

Vol II Issue V Nov 2012

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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MAULANA AZAD'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS

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Abstract:

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is one of the pioneer nation builders of modern India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad whose real name was Abul Kalam Ghulam Muhiyuddin was born on November 11, 1888 in Makkah. He came back to Calcutta (now Kolkata) with his family in 1890. He was home schooled. He learned Arabic, Persian, Philosophy, Geometry, Mathematics, Algebra, English, World history and Politics.

KEY WORDS:

Political, Thoughts, Philosophy, Objectives.

INTRODUCTION

He wrote many books ranging from religion to politics. He started weeklies as 'Al Hilal' and 'Al Balagh' in 1912 and 1915 respectively. He plunged into Indian Political Struggle by joining Congress in 1920. Maulana Azad, no doubt, was one of the three leading personalities of trinity Gandhi-Azad-Nehru. They led India to the portals of independence.

The present paper seeks to analyze Maulana Azad's political contribution and its relevance today. At the onset objectives of the present study appear essential.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the political contribution of Azad in Indian Freedom Struggle
2. To communicate political thought of Maulana Azad to the public for its awareness.
3. To analyze Political thought in the present scenario.

POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MAULANA AZAD

Maulana Azad and Revolutionaries

Out of his special attention to Bengal, Lord Curzon; the viceroy in India had vicious motives Lord Curzon resolved to divide Bengal; politically advanced part of India. The hidden purpose to create watertight compartments of division between Hindus and Muslims of India.

Ultimately, Curzon divided the province of Bengal in 1905. This move of imperialist Curzon gave rise to the revolutionary activities of revolutionaries. Shri Arabindo Ghosh moved to Calcutta to awaken feelings of patriotism in Indians. Up to this time, Maulana Azad too adopted the pen name 'Azad' or 'free'. Due to the serious consequences of partition of Bengal, Azad came into contact with shri Shyam Sundar Chakravarty. Shyam Sundar also introduced him with other revolutionaries. For three or four times, Azad was fortunate to share views with Arabindo Ghosh. Constant meetings with such revolutionary leaders

awakened his revolutionary feelings. Azad's meetings with extremist political leaders could pacify their anti-Muslim approach. They did not trust to accept Muslims entry in revolutionary activities. Azad endeavored to persuade revolutionaries not to think exemplified Muslim revolutionary activities for attaining freedom in Egypt, Iran and Turkey.

Azad wanted to coax the minds of revolutionaries about one fact. He emphasized the need of Muslim participation in revolutionary activities as a sign of unity. Such joining in the political struggle would also mean strength of freedom fight. Azad promoted one group of Muslim youths to join revolutionary groups in India. But the major problem with revolutionary activities was their concentration primarily on Bengal and Bihar. He extended several revolutionaries groups to Northern India and Bombay.

AL-HILAL AND AL-BALAGH

Azad's visit to Middle East in 1908 was the real encouragement for stimulating Muslim Participation in Indian Freedom Struggles. Arab and Turk revolutionaries were of the opinion that Muslims should have led the national struggle for freedom. After his return, Azad resolved to create a new movement among Indian Muslims. He longed to uproot the policy of Aligarh School and the Muslim loyalty to British rule.

Azad after a few days, announced the publication of Al Hilal (The Crescent), a weekly to serve Muslim world. The first issue of Al Hilal was published on first June, 1912. In a limited time, the weekly became famous in the Muslim world of the county. Through Al Hilal, Azad criticized British loyalty of Aligarh School. He condemned Muslim apathy towards freedom Movement. Even London Branch of the Muslim League advised Indian Muslims to be friend Hindus and break the narrow communalist policy and lead to Indian National congress.

Azad, thought Al Hilal, fuelled the nationalist spirit in Indian Muslims. He realized that revolutionary movements were inadequate to satisfy the nationalist spirit of the whole country. Nor could be adopt the advice of sir Sayyed who wanted Indian Muslims to be aloof from national struggle and increase friendship with British rulers. Al-Hilal became the mouthpiece of Muslim participation in India. During the first world war, Azad was interned in Ranchi Jail. Most part of his life was passed in the jail. Azad was the youngest Congress President. He enjoyed Presidentship of Congress for the longest time. Cripps, a cunning statesman, too accepted his intelligence and he used to admire Azad.

Al-Hilal and his other writings during 1911-1920, raised a different slogan with which the higher echelons of Muslim leadership were not familiar. It was indeed a new language to them, as has been rightly described by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 'Discovery of India'. Mahmudul Hasan, a towering personality of the Indian National Movement, was reported to have said, "We (Ulema) were sleeping but Azad has roused us from slumber." Al-Hilal spoke Azad's constant belief in the Hindu-Muslim unity.

At the onset of the First World War, Al-Hilal adored German strength and denounced the British role in the war. An editorial entitled 'Pro-Germanism in Calcutta' published in 'Pioneer' attracted the British Government's attention. Pioneer criticized Al-Hilal for the Pro-German sympathies which would be perilous for the pursuit of war effort. The Bengal government therefore invoked the Press Act and forced its closure by forfeiting its security deposit and demanding fresh security⁵ and demanded a second deposit of 10,000. He had to close the press of 'Al-Hilal.'

