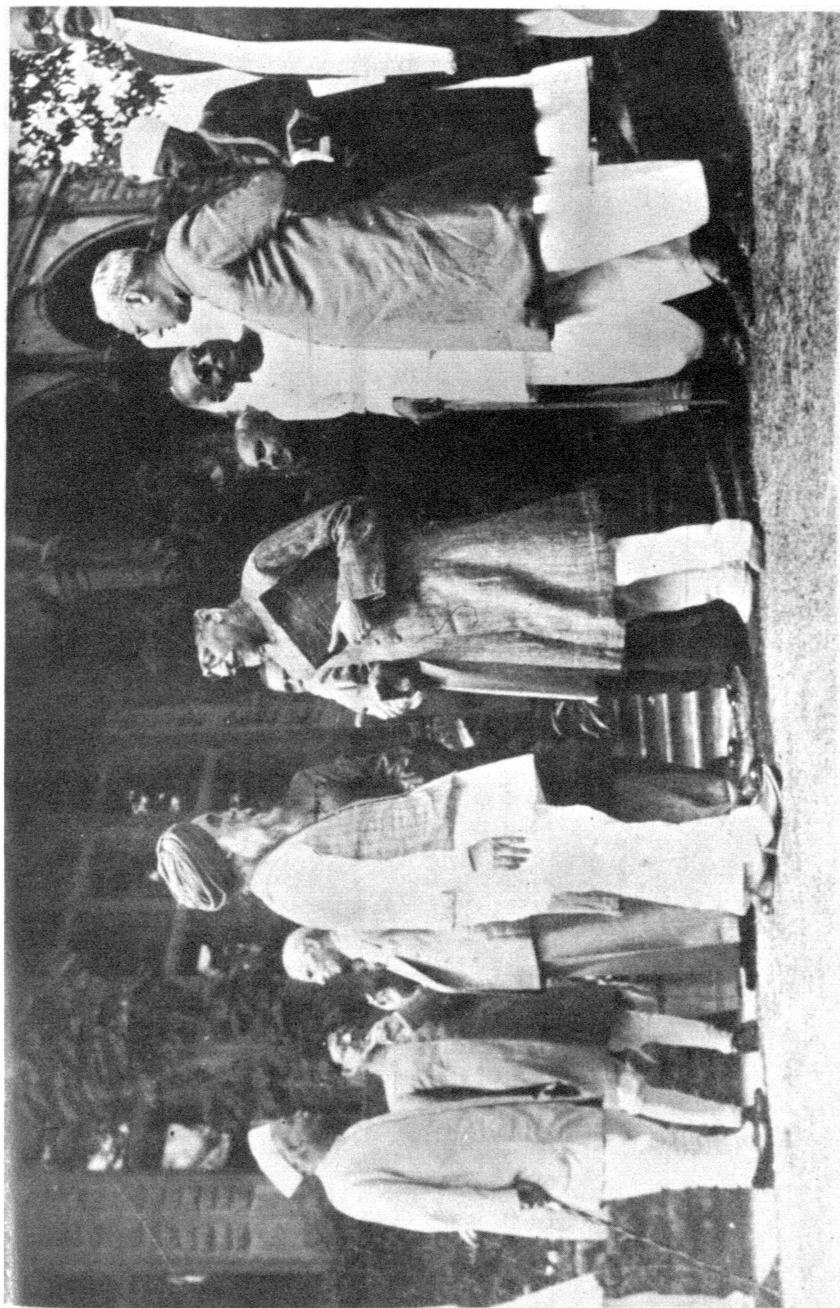
He would have surely done his best to somehow ease the communal tensions and conflicts whether they were caused by the publication of Salman Rushdie's infamous novel or by such disputes as the Ram Janam Bhoomi and Babri Masjid controversy in Ayodhya. Naturally he would have taken note of the sensitivities and strained feeling of certain sections of both the communities. He would have at once realized and recognised that such controversies or controversial claims and counter-claims inevitably turn into a fostering sore in our body-politics and becomes a perennial source of tensions and troubles. He would have certainly discovered or 'devised some solutions or remedies to diffuse tensions and settle such disputes once and for ever. It is a hard fact of life, which we can ill afford to ignore that whether it be a temple which has been defiled, damaged or converted into a mosque by some conqueror or its images or statues have been broken or disfigured by some marauders or vandals or iconoclasts



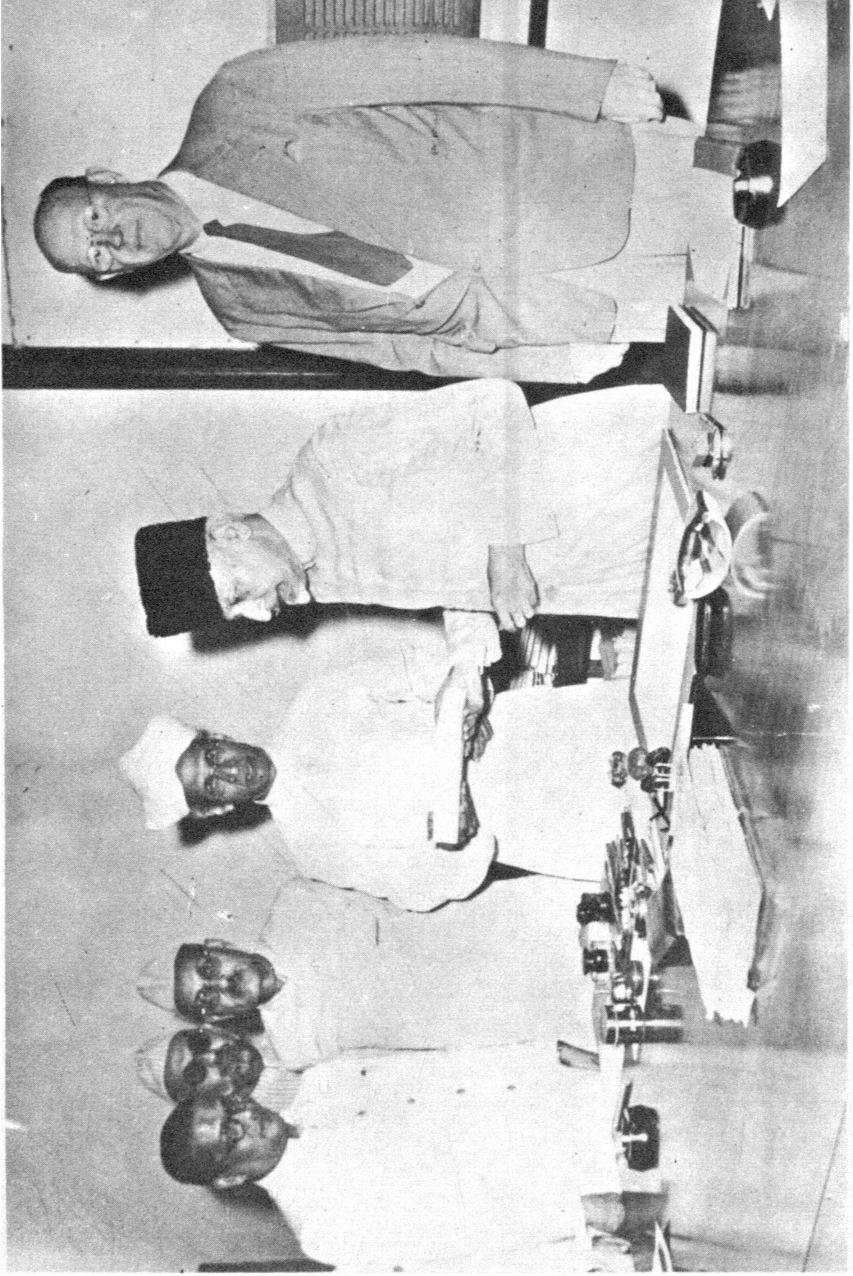
With Gandhiji and Nehru.



With Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad



Azad with Tara Singh, Jinnah, G. Rajagopalachari and others at the Shimla Conference.



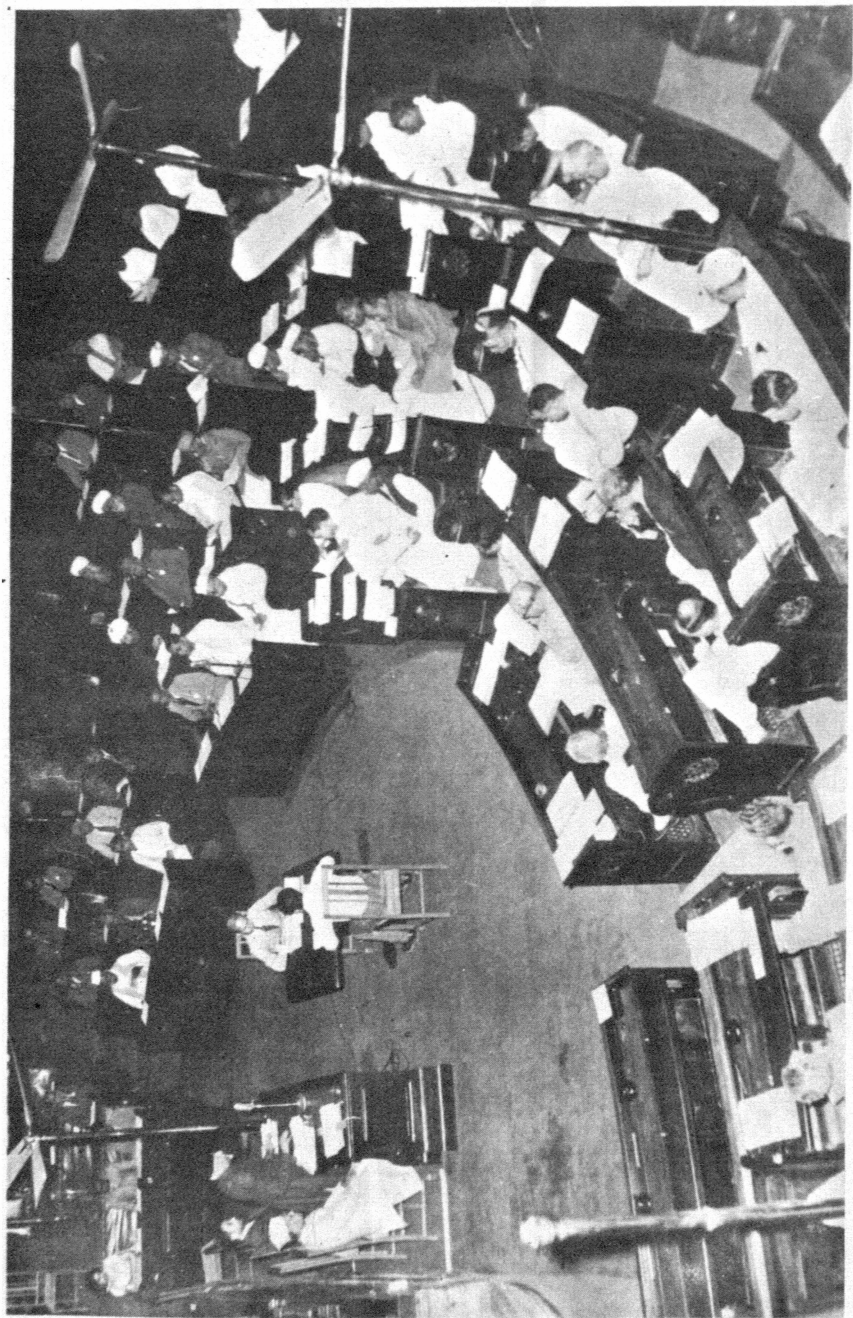
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad receiving the report of the Universities Commission from its Chairman Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, on 24 August 1949.





With Helen Keller.

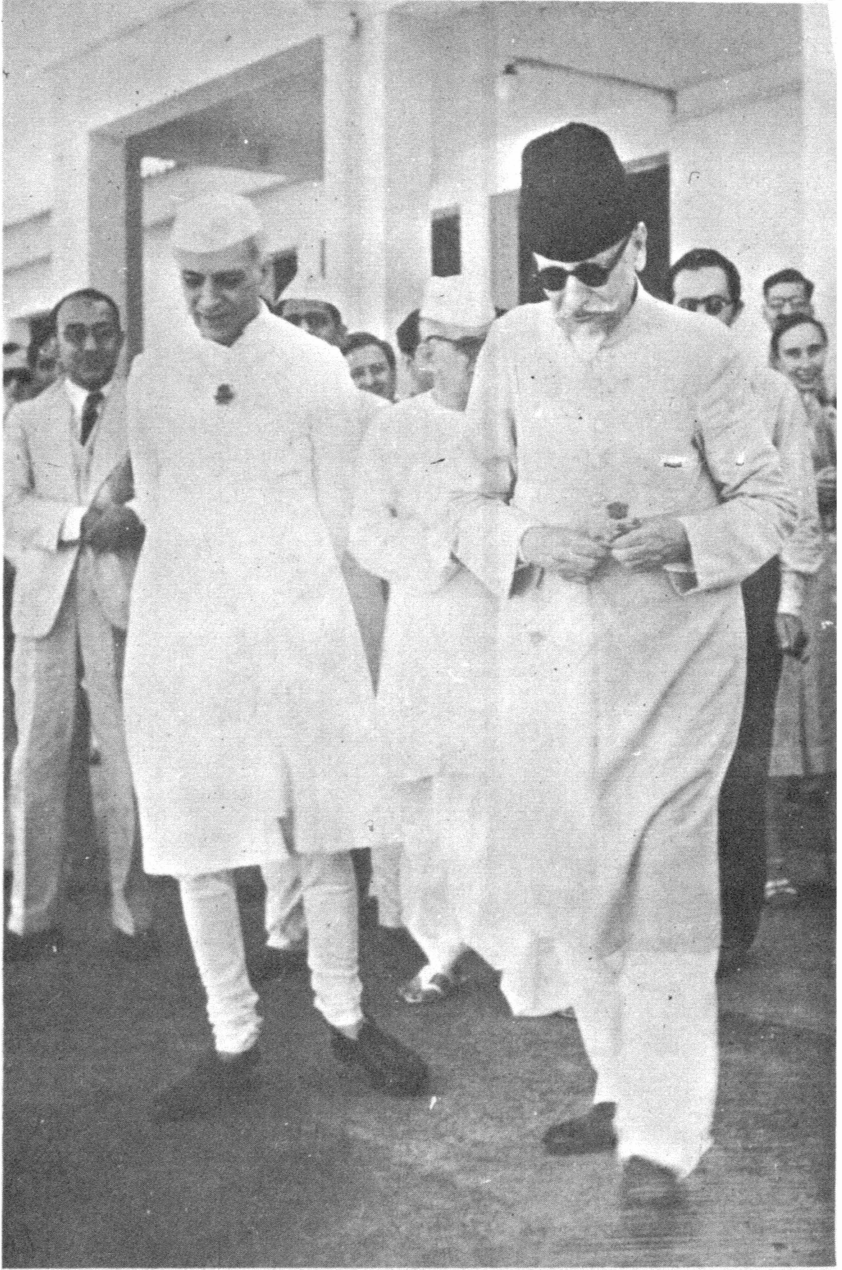




Maulana Azad inaugurating the first All India Conference on Letters, in New Delhi, on 15 March 1951



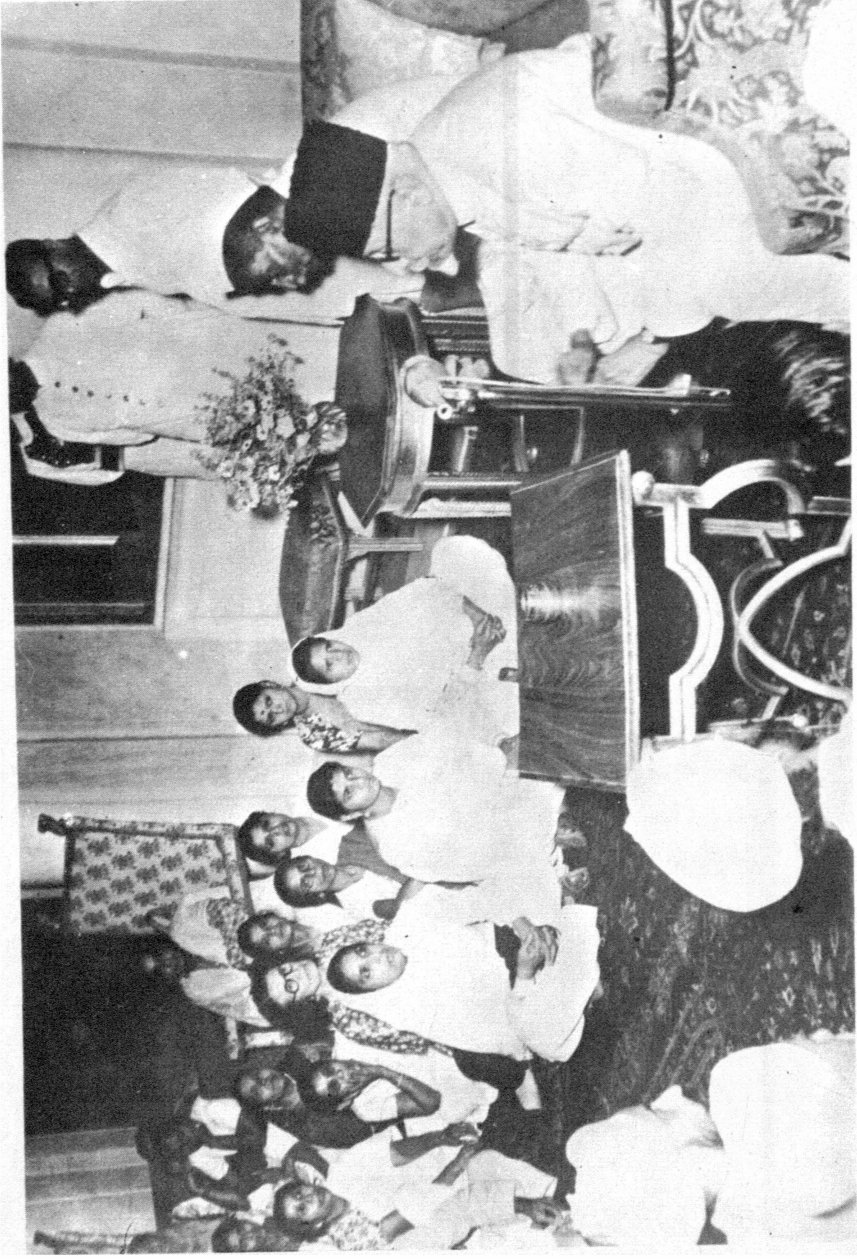
After a luncheon in honour of Dr. J.T. Bodet, Director UNESCO'S External Relations Service, in New Delhi, on 26 March 1951: Also seen in the picture are Lady Mountbatten, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt. Indira Gandhi, Dr. Tara Chand and others.



Maulana Azad being seen off at Palam Airport, by Jawaharlal Nehru and his other Cabinet colleagues, on his visit to some European countries in June 1951.

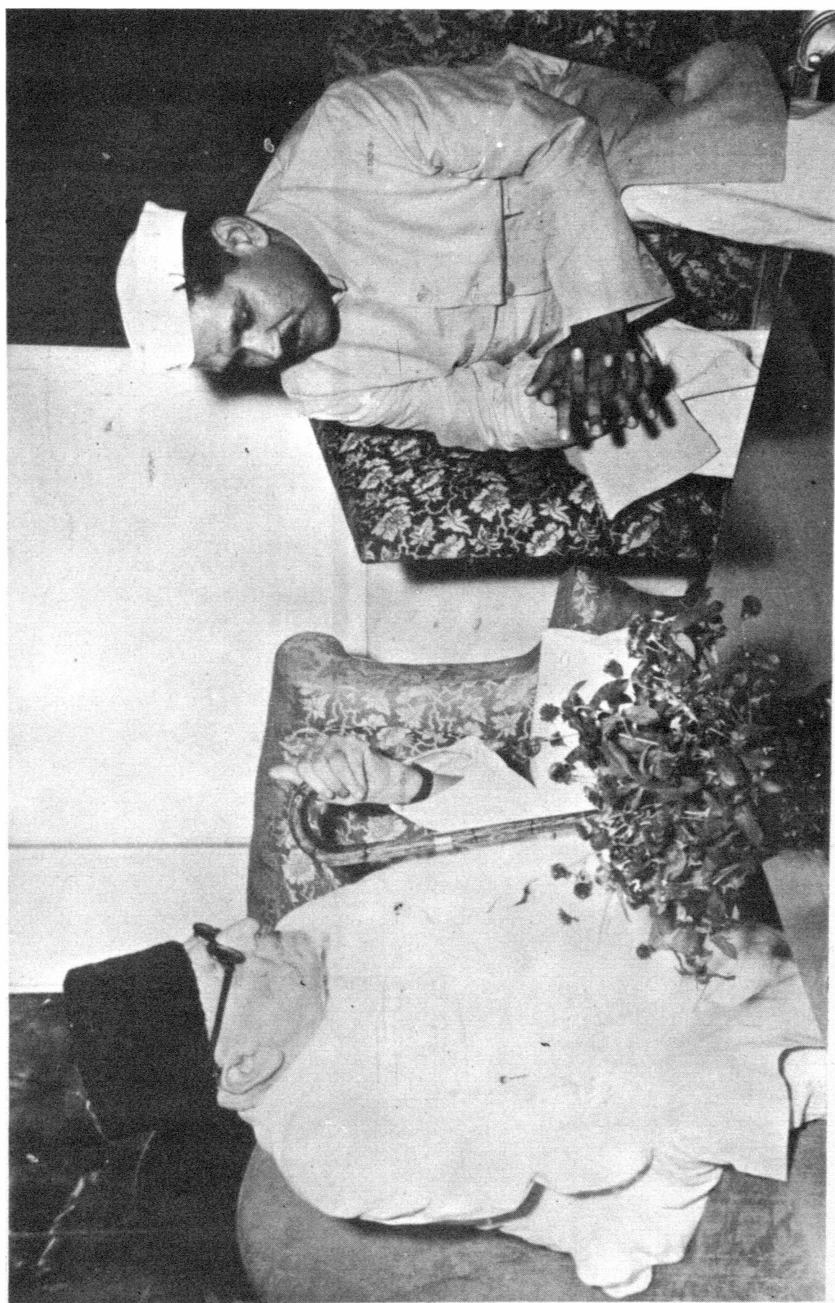


With Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Sardar H.S. Malik and others at the Paris Airport in June 1951.



At Rashtrapati Bhavan with Dr. Rajendra Prasad at a reception of the Heads of Primary schools of Delhi on 27 April 1952.





With Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, the then Minister of Education, Madhya Pradesh.



Last Journey.

in the past, or it be a mosque which has been defiled, damaged or transformed into a Hindu temple by rioters or marauders in comparatively more recent past; both stand on the same footing. Both remain standing monuments to the defeat and humiliation of the forefathers and ancestors of the people of either of the two communities at the hands of vandals or iconoclasts or the so called conquerors. The question that confronts us now is whether we should do something to remove such bitter irritants and painful reminders of a more painful past by some process; or allow these to remain as permanent sources of communal friction and hostility. I feel confident that if Maulana Sahib was there he would not have allowed this situation to continue and stagnate endlessly and remorselessly.

In this birth centenary year of Maulana Saheb our best tribute to him would be to find solutions and remedies to cure such ills and save the country and its people from the bloody conflicts, conflagrations or holocausts, it has witnessed and suffered every now and then. Human mind has not lost its ingenuity altogether, and given good will and good sense on all sides, effective and lasting solutions can be found or devised to ease or overcome these human problems, just if we bear in mind the humane and saintly qualities and the catholicity of the views and approach of Maulana Sahib to such problems.



## An Undisputed Leader of Indian Nationalism

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*M.L. Dwivedi\**

In the galaxy of Indian National leadership before and after independence the personality of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was remarkably unique. So much outstanding was his contribution during the struggle for independence of the country that he was reckoned as one of the foremost of the leaders in the political horizon. I still remember that whether it was the city or town or the village throughout India, the Congress workers including children took out processions in cities and villages from lane to lane shouting slogans of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai', 'Pt. Jawaharlal Ki Jai' 'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Ki Jai'. His name in the foremost leadership was not by virtue of his being a Muslim but because he was really a staunch nationalist citizen of the country, who did not believe in communalism or narrow religious bigotry. He was born in Mecca in 1888 and had his early education in Arabic and Persian but later on when his parents came to Calcutta, his study continued. From his early childhood he showed

\* Member of Constituent Assembly and Former Member of Parliament.

remarkable intelligence and nationalistic outlook. His bent of mind was literary from the very beginning combined with the vision of a poet who excelled in writings of both the kinds. It was due to in literary pursuits and forceful oratory that he began to be associated with literary gatherings and meetings and his contributions in all such meetings and conferences were so extraordinarily praiseworthy that he won the applause of all those who came in his contact with him.

He had barely entered the prime of his youth when India was involved in the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British regime in India. He became an ardent worker in that field of activity also and he fondly associated himself whole-heartedly into all the movements during the freedom struggle. He had to undergo rigorous imprisonment on a number of times extending upto 10 years. In the aggregate of population of 36 crores of people of India before independence the Muslim population was nearly about 25 per cent and there were a number of Muslim leaders including Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Liakat Ali Khan and others whose minds were engulfed in communal outlook, but Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was so broad minded and full of forethought that he did not join hands with forces of the communal minded Muslim leaders and willingly opted to serve for liberation of the country under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. He worked honestly, assiduously and devotedly for the Indian National Congress which was fully involved in movement for achieving freedom from the British yoke. His public speeches were so forceful, influential and convincing that the rank and file became his devotees and it was due to the co-ordinated efforts of leaders like Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chakravarti, Rajagopalachari, B.C. Ray, Chitranjan Das, Pattabhi Sitaramyya and Subhash Chandra Bose including the Maulana himself, that the Indian masses from all corners of the country began to participate actively in the movements for independence, irrespective of the fact that the British used extremely repressive and torturous methods for crushing the movements. Maulana Azad was not deterred and he faced all the tortures bravely in all the movements and in the event of some trouble in the country or in the Congress leadership, he played the role of a mediator. By trouble it should not be understood that there were difference of

opinion among the Congressmen. The fact is that whenever Mahatma Gandhi found things being overdone by Congress workers or running towards violence which was not the creed of the Congress and the Mahatma used the weapon of self penance such as undertaking fast unto death and only when people realised their mistakes and vowed not to indulge in activities outside the principles laid down by the Congress high command that Mahatma Gandhi ended his fasts.

It would be appropriate to cite a particular incident which would throw light on Maulana's mediatory role at crucial junctures. During communal riots in West Bengal, in the wake of partition, Mahatma Gandhi took his famous Noakhali march and undertook a fast unto death at Calcutta. Several days had passed and Mahatma's condition became very critical. At this time Maulana Abul Kalam Azad came out bravely in bringing about the Muslim fanaticism to come to reason, and his efforts succeeded when all the Muslims and Hindus proclaimed before Mahatma Gandhi that they will not do anything of the type in future. Thus it was due to Maulana's initiative in this as well as several other important events during the struggle for the freedom of the country that his name began to be ranked among foremost the Indian national leaders.

Azad was one of the eminent national leaders with a determined mind to see that India was not divided. It is a fact that if he had leanings towards communalism, he could have ranked as one of the foremost in Pakistan. The names of two national Muslim leaders that ranked among the main pillars of the edifice of Indian independence are of Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It goes to their credit that they stood firm in their outlook for Indian nationalism. They were just like rocks on the sea shore which remain unaffected by storming waves.

He was a simple man of great character, honesty, and unflinching loyalty to the Indian Nationalism. There was one lapse in his capacity as the Education Minister in the Indian Government and it was with regard to the language of the Union. In the Constituent Assembly of India, there was the question in connection with determining the language of the Union as to

whether Hindi or Hindustani should be the language of the Union. A number of constitution makers including Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were in favour of Hindustani and another set of them including Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Purushottam Das Tandon, Kaka Sahib, N.V. Gadgil and a good number of others were in favour of Hindi in the Devanagri Script. The Maulana wanted Hindustani with both Persian as well as Devanagri scripts. However in the meeting of members of the Congress Party in the Constituent Assembly held for taking a decision in this regard, the majority was in favour of Hindi with Devanagri script, as the language of the Union. Therefore, this decision was carried unanimously in the Constituent Assembly of India and then Hindi with Devanagri Script was adopted as the language of the Union. For the development of Hindi to be acceptable for legal and all other purposes a time limit of 15 years was decided.

After independence Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the Education Minister and development of Hindi as the language of the Union was the responsibility of his ministry. It is rather sad that during all the 15 years, this decision of the Constituent Assembly of India could not get the desired practical shape.

The general view is that the Maulana perhaps may not have been biased against Hindi but due to his having been born in Mecca and in his early education having been in Arabic and Persian, he thought in favour of Hindustani and even after unanimous decision by Constituent Assembly of India, Maulana Azad kept on harping the tune of Hindustani. So much so that he gave a good sum of money to Pt. Sunder Lal to prepare a vocabulary for compiling a glossary of terms and words in Hindustani used in the Constitution. Pt. Sunder Lal tried to accomplish this task. In this endeavour to forge the glossary, he, on the one hand, tried to avoid words and terms originating from Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and on the other ended up compiling it in a style which was quite different from the Hindustani Maulana had in mind. In his efforts to do so, he brought in far-fetched terms and words for use in the constitution vocabulary in Hindustani. For example, he devised the word 'Pahalua' for Prime Minister, 'Bich Bindi Kholi' for Central Cabinet and 'Sar

Baithee Karna' for Presiding. The entire vocabulary in the so-called Hindustani abounded in words and terms and phrases which neither belonged to Sanskrit nor Persian and Arabic and was not in Common also with the prevalent Hindustani and the coining of all these was so absurd that it could have been impossible for them to be intelligible to any set of people.

When a printed copy of this vocabulary became available to me, I was simply amazed. Therefore, I put a question in Lok Sabha to Prime Minister Nehru in the language of Pt. Sunder Lal but neither the Speaker nor the Prime Minister could understand what did it mean and when I read out the meaning of these terms to them, giving their synonyms in English the Prime Minister also was astonished and the glossary was discarded.

In my opinion Maulana Abul Kalam Azad may also not have had in his mind the shape of this vocabulary as coined by Pt. Sunder Lal and perhaps he had even not seen it; but it showed his desire to bring about a vocabulary of the words and terms of the Constitution in Hindustani so that he could have thought that this Hindustani could be understood more popularly. Maulana Azad is not to be blamed for this because his early education having been in Arabic and Persian, he did not want to ascertain that a majority of the Indian languages, like Bangla, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada etc., enumerated in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, abounded in words and terminology of Sanskrit origin. The words of Sanskrit origin are in abundance in all these languages, some of them with 70 to 80 per cent, and others like Tamil with at least 30% words which have their origin from Sanskrit. Therefore, in the Committee, (which consisted of two members of each language group of which I was also a member representing Hindi Group) for preparing a glossary of the words and terms in the Constitution in Hindi, unanimous decision was taken to the effect that words and terms which may be common in at least eight out of fourteen languages enumerated in the Constitution should form part of the glossary. It was also decided that when any word or term is found not to be so common, the selection may be made from Sanskrit. Thus, the vocabulary prepared for the Hindi version of the Constitution did not belong wholly and solely to the Hindi language in vogue in the states where Hindi is supposed to be the mother tongue. As

a matter of fact excepting the verbs and prepositions used in Hindi, Hindustani or Urdu commonly, all other words, terms and phrases etc. used in the glossary were intended to constitute a language of All India type, although the name given to it remained Hindi.

The net result was that during the 15 years stipulated in the Constitution after which this Hindi should have become the language of the Union in practice, the goal could not be achieved. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Education Minister, I think, does not stand to blame for this as even after 40 years from the date the Constitution came into force, there were little or no attempts for introducing the use of Hindi, in the Government offices by any other Education Minister or the Ministry of Home Affairs after the passing away of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. On the contrary, in 1963, a Constitution Amendment Act was passed whereby English is continuing as the language of the Union.

I have been associated with Maulana Azad in many ways. First as a volunteer in the struggle for freedom and later as a colleague in the Constituent Assembly, Provisional Parliament and Lok Sabha and I always found him to be a refined gentleman highly sophisticated in habits and manners. He has been held in very high esteem in the society and as I have already mentioned he was the most popular and eminent Congress leader who believed in secular and undivided India and worked for it till the end of his life. I still remain devoted to him and offer my humble homage for his services to the country, the Indian nation, and to all the people of the Indian sub-continent.

## Abul Kalam Azad: A Prudent Nation Builder\*

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*Chaudhari Ranbir Singh\*\**

I am one of those few freedom fighters and lucky ex-Members of Parliament who are still alive and who had seen and heard Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from close quarters and who are aware of his competence. Maulana Azad was one of those outstanding national leaders whose contribution towards nation-building was great and unique in many ways. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Maulana Azad was a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through the problem to its core...'.<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Azad was the best gift of Islamic culture. He was a well known scholar in Urdu, Persian, Arabic Language, Islamic theology and Philosophy. Though he had received traditional education he was not a victim of obscurantism or fanaticism.

He participated in Khilafat Movement and then joined the Congress Party where he emerged as a prominent leader at the

\* It is the English version of an article 'in Hindi'

\*\* Member of Constituent Assembly and Former Member of Parliament.

national level. He participated in the Quit India Movement and became the President of the Congress. During the freedom struggle, he worked hand in hand with the top leaders of the Congress Party. Before the outbreak of Second World War, out of eleven Provinces, Congress was in power in eight. The Punjab province included the present Punjab in Pakistan as also Haryana. Mian Iftikharudin was the head of the Punjab State and Sikandar Hayat Khan had formed his Ministry in Punjab in which Chaudhary Chhotu Ram was also a Minister. Besides, non-Congress Ministries had been formed in Bengal and Sindh Provinces. But Muslim League had not formed Government in any State. The Congress Government had submitted their resignation to protest against sending Indian troops in the World War without taking the Indian leaders into confidence. British imperialists covertly encouraged Jinnah and his party to make a demand for Pakistan. When Maulana Sahib along with other Congress leaders and workers were raising the voice of the country and filling the jails in support of their demands Muslim League and its leader Jinnah were fanning communal feelings with the help of the British Government.

Maulana Sahib had staked every thing for the independence and unity of the country. He believed that the well being of the Hindus, the Muslims and other communities lay in the unity of the country after it became independent. After the elections of 1946, Maulana Sahib came to Lahore and tactfully frustrated the attempt of Muslim League to form its own Government and in its place was formed a coalition Government of Khizer Hayat and the Congress Party. Maulana Sahib was a brave fighter for freedom. He was a 'Satyagrahi' and we all tried to follow his ideals and orders. He was a confident of Mahatma Gandhi. British Cabinet Mission visited the country after 1946 elections and Jinnah incited parochial and communal feelings among the Muslims and insisted on the division of the country. The British imperialists declared India independent on 15 August, 1947 but at the same time they divided the country. This resulted in mass exodus of the Hindus, the Sikhs and Muslims from Punjab and Bengal to both the sides of the border as also large scale bloodshed amongst erstwhile brethren. The result was that lakhs of people lost their lives because they did not heed the advice of



Maulana Sahib for the unity of the country.

As I was a member of the Constituent Assembly, the Provisional Parliament and Lok Sabha, I had the opportunity to watch the efficiency of Maulana Sahib. While looking after the Ministry of Education, Maulana Sahib, as a close confidante of the Prime Minister, contributed his mite in managing the affairs of the State and formulating and implementing the policies of the Congress Party. Panditji gave due weightage to the suggestions made by him for solving the problems of the country.

Maulana Sahib had contested the Lok Sabha election in 1957 from the Gurgaon constituency. At that time I had the opportunity to see his farsightedness and efficiency when I was the General Secretary of the Congress Party in Punjab.

It was due to the sagacity and the good offices of leaders like Maulana Sahib and Shri G.B. Pant, that the Akali Party, which sent about one lakh Satyagrahis in jail to get Punjabi Suba, along with their leaders like Sardar Hukam Singh who later became the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Giani Kartar Singh, joined the Congress Party even against the wishes of Master Tara Singh, the then Leader of the Akali Party. Akali Legislators in Lok Sabha and in Punjab Assembly contested election in 1957 as Congress nominees. Although, their demand for Punjabi Suba was not accepted and only the Regional Committee Scheme was introduced. Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, an arch enemy of Akalis, was persuaded by Maulana Sahib to agree for the merger of Akalis in Congress Party.

Though Maulana Sahib was fairly conversant with the English language he never used to converse even with the foreigners in English. With his respect and understanding of the need for a national language he used to talk and write in Hindustani. He was also very particular about wearing Hindustani dress. Thus, he was an embodiment of our composite nationalism.

## Maulana Azad: A Fearless Soldier in the Fight for Freedom

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*Col. B.H. Zaidi\**

I belong to a generation which had many opportunities of seeing Maulana Azad at close quarters. I had the good luck to listen to some of his stirring and fiery speeches and to be moved by his unique eloquence. Many scholars and intellectuals have expressed their opinions about the depth of his religious thoughts, his literary eminence and his role in politics. I propose to confine myself to writing my personal impressions.

Maulana's personality was like a diamond with many facets. He was a thinker, statesman, orator, author, a deep scholar of oriental learning and a teacher and guide for Muslims. His extraordinary intellect, varied gifts and his deep devotion to the cause of his country and community led him to take an active interest in many fields and left his lasting impress on all of them.

Maulana Azad liked privacy, was not given to talking unnecessarily, and took time to open up. He was conscious of his mental gifts, scholarship and a richly endowed personality and so was averse to mixing with common people. He took time to come

\* Member of Constituent Assembly and Former Member of Parliament.

to a decision after examining every aspect of a problem but once he made up his mind he stuck to his decision. He was one of those who live in a world of their own and are so absorbed in exploring it that they do not take notice of ordinary happenings around them. As a scholar he was ever busy adding to his knowledge and remained a student up to the end. In addition to oriental learning and Islamic literature, he was interested in studying Western philosophy, literature and history. In his early years he had not studied English, but came to acquire enough competence to read advanced books in English.

One outstanding achievement of his was the translation of a commentary on the Quran. His translation retained the true spirit of the Quran, and in his commentary he brought out with clarity that the basic teaching of Islam is belief in the universality of religious faith, and it confirms the greatness of all teachers of truth and righteousness born in different countries in different times who taught belief in God and the leading of a virtuous life. He emphasised the Islamic principles of fraternity, equality and peace and strengthened his argument by citing examples from the early period of Islam.

Another great achievement of his was that he taught Indian Muslims to love their country and have a secular outlook. He insisted that Muslims should participate in the national struggle for freedom without any mental reservation, or conditions, and once India was free they should press for the protection of their interests – religious, cultural, political and economic – in India's Constitution. The Maulana readily and cheerfully took part in the struggle for freedom and his shrewd political sense often helped the Congress to reach momentous political decisions. He worked as the President of the Indian National Congress for many years.

The Maulana was vehemently opposed to the partition of the country for it was negation of his unshakeable belief in nationalism and secularism. He did his best to stop the division of the country and never wavered in his opposition to it. Partition came as a great shock to him, and he gave expression to his feelings in the many emotional and impassioned speeches and writings. He could not reconcile himself to the division of the country and his opposition to it was total and unconditional. This becomes clear in his famous *India Wins Freedom* and the thirty pages made public recently. In this book Maulana has stated that

if in 1946 he had proposed the name of Sardar Patel and not Jawaharlal Nehru as his successor as President of the Congress Party it would perhaps have turned the tide of history, for the Sardar would never have agreed to partition. I have reasons to disagree with this view.

I was close to Sardar Patel and often visited him at his residence. One day I gave expression to my grief and complaint that the Congress did not oppose partition with sufficient vigour and determination. Sardar sat up and said that their experience of working in the provisional government along with the Muslim League was very bitter. The Muslim League, he said, held the portfolio of Finance and it was difficult for us to get even an ordinary post approved by the Finance Ministry. The Muslim League's nominees in the Ministry did everything to embarrass and humiliate us. Their pinpricks made us realize that it would not be possible to work with them in free India. 'So I said', spoke the Sardar, 'you take away your four annas and leave us alone with the rest'. Maulana seems to have written it in an emotional mood because his dream of a united progressive India was destroyed. Moreover, after partition both sides indulged in most inhuman acts, and the widespread murder, riots and pillage caused Maulana much pain and grief.

Once division of the country was a *fait accompli*. Maulana, through his public speeches and writings exhorted the Muslims to look upon India as their home, and to work for its greatness and prosperity. He raised the shattered morale of the Muslims and tried to renew their self-confidence.

Pandit Nehru was one of the friends in whom Maulana had complete faith, but in matters where he did not agree with his friend's views or actions he was fearless in expressing himself. There was a great deal of difference in the make-up of the two personalities but their love of the country and joint participation in the building up of a free Democratic India ensured their mutual respect and regard.

Maulana Azad was a fearless soldier in the battle for India's freedom and was among the earliest builders of the independent nation. India owes a great deal to both of them and their lives will be a source of inspiration for the generations to come.

## Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: A Visionary Minister

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*Malcolm S. Adiseshiah\**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of our outstanding political leaders, who was able to synthesize his deep political beliefs with a highly action oriented public life. It is not without significance that after Independence he accepted the post of Minister of Education and remained in that post for the rest of his life. It was one indication of his deep and lasting commitment to matters of the mind.

I met and worked with him when I was at UNESCO and he was the Minister of Education.

As Minister of Education, he had very clear priorities, including priorities for UNESCO and other forms of inter-national co-operation. In this area, it was his view which has lasted to this day, that the major area for India to co-operate with UNESCO and other countries is in areas of Science and Technology. He helped to initiate the network of National Science Research

\* An eminent educationist and former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Institutes and the technology and technological educational institutions of the country. In these he used UNESCO and bilateral aid fully and optimally.

He was a respected figure in the UNESCO circles, where his addresses to the UNESCO General Conference, which he attended on three occasions, were always heard with rapt attention. He presided over the eighth session of UNESCO General Conference and guided with all his knowledge, wisdom and experience the debates along lines, where the limited UNESCO resources were concentrated on a few major projects – in Primary Education, in Arid Zone development and East West Cultural values.

On one occasion there was a minor fracas in the general conference which he helped to diffuse. One of the Indian delegates in his statement to the conference got carried away by the eloquence of his speech, and in criticising some programmes of UNESCO run by the Secretariat, said that he felt that something was rotten in the state of Denmark. Immediately the head of the Danish delegation got up and violently protested against this remark and assured the conference that all was well, peaceful and happy in his country. It was not till it was explained that this was a quotation from one of Shakespeare's plays that the matter was settled.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad spoke in Urdu – the finest and most fluent. He was lucky to have by his side, Humayun Kabir, to translate his statements into English. Like all translations, there was difficulty in capturing the originality and essence of his expressed thoughts.

## Portrait of a Great Patriot

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*Rasheeduddin Khan\**

A child named Mohiuddin Ahmed was born to an emigrant Indian *pir* (Muslim divine) Maulvi Khairuddin (1831-1908), in Mecca in the month of Zul Haj 1305 AH (i.e., between 9 August - 6 September 1888), from his Arab wife Alia (d. 1899), daughter of Sheikh Muhammad Zahir Vatri of Medina. The child was named Feroze Bakth from whose alphabets the year of his birth could be calculated according to the Arabic numerical system. The family had a distinguished lineage of Muslim divines, one of whose illustrious forebearers was Maulana Jamaluddin, Sheikh Bahlol of Delhi, a contemporary of Emperor Akbar, who declined to sign the 'infallibility decree' sponsored by Mulla Mubarak, father of Faizi and Abul Fazl. The precocious child Ahmed, who migrated with the family to Calcutta in 1898, when he was ten, changed his name to Abul Kalam Mohiuddin Ahmed Azad Dehlavi, when he was barely 12 years old, and came to be subsequently known only as Abul Kalam Azad.

Professor in Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University and former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Maulana Azad was a child prodigy and a brilliant mind revealing scintillating versatility. He composed poetry and published a poetic journal when he was 12; completed his formal studies in Muslim theology *Dars-e-Nizamiyah*; *al kalam*, philosophy and logic, studied rhetoric in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and the rudiments of traditional Chemistry, Astronomy and Medical Science by the time he was 14. He published a journal of literary and informative interest *Lisan-us-Sidq* at the age of 15, which amazed established scholars of Urdu like Maulana Hali and Maulana Shibli. He was great in several evocations that he could combine in the course of his life. He was a pioneer of nationalistic journalism in Urdu and an intrepid editor; a stylist in Urdu prose who exhibited not only felicity of expression with profundity of thought and analyses, but also an abundant capacity of the Urdu language for learned discourses in several branches of knowledge. He was a persuasive political orator and a prolific publicist; a religious preacher and social reformer. He was recognized as an outstanding luminary of Islamic studies, both theological and secular; and a creative and rationalist interpreter of the Quran in Urdu, and undoubtedly one of the greatest in any Indian language. Maulana Azad was a consummate ideologue of the composite culture and composite nationalism of India.

The memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad brings to mind a cavalcade of events and personalities of Indian national movement — a whole generation of stalwarts, each glorious in his own way, who jointly laid the foundation of resurgent India, dedicated to the values of democracy, secular polity, social justice and composite nationalism.

Maulana Azad evokes respect and admiration as a great patriot, a valiant leader, a scintillating mind of creative versatility, and a dauntless proponent of composite nationalism in India. He shone brilliantly even on the star-studded horizon of the national movement, for his convictions, creativity and larger humanistic concerns.

In the struggle for national independence, which was the main goal and central concern of his intellectual, journalistic, political and, to a large measure, even of his religious exertions. Azad's life can be perceived in three phases, which retrospectively



appear as three stages of his political evolution into an integral personality.

In Phase One: 1906-15 (when his age was 18-27 years) Azad emerges on the Urdu literary and journalist scene as a 'Muslim patriot', imbued with the romantic passion for promoting Pan-Islamic solidarity against the worldwide tentacle of Western colonialism, and for a liberal and rationalist regeneration of the global Islamic community. In this early phase he drew inspiration from the teachings of three pace-setters of reform in the Muslim world — the Islamic revolutionary drive and stirring call for renaissance of Asia and the Arab world and its modernisation given by Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-97); the intellectual zeal for religious re-formation initiated by the Egyptian *Mufti*, well-known for his liberal and rationalist interpretation of the *Quran* and the *Shariah*, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905); and the powerful plea for the urgent reconstruction of Arab polity based on political democracy and creative response to the challenges of the new world made by the fiery Lebanese intellectual, Muhammad Shashid Rida (1865-1935), whose popular journal *Al-Manar* provided the relevant format for Azad's *Al-Hilal*. This was also the phase when Azad sought inspiration from two of his own Muslim compatriots — Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) and Maulana Shibli Naumani (1857-1914). Sir Syed's efforts towards rationalism and modernisation as exemplified in his writings and addresses in *tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, *Iqf sir-ul-Quran*, *Maqalat* and *Khuthet-i-Ahmadiya*, became a pace-setter for Azad's writings on Muslim social reform, even as Shibli's erudition on a wide range of Islamic studies from the biographies of the Prophet and eminent Muslims to Persian poetry and literary criticism, and above all his humanism, wit and romantic inclinations to life and letters, provided him a breath of new vision and broadmindedness.

However, soon he got disenchanted by Sir Syed's political conservatism and pro-British inclinations. During this phase his main contribution is as a journalist and an editor, culminating in the publication of *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, which moulded Muslim thought and opinion in India. In *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

'...Because of his writings he was known in the Islamic

countries probably more than any other Indian Muslim. ...Abul Kalam Azad spoke in a new language to them (Muslims) in his weekly *Al-Hilal*. It was not only a new language in thought and approach, even its texture was different, for Azad's style was terse and virile though sometimes a little difficult because of its Persian background. The older conservative leaders among Muslims did not react favourably to all this and criticised Azad's opinions and approach. Yet not even the most learned of them could easily meet Azad in debate and argument. He was a strange mixture of medieval scholasticism, eighteenth century nationalism and the modern outlook. Abul Kalam Azad attacked this stronghold of conservatism and anti-nationalism not directly but by spreading ideas which undermined the Aligarh tradition...'

In between Phase One and Two, Azad was interned in Ranchi (1916-19). These four years gave him an opportunity for contemplation and reflection and provided the necessary solitude for critical evaluation of his ideas, approaches and assumptions. It was indeed a creative interlude for him. Much of his profound writings like *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* begin in this period, and one finds a great transformation in his outlook on religion and politics, often he comes out of Ranchi.

In Phase Two: 1920-23 (when his age was 32-35 years) Azad appears on the national scene as the leader and ideologue of the Khilafat movement, and with Gandhiji as a pioneer mass mobiliser for civil disobedience and satyagraha. It is not adequately recognised that Azad's meeting with Gandhiji for the first time on 18 January, 1920 in Delhi (barely few weeks after his release from Ranchi) was a turning point in Azad's political life. After many hours of personal conversation, partly in the company and in the house of Hakim Ajmal Khan, Azad was probably the first – the very first – person, who fully backed Gandhiji on his newly formulated programme of non-cooperation. He was followed by Hakim Ajmal Khan. Other top national leaders of the time – Lala Lajpat Rai, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru were converted to Gandhiji's way of thinking and strategy of struggle, many months later. At that time Jawaharlal Nehru was still not recognized as

the leader of the first rank, nor Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari or Rajendra Prasad had emerged on the national scene. Of course Mohammed Ali Jinnah was there, prominent and respected as a top leader, hailed by many, in the words of Sarojini Naidu, as the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. But it was precisely on this issue of satyagraha and mass civil disobedience in 1920, that not only Jinnah violently disagreed, but also left the Congress, never to rejoin it again but to fight against it till the bitter end, in a long drawn battle, in which he castigated the Congress as an Hindu organisation and denigrated Azad as its Muslim 'show-boy'.

It is interesting to recapitulate that Gandhiji's programme of non-cooperation was first presented and endorsed in a predominantly Muslim congregation, presided over by Maulana Azad. This was the Meerut meeting of the Khilafat Committee held in May 1920.

Gandhiji and Azad remained together during 1920 and 1921, while touring the country for popularising the civil disobedience programme. In December 1920, Azad did something reminiscent of mediaeval Indian history, when the Sikh Guru Arjun Dev (1581-1606) had invited the great sufi-saint Mian Meer of Lahore (1550-1635), to lay the foundation stone of Harmandir temple in Amritsar, Azad invited Gandhiji 'as an embodiment of sincerity and sacrifice', to open the Madrasa-i-Islamia in Calcutta, in the Jama Masjid complex on 12 December, 1920. And Gandhiji in his inaugural speech said 'let this Madrasa produce true Muslim and true Indian, ...who would avoid slavery and die for independence'.

In the Third Phase: 1923-58 (i.e., from the age of 35 till his death at the age of 69), covering almost half of his life-time, Azad remained a stalwart of the National Movement and a most eloquent articulator and defender of the values of composite culture and secular nationalism.

In his life Azad travelled on three paths at different times -- the path of exclusive Muslim patriotism and Pan-Islamism (1906-20); the path of reconciling Muslim patriotism with larger Indian nationalism (1920-23), and the path of thorough going secular, democratic nationalism (1923-58). He traversed all the three paths, as if they were inevitable stages in his evolution

towards the final goal of national independence; as if these phases were unavoidable, obvious and logical for anyone born in a highly traditional and orthodox Muslim family. Maulana Azad symbolized dramatically the entire spectrum of the socialization process in Indian politics that appeared inevitable for a typical Indian Muslim, brought-up in a conventional Muslim environment, subscribing to traditional values and norms, heir to inbuilt prejudices and given premises of social life, beginning education in a *maktab* or a *Madrasa*, circumscribed in his home and family environment by customs, conventions, social attitudes, civic manners, restrictions and taboos. That is, an atmosphere in which every progressive change and attempts at modernisation were decided as slavish imitation of western, rather British and Christian forms and patterns of life, hence repugnant to the dignity of Islam and pride of India. Exposure to Western education was considered a strategem of enslaving the mind and consciousness of the colonized people thereby vitiating the impulse to revolt against western-Christian domination. Azad's journey towards secular enlightenment began from such an ascriptive and hide-bound environment. But it is instructive to observe the paradox that exists between Azad born in a traditional household and Jinnah born in a cosmopolitan household, in their trends of political development. While Azad moved from the particular to the general, from the limited to the universal, from sect and community to nation and humanism, from religion-dominated political consciousness to secular, liberal democratic consciousness, Jinnah on the contrary moved just in the opposite direction.

There were four basic assumptions of Maulana Azad's political credo: (i) that Hindu-Muslim unity is a decisive element not only for national independence but also for building a democratic national identity in India; (ii) that the Khilafat movement is in essence the struggle for Indian independence and therefore it was necessary to promote joint Hindu-Muslim mass action; (iii) that non-cooperation and boycott of British goods for the Muslims is not only a political necessity but also a religious obligation based on appropriate puranic injunctions, whose validity is apparant in the circumstances in which the British government has become a belligerent opponent; (iv) that the building of

composite nationalism and stabilising its foundations is not only politically desirable but also a duty of the Muslims, in tune with the injunctions of the *Shariah* and in pursuance of the example set by the Prophet Muhammad himself.

Like Gandhiji, Azad considered Hindu-Muslim unity as an axial principle of national liberation and national reconstruction. For both of them it was an article of faith, a moral imperative. On 25 August, 1921 in his famous address to the Agra session of the Khilafat Conference, referring to Hindu-Muslim Unity, with dramatic emphasis and sincerity he said: 'Friends! if I recognize any work as my life-work, it is this'. And it was in this address — probably one of his greatest oration, so compact with new ideas and radical propositions — that he expatiated on the religious dimension of Hindu-Muslim unity. He said: 'If the Muslims of India would like to perform their best religious and Islamic duties ... then they must recognize that it is obligatory for the Muslims to be together with their Hindu brethren... and it is my belief that the Muslims in India cannot perform their best duties, until in conformity with the injunctions of Islam, in all honesty, they do not establish unity and cooperation with the Hindus. This belief is based on the imperative spirit of Islam'.

As a conclusive religious argument in defence of composite nationalism, he cited the example of Prophet Muhammad himself. In the very first year of Hijra (623 A.D.) the Prophet himself formulated the now famous Covenant of Medina, which was adopted in a general meeting of the people — both Muslims and non-Muslims, as a document declaring that the Muslims ('the Muhajereen' — the Meccan emigrees and 'the ansaar' — the Medinian helpers) enter into a political compact with the Jewish tribes, the Christians and Sebaens and Pagans, living in and around Medina, for mutual security, aid and support against the belligerent invading tribes from Mecca.

The document enumerated certain items of common concern and common action, and declared that in religious matters, everyone will have his own religion, 'for Jews their religion and for Muslims their religion'. But it categorically stated that all the parties to the Covenant have become *ummat-ul-Wahida*. Maulana Azad explicitly translated *ummat-ul-Wahida* as One Nation: *Umma* — Nation; *Wahida* — One. Other commentators translate it

variously as One People, One Community, One Congregation etc. Maulana argued from this innovative, though subsequently unsuccessful experiment of the Prophet in building a multi-religious political community even in his own time, that there is greater and more pressing need for creating a unified nation in India, by strengthening Hindu-Muslim unity and solidarity, and indeed bringing about multi-religious harmony for political unification and nation-building. No one before Azad, nor since, has argued so vigorously from religious angle, about the validity of constructing composite nationalism in India.

Maulana Azad integrated in his personality, deep reflective scholarship of the classical Islamic mould with capacity for rational and pragmatic thinking, attuned to the abiding concerns of social transformation and political emancipation of his motherland.

Maulana Azad remains a shining example of the fusion of the rationalist heritage of Islam and the compassionate heritage of India. He coalesced with endogenous creativity the Vedantic vision of many paths to truth with the Islamic doctrines of *Wahdat-e-Din* (Unity of faith) and *Sulhe-kul* (Universal peace).

He could find the echoes of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* in the repeated Quranic message

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(the entire Humanity is one community nation). Indeed in continuation with the intellectual exertions of early pioneers like Al-Beruni, Amir Khusro and Emperor Akbar's great grandson, the heir-apparent of Shahjehan, the Moghal Prince Dara Shikuh. Maulana Azad sought to examine the formulations of Upanishadic speculative thought with the quintessence of Islam, in order to build bridges of understanding between two great systems of social ethics, namely Hinduism and Islam, that dominated the multi-religious scenario of the sub-continent of India.

Maulana Azad's world view is reflected in his monumental work *the Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, Azad argues powerfully about the 'oneness of religious faiths' (*Wahdat-i-Din*) that has been vitiated

by the inevitable divergence of *Shariah* (laws) necessitated by different socio-cultural environments, and by formalistic and institutionalised schism, promoted by the followers of the diverse faiths. In his monumental commentary on the brief seven verse opening chapter of the *Quran*, *Surat-ul-fatiha*, (which he calls the natural introduction to the study of *Quran*), Azad emphasises the doctrine of *rububiyat* as the quintessence of Islam in its universal appeal and validity. *Rububiyat* as a doctrine entails the recognition of God as *Rabb-ul-Alameen* (Lord of all Being; author of all Existence, circumscribing all Creation). The word *Rabb* in Arabic implies 'the Cherisher' 'the Nourisher' 'the Sustainer', 'the Provider' for all His creation. It encompasses the attributes of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, in the henotheistic Hindu pantheon.

The system of Divine Nurture (*Nizam-e-Rububiyat*) transcends all divisions and fragmentation of mankind based on any consideration like creed, colour, region, nation, etc. Hence *Rabb* is not the God only of one people, but of all the people. Then Azad emphasises that three attributes of God are reiterated continuously in the *Quran*, and hence should be recognised as fundamental – namely *al-Rahman* ('the benevolent' *i.e.*, one who gives even without seeking) and *al-Rahim* ('the merciful' *i.e.*, one who responds when asked, and is forgiving), and *Malik Yaum-ul-Din* (Master of the day of Judgement, *i.e.*, who shall dispense justice). *Providence, Benevolence, Mercy and Justice*, then are the four cardinal *values* inherent in a universal, omnipotent, omnipresent God. Azad lays stress on reason (*aql*) as the instrument of comprehension and explanation of all matters, divine and secular. He concludes his commentary of *Surat-ul-Fatiha* by saying that when such a universal God, *Rabb ul Alameen* *guides* on the *right path* – (*ihdenas-Sirat-al-Mustaqeem*) it is not the particular path of any race of nation, but the path on which their is universal consensus of the leaders of all the religions and of all right-minded human-beings, may they belong to any race and any age. Commitment to universal humanism, he says is indeed the essence of the Quranic message.

## II

Maulana Azad is revered without being understood. He remains only partially understood and a much misunderstood

personality among the stalwarts of the Indian national movement. Because to a large bulk of our people he has been reduced to a noble 'totem' of the political tribe called the 'nationalist Muslims' — a tribes whose political legitimacy acquired credence in the pre-partition milieu only as a contra-reference-point to what was then known in the vernacular as the 'League-e Muslims'. Today for most of his compatriots Azad is part of the sentimental heritage of the national movement, a relic, a bygone phenomenon, whose name and memory evokes appropriate sentiments of admiration, veneration, felicitation, adoration, etc., but never of clear and critical understanding, never of rational intellectual comprehension of his life, his role, his struggles, the lesson of his tragedy, and the abiding message and relevance of his dreams.

This is partly due to the fact that the 'nationalist Hindu', whose clan has thrived and multiplied in post-partition India, and who constitutes today the mainstream of Indian polity, had always taken the so-called 'nationalist Muslim' for granted, as a natural ally in the national movement. This sometimes entailed neglect and oversight and an attitude of condescension and underestimation of their role and importance. It is not often realised that due to their convictional opposition to Muslim communalism, the habitual obedience of the nationalist Muslims to the cause and purposes of composite nationalism has been axiomatic and heroic. And for a considerable measure it was more than that of the nationalist Hindus, because of an obvious situational difference. The majority status of the nationalist Hindus, provided them with an ambiguity of being communal and nationalist at the same time, if they were so inclined, because almost always majority communalism can pass off as rudimentary nationalism. But minority communalism, by its very nature, stands-off and shrieks, so to say, and exposes itself as 'different', 'divisive' 'separatist' and 'anti-national'. It was a gratuitous insult to refer to a thorough going Indian nationalist of Muslim origin as 'Nationalist Muslim' while for Hindu, no suffix or prefix was deemed necessary.

One reason for considerable ignorance about Maulana Azad, stems from the fact that in our own time and age, there are not many who can read, much less understand and appreciate the Urdu language in all its powerful thrust, allegorical beauty and



sophisticated diction. It is not often realised that the alienation of the Urdu language in India, is one of the cruelest cultural tragedies of our times. It has robbed us of a significant part of our heritage, also of the national movement. Most of Maulana's creative works, ideological speeches and journalistic writings, memoirs and account, are almost all in Urdu. There is not much of consequence, either written or spoken by Maulana, which is available in the English language. Humayun Kabir's English version of Maulana's Urdu narrative – called *India Wins Freedom* is the only readily available book that is read by a large number of people. The book is a reconstruction of Maulana's successive conversations on certain aspects of the last phase of freedom struggle, that is from the formation of Congress ministries in the Provinces in 1937 to Gandhiji's murder in 1948. Stylistically and in emphasis, the book appears more in harmony with Humayun Kabir's Anglo-Bengali assertiveness and occasional blatancy, which makes it a rather sad caricature of Maulana's own Urdu style imbued with subtlety, wit and nuances, and the inevitable grace and generosity, which was integral to his style in life. In other Indian languages what is available is still meagre. Lack of communication is obviously a serious impediment in comprehending a personality. The telling words of a contemporary Urdu poet, Majrooh comes to mind:

*Zabaan hamari na samjah yahaan koi Majrooh,  
Hum ajnabi ki tarha apney he watan mein rahey*

(No one here understands my language, O Majrooh, Like a stranger, I lived in my own country)

The Maulana was much misunderstood, rather deliberately, by his contemporaries, for variety of reasons – political sectarian, factional and personal. His intellectual brilliance matched with majestic personality, provoked powerful jealousy. Admiration slipping into envy, and envy degenerating into hate is not an uncommon psychological passage. In a beautiful line Ghalib says: 'I have envied beyond limit, that one might suspect it to be hatred'.

The Muslim communalist could not tolerate a man so profound in Islamic theology and ontology, and who was capable of quoting the Quran and the Sunnah in defence of his basic

credo of composite Indian nationalism. The orthodox and tradition-bound Ulema were disturbed by his endogenous creativity and rationalist exertion in the interpretation of the faith (*ijtihad-fid-din*) in harmony with the great Hanbali reformer Ibn Taimiyah (1268-1328), who had emphasized God's transcendence to underline oneness of faith (*Wahdat-i-Din*) and fraternity of humankind involving reciprocal obligations. Sectarian opposition to Maulana became fierce with his continued affirmation of composite nationalism, not only as a desirable political objective but also as one dictated by rational understanding of the *Shariah* and the Covenant of Medina prepared by the Prophet. His detractors derided *Irjumen-ul-Quran* as '*Congress tafsir*', and as a *tafsir-bil-ray* (interpretation by personal opinion), in order to prejudice the ignorant Muslim masses from assimilating its great message of reason, humanism and compassion. The Muslim league had whipped-up a campaign of hate against him. In the measure in which Maulana lost his Muslim political constituency, some of the Congress factional groups, tried to weaken his legitimacy and hold.

Azad's fascinating personality had its own points of contradiction as well. There was always an inner tension in his conduct and style and public posture due to dichotomies that his personality had to reconcile. There was the dichotomy between a life of profound scholarship pursuing simultaneously a life of active politics; between involvement in Islamic religious reformation and commitment to secular democratic nationalism; between promoting Muslim mass consciousness on religious symbols and idiom, and yet promoting composite nationalism, involving in its wake struggle against Muslim communalism, sectarianism and separatist politics.

Maulana Azad was one of the greatest intellectuals that the National Movement had produced. His intellectualism was of the classical mould and learning, a real *Alim*, spanning wide branches of knowledge from Islamic theology to Arabic and Persian literature, *al-kalam*, traditional philosophy and metaphysics, and later his interests stretched to European literature and selective philosophical and scientific studies. Allegorically speaking, one might say that he was a born patrician in an age of plebian — upurge, and despite his endeavour to identify himself with the

interests and concerns of the plebians, his inborn aristocracy of the mind and learning; so evident in his scholarly speeches, profound writings, his style, his manners, his values, that he could never really get firmly rooted in mass-culture and mass-politics. He was *with* them, but not of them. He knew it, and never pretended otherwise. There was always a wide chasm between him and his audience. He over-awed them by his oratorical skills, his fluency, the flight of his poetic imagination, the flourish of his pen, his learned references and appropriate political lines. Most of his persuasive and erudite Urdu diction, most of the time went over the heads of common mortals, whose elemental response was applause and adoration, without clear understanding.

In the life of nations and civilisation, sometime great personalities are also great tragedies. When 'time' and 'circumstance' do not harmonize with the main exertion of a personality, discordance occurs, which casts a gloom on an otherwise brilliant career. Only those personalities betray the tragic touch, whose previous accomplishments, prompt expectations beyond that which can be fulfilled. The tragic element endemic in Maulana Azad's career was due to the fact that he was Muslim in a predominantly Hindu environment, and yet bold enough to recommend and propagate composite nationalism to Muslims in variance with the prevalent political consciousness based on communalised politics. But precisely because of this Maulana Azad remains an undaunted symbol of defiance against unreason, sectarianism and parochialism, whose brilliant exposition remains the heritage of generation which still has to fight the battles he fought — battles against communalism, hate and violence, for building an enlightened India of his dreams.

I have vivid but poignant memory of Maulana's funeral procession. Tens of thousands of his compatriots belonging to all castes and creeds bade him a tearful farewell. I remember a moving personal episode of a more-or-less illiterate *pahari* Hindu cook who retorted when told why are you mourning, because Maulana was a Muslim. He said: '*Jane do Sahib, Na woh Hindu thay na Musalman. Woh to barey shareef admi thay*'. (Forgive me Sir, he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. He was a very good man). Indeed this can be his abiding epitaph, that he was a good man. And that I think is enough to say on anyone's death.

*PART THREE*

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# **HIS SPEECHES**

## **Adult Education, Technical Education and Language Policy\***

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...There is no doubt that the problem of adult education is as important as that of child education. The adult education has far greater aims than merely teaching adults how to read and write. It is our duty to impart to adults an education which should develop their thinking faculty so that they are enlightened and enabled to take due interest in the affairs of a democratic State and society. In no walk of our national life can we progress without the considered and judicious co-operation of millions of our countrymen. Anyhow, no body would deny the extreme importance of this work. What we have to see is how best this work can be accomplished in the shortest time.

