Chapter - IV

AZAD AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT
Chapter 4
Religious Movement

Azad believed in continuity of philosophy and culture. He was neither a conservative diehard nor an ultra modernist. He balanced the ancient philosophy with modern views. He rejected the traditionalist and superstitious view of past. Whatever he accepted from past was on ground pure reasoning. He was not in favour of departure from the past but he believed that the history of philosophy and history of evolution of human intellect is a continuous process with no division of past and present. In the concluding paragraph of his introduction to the ‘Tarjuman-ul-Quran’ he has describe his views as under:

‘It is voyage among scholars and critics these days to distinguish the ancient from the modern. But I recognize no such distinction. The ancient belongs to me as a legacy for my forefathers, and so far as the modern is concern I have curved my own way. The modern trends throughout are as familiar to me as every nook and corner of the ancient.’

Azad was a genius. He could not be content with legacy of family and environment and himself set on the pilgrimage philosophy. There was no conviction of him. ‘but was riddled all the thrones of doubt and there was no spiritual belief which had not passed through all the vicissitudes of unbelief.’ Azad claimed, and most probably he was right in his claim, that ‘he had quaffed the poison from every poison jar even as he had tried all the anti-dotes that the science of healing had prescribed. When he was thirsty, his thirst was
unlike that of others; nor was the peace that had filled him obtained from common spring. 3

Thus, Azad carved his own way which was neither detached from the past nor it was ‘bewildered’ by the modern but a fine blend of both – modern reason and ancient principals that is why, Azad’s philosophy could appeal both the generations, old and new. Old people were pleased because of their terms; young people rejoiced as he had new inspiration for them.

Azad used the word ‘Religion’ in as wider sense then it was prevailing at that time. While writing the ‘Tarjuman-ul-Quran’ a significant work on the Holy Scriptures, he presented the philosophy of religion to the masses in a very reasonable and appealing way. He had realized that some unreligious traditions had entered the religion and had spoiled it. He also established that there was no ground of conflict in various religions. Truth is truth with whatever name you call it. Had people realized this spirit of religion they would not have gone against each other in the name of religion. He acknowledged the right of individual to accept or reject any particular religion. He was of that view that religious antagonism is created by a few interested persons who want to monopolies the truth and force it on others.

Azad believed that the root of all religions is one. They have same spirit and kernel but they differ in their form. In different places and environment people adopted different method of worship and many environmental traditions evolved. These traditions are only circumstantial and nothing to do with fundamentals of religion. The so–called differences in religions are the
differences of forms and traditions only. Azad has emphasized on the spirit of religion, which is the united factor of mankind.

Azad had realised that Muslim like any other community could burst like volcano in the name of religion, and could put themselves in any danger for the sake of it. When he wanted to create stir amongst Muslim against slavery, he would caption of his article, with the verse of Quran, “struggle, struggle, struggle the way of liberty, Don’t be afraid of, Have fear of God only, if you are righteous. As back as in December 1912, he said “for Hindus it is their patriotic duty to struggle for the emancipation of the country but for the Muslim it is their religious duty and it is included in the struggle in the way of God. God has made them ‘Mujahid’ (soldiers) in his way. They must make every effort for truth and reality and to break human chains of slavery and exploitation. The remedy Azad suggest was to reform Muslim socially and morally and to make them perfect soldiers against the forces of tyranny and exploitation. He prepared them to put everything at the altar of duty. Such an attitude can be created only through sentimentalism. He knew well that the Muslim of the day would not listen to a word which is budged an inch from the religion. Religion was their weakness. That is why he made the religion the basis of all his philosophy on the one hand and on the other he revolutionized the religion to meet the demands of the day he gave it a fresh radical touch to convert the defeatist tendency of the Muslims into a radical and revolutionary spirit. He tried to create in them the self realization, self-confidence and to give them a new life. At a time when Muslims were over awed by the flood of new
civilization, new culture, new sciences and discoveries of the west, they were becoming indifferent and passive to social life day by day. Azad changed their whole approach towards life and towards religion. He told them ‘Islam was a spiritual revolutionary movement and was a response to the call of change when the world is restless to have a new change. It gave them change and revolutionized the old system and traditions. To respond to the call of change was the nature of Islam.’

The revolutionary character cannot be made up of timely emotions, sentiments, extremism and warmth is the action alone, without revolutionary ideology and thinking created in the mind of the people. The greatest characteristic of Azad is that he was revolutionary thinker.