A year later, Azad started a new journal Al-Balagh which ceased publication at the end of month of March 1916. Publication and circulation of Al-Balagh was disrupted by the British government as they banned Azad's entry in Bengal. Azad's entry in Madras, Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh was already forbidden. The only destination to reside was Ranchi in Bihar. He thought that from Ranchi he could handle all the publication matters of 'Al-Balagh.' British Government kept strict vigil on him even in Ranchi. After a few months, British Government came to conclusion that Azad's revolutionary activities and his writings and speeches which had considerably aroused anti-British sentiments among his countrymen, were noted as seditious. How long could the oppressive and autocratic British rule tolerate the freedom of a revolutionary?⁶ Therefore British Government interned him with strict restrictions on his movements. The period of his internment at Ranchi was about three and a half years. He was released on January 1, 1920.⁷

KHILAFAT AND NON-CO-OPERATION

The Khilafat Committee and Jamiat-al-Ulama-i-Hind were formed in 1919. Azad released in Ranchi and met Mahatma Gandhi on 18 January, 1920. He supported both. Khilafat Committee was religious and its main concern was for Muslims. With the defeat of Germany, Victorious countries divided the Turkish empire among themselves. Muslims of the world including of India strongly felt that victorious European countries would destroy Islam and its holy places. On Khilafat issue, Indian leaders seriously

decided to send a deputation to the Viceroy to understand Muslim sentiments regarding Turkey and the Khilafat. Maulana mentions: "Gandhiji participated in the discussions and expressed his complete sympathy and interest in the proposal. He declared himself ready to be associated with the Muslims on this issue. On 20 January, 1920, a meeting was held in Delhi. Apart from Gandhi, Lokmanay Tilak and other congress leaders also supported the stand of Indian Muslim on the question of the Khilafat."⁸

Maulana Azad was the president of Khilafat Conference at Calcutta held in February 1920. The Conference demanded to free those Muslim lands which were under the control of non-Muslims. Another resolution passed by Khilafat Movement was to boycott British regime in India. It stressed on Swadeshi Movement. Gandhiji supported the Khilafat Movement. At special session of the Congress held at Calcutta in September 1920, Gandhi insisted on the need on non-cooperation for Swaraj and solution of Khilafat problem. C.R.Das, Lala Lajpat Rai vehemently opposed this. But Azad firmly stood with Gandhi and travelled throughout country for non-cooperation movement. Hindu-Muslim unity reflected in the implementation of Khilafat Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement. Maulana Azad's big dream was to maintain goodwill and amity between the Hindus and the Muslims. But Gandhi had to halt non-cooperation movement due to violent step taken by local people at Chauri Chaura. They set fire to a police station resulting into the death of 22 policemen. Gandhi's non-violence was a weapon as well as life philosophy. While for Maulana Azad non-violence was a part of policy. He could not believe non-violence as a full-fledged instrument to throw away British Government. Along with Das, Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Azad criticized Gandhi's abrupt 'halt' to non-cooperation movement.

In 1923, Azad was elected President of Indian National Congress at Ranchi. He was 35 years of age and was the youngest Congress President. But Congress was divided into two and Swaraj Party was formed. Pro-changers as Mr. Das, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan formed this party. No-changers as Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Azad stressed the fact that "our real object was the liberation of country..... So long as the objective was the same, each group should be free to follow the programme which it considered best."⁹

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a lion's share. When the Government of India Act provided for complete provincial autonomy. But the Congress was adamant on its demand of complete independence. It Congress denied the provincial autonomy. But the foresight of Maulana Azad understood the meaning of rejection to contest elections. He did not favour boycotting elections. Maulana said, "If the Congress did so, less desirable elements would capture the central and Provincial Legislatures and speak in the name of the Indian people..... Ultimately the point of view I represented prevailed, and the congress participated in the elections with results which I have already indicated."¹⁰

President of the Congress (1940-1946)

Maulana Azad was elected President of the Congress for second time. The second term was of six years. This period was of complications and hardships for the whole country. Another hindrance was Second World War. Under his charismatic leadership; movement as 'Satyagraha' and 'Quit India' were successfully launched and reached to public. Even Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel appreciated Maulana Azad's leadership.

APOSTLE OF INDIAN UNITY

Maulana Azad intensely opposed the Partition of India. He had consistent faith in unity and solidarity of the dearest land, India. He was distressed to see the fulfillment of Jinnah's dream of Pakistan. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was one of the leaders who sowed seeds of division of the country on communal line. Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan scheme was based on two-nation theory. Maulana as Congress President issued statement on 15 April 1946; "I must confess that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is un-islamic."¹¹

Maulana was shocked seeing the favour for Partition of Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.¹² Gandhi was his sole hope and Gandhi even promised Azad: "If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive I will never agree to the next meeting, Gandhi tried to persuade Azad by saying that partition appeared inevitable. In despondency Azad said," If even you have now adopted these views, I see no hope of saving India from catastrophe. ¹³

RELEVANCE OF AZAD

Maulana Azad has been thrown into oblivion by the socio-political sphere in India. Our nation

desperately needs to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity. Communal riots have always been the frequent attacks on Indian democracy and social fabric. If Maulana Azad were alive, he would never see the breaking bondage of religions and culture. Narrow aims of politicians at the altar of motherland would have really shaken him. Loosening faith and religious intolerance might have led him to the unending sorrow.

Indian socio-political scenario thoroughly needs the application and implementation of his thoughts. Maulana Azad's political philosophy was based on Hindu-Muslim unity. He released Muslims from constriction of Aligarh Effect adoring the British Rule. Maulana Azad was the driving force to bring Muslim society in the flow of political participation in freedom struggle.

Maulana Azad had grave doubts regarding the formidable political conditions after the creation of Pakistan. In 'India Wins Freedom', Azad remarks: "In fact, the more I think about it the more I am convinced that the creation of Pakistan has solved no problem." Pakistan and India would be hostile to each other. Of course, enmity between two countries of South Asia has been increasing day by day. Of course, as prophesied by Azad Pakistan will have no internal peace. Maulana Azad's Prophecy regarding the creation of West Pakistan i.e. of Bangladesh has also come true. He concludes 'India wins freedom' on "History alone will decide whether we had acted wisely and correctly."

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