The report submitted by the Central Advisory Board in the year 1944 contained also a scheme for adult education. But this scheme could not be enforced. It was after the last general elections, when the Congress Ministries were re-established in the Provinces, that attention was paid to this thing. Work was taken

\* Speech delivered in the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) 11 March, 1948

in hand but on too small a scale to meet the demands of the day. After my assumption of office as Education Minister last year the first task that confronted me was the basic Education and Adult Education schemes. But the political condition of our country at that time was such that no time could be spared for attending to the task of education. Government was over head and ears engrossed with other affairs. I wanted to convene a meeting of the Provincial education ministers and representatives of the Universities. Twice a date was fixed but every time it had to be postponed because conditions at that time made it impossible for men to assemble for a conference. Opportunity offered itself at last, and in January meetings of the Educational Conference and the Central Advisory Committee were held. I placed before them a new scheme for Adult Education; and you know that it was approved by both of these bodies. The report of the sub-committee appointed for this purpose by the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Board was presented and accepted with some modifications. Our scheme is ready now. Its one branch concerns literary education and the other with the development of mental faculties. The latter provides besides oral lectures, the media of radio, films and modern methods of open air dramas. Efforts are being made to secure the best equipment. For this very reason this year money has been earmarked for a film library. Production of educational films is being undertaken. A separate section has been started under the ministry for the purpose of helping in the preparation of necessary literature. The sub-committee appointed by the Advisory board had stressed the inclusion of certain amount of technical education in this scheme because a majority of the adults receiving education under this scheme would be connected with some profession or art. This suggestion has therefore also been incorporated in the scheme. Opinions of the Provincial Governments have been invited in this connection. We intend to introduce this scheme in such a way as should enable the schools of Basic Education to become centres of all activities of the Adult Education as well. In this way we want to create a new intellectual atmospheres in this country.

So far I have told you the story of Adult Education. But mere paper scheme does not do. It requires material and for material the question of money comes first. The House is

familiar with the attitude the Central Government have hitherto been adopting in this connection. Government proceeds upto a certain point beyond which it cannot proceed. I wish we could cross these old limits and move along new lines.

I wanted to have double the present grant but due to the emphasis laid by the Ministry of finance on our limitations for the year I had to content myself with it. The political conditions and especially the misfortunes of the Punjab, have suddenly burdened the finances of the Central Government; and due to this we have been forced to proceed slowly. Nevertheless I admit that other things can afford to wait but not education. It is necessary that somehow or other provision for money for this work must be made. This was also one of the Fundamental questions which were raised in the Educational Conference which met on the 16th January. The Conference has appointed a committee to go into this question and to make its recommendation. I hope Government will receive their recommendation by June and we will be able to arrange sufficient funds for carrying out essential schemes of education.

In moving the second cut motion the Honourable Shri Deshmukh has drawn the attention of Government to the necessity for technical education. I may assure him that Government have been doing everything possible in this connection and in our plan for the next year's Budget we have tried to move quickly. If the Honourable Members had glanced through the statement circulated to them, this cut-motion would probably have not been necessary. I will briefly tell the House what has been done in this connection.

The Government of India have decided to open four Higher Technical Institutions on the model of American Institutes of these two will be located near Calcutta and Bombay and work has to be started atonce. From the files I find that this matter has been under consideration for the last two years, but so far neither any site has been selected nor any progress made in pushing through the work. I tried to remedy this state of affairs, and to enforce the scheme as soon as possible. The site has now been selected and arrangements for the staff are being made. Each of the four institutes would cost Rs. three crores as Capital expenditure and Rupees forty four lakhs as recurring expenditure

and will provide for the training of 3,000 students — 2,000. Under graduates and 1,000 Post-graduates. The whole scheme is expected to be completed within two or three years.

Four years' development plan for the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, has been sanctioned, and the power engineering department is being opened.

Three years' development plan for the Delhi Polytechnic has been sanctioned and the work is being started.

The All India Council for Technical Education recommended to give from the Centre a grant to the existing technical institutions in the country. Accordingly the grant has been sanctioned for five years and it is being given.

The House might be aware of the fact that an Overseas Scholarship scheme was passed by the Central Government in 1944 and scholars from India were being sent abroad for training. When the new Government assumed office it was felt that this scheme was not followed properly. Therefore the first thing was to try to raise the status of the existing institutions to a level so as to train students with much higher qualifications, and then to determine according to the plan the subjects for the study of which scholars should be sent abroad and then to grant scholarship for those subjects only. Accordingly with this object in view a committee called the Scientific Manpower Committee was set up to investigate into the country's immediate scientific requirements and to prepare a plan.

The committee is still functioning. It has submitted its interim report and Government gave their immediate attention to it and have accepted most of its recommendations. The recommendations stressed the need for giving fresh grants to the country's universities and institutions to enable them to augment their resources for imparting educational facilities in scientific and technical subjects. We have started giving grants from this year, and allotment of funds has been made for the three Central Universities.

In addition to these activities of the Central Government the technical education work is also being generally accelerated in all the Provinces. The Central Government have this year given



handsome amounts to the Provincial Governments to enable them to implement their development schemes quickly.

Accordingly, 29 Junior Technical Institutions are being reorganised, and their scope of instructions is being enlarged, 4 Technical High Schools are being opened; 11 Senior Technical Institutions; 140 Junior Technical Schools; 38 Technical High Schools; 16 Polytechnics; 4 Senior Technical Institutions, will soon begin to function.

These statistics relate to the general Post War Development Plan.

In moving the third cut motion, the Honourable Mrs. Hansa Mehta has drawn our attention to the fact that no rules have yet been prescribed for grants to the universities. And it is necessary that the Central Government should elucidate its policy in this respect. I feel that no such question arises. The practice followed by the previous Government was to give grants to the three Central Universities only and with a view to give these grants, a committee called the University Grants Committee was constituted. The present Government felt that if it was desired to raise the standard of education of the entire country to the same level, then the scope of Central Government's help should not be confined to the three Universities only. It should be further expanded. In other words we should open its doors for the distribution of grants to other Universities also. With this object the University Grants Committee was constituted *de novo* and its terms of reference have been framed in such a manner so as to fully conform to this new policy. All the applications which are now received by the Ministry will be passed on to the University Grants Committee. The Government will carefully consider over the recommendations made by the Committee in this respect.

Mrs. Hansa Mehta has also referred in her speech to the existence of communal institutions and has stressed the point as to why the word 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' should at all be associated with the names of Benares and Aligarh Universities? I fully agree with the views expressed by her. I do not only agree but I welcome this idea. I extend a hearty welcome to this. No one else than myself will be happier if the words 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' are eliminated from the names of these two Universities. But it is

clear that legislation establishing these Universities was passed by this House and until the Acts are amended we cannot make any change..... The Government are also in full agreement with the point stressed by Shrimati Mehta. Any Honourable Member of the House can move for an amendment of the Act. In any case this change must be made.

The Government are also in full agreement with the point stressed by Shrimati G. Durga Bai. Nothing can retard more the growth of our national life than the encouragement of 'community' 'religion' and 'caste' in the educational sphere and placing of such limitations as would separate one class of people from the other. When we oppose this, it is not our intention that the backward classes should not be provided with facilities for advancement. On the contrary they should be helped in every walk of life and there is no doubt education is the high-road for their advancement. If they have been left behind in the sphere of progress it is not their fault. The society is to be blamed for this. It is all the more necessary therefore that the society which has not upto now placed them on an equal footing, should help in their advancement. Take the case of our Harijan brethren. If seats can be reserved for them in some institutions it does not mean that they are accorded discriminatory treatment over other classes. The reason is that if such a course is not adopted there is danger that they would be lost and will not be able to receive the benefit of education according to their share. The Government quite agree with the view that there should be no distinction of caste or creed in the sphere of education and whatever policy the Government and universities of the Provinces have so far followed in this respect they should now adopt the national policy of the Central Government.

The last motion was moved by the Honourable Mr. Frank Anthony, pointing out that the Government should have a uniform policy regarding language. If any change has to be introduced it should be done slowly and gradually after full consideration. The change from English to an Indian language should not be sudden as this will disturb the standard of education and will result in harassment to people. I can assure the Honourable Member that this is the policy of the Government who have advised the Provincial Governments to move cautiously and slowly in this

matter. It must be known to the Honourable Members that I was first to raise my voice and warn the people against taking hasty steps and to move slowly. In my convocation address at the Patna University I first expressed my view that we should substitute the language in the course of five years and though we should start the process now the English language should continue for five years. This opinion applies not only to matters of education but also to matters of administration. Later on in the month of January when the Central Advisory Board and the Educational Conference met, I placed the same view before them and laid emphasis on the point that English should be replaced gradually and after due consideration. I am glad the Central Advisory Board and the Educational Conference both agreed to this view, and I can say with confidence that the general policy of the Government in this connection will be as was indicated by me. Thus the Central Government have, so far as they are concerned, laid down a definite and clear policy on this subject and as medium of instruction English will be replaced by one or more Indian languages. We do not want a sudden change but the change should be effected step by step. Our plan is that this should be accomplished in five years and in such a manner that in the sixth year the need for English should vanish.

To put it succinctly the Government policy can be described as follows:

So far as the primary and secondary stage is concerned it has been decided that the medium of instruction will be the mother tongue, and this is being put into practice by all the Provinces. For the University stage, it has been decided that English cannot continue as the medium of instruction but this change we should bring about in five years so that in the sixth year English will be fully replaced.

This then is the policy of the Government on the language question and the representatives of the Provinces who came to attend the Educational Conference also agreed to it. It is, therefore, not correct to say that the Government have no uniform policy in this matter.

As I have already said it has been decided that the medium of instruction even in the University will be the national language.

But we have not decided yet whether we are going to have one or more national languages. The All India Educational Conference which I convened in January last has appointed a Committee to go into this matter and we are awaiting the recommendations of this Committee.

The Honourable Member has specially mentioned the U.P. Government. I cannot say what exactly his point is? In November last I saw a press report to the effect that the U.P. Government will stop printing the U.P. Government Gazette in English from the new year. I immediately wrote a letter to the U.P. Premier suggesting that it will not be proper to do away with English so suddenly. In his reply to my letter he assured me that his Government was not in favour of making sudden changes and that he fully concurred in my opinion expressed in my address at the Patna University. Now I am aware that the U.P. Government Gazette is still being published in English as usual.

I will also tell the House that it is welcome to make as many requests as it pleases regarding matters educational and I will welcome all such requests but it should not forget that I am only a Minister of Education and not an Officer-in-charge of paradise, nor have I a magician's basket with me to produce a full grown tree at a moment's notice.

## Education Policy\*

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I feel that giving a general outline of the Government's educational policy is necessary in view of the fact that this is the First Budget for a full year of free and independent India. I am, therefore, availing of this occasion to place before the Honourable Members a statement not only of schemes we have in hand and the moneys involved in their execution, but also a blue-print of our future educational edifice.

When the National Government was formed in August 1947, it entered into a heritage which was burdened with many encumbrances. There was no clean slate to write upon but a palimpsest on which was scrawled the marks of generations of scribes who had each his own mode and style. For 150 years, there had been in this land a government imposed from above with an attitude, a tradition and a method of work which was largely alien. The first task of the National Government was, therefore, to avoid being swallowed up by the past. It was easy to fall in line with existing tendencies and take the line of least resistance. The National Government resisted that temptation and sought to create new traditions, a new point of view and new attitude towards our problems and their solution. I do not say that

\* Statement of Policy in connection with Cut-Motions on the Budget proposals for 1948-49 as circulated to Honourable Members, 11 March, 1948.

the slate has been wiped clean, for the work of generations cannot be swept away in a day. No efforts have, however, been spared for the reorientation of the policy of Government, and I hope that the house will agree that success in a large measure has been achieved.

I assumed charge of what was then the Department of Education on the 15th January 1947. My task was to survey the schemes, some of which were already in operation, some just started and others yet in the planning stage. These schemes were, however, all conceived at a time when an alien Government was in the seat of power and I had to examine what modifications were necessary in order to bring them into line with the spirit of the changed times and circumstances. I also conceived it as my duty to undertake new plans in the educational field to enable us to realise the objectives for which the Indian people have been striving for the last 60 years or more.

I need not dilate on the difficulties which we have had to face during the last year. There was almost from the beginning political uncertainty and the fate of the country hung in the balance. The Cabinet Mission's plan was in the melting pot and soon after there emerged the plan for a division of the country into two States. In addition, there were as every member of the House is aware, internal stresses inside the Government itself which made it impossible for us to function as a homogenous Cabinet and pull our full weight in advancing the interest of India.

It is true that after the 13th of August most of these uncertainties were set at rest and the internal stresses within the Cabinet resolved. There were, however, new and stupendous happenings beginning with the Punjab upheavals when for full three months the Government had to suspend and hold in abeyance almost all its activities and gear the administrative machinery to one and one purpose alone, viz. the rescue of those unfortunate countrymen of ours who had been involved in this terrific catastrophe.

In spite of all these distractions, the Government have spared no effort to advance the cause of education in the country. One thing which struck my notice soon after I assumed charge was that even where the Government had formulated well

thought-out and beneficial schemes, the execution was so slow that no appreciable results could be expected unless the process was accelerated. I will give you one or two instances of the slowness of the Government machinery when we took over charge. It was decided to establish a central institute of Education full two years ago and a budget provision of Rs. 22 lakhs was sanctioned for the purpose. It is true that lack of building material was partly responsible for failure to implement the plan, but in my opinion, this is not sufficient justification for having failed to bring the institute into existence. If necessary, a start might have been made and the institute housed in a temporary or hired building while its permanent edifice was being constructed.

Another example to which I must draw your attention is the scheme of basic education for the country. Both the Central and the Provincial Governments had agreed to put into effect immediately the first Five Year Plan of the basic education scheme which aimed at providing free and compulsory training to the citizens between the ages of 6 and 14. I feel that the Centrally Administered Areas should have served as a model and even if there were delays elsewhere, these areas should have put the scheme into immediate effect. I regret to say that though huge files of correspondence piled up between the Central Government and the Delhi Local Administration, the work did not start.

I now come to schemes which had already started when I assumed charge but not in the spirit and manner that I considered necessary. The scheme of overseas scholarships was conceived in 1944 and a beginning was made during that very year. This was a most important scheme and should have been carried out according to carefully thought out plans. We should have examined what is the capacity of existing institutions in India and how far they can be quickly expanded in order to meet our requirements. Where conditions in the country demanded that students must be sent abroad, it was necessary that great care and thought was exercised in the choice of scholars and the institutions to which they were sent. We should have considered that the exigencies of war made conditions extremely difficult in both, the U.K. and the U.S.A. Even when war was over, 90 per cent of the seats in most of their universities and technical institutions were reserved for their own ex-service personnel. In

addition, there were great difficulties with regard to housing and food for students who would go to the U.K. I am afraid that these factors were not properly weighed, and a decision was taken to send 500 students abroad every year. Two batches had already gone and the selection of a third almost completed when I assumed charge. I did not want to stop this third batch from going abroad but considered that a further survey of the entire scheme was necessary. Accordingly I appointed an Overseas Scholarship Committee which has already submitted its report and the Scientific Manpower Committee, which also has submitted an interim report. In the light of their recommendations, new plans are being made and I can indicate the general policy of Government. From now on, more money will be spent on the expansion of Indian institutions and only in exceptional circumstances will selected candidates be sent for training abroad at Government expense.

One of our biggest, and perhaps our most important scheme is the Basic Education Scheme for universal compulsory education. Important and valuable work was done by the Central Advisory Board of Education under the last Government. We could not, however, take their recommendations as they stood and felt that certain important modifications were necessary. According to that plan, the full implementation of the scheme would take 40 years but people of India are not prepared to wait for even half that period. I have said earlier that in my opinion the Centrally Administered Areas should serve both as pioneer and a model, and accordingly I have set up the Delhi Provincial Education Board, and I am taking steps to see that from the 1st of July this year, the basic education plan starts operating in this area.

I felt that we should go ahead with the scheme in other areas of India as well. For this, however, it was necessary to get the fullest co-operation from the Provinces and the States. I, therefore, proposed an All India Educational Conference and had originally intended that this should meet in June 1947. Political uncertainties compelled postponement of this Conference twice but ultimately it was held in January 1948. I suggested to the Conference that instead of 40 years, we should aim at a target of five years for the completion of the plan and in any case see that



the plan is fully executed and worked out within a period of ten years. The Conference agreed with me and unanimously resolved that steps should be taken to bring this about. There were the problems of trained teachers and finance. The Conference held that while every effort must be made to increase facilities for training teachers. We cannot wait till a sufficient number of trained teachers are available but must go ahead with existing material in the country. It was therefore proposed that there should be some kind of educational conscription for five years during which every literate man in the country would be expected to put in a period of service as a teacher of the nation. The finances involved are an additional expenditure of about Rs. 24 crores per year for the next five years. The conference suggested that a Committee should be appointed to examine all available methods for meeting the financial requirements.

I have referred to the Central Institute of Education the establishment of which was approved two years ago. I decided that we should not wait because of shortage of building material but go ahead with the scheme with whatever housing was available. Accordingly, the Institute was started in December 1947 and is housed partly in tents and partly in a bungalow in the Cavalry lines. I am hoping that very soon the foundation stone of the permanent buildings will be laid.

I will now briefly refer to the schemes for which funds are needed during the coming years. You will find that the Tata Institute of Science was given a grant of Rs. 3.5 lakhs non-recurring and Rs. 0.5 lakhs recurring in the year 1947-48. Provisions for an equal amount had been made during the coming year. Provision has also been made in the budget for 1948-49 for a library of educational and cultural films which will be used to carry out the scheme of adult education. Without simultaneous drive for adult education our scheme for basic education for the children of 6-11 years cannot be fully implemented.

Provision has also been made for the establishment of national museum of Art, Archaeology, and Anthropology. Here the amounts provided are less than what are required. The financial urgency compelled us to slow down the rate of progress, but I trust that we will now soon be able to go ahead with the programme at full speed.

You will find that a provision has also been made in the budget for helping the universities, in schemes of fundamental research. The importance of such fundamental research need hardly be emphasized before so responsible a body as this House. I may only add that with same end in view, we have also provided moneys for research in Higher Polymer Physics and Chemistry at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Calcutta, and the establishment of a Power Engineering Department at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Honourable members are aware that the Central Government have special responsibility for the development of Central Universities and under this head provisions has been made for implementation of the interior scheme and the execution of the post-war development plans.

I have referred earlier to the new policy of Government to expand facility for training within the country itself instead of sending scholars abroad. In pursuance of that policy you will find that the budget provision for improvement and development of existing technical institutions according to the recommendations of the All India Council of Technical Education. The most important projects in this respect are the establishment of Eastern and Western Technical Institutions near Calcutta and Bombay respectively. The site for the Eastern Higher Technical Institute has already been approved and the site for the Western Higher Technical Institute has also been provisionally selected. A start has been made in regard to recruitment of expert staff and advertisements issue simultaneously in India, U.K., and U.S.A. for recruitment of 1 Director and 8 Heads of Departments for the Eastern Institute. They will also be responsible for the planning work for Western Institute in the initial stages. Provision has also been made for the establishment of regional committees for the All India Council of Technical Education.

There is today an extreme emphasis on development of facilities for scientific and industrial training. I, however feel that a country like India with the age-long traditions can ignore the humanities only at the risk of jeopardising her ancient civilization and culture. Provision has, therefore, been made in the budget for the reorganisation of the Marris College of Hindustani Music, the establishment of Central College of Karnatak Music in South

India and, most important of all the establishment of a National Cultural Trust. For the Marris College, a grant-in-aid of Rs. 1,45,000 was sanctioned for the year 1947-48 and an equivalent amount has been provided in the next year budget for the Central College of Karnatak Music an amount of Rs. 4,25,000 has been provided in the Budget. The establishment of National Cultural Trust with 3 Academies to cater for Arts, Architecture, Letters, Music, Drama and Dancing will serve to focus the Artistic and Cultural life of the nation in one common Centre.

Schemes have also been formulated for the establishment of a Training College of Physical Education and a sum of Rs. 2,10,000 provided in the budget for the purpose. Provision has also been made for a Training College for teachers in Domestic Science in cooperation with the Lady Irwin College in New Delhi. Admission will be on an All India basis with provision of scholarships as well as maintenance in deserving cases.

I have referred earlier to the necessity of the increasing facilities for training of teachers. The two schemes of training College for Physical Education and for Domestic Science are meant to meet the requirements from one point of view. For general training of teachers, in addition to the schemes already referred to provision has been made for expanding training facilities at the Viswabharati. Training in arts and crafts, dancing and music and in basic education will be provided there.

Provision has also been made for the establishment of a Central Braille Press for the service of the blind. There are several other schemes which had to be either postponed or slowed down because of financial stringency. I may refer to the proposal for the establishment of a Central Institute of Foreign Languages. With India's expanding contacts with all countries of the world, the need for such an institute is obvious. A Central Bureau of Psychology, is also a pressing need but no provision could be made for it in next year's budget. The matter is, however, under consideration. Another scheme which has had to be postponed is the establishment of an Experimental School in Delhi on the lines recommended by the Central Advisory Board. I trust that after the Basic Education Plan has been put into operation it will be found possible to revive this project. The establishment of a National Central Copyright Library as well as a Central School of

Indian Architecture and Regional Planning had also to be postponed for financial reasons. I would not have, in normal circumstances, agreed to anyone of these schemes being postponed or slowed down, but on account of the extraordinary circumstances of last year and particularly the drain upon the nation's resources on account of the Punjab calamity, I have reluctantly agreed to this slowing down. I, however, trust that this is purely temporary and we shall soon be able to go fullsteam ahead.

I have given some account of the work in hand. I may frankly say that I am not fully satisfied either with the progress achieved or the number of schemes in operation. I would, however, like the Honourable Members to remember that nothing can be done without adequate finances. I will give three further instances of the way in which extremely important work has had to be postponed or slowed down because of shortage of funds. The Honourable Members are aware that the Archaeology Department is one of the most important sources from which we get material for the "Discovery of India". It is well known that the history of India is still a wide and uncovered field and it will be no exaggeration to say that our real history lies buried underground. Excavations of large scale are necessary to unearth the relics of the past and reconstruct our history, but mean funds which are not at the moment available.

Our National Archives, formerly known as Imperial Records, are a treasurehouse for the history of last 200 years. These records must be carefully preserved for the loss of one record means that one chapter of our history has been lost. Further, once these records are lost, they can never be recovered again. Schemes for air-conditioning and use of modern scientific methods for the preservation of these documents had been planned. We had also planned the classification and arrangement of the records for facility of reference and study, but the lack of funds prevented the provision of any money this year and there is nothing in next year's budget as well.

The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal is also a veritable treasurehouse of Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Persian and Tibetan records. The collection there is one of the richest in the world. The climate of Calcutta, however, has led to damage of many old

manuscripts. It is essential that immediate steps must be taken to restore and preserve 9000 of such manuscripts. Air-conditioning is indispensable in a climate like that of Calcutta but this again means additional expenditure. I propose to appoint a Committee to report on the best methods of preservation of these records and finding necessary finances for the purpose.