Azad used religion as to be a source of inspiration to the people. It was for the welfare of the whole of humanity; it resolves their differences; it solves their problems; but it was not orthodoxy or conservatism to impede their progress, nor it makes them inactive or be contented with whatever they have got or in whatever conditions they are. It teaches them to struggle hard for their betterment. It demands them to perform their duty towards their fellow beings, their country and nation. Righteous living does not mean to worship only but includes all duties, social, political and economic.

‘In the field of civilization and culture no other crime is as serious as narrowness.’ Azad did not accept any narrowness in the name of religion. For every situation he could bring reference from Quran and Hadis and could show
new paths to the people. He found non-contradiction between reason and religion he was opposed to western imperialism but he never opposed their scientific claims or scientific discoveries.

Azad does not detach religion from politics. But this makes politics ethical not communal. Religion is a moralizing force; it prohibits politics from becoming a brutality. The religion preached by Azad is based on unity and brotherhood; it would not create religious differences or disharmony. Politics and religion are not poles apart. They are two parallel streams following in the same direction. Religion has come to teach the people the principles of justice, equality and righteousness. Politics administers justice and equality, and punishes those who deviated from righteousness and disturb a just system. Hence, politics is not mere coercion or foul play in the hands of the rulers to achieve power.

Azad gave a call of sacrifice and fearlessness. The best death is, as the prophet said, the death of that man, who speaks truth before the tyrant and is sentenced to death for that act of his. On the top of the front page of Al-Hilal an ayat from Quran was written meaning, ‘nether be afraid, nor be desperate; you know, if you are seekers of truth.’

The concept of multi religious or composite nation as adopted by Azad was based on this principal. Unlike any separatist Muslim leader he was not afraid of the tyranny of majority rule in free India. The fear of majority coercion never raised head in Azad. Many a times he expressed this view in
speeches and articles. The idea of partition of the country or the reservation of seats in the name of fear looked funny to him.

**True Religion**

Once Azad told Mahadev Desai: ‘Religion is a force whose power is impossible to gauge. A bullock cart in charge of a stupid driver may at the worst cause an accident resulting in some injury to the driver and one or two more people. But we know what happens when there is a railway accident. Hundreds of lives are lost and untold damage is done. Religion is like the mighty steam engine which needs to be in the charge of a skilful and wide awake driver. In the hands of an unworthy driver it can cause untold misery. To our great misfortune religion has fallen into unworthy hands. They have turned it into irreligion, and I do not know where we are going." As Sheikh Ahmad Al-Bakouri has observed ‘To Maulana Azad, religion was not an instrument which would make people live in self contentment and isolation with no interest in any thing but themselves. Religion, according to him, was not an article or a piece of merchandise to be bartered to the service of lies and hypocrisy or to be used for ensuring material gains or acquiring positions of influence. Religion is nothing like that. It is ethics and fine character. It motivates people to goodness and stimulates in them the human touch. In his estimation, people could find in religion the same solicitude which a traveler finds in the shade of a tree on a hot summer noon."
At last Azad turns to religion for help which can give satisfaction and confidence both, provided that it is not mere superstition, but bears wisdom and reasoning. Since religion addresses more to our minds than to our hearts Azad prefers religion to both philosophy and science. He has discussed the reason in the Ghubar-e- Khatir. Philosophy will open the door of suspicion, it cannot close it; science will give proofs; it cannot give belief religion will give belief; it will not give proof. To lead a life on this earth we need not only proved realities but also belief. Man cannot be content with those things alone which are proved but he requires certain other things also which though cannot be proved are acknowledged.  

Azad believed that the concept of God solves many problems of life and existence. After giving various illustrations in support of his view he concludes, we have to acknowledge the existence of God, if we do not, there remains no other solution of the problem of this universe. “Within us there is a demand for the solution of the problem which makes us restless.” The acceptance of the existence of God is the proper solution which can give full satisfaction to the seeker of truth. What is life? Why and what is this ever changing world? Has it a beginning and an end? What is man who is a rational being? These and similar other questions which have been agitating the mind of man from the primitive age till to-day can be better solved by accepting the existence of God-Almighty. Although man has discovered and harnessed
nature, he is unable to answer these questions. Various other solutions offered by man made the problem more complicated than ever.\textsuperscript{12}

Distinguishing religion from philosophy and science, Azad holds that there is no last word in philosophy and science: they evolve through dialectical process, but in religion there is no antithesis. Anti-thesis is its death. In the religion the first word is the last word. With all its dialectical arguments the philosophy proves this world as mere ‘Idea’. It unveils one cover just to disclose that still hundred veils of mystery are there under which the reality rests. It proves that this universe is the workshop of suspicions. Contrary to it, religion accepts the full existence of the universe and life both and says that every thing depends upon belief. Thus religion acknowledges existence and mystery both.

