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**Maulana Azad's Vision for Nation Building: Exploring Nationalism and Multiculturalism in 'India Wins Freedom'**

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**Abstract:**

This abstract delves into Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's vision for nation-building as portrayed in his autobiography, "India Wins Freedom." Azad's narrative unveils an intensely nationalistic outlook intertwined with a profound belief in multiculturalism. Through a meticulous examination of his work, this study elucidates Azad's perspectives on unity, secularism, and the pivotal role of diversity in shaping the nation's fabric. It analyzes Azad's efforts to foster a cohesive society amidst the complexities of religious and cultural pluralism, offering valuable insights into his enduring relevance in contemporary discourse. By exploring Azad's vision, this research sheds light on the intricate interplay between nationalism and multiculturalism, providing a nuanced understanding of his contributions to the discourse on nation-building in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Azad's narrative not only chronicles the struggle for India's independence but also serves as a blueprint for inclusive nation-building. His emphasis on dialogue, mutual respect, and social justice resonates strongly with Today's diverse world. Through Azad's lens, this research reflects on the enduring principles essential for fostering unity and pluralism in societies grappling with identity and division.

**Keywords:** Nation-building, Identity, Pluralism, Freedom Struggle, coexistence

**Introduction**

The real name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin. He was popularly known as Maulana Azad. One of the most significant leaders of the Indian freedom struggle was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was also a remarkable scholar. He was a polyglot who knew Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, English, Persian, and Bengali. As a symbol of his mental liberation from a constrictive perspective on religion and life, he chose the pen name Azad. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad held the position of Education Minister (the <sup>first</sup> education minister of independent India) in the cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru from 1947 to 1958. He died on February 22, 1958, due to a stroke. Maulana Azad was posthumously awarded India's

highest civilian honor, Bharat Ratna, 1992 to recognize his glorious contribution to the nation.

### **Azad's Literary Contribution and His Pan-Islamic Outlook**

Azad was educated and trained as a priest. He wrote many books and journals and reinterpreted the Holy Quran. His learning enabled him to abandon the tradition of Taqliq, or conformity, and embrace the principle of Tajdid, or innovation. He showed interest in the pan-Islamic doctrines of Jamaluddin Afghani and Aligarh's thoughts on Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Filled with the pan-Islamic ethos, he journeyed through Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. During his sojourn in Iraq, he engaged with expatriate revolutionaries, fervently advocating for establishing a constitutional government in Iran. While in Egypt, he encountered luminaries such as Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, Saeed Pasha, and other fervent activists driving revolutionary movements across the Arab world. His direct exposure to the principles and ethos of the Young Turks in Constantinople significantly contributed to his transformation into a nationalist revolutionary.

### **Participate in the Revolutionary Movement and Remove the Predetermined thoughts against Muslims.**

Upon his return from overseas, Azad encountered two prominent revolutionaries from Bengal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Sri Shyam Sundar Chakravarty. He became an active participant in the revolutionary movement against British dominion. Azad perceived the revolutionary fervor as predominantly confined to Bengal and Bihar. However, within two years, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was pivotal in establishing covert revolutionary centers across North India and Bombay. Notably, a significant portion of his fellow revolutionaries harbored anti-Muslim sentiments, believing that the British government was manipulating the Muslim community against India's quest for independence. In the face of this sentiment, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad endeavored to persuade his associates to relinquish their animosity towards Muslims.

### **Azad as a Politician and the Precursor of Hindu-Muslim Unity**

From an early age, he aligned himself with the cause of Indian independence, emerging as a proponent of Hindu-Muslim amity. An advocate for harmonious coexistence between Hindus and Muslims, he staunchly opposed the partition of India based on communal lines. Remarkably, he presciently foresaw the partition of Pakistan and the imposition of military rule in the nascent state. Assuming the role of the inaugural Education Minister of independent India, he left an indelible mark on the country's educational landscape. Today marks the 66th death anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a distinguished Indian freedom fighter and the founding Education Minister of independent India, whose birthday is commemorated nationwide as "National Education Day" in recognition of his outstanding contributions to education in the post-independence era.

Following his release from incarceration, Azad galvanized the Muslim community by spearheading the Khilafat Movement, aimed at reinstating the Khalifa to his rightful position as the ruler of British-occupied Turkey. In 1920, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad aligned himself with the Indian National Congress, supporting the

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Gandhian Non-Cooperation Movement. Notably, he was entrusted with the presidency of the Congress's extraordinary session in Delhi in 1923. Later, in 1930, Maulana Azad experienced another episode of detainment, stemming from his breach of salt restrictions during Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha, resulting in an eighteen-month imprisonment in Meerut.

In 1940, at the Ramgarh session, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad assumed the presidency of the Congress, a position he held until 1946. Advocating for a union of independent states, he staunchly opposed the divisive notion of partition. The partition deeply pained him, shattering his vision of a united nation where Hindus and Muslims could coexist and flourish together. He delivered a historic statement during the Delhi Convention that earned him the moniker "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity."