There are also new schemes of study which are necessary, if we are to give a proper orientation to our national outlook. There must be a revision of syllabus and courses of study from the primary to the university stage. I will mention only two fields where immediate work in this connection is essential. The history of India is a proud heritage of every Indian citizen. Yet there does not exist as yet any true national history of our land. It is necessary that a history of Indian civilisation and culture from the earliest times must be taken in hands at an early date. Honourable Members are also aware that Indian philosophy is one of the proudest possessions of human civilization. In our college histories of philosophy, Indian philosophy is however, relegated to an obscure corner. In order to get a true perspective of philosophy, it is necessary that student should know of the great contributions of Indian, along with the developments which took place in Greece and Modern Europe. I propose to appoint a committee of eminent philosophers with Dr. Radhakrishnan as the Chairman to write a history of philosophy in which due and proper emphasis will be given to these facts. It is my intention to have a similar Committee for supervising the preparation of a history of India.

I would like in passing to mention that with a view to providing necessary education for the masses a new Section of Social Education has just been started in the Ministry. I need hardly remind you of Disraeli's famous saying that we must educate our masters, but to serve its real purpose, this education must be not only a teaching of the R's but an education in the structure, traditions and purposes of society.

I would also like to inform Honourable Members that we have just started an interesting experiment for encouraging young artists by the award of an honorarium. Six artists have been chosen this year and have been awarded a grant of Rs. 2,500 each. The grant is unconditional but given only to artists who are

young, full of promise and in such financial conditions that they require State help to develop their genius. The artists were selected by a Committee of experts of established reputation.

I have again and again emphasized the need for providing more funds for education. I would like Honourable Members to consider the proportion of money spent by the Central Government for educational purposes. For the year 1946-47, the total Central budget was Rs. 421,35,86,000. Out of this only Rs. 1,87,13,500 were spent on Education. This represents only 0.1 percent of the total budget. If the expenditure on Defence, Posts, Telegraphs and Railways is excluded from the budget the percentage of expenditure on Education would work out at 1.3 percent. This represents an unhappy state of affairs and must be remedied as early as possible.

It is true that Education is a Provincial subject but during the present phase of the country's development, it is absolutely imperative that the Centre must take the initiative. I have already referred to the Scientific Manpower Committee. In its interim report, it has urged the necessity of the Centre taking the initiative in the provision of technical education of different grades and types throughout the country. What applies to technical education holds equally true of art, archaeology, anthropology and other specialised studies.

I know that generally the Treasury Benches want to avoid pressure from honourable Members and are happy if their proposals are accepted without comment or criticism. I, however, welcome the constructive suggestions they have made and shall be glad if they put further pressure on me and the Government to do as much as possible for a new expansion of education in this ancient land. I need hardly say that whatever be our programme for industrial, scientific, agricultural, commercial or material progress and development, none of them can be achieved without an improvement of the human material which is the basis of our national wealth. That human material is largely conditioned by the training and education which it receives. It seems to me that whether we think of defence or of food or of industries and commerce we must take every step to see that education is given the first priority among all our national requirements. If this is also the opinion of Honourable Members and they urge upon the

Government to act in that light, no one will be happier than myself, whatever may be said in criticism of the proposals for schemes that I have presented before the House.

I know that these schemes are not fully satisfactory. I myself would have liked to present before the House a more ambitious scheme of Educational programme and development. Conditions, were, however, against us and we had to fight against tremendous odds, unprecedented in the history of our land. I would, therefore, plead that the House should judge us, not by the quantum of results achieved, but by the effort and strain involved in achieving them in the face of stupendous difficulties. Honourable Members are aware of the existence of these obstacles, but perhaps do not always realise their magnitude and extent. The Government have no Alladin's Lamp which can build palaces overnight and must, through days, months and years, strive to erect the edifice which all of us desire. In the words of the Persian poet:

*Mai Khwahi o tund o tez wangah bisiar*

*Een badah farosh hast Saqi-e-Kausar nest.*

Thou desirest wine : wine that is strong and powerful -

And not only strong and powerful but in profuse and abundant measure. Rememberest thou that here is a vintner no servitor of Paradise.

If you remember our difficulties and also remember what has nevertheless been achieved, I feel confident that you will commend the manner in which a beginning has been made. I make bold to say that though difficulties and obstacles prevented us from completing the house, yet no obstacle, no difficulty, no diversion, no opposition could make us desist from our task. I would submit that though the house has not yet been built, foundations have been laid on true sound lines.

Sir, my Hon. friend Acharya Kripalani began the discussion day before yesterday. He emphasised in his speech that the present system of education was entirely defective and that it must be reformed. It occurred to me, when he took up the argument, that perhaps he would discuss the measures of reform suggested by the Education Ministry recently and the steps taken by the

Central Advisory Board of Education in January last. I thought that perhaps he was going to offer some suggestions of his own in that behalf. But I was surprised to hear him say that we appointed a commission for University Education, a commission for Secondary Education and now perhaps after a few days we might appoint a commission for Primary Education. This shows that he has no idea of the way the Government is doing the work of education. Either he does not get the time to read these things or his remarks that now a commission would be appointed to examine Primary Education is entirely meaningless, because so far as Primary Education is concerned it was decided by the Government, not today but five years before, that it would follow the basic pattern. All the State Governments have accepted this and are acting accordingly. Now the question, that remained, related to University Education and Secondary Education. The question of Secondary Education was even more important than that of University Education because, as a matter of fact, the real defect that lies in our system is to be sought therein. The British Government evolved this system not to give education to the people of our country but for the reason that they needed English-knowing persons of a special type for carrying on the work in their offices. It was for this reason that they established Universities. University Education could not exist without the co-existence of Secondary Education and Primary Education. Secondary Education was evolved only as a means of University Education. No consideration was given to the fact that for thousands and millions of persons who cannot reach upto the stage of University Education, Secondary Education will not be the 'means' but the 'end'. Secondary Education, therefore, should be of that type and contain that element which can serve as an 'end' in the education of ninety per cent of our people rather than remain a mere 'means'. The result was that the whole system of our education was misshapen. However, the most important thing was to hold an inquiry in regard to the Secondary Education and then to recognise it anew. Therefore, a commission was appointed. It submitted its report in nine months. Now the report came up before the Central Advisory Board. The Central Advisory Board appointed a committee in November to examine this report and to submit its recommendations in January to the Board at the time it holds its meeting. A meeting of the Board was held again in



January. The recommendations came up before the Board. The Board accepted them and then chalked out a programme. To say that nothing is being done by way of reforms in the system of education is entirely meaningless and wrong. It has become a fashion today for any and every man to stand up and give expression to the platitude that the education system is defective. There should be reform no doubt, but tall talk leads us nowhere. What needs to be considered is that if there be reform what should be the mode thereof. The Education Ministry considered this and it can be claimed that the programme of reform that it has chalked out for itself at present, is the only correct programme. Given full co-operation of the State Governments we will reorganise Secondary Education within a short time. So far as University Education is concerned, there was for that too the need to have some such agency by which the necessary reform could be carried out. It is known to the Honourable members that a University Grants Commission has been appointed for this very purpose. The work has been started and it is hoped, so far as University Education is concerned, that steps will be taken speedily in that direction.....

## Job Opportunities for Foreign Returned Scholars\*

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Sir, as I am not feeling well therefore I think you would kindly allow me to speak while sitting.

At the very outset I would submit a few words about the time that has been allotted this year for Education Budget. It has generally been complained that very little time has been allotted and not only for Education but for Health and Labour Ministries also an acute shortage of time has been felt. I am fully in favour of this complaint. Without the least doubt it is essential that we may take more active interest in those matters that pertain to the nation building activities and be able to scrutinise the matter in more details. I assure you that the treasury benches also from where I am speaking, have felt this necessity. We have decided that from next year one full day will be set apart for Education. As regards Labour and Health also I hope more time will be allotted....

In this connection only six speeches have been made. The object of the first speech, as far as I have been able to understand, was that while planning scheme of national education we have not to copy the Western education only but have to plan our own particular scheme of education. I think that it is such an acknowledged fact that there can be no two opinions about it. Without doubt we cannot refrain ourselves from imparting instruction in modern sciences and knowledge. We have to go forward on the way of learning. We have not to recede. But besides this we have to keep in mind certain other facts also. We cannot forget them in any way. India has got a definite civilization of her own. India has a history of her own and has well developed philosophy and metaphysics. She has her own traditions about mental and spiritual life. She has taken a conspicuous and splendid share in the development and diffusion of human knowledge and civilization. Hence it is essential that we should preserve our splendid heritage and draw up such a scheme of our national education, in the outline of which the influence of Indian Culture and Spiritualism may be fully apparent. The outline of our national education should be modern but the spirit must be Indian. I will assure this House that the Education Ministry has before her such a plan and as far as this aim is concerned the Government is wholeheartedly with them.

My honourable friend has drawn attention towards one more point. He acknowledges the fact that for higher studies in scientific and technical subjects Indian students should be sent to foreign countries. But he likes this work to be done in such a manner whereby our objective may be achieved at the earliest and then after that we may not stand in need of sending any more students to foreign countries. I am fully in support of this view point. I would like to assure them that the Government have drawn up the new over-seas scholarship scheme with this very objective in view and this scheme has to come into force from the new financial year. Under this scheme the Government wish to send every year a certain number of Indian students to foreign countries. But the object of sending them to foreign countries is that necessity of sending students abroad may at the earliest come to an end. For attaining this object it was essential to investigate the educational facilities that are available in all the existing

institutions of the country and to ascertain their weak points also. Then in order to substantiate those aspects that may prove to be weak, particular educational subjects be selected, and for those subjects only students be sent to foreign countries. Besides this special help may be given to the existing institutions for making suitable arrangements for higher technical education and as far as possible new institutions also be started at the earliest. So the Education Ministry is working in this manner and the details you have read in the report of the Ministry.

As you know the over-seas scholarship scheme was started by the previous Government in 1945 and some batches of students had been sent to the foreign countries. But when I took charge of the Education Ministry on 15th January, 1947 then at once I came to know that the scheme has not been worked on proper lines and some defects of fundamental character are working therein. The first and foremost defect has been that the scheme was not planned in such a way whereby efforts may have been made to take into consideration all these important aspects. Special emphasis was laid on the fact that maximum number of students be sent to foreign countries for technical subjects but sufficient attention was not paid for the selection of the subjects for training for which students were to be sent abroad so that they might properly make up our present needs and deficiencies in the educational institutions. The result was that the sphere of benefit accruing from this scheme was considerably narrowed down and as much benefit the country was to have could not be had.

One more mistake was committed whereby a new type of complication has been produced, namely a great difficulty is being felt in giving immediate employment to all the students who are returning from foreign countries after completing their studies. An honourable member has just given out in his speech that he has come to know of the case of a certain gentleman who was sent abroad under the over-seas scholarship scheme. He has now returned after completing his studies but is sitting idle. The honourable member has come to know only of one such case, but I would like to tell him that more than one such case, have come within my knowledge and I fear that in future more such cases will come to our knowledge, but this is the inevitable result of the defects of the previous over-seas scholarship scheme. As far as

possible we are trying to improve the situation but we cannot escape the consequences of the past mistakes.

In that scheme it was decided that the various departments of the Provincial and Central Governments may be consulted as to what kind of persons they would require for their work in future and for which technical subjects they want students to be sent to foreign countries. So the Education Department of the past did likewise and questionnaires were sent to the different departments. It was war-time and it was generally thought that the development schemes would surely be started after war and for these schemes technical experts would be required. Keeping this imaginary plan of hope and expectation before them every department selected a number of subjects and referred them to the Education department. The Education Department announced those very subjects and the selection board after selecting the students sent them to foreign countries. In the meantime the war came to an end but the financial and political condition of the country assumed such a trend that the development schemes, whose imaginary plans had been drawn up, could not be started and even now it cannot be said whether they can be started or not. The result is that when these state scholars return after finishing their courses of studies of 2-3 years then a majority of them come to know that the projects for which they had been sent have not so far been started and so they cannot be given immediate employment.

Now one more obstacle has also sprung up, about which no one could have the slightest doubt or suspicion, namely the division of the country took place and a large number of Government servants migrated to this country from Pakistan. Besides this a huge influx of refugees had to turn its face towards India. It was the foremost duty of the Government to provide employment to these unfortunate persons. So we had to come to the decision that the refugees should be given first preference while making appointments for all those posts that might fall vacant. The result was that the vacancies that could be created for these state scholars in Government service were to a great extent filled.

From what I have said to you I do not mean to say that the present Government wants to shirk its responsibility by laying the

fault on the previous Government. The Government cannot do so. The Government are fully conscious of its responsibilities. The Government are making all possible efforts to give employment to these state scholars so that the maximum benefit of their education could be had. So a greater number of the state scholars, that have so far returned from foreign countries have been given employments and the remaining ones also will be given employment in the very near future. Of course, the Government expects at least so much that it may not be held responsible for the state of affairs that has been created.

I am in full agreement with the motive behind the things upon which stress has been laid by Shrimati Durga Bai. No programme of national education can be appropriate if it does not give full consideration to the education and advancement of one-half of the society, that is the women. The Central Government is doing whatever it can in this connection and is going to do it with an even greater speed. But with regard to those matters which concern the provincial governments or the universities I cannot say anything with absolute confidence at this time. The Central Government can give them its advice and can also exert pressure to a certain extent but the final decision has to be made by them. At any rate, I should assure her that the Government would certainly make whatever endeavours it can in that direction.

## Language Policy and Expenditure on Education\*

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The Honourable Member Begum Aizaz Rasul has drawn attention towards the necessity of imparting primary education to the children in their mother-tongue and urged the Government of India to lay down a clear-cut policy in this respect. I would like to tell her in this connection that this question has already been decided once for all and there is nothing more to be done. The Central Advisory Board of Education have explicitly laid down that the medium of basic education should be the mother tongue, because this is the natural and appropriate medium for imparting education. The Government of India have already emphasised upon this principle through their Resolution of August last year and this fundamental principle has generally been accepted. As a matter of fact, the difficulty arises only when there is a difference between the language spoken by one group of people and the State language of the Province concerned, e.g., in Bihar there are Bengali speaking classes. In such a case, the Central Advisory Board have proposed that the medium of primary education should be the mother tongue, and after the fifth class the State

\* Speech delivered in the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative), 18 March, 1949.

language should be taught. But the medium of education should strictly be the mother tongue.

If the language spoken by a certain group of people is not the same which has been adopted by the Provincial Government concerned, then in such a contingency it shall have to be admitted that every inhabitant of the Province should learn the State language; otherwise he will himself suffer. This is also obvious that the University education cannot be given through the medium of different languages. One language only shall have to be adopted and that shall be the State language. Except this, there cannot be any practical solution of this problem.

In this connection, I shall also admit that complaints are regularly pouring in from certain Provinces to the effect that this fundamental principle is not being fully acted upon. If these complaints are correct, then I must admit that this is really a deplorable state of affairs and it is most essential that it should be remedied. The Government of India are already in correspondence on this subject with certain Provincial Governments, and it is very likely that a conference of the Provincial Education Ministers may be convened in this connection. In any case, I shall assure the Honourable Member, Begum Aizaz Rasul, that the Government are fully alive to the importance of this matter, and they shall do their utmost to remove genuine complaints.

Now, I shall say a few words with regard to the last speech delivered by my honourable friend Mr. A.V. Thakkar. As a matter of fact, the point raised by him is the crux of the entire subject of education. If the problem of education is treated as the fundamental basis for the uplift of the nation, then is it not necessary that more money should be earmarked out of the revenues of the Central Government for this purpose than what is being spent at present? The previous Government used to spend Rs. 2 crores at the most for the purposes of education which did not form even one per cent. of the Central Budget. It was hardly 5 per cent. After having put in strenuous efforts for the last two years, I have been able to get it raised to Rs. 5 crores, and now it can be said that 1 per cent. of the Central Budget shall be spent for the purposes of education. But I would like to know



whether this amount is adequate for a country whose literate population does not exceed 15 per cent. even. And should our conscience feel satisfied after spending this amount?

Today, there is no other matter which more vitally affects the country than this problem. When will we be able to confer upon 85 per cent. of the subjects of the Indian Union their birth-right of learning 3 R's? The Sargeant Scheme had contemplated a period of forty years. But I do not think that today anyone of us shall be prepared to wait for such a long period. On my assuming charge of the Ministry of Education, I devoted myself towards this aspect; and prepared a fresh scheme for imparting basic education in the junior standards by means of which the basic education upto this standard can be made universal and compulsory during a period of ten years at the most. 'Kher' Committee was set up to consider this scheme. This Committee considered all the aspects of the matter and prepared a comprehensive scheme covering a period of sixteen years, viz., 10 years for junior basic education and again six years more for senior basic education. The Ministry of Education were eager to implement this scheme from the beginning of the new financial year. A sum of Rs. 5,40,00,000 was needed for this purpose. I am deeply constrained to say that this could not be arranged and the implementation of the scheme has had to be postponed.

I was rather much pleased to find that my honourable friend Mr. Thakkar shares with me in my present predicament, and other members too have seriously felt the paucity of funds. But I would like to tell you that this is not quite sufficient. You should realise your responsibility in right earnestness and think over as to how to remedy this state of affairs. Certain friends have complained against the Ministry of Finance and drawn their attention for attaching more importance to the nation-building programme. But I will dare say that the mere complaint against the Ministry of Finance cannot solve the problem. As a matter of fact, the real solution of the problem lies in your own hands. The Ministry of Finance merely maintains an account of your treasury, while you have got full powers to spend it. If you really feel that more amount should be spent under 'Education', then you should accept a plain and well-balanced proposal in this House that at least 10 per cent. of the Central revenues should be allocated to this head. So long as no such action is taken, the Gordian knot of the national education shall never be disentangled.

## Visva-Bharati Bill\*

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"That the Bill to declare the institution known as "Visva-Bharati" to be an institution of national importance and to provide for its functioning as a unitary, teaching and residential university, be taken into consideration."

While moving for the consideration of this Bill, I feel that my task is quite simple and a brief one. I am sure that there is none in the House who is unaware of the importance of that institution. I also feel confident that everyone of us is fully conscious of the place of honour and the esteem which it has created for itself in the minds of people both within and outside India during the last thirty years. As a matter of fact, by passing this Bill, we are giving it nothing new or anything which it has not achieved already. What is it then that we want to declare by passing this Bill? There are two things, first of these is to recognise that the institution has national importance. Whether we declare it to be as such today or not and whether we acknowledge it or not, the fact remains that this is an institution of national importance. The other object of the Bill is to give official recognition to it as a university. The fact is that ever since Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore had established this institution in 1921, it

\* Speech delivered in the Provisional Parliament, 28 April, 1951.

has been working as a full-fledged university. Not only in India, but outside also it enjoys the esteem of a university. Scholars and students from all over the world come to Visva-Bharati to carry and spread the impressions gathered from here in all parts of the world. It was, therefore, only our fault that we had not given it the official recognition so far — a status it had already achieved and had deserved since long. We are giving credence to that status today.

Another consideration that I want you to consider carefully is the general form in which this Bill has been drafted and presented. All along our efforts have been to give this Bill such a shape and include in it only such new things and provisions of law which are absolutely necessary for a university to have. But as far the type of education and system of education in this particular institution are concerned or even as far the general principles of education are concerned, we have been careful to preserve their original character and we have exercised maximum caution not to introduce even a shadow of an alteration. A study of the Bill must have made that quite clear that Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, while opening this institution, did not care to adopt the general terms of the existing universities. He had made efforts to adopt Hindi terms for the different posts and the committees in his institution — for instance the word he adopted for the Executive Council is '*Karya Samiti*'. All terms like this have been taken by us as such while within brackets we have given their English equivalent, so that people may not feel any difficulty in understanding them. We have not altered them anyway. Some of the amendments tabled by some hon. friends seek to adopt other terms in place of those which are current at present. But I hope you will agree with me that it is inadvisable to alter the terms which were adopted by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore himself. For instance the term '*Karya Samiti*' chosen by him for the Executive Council does not appear as good to certain friends. We can have another word in its place. But I feel that we should not indulge in such an attempt and the words he had selected, should be left unaltered. For some of these words he had given no new equivalents. For instance, he has suggested no equivalent for the word 'principal'. Some hon. friends have tabled amendments in which they have attempted to make the words like 'Vidyapith' or 'Vidyalaya' current in place of

the word 'university'. I feel this course is also undesirable to adopt. What Hindi words should be adopted for words like 'university', 'principal' and so on, is a matter which cannot be decided here. We cannot coin definite terms on an occasion like this while passing a Bill. This is a job of the experts. You are aware that the Government of India have set up a Board to consider all such technical terms and compile a Hindi dictionary of the same. This is the function of the Board. But for the present we have also left those words which Dr. Tagore himself had left unaltered. Again, we have also adopted those Hindi equivalents which he has used. Similarly a question has arisen regarding the spelling of certain words for instance of the very name of the institution viz. Visva-Bharati. Certain friends think that the letter 's' having been used in the Bill, it will read as 'Visva' and not 'Vishva'. It is not so. It remains still 'Vishva'. In this regard a method of writing Sanskrit or other oriental words has been settled. It has been decided that 's' whenever used for Sanskrit words, will pronounce 'sh' and no 's'. For this very reason from the very beginning 's' and not 'sh' has been used while spelling Visva-Bharati. Similarly there is the word 'Sikhsa Samiti'. Certain friends want 's' to be replaced by 'sh' there too. I will like to say that it is unnecessary. It pronounces still 'sh' and this is the international method. It has been in practice since long. I think that the Bengal Education Society had also adopted this method in-1904.

...Further, ever since Visva-Bharati has been established, its name has been written in this very form and this very spelling was adopted by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore himself. We have, therefore, decided not to alter it. Whatever be the case, we have made efforts not to alter the objects for which this institution was established or the general educational atmosphere which it has helped to create. The Government of India feel that this institution is Dr. Tagore's present to the Nation and as such should be preserved. I recall in this connection what Mahatma Gandhi had told me in 1947. When in January, 1947, I took over, the charge of the Ministry of Education. Mahatma Gandhi had told me that he had a keepsafe of Gurudev with him. Those who knew Rabindra Nath, generally used to call him as Gurudev. So he had told me that it was precious thing kept with him and that

it was his desire to hand it over to the Government of India. I feel a pleasure in having this opportunity, although somewhat delayed, to set the Government of India's seal on the preservation of this institution. I also hope that the House will give me an early opportunity to request it for the passage of this Bill. I do not think there is anything left in the Bill for which it need be circulated for eliciting public opinion or be referred to a Select Committee. The few clauses of the Bill are the same which are normally provided for the administration of any other university. I consider it to be better and, as such, I request my hon. friends that instead of taking much time in the discussion over the Bill it should be passed at the earliest .