The satisfaction provided to us by religion is positive in the sense that it assures us the moral values of our acts; the light which we do not get at another place. It tells us that life is a moral obligation that must be complied, it is an encumbrance that must be assumed.\textsuperscript{13} For the moral consciousness of man is the significant characteristic of man which distinguishes him from the other animals, moral values are essential for life.

The religion Azad professed and practiced was as universal as the humanitarianism. In no religion, he affirms, there can be a provision which is against the general and rational principles of humanitarianism. Azad held that originally man was enlightened and righteous. Being nearer to nature he was
true and faithful. It happened at the latter stages that man strayed from the right path. The more he went away from nature the more he was deprived of truth. The primitive stage of man was not of self-deception but of righteousness. It was not a dark age. In that age man witnessed light – pure crystalline passions free from confusing logic. But when the caravan of humanity marched ahead in search of novelties, man stumbled and lost his way. The light disappeared and darkness surrounded him, or in the other words when the human caravan proceeded, it met the darkness first and was lost in it. Man forgetting his inner self and spiritual enlightenment, started discovering Nature as it was. He neglected his inner-self and was more tempted to discover his external environment. In the external search of truth man was deceived at every step. Time and again, he had to change his belief according to his knowledge. He believed only those things which were perceivable and accessible to him. The spiritual belief was subjected to the external environment. Scientifically speaking such an investigation into nature and matter was not a mistake, but in its primitive age science had not crossed the age of superstition. Hence superstition replaced truth. What Azad stressed is that in the history of mankind the age of superstition was the second and not the first stage. The vestiges of the first pure primitive age may be traced out from the religious traditions of Egypt, Greece, Chaldia, India, China and Iran, when mankind led a simple life according to the law of nature. Man believed in God-Almighty and led simple, pure and happy life. The story of Universe told by Plato in Critias, and the story of Timaes by an Egyptian Pujari, the story of Adam in The Old
Testament throw light on the natural life of man. Originally the whole mankind belonged to one single group, adopted one and the same way of life, the same belief and convictions without any prejudice or discrimination. The division came later. Azad brings quotations from the Holy Quran. He finds that originally all men were one but later they created differences. Therefore, God sent His messengers from time to time who conveyed His messages. They preached that good deeds bear good fruits and warned them against the consequences of bad deeds. God bestowed upon them His Books so that they might remove their differences.\textsuperscript{15}

The Concept of God

The concept of God has played an important role in the history of mankind. People had to fight thousands of crusades and executed millions of people in order to establish the form and nature of God. With regard to this controversial issue, Azad says that the concept of God is not a creation of man’s mind. Being a spiritual concept it is perfect in itself; it needs no evolution like material sciences. It is a thrilled perception, perceived by human beings only. This thrilled perception is beyond the influences of environmental developments. The concept of God does not change with the change in the external environment of men or by his material development.\textsuperscript{16}

In the history of theology the concept of God has been considered as an evolutionary idea. Man perceived God gradually through various forces of nature. But Azad is of different opinion. He is sure that when for the first time
the world was displayed before man, he perceived the existence of an Almighty Being, and accepted Him the creator of the universe. It was subsequently that man added attributes and qualities to the concept of God. They were analogous to his own qualities. This was a retrogression. Many attributes of God led to the concept of multiplicity or polytheism. Azad repudiates the European scholars who treated monotheism as the result of an evolutionary process. The excavations and researches carried in the twentieth century gave a powerful set back to the evolutionists. These researches proved that the primitive man believed in oneness of God.

The existence of God was never in dispute. The differences were mostly in respect of His attributes. As the human intellect was not able to conceive an Absolute power without analogies he perceived the Absolute through attributes. The ideological evolution was not in respect of the existence of God. It was in regard to his attributes only.17