He said, "Today, if a farishta (an angel) were to descend from Heaven and declare from the heights of the Qutab Minar that India will get Swaraj within 24 hours provided she relinquishes Hindu-Muslim unity, I will relinquish Swaraj rather than give up Hindu-Muslim unity. Delay in the attainment of Swaraj will be a loss to India, but if our unity is lost, it will be a loss to entire humanity" (INC session 1923)

#### **Azad is a Promulgator of Composite Culture**

Although he was a distinguished Islamic scholar, the Maulana significantly supported composite culture. He maintained, "We should accept our defeat but at the same time try to ensure that our culture was not divided" (India et al. 168) even as he accepted separation. A lovely comparison is added: "If we put a stick in the water, it may appear that the water has been divided, but the water remains the same, and the moment the stick is removed, even the appearance of division disappears." (Azad 215)

#### **Azad, as a Journalist**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is also a renowned journalist and educationist and one of the exponents of the Indian independence movement of the subcontinent. In the early years of the 20th century, he edited at least six newspapers and journals with success. *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, however, are emblems of his spirited journalism, careful storytelling, and heartfelt generosity. His main objective as a journalist was British imperialism. He began by interpreting religious truth with his synthesizing ability and flexible yet impetuous pen and using historical analogies and events to emphasize the adverse effects of allowing injustice and tyranny.

#### **Depiction of Azad's Contemporary Outlook Through His Journals**

With Nairang Alam, he began his journalism career in 1899, lasting eight months. He was the editor of *Al-Misbah*, which stopped being published after a few days in 1900. Then, he contributed several essays to *Makhzan*, one of the most renowned Urdu literary journals of the time, which was published in Lahore under the editorship of Shaikh Abdul Qadir. Azad provided a fascinating piece on the "Art of Newspaper Writing" in its May 1902 edition, in which he talked about the usefulness of newspapers as a tool for shaping public opinion. He demonstrated how the media in Europe and the United States changed society's thought. Azad joined *Ahsan-ul-Akhbar*, a weekly publication published in 1901 and edited by Maulvi

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Ahmad Hussain of Fatehpuri and Abdul Ghaffar, a publisher and dealer. The 1901 publication barely lasted for two to three months. He revised the prose section of *Khadang e-Nazar, Lucknow*, in 1902. Azad's innovative and contemporary viewpoints on education, which he thought was the key to social changes, were represented in the essays in *Lisan-ul-Sidq*. He was concerned with the spread of scientific ideas among the educated. He focused on translating the scientific and philosophical writings of Bacon, Newton, and Darwin. He aimed to foster a spirit of inquiry among his audience.

#### **Azad's Participation in an Islamic Educational Centre named Al-Nadwa**

Azad joined Al-Nadwa, the literary arm of Nadwat-ul-Ulama, a periodical of Islamic theology, upon Shibli Nomani's (1857–1914) request following the closing of *Lisan-ul-Sidq* due to financial constraints. Azad gained much respect from Muslim intellectuals and divines due to his affiliation with Al-Nadwa between October 1905 and March 1906. His goal as a journalist was first realized in an essay in the April 1910 edition. In the essay entitled "Nadwat-ul-'Ulama' ka Ijlas-i-Dehli aur Quran ki Shahrah-i-Maqsud" (The Delhi session of the Nadwat-ul-'Ulama' and the goal of Quran), he asserted that the fervently advocated English education among Muslims, perceived as an immediate remedy for the myriad challenges within Muslim society, had proven ineffectual in delivering transformative outcomes. He continued by saying it was a fruitless endeavor since it could only generate job-seekers who would work for the British bureaucracy's administrative apparatus. He also spoke of the sad plight of the current class of "Ulama." He claimed that although they were meant to be the community's natural leaders, the "Ulama" had morally degenerated. According to him, graduates of madrasas who pursued traditional study programs—which could not be of higher quality than Nadwah—wanted to bring about a fundamental change in the situation. He placed all of his faith in Shibli and everyone else he may be able to sway.

#### **Journals of Azad**

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad inaugurated a weekly periodical in Urdu titled "Al-Hilal" in 1912. Al-Hilal was crucial in restoring harmony between Hindus and Muslims after the Morley-Minto reforms caused animosity between the two groups. Al-Hilal developed as a radical platform for the dissemination of extremist ideas. In 1914, the government outlawed Al-Hilal because it was seen as a proponent of separatist ideas. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad subsequently initiated a second weekly publication, Al-Balagh, with the identical objectives of fostering Indian nationalism and propagating revolutionary ideals grounded in Hindu-Muslim concord. In conjunction with the prohibition of this periodical in 1916, the government also expelled Maulana Abul Kalam Azad from Calcutta, confining him to internment in Ranchi. After the First World War's conclusion, he was released. Azad's primary motivation for founding this newspaper was to appeal to Muslims to act according to the Prophet Muhammad's examples and adhere to the Qur'an in their beliefs and deeds.

Additionally, he aimed to promote political awareness among Muslims. Through the columns of his newspaper, Al-Hilal, he tried to demonstrate that being a devout

patriot and a good Muslim were not incompatible. He gave the eradication of foreign dominance high priority because he understood the demands of the period.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion, the study has concluded that the research topic highlights the significance of Azad's notions of nationalism and multiculturalism and his enduring relevance in shaping a cohesive and inclusive India. Furthermore, the study has emphasized the importance of learning from historical figures like Azad to build a harmonious and pluralistic society.

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