Those of my friends who have taken part in the present debate have tried to shed light on the various aspects of education and some of them have even broached the subject relating to the recommendations of the Universities Commission. With regard to the present Bill, however, particular stress has been laid on two matters, viz., powers of the Visitor and the framing of the Statutes. I shall, in my speech, confine myself to these two matters alone. So far as the Visitor's powers are concerned the power that has been vested in him is not really of a novel character. It is the same kind of power as is provided in every University Act in some form or the other. The university is an autonomous body. As soon as an Act is passed it starts the work of its internal administration in accordance with that Act. There is no external interference with its work. But the need has been felt in every University Act for the provision of some avenue for reform and correction in case of an emergency. If a time comes when the administration of the university is in danger of a breakdown or the standard of its education deteriorates to the extreme there must be some authority that might supervise its interests in that contingency and be of help. This is borne out by a glance at the Indian Universities Acts. According to the practice that has been followed heretofore this power was vested in the Chancellor, or, the Lord Rector. In universities where the highest office was that of the Chancellor, who used to be either a Governor or the Governor-General this power was reserved for the Chancellor, as in the case of the Calcutta University, the Delhi University and other old universities in the case of those universities where the

right to elect the Chancellor has been vested in the Court and a higher office of Lord Rector has been provided for the relevant Act vests these powers in the Lord Rector, as in the case of the Aligarh University. As the Universities Commission has made a recommendation that the office of the Visitor should now be assigned to the President of the Indian Union the Government has in this Bill appointed the President to be the Visitor and vested in him just those powers that have hitherto been vested in the Chancellor or the Lord Rector. No new power has been conferred nor has any new supervision been imposed. Just have a look at the Acts of Delhi, Aligarh, Banaras and other Universities and then say which is the new power that has been vested in the Visitor which you regard as excessive. What, then, is this power? Is it the kind of power that seeks to interfere in any way with the internal administration of the University? Not at all. It is just a kind of check that has been provided to serve in case of special emergency (which need never arise). If, God forbid, an occasion were to arise when those entrusted with the Administration of the affairs of the University act with wilful neglect in the discharge of their duties and the advice and the warning by the Visitor fail to produce any satisfactory results it would become essential under the circumstances, in order to save the University from falling a prey to various evils, that the Visitor should adopt proper measures for conducting an enquiry and then send his findings to the University. It is hoped that this action on the part of the Visitor should prove effective in putting matters right but if the conditions deteriorate so much that even that action does not prove effective then the final decision shall lie with the Visitor and it shall be binding on the university.

If we are going to do away even with this healthy provision for reform in case of emergency I should like to know what other course can be adopted to meet an abnormal situation. The need of such a provision has been felt in the case of every University Act and it is essential with a view to safeguard the future of the Visva-Bharati that the Visitor be vested with special powers to cope with a special emergency.

Viewed from the practical point of view this does not in any way affect the internal administration of the university whose functions will not be interfered with. It remains completely

independent in all its affairs. A 'watchful eye' has been provided only to serve for unusual circumstances (which, it is hoped, may never arise). If, however, an emergency does arise at some time this eye would be open to watch things, it would not remain closed. I feel that that much amount of watchfulness is unavoidable.

The second point that has been very much stressed by my friend. Dr. Kunzru, is that the Statutes should also have been framed and presented along with the Bill at the same time so that the House might have been afforded an opportunity of studying them and that they might even now be placed on the table of the House. The Government would have been pleased to do so could the Statutes have been framed immediately but as this could not be done it was not considered necessary to postpone the presentation of the Bill on that account. This is not the first occasion that the Statutes have not been presented along with a University Bill. Many a time before now has also the same procedure been followed. The Bill is passed and the Statutes are left to be passed later on at leisure. The Statutes do not have the same value as the sections of an Act. They are passed on the basis of the Act and have just as much scope as is permitted by the Act. They are not enduring like the Act but are subject to continual change and the University is empowered to insist on a change in them. If it has not been possible to frame them immediately along with the Bill I fail to understand how it affects our task prejudicially and why it should come to be considered that our debate on the Bill would remain inconclusive without them.

Some of my friends have stressed the point that the ideal for which Visva-Bharati was founded should remain intact and that it should not be allowed to develop into a University like other Universities in the country. I am glad to note they have a full consciousness of the fact but I think it was not quite necessary for them to have emphasised that point so much for the Government themselves have that objective fully in view. Let me now tell you in greater detail how the Government felt induced to bring forward this Bill. The Government was aware of the importance of this institution and was anxious to ensure for it a stable future. But it was unable to decide what method should be adopted for

doing that. In the meantime our friends of the Shanti Niketan made a proposal that it should be given the form of a Central University. They thought that it was the only proper course for safeguarding the future of this institution. The Government did not accept that proposal straightaway but kept thinking over it for a fairly long time. Personally, I was eager for the Government of India to do everything in their power for its protection. I had made a promise to Mahatmaji on that score and it was my duty to fulfil that promise at the earliest. But the basic question that confronted me was 'what does protection signify, is it the protection of the body or of the spirit?' Any safeguard that might provide it physical protection but ignore the protection of its spirit was not acceptable either to me or to my colleagues. If we were to make it safe physically but let its spirit be lost this would have been no protection but rather destruction. I fully apprised my friends of the Shanti Niketan of these views of mine. We made it clear to them that the Government could agree to give it the status of a Central University only on the condition that its existing educational set-up remains intact and should not be changed in any manner. Our friends of the Shanti Niketan assured us that they were also moved by the same objective, that they were in no case prepared to allow any change in its educational ideals and set-up and that all that they desired was that it should be granted the status of a Central University and its national importance admitted and that the Central Government should assume responsibility for its maintenance in the future. When the Government felt fully satisfied on that score it decided to draft the present Bill and to bring it before the House. This Bill declares that the institution named Visva Bharati which was established by Rabindranath Tagore for special objects is recognised as a University. Now this means that this institution, as it stands is recognised as a University. The Bill simply gives it the status of a University and does not make any other change.

Some of my friends have objected that the Bill does not tell us what kind of university is it going to be. Will it be an ordinary one or of some special kind? What will be its objective? What kind of education will it impart? I would like to tell them that the Bill does not seek to answer those questions because the very existence of the Visva-Bharati is a standing answer to them. The



Visva-Bharati has been established since 1921. It has a set aim and has developed a special system of education. This Bill gives the status of a University to the Visva-Bharati as it stands. The Visva-Bharati having been recognised as a University it is no longer necessary to determine afresh its position, its aims and its educational set-up. Had an effort been made to do so even the original objective would have been defeated. We are not out to establish a new university but are simply giving the status of a Government university to a University that has been in existence at Shanti Niketan for the last thirty years.

Shri R.K. Chaudhuri has drawn our attention to the need for rendering financial assistance to the University. Let me assure him that the Government have already made the necessary arrangements in that connection. An annual grant, as also a non-recurring grant, has been decided upon in consultation with the friends who are at present responsible for the management of the Visva-Bharati. They have assured us that that much assistance would be sufficient for the university and that it would not stand in need of any further help for at least ten years. In any case, since the Central Government have assumed responsibility for its up-keep they would certainly see to it that its activities do not suffer in any way for lack of funds.

You should also bear in mind that we cannot form an estimate of the expenditure of this University by making comparison with the expenditure incurred by the other universities. In other universities a large amount of money is spent in the construction of imposing class-rooms but the Visva-Bharati is not in need of any 'building' for its class-rooms. Nature has provided it with the canopy of the sky and the open places and they do not want to make any additions to them in the form of brick and stone. Its only building requirements are a hostel and a library.

There is no other expenditure to be incurred on building barring staff quarters. The amount that has been set apart for these purposes is sufficient for these buildings.

Let me also make one more clarification. I have considered all the amendments that have been put in. Out of them I would accept seven. As for the rest I hope they would not be pressed. I

have again considered the amendments that seek to modify the spellings of the words 'Visva-Bharati' and 'Shiksha-Sammelan'. I have decided that if the Government Press has such 'S' fonts as are provided with the sign which makes them pronounce as 'sh' the letter 'S' in words like 'Visva-Bharati' etc. shall remain being in accord with international practice, but if the 'S' with the sign be not available these words would employ 'sh' so that there may not be any possibility of an error.

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## Budget Allocation Expenditure on Education\*

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Sir, I listened attentively for four hours to all the speeches which were made by those of my friends who took part in the debate the day before yesterday. But I am sorry to say that they disappointed me to a great extent. With the exception of one Hon. Member who made a complaint about the Scheduled Castes Scholarship Scheme and to whom I would reply later on, the substance of all other speeches made was that the Government's educational activities were insufficient to meet the requirements of the country. They suggested that more should be done than what was already being done. My friend, Dr. Meghnad Saha, moved a cut motion and his whole emphasis was on the point that we were not spending as much of money on Education as we ought to have spent.

Regarding Basic Education it has been complained that no steps have been taken to spread it in the country. With regard to adult education it has been complained that nothing is being done. Similar remarks have been made about technical education as well. It has been said that very little amount has been provided

\* Speech delivered in Lok Sabha, 16 June, 1952.

for scholarships to the scheduled caste students and that at least one crore of rupees should be earmarked for that purpose every year. My friend Dr. Meghnad Saha regrets that the recommendations of the University Commission have not been implemented. Among other things one recommendation of the Commission was that a sum of rupees five crores should be provided for meeting the requirements of the Universities. This sum has not been provided so far. Again, he complained that the recommendation of the Kher Committee which suggested that the Central Government should spend ten per cent. of its budget on education have not been given a practical shape.

Sir, so far as the problem of education is concerned we had five occasions to discuss its annual budgets during the last five years. Every time all these complaints were made and grievances expressed and every time I had to express at length my inability and helplessness. Besides that the Minister in his capacity as chairman of the Central Advisory Board of Education gets a chance in the annual meetings of the Board to place before the country a complete picture of the activities and achievements of the Ministry. And I have repeatedly expressed in these meetings the difficulties and handicaps that the Ministry of Education has to face. Its reports have come up before the country. Its last annual meeting took place in the month of March and in my address I placed all the relevant facts before the Board. I am aware of the fact that the present House contains a large number of members, who were not here in the old House. But whatever has been said about this problem during the last five years in the House or whatever has featured in the reports of the Central Advisory Board, was not meant for Members of the House only, but for the whole country; and I hope it has come to the knowledge of every person through the press.

Under these circumstances, Sir, you can yourself imagine the extent of my surprise when the hon. members one after the other rose and began to raise those very old issues which have so often been raised here. I was surprised to see that everybody was trying to repeat those very old complaints and there was none who could have felt the necessity of making an attempt to cut the Gordian knot which has come in the way of our educational progress. No criticism can be effective unless it is accompanied by a positive

suggestion. And not only that but anything said, should be said with a sense of responsibility. But I am astonished to see that whatever my hon. friends have said does not contain even a shadow of these things. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh is of the opinion that we should not take the trouble of dealing with the problem of education in parts but on the other hand we should settle this problem once for all. He complained that nothing was being done for the sake of education and suggested that everything should be done in that respect. 'Nothing is being done for education', this declaration can come only from him. And that 'Everything should be done for education' these words too can only be expected from him. Because in both the cases no question of responsibility arises for him. The question is whether this knot, which has come in the way of education and which is being lamented for the last five years can be cut by complaints of this nature. My budget speech last year was not just a speech, it was an expression of my mental agony which thus found an outlet. I have stated in detail how the Government decided to go ahead in all directions in the educational field during the last five years and how they had to stop for sheer helplessness. If you are prepared to give me a solution of this fundamental impediment and are prepared to tell me to-day that the Government could work out a solution but it has not tried to do so deliberately, then I say, I am prepared to submit to all your complaints etc., and your complaints would be justified. But if you go, on ignoring the fundamental issue and only make complaints, I am afraid no problem of the country could be solved by such a lip service.

With a full sense of responsibility I have been telling you and do so again that there is no aspect of the educational problem in the country which the Government have not considered and on which they have not made plans. Today, you have mentioned only a few matters connected with the educational problem. Four years have already rolled by since the Government not only considered these matters but finalised their policy about all these fundamental and important matters also. They appointed committees on almost every subject, considered the recommendations of these Committees and finalised plans for work. There is hardly any branch of education such as basic education, adult education, technical education, university

education, physical exercise education etc. etc. which has been ignored and for which a finalised scheme is not ready now. But when all the schemes were ready and the Education Ministry took final decisions to implement them, we came to know that the road was blocked and that we could not take even a single step in that direction. Why is the road blocked? The reason is that we required money to get every scheme implemented and unfortunately we have not got sufficient money. If we cannot provide money for this purpose it is obvious that we cannot do anything practical, no matter how many schemes we may work out on paper. Will any Hon. Member out of five hundred Members of this House be pleased to suggest to me how to remove this impediment?

Only four days back the defence budget was being debated here. So far as I remember, no Hon. Member excepting one who is sitting in front of me on the opposite benches expressed the opinion that expenditure on defence should be curtailed. Not only that but it was emphasised that more money should be spent thereon. Some friends suggested that it was the age of air warfare and that our Air Force was ineffective as yet. They thought it was essential to strengthen it. Although the Government are not prepared to spend more money on defence, yet they are prepared to concur in the other view that has been expressed other view viz., that the expenditure thereon should not be curtailed. No doubt, the expenditure is heavy. The Government spends about half of its income on this item. But unfortunately conditions are such that it cannot be curtailed. However, if you are of the opinion that expenditure on army should not be curtailed, the Government too agreed to it. But, at the same time, we should not forget what were our decisions about the Army that we had formulated long before the partition of the country.

The question of expenditure on the Indian Army came up before us sometimes prior to the partition of the country. Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy, was of the view that if we were to reduce the strength of the war-time Army, it should be done gradually and not all at once. Keeping this in view the cabinet decided that expenditure on the three wings of defence forces should not exceed one hundred crores of rupees. It should in no way exceed it, that was their opinion. After that the partition took

place and about one-third of the country seceded from the rest of India forming itself into a separate State. Along with that went about one-third of our army too. If we keep our old estimates, we ought to have curtailed our defence expenditure by one-third, that is to say, the maximum expenditure on the defence of the country should not have come to more than seventy crores of rupees. But you see we are spending about one hundred and ninety crores of rupees on our defence now, instead of seventy crores which was our original estimate. In brief we are spending about one hundred and twenty crores of rupees more on defence now than was originally estimated. And, in the very nature of things, neither the Government desire to cut this expenditure nor would you like to have such a cut. Hence, so far as the question of defence is concerned, one hundred and ninety crores of the total income is being spent on it with your consent and approval.

Partition brought a big burden on the Government in its train which nobody even dreamt of. Lakhs of people living in Pakistan were uprooted from their hearths and homes and this Government had to take the responsibility of rehabilitating them in India. You know how much money the Government had to provide for this work during the last five years. Shri Ajit Prasad is sitting here behind me; he will tell you the whole story about it. We have spent about one hundred and forty crores of rupees to solve this problem and still it has not been solved in its entirety.

Another heavy burden is that of food. Food production in the country is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the growing population and as such it is essential that foodstuffs should be imported from outside. We purchase foodstuffs from the world market at high prices and sell it to the people at cheaper rates. Besides that it has become necessary for us to give a practical shape to the various projects in order to increase the productivity of the country. We are not in a position to shelve those projects either, so that crores of rupees have been spent on them and we require many more crores to accomplish those works. All of us know what these irrigation and hydro-electric power projects mean to our national welfare. If we fail to find any money for them, it means that there is no way out for the fulfilment of all these capital projects in future. We had to find

money for these things, though financial considerations compeller us to go slow with them.

The inevitable result of all these things was that very little scope was left to provide more money for education. We can have more money for education only when we can save money in other works. But things being as they are at present, money cannot be saved in the other departments. So it is apparent that more money cannot be found for education.

I would like to know the logic of the arguments of those Hon. Members who while participating in the debate complained that there were no educational activities going on. I say we cannot have more money for education because we are spending it on other works, the expenditure on which cannot be curtailed. What are those items, on which we are spending the major part of our income? They are defence, rehabilitation, food and river valley projects etc. The line of action taken by you on this occasion is that expenditure on all those items should not only be not disturbed but should on the other hand be increased. Defence budget has been debated and with the exception of one solitary voice nobody expressed the view that defence expenditure should be curtailed. One-half of the total budget is being spent on defence. It is one hundred and ninety crores. You not only agreed to that expenditure but also demanded that more should be spent on it. Only after a few days the House will have the demands for grants to the Ministry of Rehabilitation before it. My mind is already occupied with the echo of the voices that would be raised in the House on that occasion. You would certainly say that the money provided for rehabilitation is not sufficient and that more should be provided for it. The demands for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry would follow those of the Ministry of Education. I have no doubt in my mind that everybody would complain that what is being done is not sufficient and that more should be done. This would be followed by the demands for the Ministry of Food. Everybody amongst you would rise and say that food subsidies which were formerly being given by the Central to the States should be continued and that they should not be stopped; which would mean that the Central Government should shoulder an additional burden of several crores of rupees more. Besides that, demands for the Ministries of Production and



Housing are coming up for debate in the House and the House would certainly put forth its grievances, the sum and substance of which would be that the Government should spend more and more money. If in your opinion, expenditure cannot be curtailed on all these items, but that, on the other hand, more money should be spent over them, wherefrom can you get the money for education? It cannot come from the skies. The total income of the Central Government excluding the Railways is not more than four hundred crores. Whatever amount of money we may have to provide for any subject, it has to be found from the revenues of the Government, which you would agree, are limited. An Hon. Member made an appeal to the Finance Minister that more money should be provided for education. No doubt it is the Minister of Finance who is the cashier of the Government, but he can provide money for anything only when there is sufficient money with him. And if there is no money in his bag, he can certainly search for it but he cannot provide it. Now just see what your logic comes to in this connection? We cannot have sufficient money for education because we spend it on defence, rehabilitation, food and river valley projects. You say that expenditure should not be curtailed on all these ministries and in the same breath you suggest that more should be spent on education. If we take both these cases together we come to the conclusion that while we are not in a position to find money for education, we should spend more and more on it. For God's sake, tell me what conclusion you want to draw from these 'major' and 'minor' premises. After all Aristotle did not do anything foolish in laying the foundations of 'Logic'.

I have been telling both inside as well as outside the House as to how we finalised the schemes one after the other during the last four years and how we failed to take any practical step because of financial considerations. The proposal for making primary education compulsory was worked out during the British period. This is known as the Sergeant Report, which envisaged an educational programme for the country for about forty years. But as soon as I took over the charge of the Education Ministry, Kher Committee was appointed. It recommended the reduction of the period from forty years to sixteen years, ten years for junior basic and six years for senior basic. According to this programme the

burden of seventy per cent. of the total expenditure was thrown on the State Governments and thirty per cent. on the Central Government. If the Scheme could have been implemented the Government would have had to pay four crore rupees in the first year, eight crores in the next year and so on. The Government accepted the recommendations of the Committee but could not implement them because money could not be found. I struggled with my colleagues saying that if the programme could not be implemented fully as envisaged before, let it be started with a lesser amount and on a limited basis. But in the long run, I had to give in, because I had no answer to the bitter reality as revealed by the facts and figures of the budget.

My friend Dr. Meghnad Saha has complained that an amount of rupees five crores has not been provided in the budget for the betterment of the Universities, as was recommended by the University Commission. His tone was cool and business like as if somebody were to ask his home people is lunch not ready yet? But does he know the difficulties and the handicaps which the Education Ministry had to face during the last five years? I would like to tell him that five crores of rupees is a big amount. There are several important works which are not being taken up only because a sum of fifty or sixty lakhs even cannot be found. If I come to narrate all these facts I am afraid I am not going to finish within the time limit. You know the Ministry of Education has accepted a social education scheme, which was founded on the understanding that fifty per cent. of the total expenditure would be shared by the Centre and the rest by the States concerned. In the year 1949, I somehow managed to have one crore of rupees for starting social education. In fact, it was a nominal amount if we were to look to the needs of the country as a whole. But, even then it was a beginning in that direction. The Ministry called a conference of the State Ministers in connection with the distribution of this money and decided that the said amount may be distributed among the various State Governments in a set manner. The amount was not still distributed when the Ministry of Finance suddenly came to know that there was going to be a deficit of forty crore rupees in that year's budget and that efforts should be made afresh to meet that deficit. Shri Matthai, and not Shri Deshmukh, was our Finance

Minister in those days. The result of this development was that the cabinet had to decide that all the capital grants should be stopped; and that a twenty per cent. cut should be imposed on all other grants. Now, see what has been its effect on the Ministry of Education. With much difficulty this sum of one crore rupees was provided for an important work such as adult education; and all the State Governments were informed that each of them would get a certain amount of money for this purpose. They were asked to supplement this amount with some more money from their own resources and start the work. They had just started their work when suddenly a cut of twenty per cent. was imposed and the said amount of one crore rupees was reduced to eighty lakhs only. Anyhow the Ministry of Education distributed this very amount of eighty lakh rupees among the various State Governments and thought that every year a sum of rupees eighty lakhs would be given to them for this purpose. But when the time came for the framing of the next year's budget, the financial stringency had come to be still more acute and this amount of eighty lakh rupees had also to be stopped. You can yourself imagine the difficulties that the State Governments might have faced on that account. They trusted us and chalked out their programmes under the impression that they would be getting at least so much of assistance out all of a sudden they came to know that it was all a dream and no reality.

Day before yesterday complaints were voiced that the various measures relating to education had not been taken. I assure you that there is no measure which Government has not fully considered and regarding which a complete blue-print has not been drawn up. If you can arrange for money today, I can assure you, Government would start the work tomorrow, for the consideration stage is already over. It is not the mind which is empty, but the pocket. You need not try to infuse intelligence or wisdom into the Government's mind. So far it has not felt any lack of it. What is lacking is money, which you should try to make available if you can.

You have not tried to give thought to this matter. Government cannot follow the path suggested by you. It has to act and not merely to talk. The question is: how is this problem to be solved? It is not a temporary difficulty which we can tide

over in a year or two, but a long-standing difficulty which is blocking our path and we cannot say when it will be removed. If it is not resolved somehow, we must admit we can do nothing for the sake of Education, rather for the sake of any 'nation-building' work. It is clear that in the near future no such revolution is likely to occur as would increase the revenue of the Governments suddenly from Rs. 400 crores to 800 crores. It is also clear that the expenditure now being incurred on other Ministries is likely to continue for some time and I do not think any substantial amount can be saved from this expenditure. Under these circumstances, what is the way out? And then, this is the impediment not only in the way of Education, but also in the way of all kinds on nation-building work. We have to find a way out for the sake of progress.