The belief in the existence of God is based on perception, it cannot be proved, nor can it be disproved. Therefore, it has stood the test of time. This is not the case with the works of reason or reason knowledge or science. “The postulates, hypotheses, theories and ‘facts’ of science are in their very essence capable of change, but the belief in God is one and unchangeable and immediate and intuitive. To those who believe in it, it is the greatest single discovery of man. It is not an invention.”18 To believe in God is the demand of man’s inner soul. In response to this inner demand man calls to God Almighty,
But there is some thing more which demands the existence of an ideal, perfect in all respects. Man being the only creature endowed with self consciousness, reason and moral sense has a longing to raise himself above the animal instincts. In order to attain the highest self, he requires some high and absolute ideal for his own guidance. Such an absolute ideal, unless perceived cannot be followed. Therefore, man attempted to interpret the Absolute into concrete. This interpretation evolved an ideology of attributes. This was a device to help man perceive God through the veils of attributes, which he himself had put on Him. This veil or garb put on God by mankind may differ from man to man. Sometimes this veil is thick, at the other it becomes thin, sometimes it is horrible and at others it is lovely, serene and attractive. The concept of God, howsoever philosophical it may be, it cannot fully satisfy man’s inner demand, nor can it attract a lively and warm sentimental belief without these attributes. That is why there are thousands of attributes attached to God. In such a case it is but natural that some people believe in some attributes while others believe in the others, thus creating differences in various religions. However, this difference, as Azad holds, is negligible. It is as good to call Him ‘Allah’ as ‘Rehman’. With whatever attribute you call Him, all His attributes are good and gracious. 

But, as all the attributes of God are of extreme goodness, graciousness, justice and creation they cannot be attached to the worldly things or material beings as they are definitely much inferior to God.
The Unity of Religion

Azad is of the opinion that fundamentals of all the religions have been the same throughout human history, and no religious difference, as such, exists. He affirms that divine guidance is not specialised for any group or nation, but it has been the same for all mankind. In every age and in every country, God sent His messengers to help and to guide men. There is not a single inhabited piece of land, where God’s prophets did not come to guide mankind. Therefore, no religious monopoly as such can be claimed. He quotes from Quran: ‘There is one prophet for each. When the prophet comes all the things are decided according to the principles of justice.’  

Being an absolute virtue the guidance so provided by Nature, i.e., (God), was always one and the same. It cannot be more than one. It addresses all the mankind in the same way. All prophets of God, whenever and wherever they were born, they carried the same message. They preached one universal law: faith in God and righteous deeds. Whatever was in addition to it, though it might be in the name of religion, was not really religion. They called upon them to eradicate their differences and remain united on one right path – the religion of God. The religion of God aims at uniting the scattered human beings. It never meant to separate them. ‘Be united in the name of God and adopt love and integrity in place of differences and enmity.’ He further observes, ‘God has blessed the whole of mankind with the uniform garb of humanity but they themselves took different names and guises and the unity of human relationship was broken into thousands of pieces.’ Azad sarcastically
sums up: they are divided in the name of races and the countries and are fighting; they are divided in innumerable nations and are at war with each other; they have various colours and it has become a very serious cause for them for hatred and enmity; they have different languages and think it a reasonable ground to remain separated from the rest of the humanity. Moreover, there are various other factors such as wealth, status, strength and position and they are considered to be quite solid grounds for separation, cessation and hatred. Azad poses a question. What should be then the uniting factor for the mankind having so many differences and disputes, and for reintegrating this broken family of humanity? He suggests: God Himself is the uniting factor, Being the creature of one and the same God, mankind cannot have diversified faiths whatever be their race, nation, country, class and status. If they have faith in the same Almighty all the earthly differences are washed away. If they feel so they will be integrated emotionally and they will realise that the whole world is their country; whole humanity is their family and they are the creatures of the same God.²¹

The question arises, if there is one and the same religion for all the mankind and the founders of the religions taught the same fundamentals, why are there so many different religions in the world? Why did not all the religions adopt the same uniform rites and methods of worship? Different religions have adopted different practices; some people, while worshipping turn their faces to a certain direction while others prefer another direction. It seems as if the different religions have given different commands to their followers.
Azad has analysed the cause of the differences and concluded that these are not fundamental differences. The differences are in the method and forms of worship only and that such differences are but inevitable. These are petty differences and are like the branches of one tree having one root. The so-called differences in the religions are not differences in nature. They differ in form only. The difference in the external conditions of the human society living in the different parts of the world and the different problems they were facing demanded a difference in the form of religion. Various forms and practices which the religion adopted were subjected to the environmental conditions. Every form and practice was in accordance with the demand of the time and the place where it had originated. To Azad this difference is not more significant than cultural and social differences among the mankind.22

Azad claims with the authority of the Quran that such differences are natural and desired by God Himself. ‘We have determined for each of you (for the followers of every religion) a special method of conduct ‘Shar’a’. If God had willed so He would have made all of you the followers of one ‘Shar’a’, but this difference is because of difference in your circumstances. Whatever commands you have been given you are to be examined in that only. Hence try to be ideal in virtues and not insist on differences.23 Again: ‘In fact, virtue does not lie in keeping your face in this or that direction but in your righteous deeds based on sincerity.24
Azad has used two terms to denote the spirit and form of religion separately. Din is the root of all religions. It is unchangeable, firm and perpetual, while Shar’a is its implementation. The differences in respect of religion are of two kinds. “One is that which is the result of a deliberate deviation from the common basic message affected by its followers. This the Quran does not tolerate. The other is a difference in the manner of implementing the message. For instance, one religion prescribes a particular form of worship; another a different form. A difference of this nature is not a difference in Din, but a difference in the way it is given effect to. It is why a difference is to be made between Din and Shar’a or the way of implementing the Din. The Din admits of no variation. It is to be the same at all time and for all people. But social aptitudes and conditions of life vary from time to time and country to country, and necessitate variations in the manner and method of implementing the Din; and these are permissible so long as they do not contravene the basic belief in the unity of God and righteous living.”

Thus Din is something subjective, i.e., love and devotion to a superior being and to be true to Him. Shar’a is something objective related to the outer environment and the social conditions of the day. People may adopt different ways of life, but their goal is the same. Azad’s main emphasis is on this unity of the goal which is Din or Religion.

The followers of different religions overlooked the unity of ‘Religion’ and insisted more upon their outer differences which they made the basis of all their conflicts and wars. Knowingly or unknowingly, they were misled by the
apparent form and method of worships. They believed more in religious rites than in the spirit of religion. They were sentimentally attached to the rites so much so that every group considered that the other group was deprived of emancipation simply because it had adopted different rituals. Azad repeatedly emphasised that the rites and methods of worship were not the roots and realities of religion, nor the difference in rites was the difference of truth and falsehood. It gives only an apparent shape to any branch of religion. Truth and reality lie far away from them. Azad declared: “All the religions of the world are correct but their followers have deviated from the truth. All ignorance, opposition, differences of claims and conflicts of organizations, which we now find, are due to lack of intelligence and defective actions of the followers of religions; in the teachings of religions there is no difference whatsoever.” If these differences between the followers of religions, which are not based upon truth, could be removed, then what is true would be left with every religious group. This is that ‘unity in truth’, the spiritual content of which is found in all the religions of the world.

Tracing out the history of the origin of religious conflicts Azad pointed out that “The followers of the prevailing religions took the outward forms of religion for Din itself, and all enthusiasm for it was concentrated on rituals. Every group denied salvation to every other merely on the basis of ritual, but ritual is not Din, said the Quran, nor the criterion of the truth. It is merely an outward aspect of it. The spirit is definitely something superior to it, and that alone was Din or religion. The real Din is devotion to God and righteous living,
and is no exclusive heritage of any single group. On the other hand, it was the common heritage of all mankind. Actions and customs are but secondary to it. They have changed and are liable to change, from time to time under varying circumstances.”

**Religious tolerance**

Thus religious tolerance is the natural outcome of his principle of unity of religions. It is the first condition of every religion, because root of all religions being the same, if any body denies another’s religion he denies the root of his own religion. That will be self-contradiction. If he acknowledges the reality that other religions have also emerged from the same root he is devoted to, naturally he will tolerate them and there will be no religious conflicts as such. Until and unless reason and tolerance prevail in the realm of religions the miseries of humanity shall not be reduced. For, some people think, and they seem justified in their thinking, that if humanity is to be relived of its miseries it should be first relieved of the institution of religion itself. But according to some of the psychologists, people can not do without religion. Even if the humanity is relieved of it, it will create some new religion in new name. Again people will create differences and again they will lead to hatred and war. Therefore, why not amend the religious concept itself and make it more comprehensive and tolerable? To give a new approach to religion will be more effective than relieving humanity of an age old institution. This is the reason why Azad has interpreted his own religion in much wider context which encompasses all the religions within its ambit.
Faith in one almighty and righteous deeds is the root of all religions. Faith is not the monopoly of any one group. The same faith runs through all the religions. It was never challenged nor was it the cause of any conflict. What is more significant is the ‘righteous deeds.’ Diverse opinions and actions between different individuals are natural and just as this diversity prevails in every other aspect of life, so it does in the religious matters. This petty diversification cannot be the deciding factor of truth. When God has made man free, every man has his own reason, likes, dislikes and approach towards a particular problem. All men cannot have the same opinion regarding even a small thing. How is it possible that they do not differ in the method and form of worship and that all mankind should adopt only one method of worship? Difference of opinion is bound to occur; but their object of worship is common, i.e., God and righteous deeds.