I have devoted my attention to this matter for a good many years and I have come to the conclusion that there is only one solution of this problem and that is that we should, to a certain extent be prepared to take the risk of 'Deficit Financing'. Of course, this risk can be taken only to a limited extent and with certain definite conditions. We cannot afford to race along this path. We will have to watch every step and to see how it affects the general economic condition of the country and whether it gives rise to the danger of inflation. But if we want to fulfill the basic needs of the country, we will have to take this risk, and for this purpose, not only financial acumen, but courage also shall be needed. You will have to take courage in both hands.

All our efforts so far have been directed towards balancing the Budget somehow. This is, without doubts, the natural thing to do and, under normal circumstances, we cannot do without acting up to this principle. If we do not follow this principle, we shall have to print more money and in the event of this amount exceeding a particular limit, the danger of inflation would rear its head. But the times through which we are now passing are not normal times. In these abnormal circumstances, one cannot help employing extraordinary methods. With regard to deficit financing, the foremost thing is to fix a limit upto which the risk can be taken. The second important point is to determine on which measures this additional amount is to be spent. If they be short-term projects which can yield results in a short time, our

path remains clear of financial hazards. And then it is not necessary to make up the deficit by printing more money. We should tap all sources of loans and take full advantage of the Compulsory Savings Scheme. We can get plenty of labour without wages and this can be employed as capital. In any case, this is a question, which needs to be given much thought. These days we are discussing recommendations of the Planning Commission, so that its report might be expedited as much as possible. During this discussion, this problem has also come before us and we are examining it from every point of view.

Education has also come under the sphere of planning and we have not only to determine the Budget for one year, but also to prepare a blue-print for five years. At the present moment, I am not in a position to place before you with responsibility the full scheme, but I shall tell you certain fundamentals which have come to the fore in this connection. The first thing is that we have already decided to revise in a few days the figure of the amount set apart in the Budget for Education. My colleague, the Finance Minister has agreed to consider how and to what extent this amount can be increased, when the full report of the Planning Commission becomes available, I believe this occasion would arise in a month's time.

The other question which came up before us was whether the sum which would be set apart for Education in the Five Year Plan, would be in addition to the amount already being spent on Education or would this amount be deducted from that? You will be glad to know that Government has decided in favour of the former alternative *i.e.*, the amount which is at present provided for Education every year shall continue to be so provided and the sum earmarked in the Plan would be in addition to it. The Education Ministry is spending about six crores of rupees every year on Education. This amount shall continue to be provided and, besides this, the amount sanctioned in the Five Year Plan shall also be drawn.

Another question for our consideration is how much money should be sanctioned for Five Year's Planning. I cannot give a particular figure, because no final decision has been taken as yet. But I can say that an amount totalling from Rs. 30 crores to

Rs. 50 crores has been suggested to the Commission and this matter is under consideration.

Supposing a sum of Rs. 50 crores is set apart for the next five years. In that case we shall get Rs. 10 crores every year for Education. To this add Rs. 6 crores, which we are now spending and we will have Rs. 16 crores. This amount will be only 4 per cent. of the total Budget. It is clear that it is much less than what it should be. Referring to the recommendations of the Kher Committee, my friend Dr. Saha said day before yesterday that the Central Government should spend ten per cent. of its Budget on Education. Four per cent. is not even half that figure. But even then if we are able to have this much amount, we shall be much better off than at present and we shall be able to implement certain basic schemes immediately. As regards the real solution of the educational and other allied problems, it shall be possible only when we are prepared to consider and decide our financial policy from a new point of view and with courage and determination.

Sir, I intended to finish my speech in half an hour and the clock is reminding me of my promise. I would now briefly reply to the complaints made about the Scheduled Castes scholarships and the recommendations of the University Commission. Two complaints have been made in regard to the Scheduled Castes Scholarships. The first is that the amount set apart for this purpose is very small and that it should be increased. The second is that Overseas scholarships should be given to them. I would deal with the latter complaint first. The two friends who have stressed this point are under the wrong impression that Scheduled Castes students have not been given scholarships for education overseas. Under the Government's general scheme of overseas scholarships all Indians were to be given scholarships and students belonging to the Scheduled Castes were selected and sent abroad. A few days ago, a list of 21 students who were sent to England and America under the Overseas scholarship Scheme was laid on the Table of the House. In addition to this scheme, there is another special scheme for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Communities, for which a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs was set apart previously. Now this amount has been increased to Rs. 17 lakhs 50 thousands. Under this scheme, the selection is

not made by the Government, but by a Board which includes Scheduled Castes representatives. From the very beginning this board has been of the opinion that money sanctioned under the scheme for university education should be spent within the country. It would be more beneficial to the community, because this is the thing which is most urgently needed for its educational progress. Now if these friends wish that a part of the money of this scheme should be spent on overseas education, there is no reason why Government should oppose it. Government would not need fresh funds for it; the expenses on this would be met from the funds already provided. Government would confer with the Board in this connection.

As regards the complaint that the amount provided should be increased, I have already related the Government's difficulties in this matter. Still I assure my friends that Government is in full sympathy with them in regard to this work. There can be nothing more pleasing to the Government than to provide the maximum funds for the progress of the Harijans. It is the Government's duty. Government fully realises its responsibility and it would try its utmost to do whatever is possible.

Now, in the end, I come to the cut motion tabled by my friend Dr. Meghnad Saha. His real complaint is that Government has not implemented the recommendations of the University Commission. One of the recommendations of the Commission was that the Central Government should also form a Committee on the model of the University Grant Committee of England and entrust to it a fund of at least Rs. 5 crores to be spent on the improvement and progress of all the universities in the country. In his speech he stressed the fact that a new spirit should be infused in university education. He wanted that their standard should be increased and their equipment made up-to-date and complained that Government was not doing anything in this direction.

I would venture to tell him that his complaint is not justified. A responsible member like Dr. Saha should have shown a greater sense of responsibility than he did in tabling a motion of this kind in the House. He says that the Government has not implemented the recommendations of the University Commission. Will he kindly refer to the Report and see what were the

recommendations of the Commission, so far as they concern the Central Government? I would like to tell him that Government considered all the recommendations of the Commission and implemented them without delay. The Commission had recommended that the Banaras Hindu University Act should be amended. Government introduced a new Bill for the purpose and it has now been on the Statute Book for many months. The Commission also desired changes in the Aligarh University Act. Government introduced an amending Bill to this effect which is now in force as an Act. Similarly, the Commission had also made a recommendation in regard to the Delhi University. This recommendation was also accepted and a new Act was enforced. Another recommendation was that the institution of Vishva Bharati should be given the status of a Central University. This was also implemented and since a year, Vishva Bharati has been functioning as a Central University. Now I would like to ask my friend how far his statement that Government has not implemented the recommendations of the Commission is correct.

Now let us consider the particular recommendation in regard to which the Hon. Member has deemed it necessary to table a cut motion *i.e.*, the formation of the University Grant Committee. I am surprised to note that it has not come to the notice of the Hon. Member that the Government decided last year to form a University Grants Committee afresh. This Committee is being formed and I hope its personnel shall be announced very shortly. But, for the present, Government has not agreed to two things, namely including all universities within the sphere of work of the committee and granting a sum of Rs. 5 crores or thereabouts. For the present, this Committee will be concerned with the four Central Universities, although it will have power to inspect the affairs of other universities, which are specially entrusted to it by the Government. Government is unable to entrust any fund to the Committee for the present. Its real reason is the same shortage of funds which I have already mentioned, but besides that there is the fact that England's examples cannot be very useful to India in this connection. England is a small island. There are no separate spheres of work for the Central and State Governments. The Government of the whole country is vested in a single administrative unit. A single



Grants Committee is feasible for the universities there but India is a sub-continent and there are separate spheres of work for the Central and State Governments. Excepting the four Central Universities, all the other Universities are the concern of the State Governments and the responsibility for their finances also rests with them.

## Promotion of Urdu, Adoption of International Scientific Terms in Hindi and Other Matters\*

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Tandonji next referred to this year's non-recurring grant of 60,000 rupees to the Shibli Academy. This Academy continues to function for the last 30 or 40 years. It is true that all the books published by the Academy are in Urdu and that Gandhiji liked their books, patronised the Academy and wrote many articles about it. Anyway, the Academy has done useful and valuable work in Urdu. As the people working in this Academy are those who took part in the Congress movement, they have contacts with Congressmen. About eight months ago, these people waited upon Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in a deputation and explained to him the condition of the Academy. They said that prior to the partition their books were largely in demand in the Punjab and Sind but now they had lost this market and owing to differences in the value of the rupee also much complicity had been created. They stated that the condition of the Academy was so precarious that in the absence of an emergency grant of Rs. 60,000 they would be compelled to close it down. They did not ask for a recurring

\* Speech delivered in Lok Sabha, 29 March 1954.

grant but on the basis of their figures demanded only an aid of Rs. 60,000 which would enable them to make necessary adjustments and the society could continue to function. The Prime Minister wrote a letter to the Finance Ministry and one to the Education Ministry expressing the view that this society should continue to function and that it would be undesirable that for want of such a small fund it should be compelled to close down and suggested that the matter should be considered. The Ministry also felt that it would not be desirable if this society was not given a small fund and had to close down, and that Pakistan could exploit the fact for propaganda purposes and say that after the partition the conditions in India are such that a society of this type cannot exist there. So, I also agreed that a lump sum, non-recurring grant of Rs. 60,000 be given to this society.

I want to draw your attention to one point and I want that we should think over it in a calm and cool manner. We should once for all try to see how our mind is working. The Central Education Ministry spends about fourteen crore rupees annually and if out of this amount a sum of Rs. 60,000 is for once given to a society that works for Urdu, is it anything against which there should have been such severe complaints and such strong opposition? We should try to see in what narrow grooves our mind is working. A sum of Rs. 60,000 has been granted for another language of the country, and we cannot tolerate it and we complain of it.

Urdu is not the language of any religious group. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others speak this language. Even if it were only Muslims who spoke Urdu — though that is not the truth — do we not have four and a half crore Muslims in India? And if a society that renders valuable service to Urdu is once given a sum of 60,000 rupees, is it anything that should be opposed and criticised as being a step for the progress of Muslim culture. Did they criticise it because they have love for Hindi? No.

Who is opposed to Hindi? All are of one mind so far as the progress of Hindi is concerned. They do not voice this criticism because they have love for Hindi but because they do not want to see any other language make progress. That is the

motive behind it. If you want to rise to great heights, you are welcome to it; but in doing so do not try to dwarf other. That is not the right way. So far as Hindi is concerned, I can assure you that there is not a single individual in the whole of North India who does not want this language to progress or who is opposed to it. In North India even those people who do not themselves know Hindi ask their children to study this language. If anything stands in the way of the progress of Hindi, I should say it is this mental attitude. Only in 1949 a society in Madras was working on the compilation of an encyclopaedia in Tamil and it requested Government of India for help. The Government thought that they were doing a good and useful work and granted Rs. 80,000 for the society. I remember how people protested and what was said at that time. The fact that we had granted Rs. 80,000 for the preparation of an encyclopaedia in Tamil was not a thing that should have disturbed anybody. But at that time also the same strong feeling was at work. It was not love for Hindi that motivated all the criticism. The feeling was: why should another language be given an opportunity to make progress? There is a desire that no other language should continue to exist. This means that you do not want the progress of Hindi but the fall of other languages. This is a wrong attitude. It is because of this attitude that Hindi does not make progress as speedily as it ought to. What is behind the opposition that Hindi has to face in the South? We should see that we do not oppose any other language of India. We want to see every language prosper. But all the same, we must remember that Hindi is the national language of India and it is our duty, it is the duty of every Indian to be firm on this issue and make every sincere effort to develop Hindi. But a different attitude is adopted here — an attitude that my friend showed the other day when he said that a grant of 60,000 rupees to a society meant that this was done in the interest of Islamic culture. This is absolutely incorrect. No question of Islamic culture is involved in it.

I want to tell you that you should not expect me to talk in a tone of flattery. Only that man indulges in flattery who has his axe to grind and who wants that everybody should be pleased with him and that he should not lose the office of a Minister. I have no self-interest. Forty years ago, when nobody had even heard of

my friends sitting around here, I decided to dedicate my life to the service of the country. I am talking of 1907 when I was 18 or 19 years of age and joined the Revolutionary Party of Bengal. Since then my whole life has been an open book before the world. There is no desire left in me now. The larger part of my life is over. Whatever little remains will also end one day. I have no desire and no ambition now. I may tell you that when a man has no personal motive left in him, he loses his identity. I mean that such a man is immune from wordly setbacks. Such a man is unassailable by weapons because this body is assailable so long as there is self-interest in a man. Once this weakness for the self disappears nothing can harm or injure a man. I may tell you frankly that for the misfortune that befell this country as a result of the two-nation theory and the establishment of Pakistan this sort of mentality, this sort of attitude has been as much responsible as the misguided Muslims and Muslim League.

This responsibility falls on people of such mentality also because you are treading the path of narrow-mindedness when you say that there is no place for any other language, there is no place for another community or for others' rights. It is but natural that people who want to be separate will get an opportunity which they will exploit. They will say, 'How can we leave our Government in the hands of such people?'

You know that I resisted such forces. I said that the Hindu intellect in India, the Hindu mind in India is not represented by this mentality. The Hindu mind and outlook are represented by Gandhiji and other who stand by him. I drew the attention of the Muslims to this fact and waged my struggle. I brought about a revolution in the minds of lakhs of Muslims. I have not been able to control my feelings in this matter, and I must tell you that so long as you continue to have a narrow minded approach to such matters, you cannot achieve your objective. Your objective will, on the other hand, be harmed everyday...

What I mean to say is that for years together we have been giving grants to those Hindi institutions in regard to which it has been said that they are not receiving any grant. A mention of this fact should also have been made. He says he did mention it but as far as I remember he mentioned it only after I had invited his

attention to the fact. Actually I brought this to his notice twice, once in regard to the Nagari Pracharni Sabha for which the Government sanctioned a sum of rupees one lakh. Then he admitted that this amount had been given. But while adducing facts in support of his argument, he overlooked this thing. Only when I made reference to it he said that these institutions were also receiving the aid.

I would take a little more of your time. Seth Govind Dass made his speech. He started by saying that there were just two hurdles in the path of Hindi. One of these, he said, was English. He also said that he considered those people who had a liking for English to be the offsprings of Macaulay.

Then he said that Urdu was the second obstacle. I am at a loss to understand how Urdu comes in here.

How is Urdu concerned with this? So far as the Education Ministry is concerned it has not created any Section for Urdu, but it has established a Hindi Section. It has chalked out a programme for Hindi and not for Urdu. Urdu in no way comes into the picture.

I do not want to speak any more on that. But I wish to bring it to your notice that he said at the top of his voice, 'The Education Ministry has decided to keep the international terms for science. This is absolutely wrong. I went to England and to France and everywhere I found that they had not adopted the international terms.' I do not understand what was the source of such information for Sethji. ... I do not know how Sethji has come to the conclusion that there are no international terms in science which we are going to retain. In the first instance, let me tell him how this decision came to be arrived at. It is not correct to say that the Education Ministry made this decision. The Education Ministry has nothing to do with it. The Government set-up a University Education Commission. This Commission submitted a report in which it was recommended that for science studies international terms should be adopted in Hindi. This thing was put before the Central Advisory Board of Education. This Board is a body which represents the State Governments, the Universities and the educationists of the country. Naturally the Government attaches value to its recommendations. When the

matter was with the Board I received a letter from Dr. Raghuvira in which he said that he was not a member of the Board but he wanted to say something in the matter. I replied that it did not matter if he was not a member of the Board, that I was empowered to extend a special invitation to him and that he should gladly take part in the deliberations. So I invited him. He attended the meeting and spoke for an hour and a half. The members of the Board took it ill. Dr. Mudaliar stood up and said that it was not a school where a teacher could teach things to the students collected there. I interrupted him and pointed out that it was a matter of vital importance and we should invite and consider all points of view. He was therefore given full chance to express himself. Thereafter the Board unanimously accepted the recommendation of the Enquiry Commission. Which says that for science international terms should be adopted in Hindi. Thus they endorsed the recommendation of the the Enquiry Commission. The Government received this recommendation of the Board and it was considered in a Cabinet meeting. There we arrived at the decision that a body of expert educationists and scientists be formed which should take up the work of preparation of the terms. Consequently the Education Ministry established the Board which is functioning. What I want to suggest is that it is wrong to say that the decision was made by the Education Ministry. As a matter of fact, this proposal was made by the University Enquiry Commission. The Board agreed with them and the Government also accepted the proposal.

Anyhow, I am not going to draw too much on your time and would like to be brief. It is our duty to abolish English as the official language of the Central Government in a period of 15 years and to make earnest efforts to adopt Hindi. But how are we going to do so? Would it serve to repeat the word Hindi over and over again. Certainly it would not. It is quite a difficult task to replace one language by another in administration which is not an ordinary thing. It involves difficulties. We have to overcome and remove them.

The Education Ministry considered this question in the year 1951 and chalked out a programme. The preliminary and fundamental thing was that we adopted a provision in the Constitution that Hindi shall be the official language after fifteen

years. If we do not pay full attention to Hindi during these fifteen years and we think that in the sixteenth year Hindi will automatically become the official language and then all work will be done in Hindi, that is simply an illusion. In this way, not to talk of fifteen years. Hindi will not become the official language even in twenty-five or thirty years. Hence we must keep this basic fact in view that at least five years should be allotted for replacing English by Hindi in the Central Secretariat, for completely adopting Hindi in all the Ministries and Departments and for arranging the publication of all circulars, reports and Gazettes in Hindi in Devanagari Script. That would enable us to have a trial and to know what shortcomings are there and what difficulties are to be encountered.

For purposes of the administration it is necessary to have a specific pattern of language as we have in the case of English, Hindi will have to adopt a pattern on similar lines. This would take us at least five years. The Education Ministry has a programme before it that after ten years *i.e.*, in the eleventh year, Hindi should be the official language side by side with English. Our friends from the South will have no cause for complaint because in the eleventh year we will not abolish English. We are going to keep it for full fifteen years, though Hindi will be adopted, alongside with it. As for the possible objection that this would involve heavy expenditure on the part of the Government, almost double, I would say that this question of Hindi is of such a great importance that the Government should gladly bear the increased expenditure. But, let me reassure you that the expenditure will not increase to that extent. All States in Northern India have already declared Hindi to be their official language and they are advancing rapidly in their bid to realise that objective. When in the eleventh year the Central Government begins work in Hindi, it will not be necessary for them to send a single paper in English to all such States as U.P., Madhya Bharat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. If at all the need arises to have some duplication in work, even then, as I have already said, this work is of such vital importance that we should gladly bear the extra burden. One might object and say why eleven years, why should it not be adopted in the fifth year. My reply to that is that that would be just as wrong as not to adopt it in the eleventh



year. This is a matter in regard to which we cannot move ahead unless we prepare the ground.

Anyhow, the Education Ministry have made their programme for Hindi. They have divided these 15 years into three periods of 5 years each. The programme for the first five years is to prepare terms. So far as education is concerned all terms upto the school standard must be finalised. Similarly terms for administration should also be formulated. In so far as the State Governments are concerned, attempts should be made to make Hindi a compulsory subject at the secondary stage.

Now, three years out of the first five have already passed. During these three years, one is glad to find that in the matter of schools, Travancore, Cochin State has given us its full co-operation and, notwithstanding the fact that they are strangers to Hindi, they have made Hindi compulsory at the secondary stage. I was pleased to learn that the Government of Mysore had also made it compulsory. It is also compulsory in Orissa and Assam. In two States only, viz., Madras and Andhra, although Hindi has been introduced at the secondary stage, it is an optional subject and has not yet been made compulsory. From the requests that are received, we, however, find that, in spite of this, considerable number of people there take up Hindi and qualify in it. We hope the time is not far when these States will also make Hindi compulsory at the secondary stage.

As for the terms eighteen thousand have already been prepared. I have called another meeting of the Board from the 20th. They have been asked to submit a report on all their activities, so that we might know how to put through our programme in future and what new steps we should take in this direction.

As for the Hindi centres, it is well known that the Dakshin Prachar Sabha has been doing a very useful and valuable job for many years. There were three places, viz., Assam, Orissa and Bengal, where no regular centre has yet been started. There too the Education Ministry has now established three centres. Teachers are being trained and efforts are afoot to organise the propagation of Hindi there in the same manner as is being done in the Southern States.

I shall not take any more time. I would ask you not to imagine even for a minute that the Ministry of Education has grown static. It has an active brain. It has made every possible effort in the past and will continue doing so in the future. It will gladly welcome any suggestion that you might make for any reform or improvement in its methods. But if ever any doubts arise or any whispers are heard I would like you to come to me. I am not far away; I sit at a distance of just five yards from the Hall. You can meet me and find out what the matter is. I assure you that insofar as it is a question of the development of Hindi, the Education Ministry realises its duty and will not be found wanting.

**TRIBUTES**

## Tributes to Maulana Azad

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In the early hours of Saturday, 22nd February 1958, death removed from our midst Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of India's most illustrious sons, a great servant of the people and redoubtable fighter in the cause of the country's unity and freedom. His mortal remains were interred near the Jama-Masjid in Delhi, a city which provided the scene and setting for many of his activities.

Deeply read in the philosophies of the East and West, he attracted attention in many countries, besides India, by his scholarship and learning, and his writings command respect wherever the Urdu, Arabic and Persian languages are read or spoken. His commentary on the Quran has come to be known as an authoritative work in Islamic literature.

A nationalist from the beginning of his public life, he came under the influence of Gandhiji and national movement nearly forty years ago. Since then he was in the forefront of the national struggle for freedom, participating in the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements, the Civil Disobedience campaign, the Quit India Movement and others, devotedly serving the country as national leader and President of the Indian National Congress on several occasions. On the last occasion, he was

President from 1940 till 1946, and in that capacity acted as the chief spokesman of the Congress Party in the negotiations with the British Government. When Independence was won, his great personality continued to be a symbol of steadfastness of purpose and a beacon of faith and hope. In January 1947, he joined the interim Government as Minister for Education, and continued to preside over the Ministry of Education till the day of his death. His interests and activities covered the entire field of national activities, and in all the great tasks to which he set his hand, he brought the impress of his great personality and his exceptional qualities.