Azad poses another question: when the root of all the religions is the same and all are based on the truth, what was the need of Quran or a new religion? Azad answers: Quran has not originated any new religion; it has revived the previous religions only. In due course of time it so happened that the followers of religions strayed from the right path and they forgot the truth. Religion became mere collection of rituals instead of belief and deeds. Admission to a creed was considered to be the means of salvation. Every group denied every other group and claimed itself to be the custodian of truth. At every such juncture humanity had required some one to remind the people the truth and to put them on the right path. It was such a juncture that the Quran
came to remind people of their duties towards the truth and righteousness. Thus
Quran has revived the forgotten truth only; it has not created any new truth for
the first time on the earth.

Azad emphasizes that reality is the same but names are different. The
same law of nature is working in animals, vegetables and minerals. When the
same law of nature is working throughout the universe how can man and his
behaviour be excluded from that law of nature? Like any other thing of the
universe man too is subject to that law. The objective behaviour of man is also
subject to the same law. If inflammatory thing happens in the human world it
will have the same effects. What Azad proves is that the subjective and
objective conditions of human world are subject to the uniform law of causes
and effects. He further elucidates the point. The laws of evolution of nations
and of their rise and fall are prescribed by nature and they are unalterable. The
chain of causes and effects always runs through the same course. These laws
are universal: the difference of time, place or person dose not affect them. As
the poison reacts irrespective of place, time and person, so does the law of
nature. “The law of truth or survival is applicable to Groups of people or
nations even as to individuals, and determines the conditions of their rise and
fall. The Quran points out that even in the case of individuals, so in the case of
nations, every group of people which has no value or use to life is eliminated.
Only they live or survive who observe or advance the cause of life. That is the
law of Rahmat. For otherwise, Human wickedness will have no check placed thereon.”  

All the nations and religious groups including Islam are Subject to the law of nature. It does not distinguish between man and man, group and group, nation and nation. The norms which are applicable to individuals are also applicable to nations and groups. If they are observed collectively they will yield the same results. The process is slow and gradual. If the nations go astray, “a time limit is set during which they will have to return to the straight path. The door for returning to the good way or for self correction is always open to them. If opportunities thus offered are missed; the law takes its own course.”

The nations and groups can survive only by observing these laws of nature. If they do not observe them, they shall be rooted out some other group or nation will take their place. They cannot survive by mere names and ideologies. What they need to survive is their action. In case of inactivity of nations or going astray God will bless those who are more worthy and deserve the opportunity. ‘The same law weeds out the undesirables – those not useful to human life – and installs others in their place to carry out the purpose of life.’

From the verses of Quran Azad has supported his view that all the groups and nations are given equal opportunities of self corrections and amendments. If they do not utilise the opportunities, alternative arrangements are made. This is the principle of natural justice.
Azad has emphasized the unity of religions in all respects. From Quran he proves that divine revelation has always remained the same and that the Quran has said the same thing which the previous revelations had said. And what is that revelation? Azad replies from the Quranic contention: “Mankind were at first, but one people and lived but one common natural life. It was only at subsequent stages when they multiplied, and economic pressures gave rise among them to conflict of interests that they came to be divided into groups, each hating the other, so much so that situation demanded the delivery of a message of truth such as might reunite them once again. It was thus that the door of prophethood or revelation was opened, and a series of prophets followed in Succession to bring to mankind the value of unity.”

The fundamental basis of the Quranic message is that divine revelation has always remained one and the same. But the vagaries of history are so strange says Maulana Azad, that the greater the emphasis that the Quran lays on this truth, the stronger has been the inclination on the part of the world to relegate it to the back ground. In fact, no other truth of the Quran has been kept so deliberately out of sight. Should one study the Quran with an open mind and look into its numerous clear assertions in this respect and then take survey of what has actually happened despite such assertions, one will not fail to notice that the faith of the Quran also has in the course of history been given the character of an exclusive concern even as other faiths.
Some religious groups had claimed that only know the principles of salvation. Azad rules out this belief. He says: ‘salvation or virtue does not depend upon one’s wishful thinking nor it is the monopoly of any one group. Whosoever commits evil deeds shall suffer the consequences, no friendship or association shall save him from the consequences.

The Quran has dispelled all the notions of affiliation to any particular group. It made faith and good deed the sole means of salvation. ‘Verily, they who believe (Muslims) and those who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians, and the Sabians – whosoever believeth in God and the last day, and doeth that which is right – shall have their reward with their Lord: fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they be grieved.’

Religion is not mere groupism. Any man whatever be his race or community, if he believes in God and live a righteous life, salvation is his reward. Some religious groups have devised a code of thought and conduct exclusive to themselves. They drew a circle around them and declared that who was within that circle would get salvation and the rest are doomed. One may be an ardent devotee of God and may practice righteous living, but if he is not affiliated to a particular group he would be disregarded. But fun lies in its vice versa, where a man is indeed a wicked man but his affiliations to any particular group promise him all salvation and reward. The Quran rejects the notion strongly and lays stress on faith and righteous living. So dose Azad.
Azad affirms that any human being, belonging to any race or nation, whatever be his name, if he has firm and true faith in God, performs righteous deeds and observes the fundamentals of the ‘Religion of God’, whether he belongs to any group or not is the true religious man and shall attain salvation.\textsuperscript{36}

Azad reiterated again and again that Quranic message is not a new message of its kind. He reaffirms that no other thing has been so prominently reiterated in the Quran than its insistence upon not being a new message. Quran dose not create a new religion nor a new group, rather it has come to relieve the humanity of evil of groupism which is the basis of all conflicts, struggles and wars. It aims at unity of mankind on a single right path common to all. It conforms to the teachings of all the prophets. It commands its followers to have faith in them. All of them were messengers of truth; all of them taught one and the same thing. To follow their common teachings in true spirit is ‘Right Path.’

Azad is of the view that all prophets should be universally acknowledged as they are the apostles of truth and virtue. To draw any line or demarcation or to create any distinction between them is gravely misleading. The Quran has called it apostacy. The right way is to over rule any sort of discrimination between the prophets; in their status of prophet hood, or in their teaching or to doubt their integrity or to conform to one and reject the remaining or to reject the one while conforming to the rest, all such discrimination is misleading. The one who has sincere longing to follow the
right religious path must believe in all the prophets and in their books and should not deny any one of them truth, wherever it is revealed, through whomsoever it is revealed, is hence it should be acknowledged.

Azad gives arguments in support of this principle. He says God is one; Truth is one; but the message of truth has been conveyed through various languages at different times and places. To conform to one prophet and reject the other means to acknowledge the truth at one place and reject it at another. You acknowledge it as well as reject it which is quite illogical and will not be called acknowledgement. It is the worst from of denial.\(^\text{37}\)

Universal benevolence is the first truth about God. It is not confined to any age, race, nation or religious group. National, racial and geographical distinctions are man- made and are meant for mankind only. God is above such distinctions; he is beyond such limits. His truth shines everywhere like sun and gives light to every individual. The seeker of truth should not confine himself to one corner only. At all time and at all places the truth appears. The allegiance should be to God and not to any particular race, place or group. Wherever and in whatever form the truth is found, it is the common asset of all mankind.

There are only two ways open before mankind: either believe in God or reject Him. If you believe Him believe in all religion; if you reject, reject all.\(^\text{38}\) There is no third path. If all human being worship the same God what should be the cause of religious conflicts? Azad is pained to see this. He asks the
religious protagonists: your God is one whom you all worship; your (religious) leaders showed you the same path. Is it not against wisdom and truth that every group is rival of every other group, and every individual hates the other? In the name of whom this war is going on? Is it in the name of same God who provided you all with one common relationship, i.e. human brotherhood?

What is right and what is wrong? This question has been perplexing all the men and all the religions. No two individuals nor two religions agree on all the principles of right and wrong. But the fundamentals of right and wrong are known as clearly as day light to every man. Having moral sense, even the most immoral man knows about virtues and vices. In varying circumstances the interpretation may vary. Nevertheless the fundamentals remain the same.

Azad interprets the concept on very broad lines. He dose not see any rigidity even in the religious concept of virtue and vice. Referring to Quran, Azad says there are two terms for what ought to do and what ought not to do. They are ‘Maroof’ and ‘munkir’. The term ‘Maroof” means the things or ways acknowledged by the society. What is acknowledged by the society as the best is worth doing. It is virtue. Contrarily, the term ‘Munkir’ is used for wrong doings. They are some acts or behaviour which are resented by the society in general, hence rejected. The commitment of such acts is wrong. Whatsoever may be the difference in beliefs and thinking, there are some things which are acknowledged to be the best things, while certain other things are rejected by all. For instance, all men agree that truth and honest are virtues while falsehood and dishonesty are the vices. Nobody denies it that rendering service to the
parents, generous behaviour with the neighbors, to help the poor and to do justice with the oppressed is a good behaviour. The tyranny, coercion, injustice and oppression are opposed to the former. To go against these principles are unanimously agreed.

Azad believed that this code of conduct on which the whole humanity is agreed, is the prescribed code of ‘Religion of God’. This code of conduct is the root of the ‘Religion.’ These concepts were ever known to all the social groups in all the ages and in all the places. Their universality is an indication of their truth. Quran does not go against them. It commands its followers to do the acknowledged virtues and avoid the rejected practices. It is the law of nature and the laws of nature are seldom changed.