A true representative of the culture which has been evolved in India through the contributions of people of many languages, many religions and many traditions, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a profound faith in the destiny of the Nation. In failing health, he worked without rest or respite in the service of India and as a true soldier died at his post in discharge of his duties. To the people of India and to the Governments at the Centre and the States, the loss of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is grievous and irreparable. His humanism and his spirit of tolerance and devotion will remain with us an undying and inspiring memory.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S TRIBUTES  
( *Gazette of India, Extraordinary* )  
23 February, 1958

The silver tongue and the mighty pen of Maulana Sahab are no more. But his life of sacrifice in the cause of the nations Independence and unity was a beacon light to millions of the country now striving to consolidate their freedom and build up a new India. The large gathering present at the meeting and the huge crowds that had joined in paying respects to the departed leader yesterday had shown to what extent the Maulana enjoyed the trust and affection of the people. Crores of people in the country, irrespective of caste, religion or province to which they belonged, mourned the passing away of a leader whose life, over the last 45 years could not be separated from the story of India's struggle for freedom and reconstruction.

Maulana Azad had by his great eloquence and powerful writings, aroused the people and prepared them to fight for freedom. He had shown by his work and sacrifice how difficulties in the way of a nation had to be overcome. At a very early age, Maulana Azad had become a scholar and a thinker. He had come to the conclusion—to which he stuck steadfastly throughout — that Hindus and Muslims had to live together in this country and that they had to live in harmony and goodwill. In this mission of Hindu-Muslim unity, Maulana Azad faced many difficulties and suffered rebukes but he did not mind these and fought for what he considered right.

We should place his example, which was a life of dedication and sacrifice in the cause of unity and freedom, before us and learn from what he had preached and worked for. That is the best tribute we can pay him and that is the only way we can strengthen and safeguard our independence.

Let us resolve in our hearts that we shall try to follow the path shown by Maulana Azad, namely, placing the welfare of the people above everything else. If the people of India understand the meaning of his life aright, we cannot fall a prey to conflicts based on caste or religion or language.

Dr. RAJENDRA PRASAD  
23 February, 1958

Maulana Sahab was an outstanding figure of great courage, fearlessness, integrity and passionate love for freedom. He noticed the defects which make for subjection and struggled to the best of his ability to remove them. National dissensions have been a frequent cause of our repeated humiliation and subjection. He stood against them; he wanted to bring about the consolidation of our country. He made no difference between Hindu and Muslim, Sikh or Christian. He felt that all those who are in this country belonged to one country and that national spirit was the driving force of his life. He was an apostle of national unity and communal harmony, the lessons which we have to remember even now, since there are forces which are still at

work in this country to divide us, one from another. This is one great lesson on his life.

Another thing which he taught us was the need for probity in administration. If we are lacking in it, the stability of the Government and the stability of our social structure will be undermined. He was much too fond of the right to prefer the wrong or the expedient. All along whenever questions of administrative integrity arose, he fought for preserving high standards in public administration. That is another lesson which we have to remember. There are forces which undermine Governments and bring about social upheavals, national dissensions, and lack of probity and integrity in administration.

When once freedom was won, he again felt that we must use that freedom for promoting social welfare, cleanse this country of sickness, squalor, illiteracy etc. and cleanse our minds of superstition of obscurantism of fanaticism. He stood for, what one may call, the emancipated mind, the mind which is free from narrow prejudices of race or language, province or dialect, religion or caste. We had in Maulana Sahab the civilised mind.

Whenever I went to talk with him, he was full of quotations from Arabic and Persian. I do not know, but I am told that his command over these languages was unsurpassed and his speeches which he gave in Urdu, whenever he gave them, cast us into a spell. They were firm in their structure, dignified and polished in their diction, and cogent and pointed. I do not think that his place can be replaced in our country. He was a great figure in every sense of the term.

Let us remember that he worked for the ideals of national unity, probity in administration and economic progress. These are the things which we have set before ourselves. The only way in which we can honour his memory is for us to adopt these ideals and question ourselves every day whether in our acts we are promoting integrity, national unity, we are promoting integrity in administration, we are promoting economic and material progress. That is the one way in which we can imbibe the lessons of his life. There is no doubt that we will not see the like of him again — a

great man, a man of stately presence, indomitable courage and fearlessness, that is what Maulana was.

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

24 February, 1958

It has fallen to my lot often to refer in this House to the death of a colleague or some great man. I have to perform that duty, a sad duty, again today in regard to one who was with us a few days ago and who passed away rather suddenly producing a sense of deep sorrow and grief not only to his colleagues in Parliament, but to innumerable people all over the country.

Now, it has become almost, if I may say so, a commonplace, when a prominent person passes away, to say that he is irreplaceable, that his passing away has created a void which cannot be filled. To some extent that is often true; yet, I believe that it is literally and absolutely true in regard to the passing away of Maulana Azad. I do not mean to say that no great men will be born in India; certainly not. We have had great men and we will have great men; but, I do submit that that peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else.

I need not refer to his many qualities which we all know — his deep learning, his scholarship and his great oratory. He was a great writer and he was great in many ways. But there are other scholars; there are other writers; there are other orators, but there was this combination in him of the greatness of the past with the greatness of the present. He represented and he always reminded me of what I have read in history about the great men of several hundred years ago, say, if I think of European history, the great men of the Renaissance or in a later period, of the encyclopaedists who preceded the French Revolution, men of intellect, men of action. He reminds me also of what might be called the great qualities of olden days — the graciousness of them. There were many bad qualities, of course, in the old days, but there was a certain graciousness, a certain courtesy, a certain tolerance, a certain patience which is sadly to seek in the world today. There is little of graciousness in the world, even though we



may become more and more advanced in scientific and technical ways. Even though we may seek to reach the Moon, we do it with a lack of graciousness, with a lack of tolerance, with a lack of something which have made life worthwhile since life began. So, it was this strange and unique mixture of the good qualities of the past, the graciousness, the deep learning and toleration with the urges of today that made Maulana Azad what he was.

Everyone knows that even in his early teens he was filled with the passion for freeing India and he turned towards ways even of violent revolution. And, then, he realised, of course, soon after that that was not the way which would gain results.

He was a peculiar and a very special representative in a high degree of that great composite culture which has gradually grown in India. I do not mean to say that everybody has to be like Maulana Azad to represent that composite culture. There are many representatives of it to various parts of India; but he, in his own venue, here in Delhi or in Bengal or Calcutta, wherever he spent the greater part of his life, represented this synthesis of various cultures which have come one after another to India, rivers that had flowed in and lost themselves in the ocean of India's life, India's humanity, affecting them, changing them and being changed themselves by them.

He came to represent more specially the culture of India as affected by the culture of the nations of Western Asia, the Iranian culture, the Persian culture, the Arabic culture which affected India for thousands of years — especially Iran — as every one knows. So, in that sense, I said that I can hardly conceive of any other person coming who can replace him because there was already a change in the age which produced him and that age is past. A few of us are just relics, who have some faint idea of that age that is past.

I do not know if the generation that is growing up will even have any emotional realisation of that age. We are functioning in a different way, we think in a different way, and a certain gap in mental appreciation and understanding separates us, separates the generations.

It is right we change; I am not complaining change is essential lest we become rooted to some past habit which, even if it was good at some time, became bad later. But, I cannot help expressing a certain feeling of regret that with the bad, the good of the past days is also swept away and that good was something that was eminently represented by Maulana Azad.

We mourn today the passing of a great man, of course a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through the problem to its core. I used the word 'luminous'. I think perhaps that is the best word I can use about his mind — a luminous mind. When we miss and when we part with such a companion, friend, colleague, comrade, leader, teacher — call him what you will — there is inevitably a tremendous void created in our life and activities.

It is possible that the initial reaction may not be a full realisation of that void. The initial reaction is one of shock and sorrow. Gradually, as days pass, the void appears deeper and wider and it becomes more and more difficult to fill that place which was filled by a person who has passed away. But that is the way of the world and we have to face it not negatively but positively by devoting and dedicating ourselves to what he stood for and trying to carry on the good work which he and others who have left us — captains and generals of our peaceful forces who have worked for Independence and progress and advancement of India who have come and who have gone leaving their message behind. And so, I hope though he may go, he will live and his message will live and illumine us as it did in the past.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
24 February, 1958

In order to make something of life, every man, be he great or small, seeks light and warmth from some source. When I was a boy, I also wanted to light the earthen lamp of my being. The first wick of my lamp I lit from Maulana's lamp. As a student, I used to read his *Al-Hilal*. I used to read it aloud to a group of fellow students. It was then that my wick caught fire.

Maulana had a many-sided personality. He was not only a fighter for freedom and a great statesman. He was a great theologian and a great scholar as well. He was a great literary artist, and possessed an excellent taste and rare aesthetic sensibility. He loved books ardently. Let nobody imagine that he ever forsook scholarship and literature for politics. To the last, he was faithful to his first love. Yet he knew that knowledge could become a burden. It could weigh a person down and make him utterly ineffectual. While he was supreme in learning, he was also fully conscious of his social responsibilities and the duties he owed to his country. He showed that he could fight for what was right, that he could devote his whole life to wrest the freedom of his country and, after achieving that freedom, to strive to make something out of it, to build on its foundations the grand edifice of a good and graceful national life. He proved that learning is not some cabbalistic incantation meant to outwit and confuse simple folks, but a radiance which could light the path of others.

This scholar, thinker and warrior of righteousness has left a glorious example behind. Persons of discernment know that to speak out the true word, to declare the truth, the bitter truth, is the greatest 'jihad' (righteous war) of all.

He did not mix much with people. Of late, he had become even more retiring in his habits. But even though he met few people, he was a friend of all. Even though he kept to himself in his room, he was our comrade. He made us feel that he shared our life, for he shared and inspired our highest aspirations.

Maulana is no more with us. The pen which scattered pearls as well as hurled bolts, is no more; the tongue that showered petals well as emitted sparks, which consumed falsehood and illumined truth, is no more. The pen lies broken and the tongue is silenced. But the Maulana lives, for his example survives, and we ought to borrow light and warmth from that example and orient our lives on the lines he desired and which he exemplified in his own life. We have a mighty task before us. It is not easy to build up this nation of ours. There is no magic or trick which can achieve it. Not one but many Abul Kalams will have to live and die for India; not one but many generations will have to give their all before we can build up our nation.

In my opinion the greatest service which the Maulana did was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One separates and differentiates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other, the true spirit of religion, brings people together; it creates understanding. It lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. It implies belief in unity, in the essential unity of things. And this is a lesson which must be learned by men of all religious denominations, by all those who want to form factions based on language or on caste or creed and thus aim to destroy the unity of our life. The disease which ails us today is that our small and narrow loyalties have succeeded in gaining the upper hand. We are more attached to little groups, and do not fully comprehend the biggest group. We have to subordinate our smaller loyalties to our bigger ones. It is not necessary to break or destroy the smaller loyalties. It is not necessary that we cease being a Sikh, a Hindu, a Muslim or a Parsi. But we must put our country and the whole mankind first before we can be worthy of being called a true Muslim, a true Hindu, a true Christian, a true Parsi or a true Sikh. The life of Maulana offers a radiant example of this ideal. This is what we need most at present in our everyday life, in our body politic. We should firmly resolve today that we shall breath this spirit — the true spirit of religion — into the life of our nation.

DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN  
23 February, 1958

Maulana Sahab was a great national hero and a great patriot. He entered public life nearly fifty years ago, and his life has been one of dedication to the service of the motherland. His service and sacrifice were immense. He fought relentlessly and was a good fighter. In the winning of freedom, he was next to none. He was the right-hand person of Mahatma Gandhi. After the winning of freedom, he was a great architect of our new State.

He was a Member of the Constituent Assembly, the Provisional Parliament and the Lok Sabha, and he was the Minister of Education, when his body was laid at rest.

I pray to the Almighty that his soul may rest in peace.

He was a great theologian and divine. He was devoted to religion, but he never allowed his religion to interfere with his politics. These are the lessons that we have to draw from the life of the great soul that has departed.

I trust that the House joins me in conveying to the members of the bereaved family our deep sense of sorrow. His loss is irreparable to the Motherland.

M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR,  
*Speaker, Lok Sabha,*  
24 February, 1958

Since the martyrdom of Gandhiji, the country has never been shaken so much as by sad demise of Maulana Saheb. The entire nation is in mourning today. The vast crowds that lined the route from his residence to the Jama Masjid, attended the funeral when his body was laid at rest, and the huge gathering that was there in the memorial meeting yesterday testified to the universal esteem and affection in which he was held by the people of all classes, creeds and persuasions. Similar meetings have been held in all parts of the country. Tributes have been paid by the thousands. There has been in a way a spontaneous expression, almost universal, of the gratitude which the nation owes to Maulana Saheb for the services rendered by him continuously for more than 45 years.

The history of India for the last many years would to a large extent represent the part played by Maulana Saheb in the making of that history. He was the embodiment of the synthetic culture of our country, which is our most precious heritage, and thus he represented in an abundant measure the forces of unity, tolerance, goodwill and friendliness towards all. He was a wise statesman, and ardent patriot, an intrepid fighter, and a profound scholar, who was respected for his learning not only in his own country but also in other lands. He guided the Indian National Congress and the country in the struggle for independence for many years. He also carried on negotiations with the Cripps Mission and other bodies and also with Wavell when the first conference met in Simla. He was a man who never wavered and never swerved

from the path of truth and righteousness. He devoted his all to the good of others. He worked for human freedom, for the Independence of India and for the unity of all living in this land.

We owe our Independence to a large extent to leaders like him. His memory will ever be cherished with affection, and people will continue to derive inspiration from his life. He stood for the highest standards in public and also in private life. He has left an impress in all walks and he will be remembered by generations to come for his nobility. He was a great man in the true sense of the word. We will not see the like of him again. The generation has come to an end, and we will only treasure the memory of such great men. He, was a beacon of hope and faith. He is no more in our midst. Not only the people but the Government too have lost a guide, one who stood for justice and fairness and for the best standards under all circumstances, and who worked with single-minded devotion in a selfless manner within as well as outside the Government. I can only pray that our country may be able to stand the shock, and that the objectives for which he stood, the aims which he always kept in view, and the principles which he actually practised, may continue to guide us.

GOVIND BALLABH PANT

24 February, 1958

Maulana Sahib was the embodiment of a synthetic culture which had existed in India for the last few centuries, which had been enriched by many streams assimilated in India. It is the genius of our people that whenever they take anything from outside they put their own grab upon it, before accepting it, thus enriching themselves.

Maulana Sahib was the culmination of an age, an age which will not come back. He had the old world's courtesies which may not revive. But, even as he was the culmination of an era, he was also the beginning of another era. I remember, in 1912 when he published out his famous journal *Al-Hilal* in Urdu, it was a revelation. A young man who did not know any of the modern

European languages yet could talk of political and historical matters with a familiarity of the expert.

He rendered the greatest service to Islam, when he recognised that Islamic countries could only be saved from the clutches of Imperialism when India was free. One does not know whether he loved Islam more or he loved India more; it was absolutely a blend where there was no first or second but both were the first. And, he made his Muslim countrymen to realise that in India while working for the freedom of India they were also working for the freedom of the countries that in Europe are called near East — and we call them West Asia.

He was a man of many brilliant facets. Any one of them would have given him fame. He was a great divine, and if he had just confined himself to the spiritual heritage of his people he would have been the first in the field, and so he remained, inspite of his political activities. He was a great orator; and if he had simply remained an orator, the nation would have remembered him among the country's great orators. He was a great scholar and if he had devoted his life to scholarship, he would have produced valuable and learned books and he would have been the leader in that field. But he took to the political field. Let it be understood that he and some of the old leaders who took to politics were not taking to politics for its sake. They had to leave pursuits dearest to their hearts; they had to leave things in which they could shine best.

Before Independence, there was no politics in India. There was only one thing and it was the love and service of the country that was lying low and that was in slavery. Many of us did not enter in politics and if we had been left alone, in normal circumstances, we would not have been in politics; but we would have gone on with the work dear to us. We had to interrupt our work because the country demanded it, and it was not politics but was the love of the country that brought us into the political field. Maulana also, but for the condition in India, would have been one of our great scholars and one of our great divines. But his merit lay in this, that he thought that all scholarship, all knowledge of divinity and philosophy, all his historical knowledge, would be worth little if the country was not free. Therefore, he joined the

National Movement. He joined it when he was almost in his teens, and I had occasion to be in contact with him in those days. There were revolutionaries inside and outside India then and there were to be connections, and I was one of the persons entrusted with this liaison. Many times literature came from outside; letters came from outside and they had to be transmitted. I have very, very vivid memories of him before 1920. In 1920 we all realised that violent revolution was not the way to freedom and that what Gandhiji had shown was the real way of rousing the masses and working for Independence.

It is very rare that people keep on throughout life in a revolutionary movement. It has been my experience that many, tired, fall by the wayside. A poet said it does not matter whether a spinner spins fine or he spins thick, but let it be that that thread does not break. And here, not only Maulana Sahib spun fine but the thread did not break. He had to suffer difficulties and humiliations. It is very difficult to stand out against the majority of one's community and to feel isolated. But he did not mind. He was insulted many times and he was a sensitive soul, yet he remained faithful to the cause that he had made his own and which he propagated throughout life, the cause of the independence of his country and its unity. Here was the person who has left a void in our nation. It is literally true, it is certain that we cannot fill that void. May be, many people will rise; great people rise; great people have arisen in our history, but the place of Maulana, I am afraid, cannot be filled. There are many who appear to be wise when they talk, but in the counsels they are not of much use. But here was a person who was not only wise in his words but wise in his counsels. He analysed the political situation with perfect clarity, and whether one agreed with him or not, one got wiser because of his analysis of the political situation.

It is said that there is, in our country the old guard. The gems of the old guard, are dropping one by one. I have to say in sorrow that we do not find that their places are being adequately filled. It may be that we may not have the gems again for some time to come, because, in the nation there is a period of creation and there is another period of silent gestation. So, it may not be possible to recreate the old giants, perhaps it may not be possible in a democracy, where the average man must rise.



But I hope the gap created by the loss of exceptional people will be filled by the general rise in the average intelligence and average patriotism of the common people.

I pay my respectful homage to the great man who has just passed away.

ACHARYA KRIPALANI

24 February, 1958

It is no doubt that we who came to the non co-operation movement in 1920 and had been reared up in the national movement for so many years feel now that with his passing a sort of a whole period is summed up.

Maulana Azad reminded us of the encyclopaedist of the French Revolution and the Leaders of the Renaissance. When I used to see him sitting either here or in the movement outside, I was reminded more of the great Arab leaders of the 10th century, combining philosophy, mathematics and something of Omar Khayyam's literature all together. It is a beautiful personality and a beautiful ideology of the new period combined with all the grandness that was in the past.

I sometimes used to feel how Abul Fasal would have looked when he translated the Upanishads in Persian and I think Maulana was the same picture here. It was not a small thing, when 12 or 13 years ago, when the floods of communalism were sweeping away many persons, to stand like a rock on the ground of nationalism despite adherence to one's religion, one's own community. For Maulana Sahib to remain with the national movement required tremendous courage.

Many people were washed away in the flood. But Maulana Sahib stood there. Therefore, it is quite true to say that, surely, more great men will be borne, but the period that is passed cannot be filled up.

S.A. DANCE

24 February, 1958

The news of the passing away of the late Minister for Education, Mr. Abul Kalam Azad, came to me as a shock. In him the Indian Government and people have lost a great patriot and one of India's ablest sons who devoted his whole life to the struggle for Independence and to the building up of India as a strong national ally. I deeply sympathise with the Indian people in their bereavement.

DR. HO CHI-MINH  
*President of the Democratic Republic Of Viet-Nam.*  
*February, 1958*

I heard with deep regret the news of the death of Maulana Azad. He was one of those who battled for the freedom of his country for most of his life. As an Islamic writer he had few rivals. As a gentleman he was supreme. I send my sincere condolence to Your Excellency, to the Government of India and to the bereaved family.

GEN. ISKANDAR MIRZA  
*President of Pakistan.*  
*February, 1958*

Maulana Azad's death is a tragedy for all Muslims. He was a great general of the war of Indo-Pakistan freedom.

FRONTIER GANDHI  
KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN  
*February 1958*

With the death of Maulana Azad, the Indian Union has lost one of its ablest administrators and an elder statesman. We have had before partition many differences with Maulana Azad; in spite of that, nobody could deny that he was one of the most learned men

of the sub-continent. He had both courage and conviction, and the position he occupied in the Congress was due to him by his merit. It will be difficult for that country to find a man of his capacity to replace him.

HAMIDUL HUQ CHOUDHURY, M.P.  
*President, Krishak Sramik Party*  
 February 1958

Azad's sacrifices for Indian Independence were very great. In spite of political differences, the Muslims of India and Pakistan held him in high esteem. May his soul rest in peace.

ZAMIERUDDIN, M.P.  
*Joint Secretary,*  
*All-Pakistan Awami League*  
 February, 1958

A man of Maulana Azad's talents cannot be claimed as only its own by any particular country. Though an Indian, he belonged to the whole world. The Muslims of Pakistan owe much to Maulana Azad. True, he did not support the demand for Pakistan, but his contribution to the freedom movement was immense. Without his contribution to the movement for freedom, Pakistan may not have been put on the way of its conception, and may not have been a reality today.

MAULVI TAMEZ-UD-DIN KHAN,  
*President, East Pakistan Muslim League.*  
 February 1958

I am personally mourning a teacher, a leader, and a friend. In Maulana Azad Pakistan lost a friend and a true well-wisher, India

lost a sane, far-sighted and tried patriot, and the Islamic world has been deprived of a religious leader of the first rank.

KHAN ABDUS SAMAD KHAN ACHAKZAI,  
*President, Quetta Division of the  
 National Awami Party  
 February 1958*

Maulana Azad was one of those distinguished personalities who would be remembered with respect in the history of this sub-continent. Though he differed politically from the vast majority of the Muslims of undivided India, one feature of his political life which stood out prominently was that he believed in standing unmoved like a rock in the teeth of strong opposition. The Maulana was an eminent scholar of outstanding ability and the files of *Al-Hilal* will remain as a living monument to his literary standard. The Maulana's strenuous efforts for the freedom of this sub-continent will remain a torch-light for the coming generations.

DR. SAYED ABDUL WADUD,  
*President of the  
 Tahrik-e-Jumhoore-e-Millat, Pakistan.  
 February, 1958.*

The death of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is a great loss not only to India but also to all the countries of the Near and Middle East. He was a great scholar possessing wide knowledge of both the Western and Eastern cultures. He was the hero of freedom who after great sacrifices for the cause of Independence, lived to see the fulfilment of his ideas. During our War of Independence he never ceased to express sympathy and support for the Turkish cause.

Since I have had the opportunity to meet him personally and to appreciate better his high qualities, my sorrow is two-fold.

PROF. FUAD KÖPRÜLÜ  
*Scholar and Former Foreign Minister of Turkey  
 February 1958*

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