Azad identifies Islam with ‘religion of nature’ because Islam means to accept and to obey God. It consists of the commands of God which lead to the ultimate benefit of mankind. The commands of God are the laws of nature. The whole universe works according to these laws. Suppose if any heavenly body deviates from the law of nature the whole universe shall be destroyed. The same is the case with the mankind. The religion of nature is but one what so-ever basis it may be. The common principles of allegiance unite mankind and establish love and brotherhood among them. It abridges their differences and verifies truth and virtue possessed by them. It substitutes love for hatred, unity for enmity, order and discipline for lawlessness and anarchy. Religion should be a relief for humanity and should save it from destruction. It should not prove itself a curse for agonizing humanity.
Such is the concept of religion of Azad. On this concept he examines Islam. He denies that Islam is a new religion. It conforms to the previous religions. It does not deny their authority nor their sanctity. It does not ask them to renounce their religion. What it demands is only sincere and true observance of the religious principles revealed earlier. This theory of Azad secularizes Islam itself. Islam acknowledged the most acknowledged principles of the world. Its message is that the truth of the previous religions be renewed. 39 This theory of Azad has been resented and rejected by the Muslim orthodoxy who insists upon Islam as a full fledged religion. To it Islam is a separate religion. It has separate entity. But Azad does not believe in multiplicity of religions. He believes that there is but one religion. So many religions as we see are the various interpretations of that one ‘religion’. All the religions have adopted the same fundamentals. Islam too has confirmed that fundamental truth.

If Islam dose not reject the previous religions rather it confirms them then why did the followers of other religions oppose it? Azad analyses that the basis of their opposition was a littlie psychological. Firstly, every religious group wanted that it alone be confirmed and rest should be condemned and rejected. Islam, contrarily, confirmed them all. Hence none was pleased with it. 40 The Jews were pleased that Quran recognizes Moses but they were not pleased with its recognition of Jesus. The Christians have no objection to the recognition of Mary and Jesus by Quran but they did not like its principle of emancipation based on faith and deeds and not on atonement and redemption. The Islamic principle of emancipation depends upon the faith and deeds of the
man. ‘As you sow so shall you reap’ is the law of nature. Islam adopted it. This
was not approved by the Christian priests. Similarly the Quraish of Mecca were
pleased with the recognition of their forefathers by the Quran but the
recognition of Moses and Jesus by it and putting them on equal footings with
their forefathers injured their racial and national feelings. This equal approach
was criticised by each and all and they opposed it.

Secondly Islam was opposed to the instincts of groupism. It declared
that all religions are one. Had opponents accepted this principle they would
have to accept that the religious truth is not the monopoly of one group. It is
possessed by all. This was against their divisive and separatist tendencies. They
would have been relieved of their group leadership. This was against their self
interest.

Thirdly the principle of absolute equality adopted by the Quran was also
not up to the taste of the religious leaders. All are equal before God and only
those are superior whose deeds are superior, was not tasteful to them. This
principle opens the doors of justice and emancipation on all mankind
irrespective of their race, caste, colour, nation or group. No group was prepared
to give absolute equality to other groups.

Lastly, the Quran said worship only one God and worship him directly.
Other religions had various different ways of worship. They did not agreed to
renounce their own traditional ways.
Azad believed that social consciousness like any other consciousness’ in mankind has evolved in stages. Humanity has passed through different stages of its evolution. At the time of revelation of the Quran, i.e., 1400 years ago, social consciousness in mankind was limited by the racial, tribal and local prejudices. Every group wanted to have its own distinct religion and claimed itself to be the sole custodian of truth. The one who did not belong to that group could not attain salvation. They believed that their tribal traditions and customs were the fundamentals of religion. As these traditions differed from tribe to tribe, each group thought that the other was deprived of the religious truth. Hence they denounced each other. Thus they were not content with the proclamation of their ways; they preached hatred and prejudices against other groups, and believed it as an essential part of their religion. Naturally this led to perpetual war and bloodshed. In the name of God all was considered right.

The second stage in the evolution of social consciousness should essentially be a development on the previous one the principles should be more tolerable, liberal democratic and in keeping with the intellectual development of men. Truth, wherever it may be should be, acknowledged. Religion is a relation between God and man. All men are equal before God. Nobody is deprived of his mercy on account of his faith or religion. If God does not discriminate with men on account of their method of worship or even with those who do not believe Him, why should men make it a cause of quarrel? This seems quite illogical. Therefore, in an age of reason, as the present one, the petty differences of religion and belief should not come in the way of
progress of mankind, people should use their own reason to judge the truth. All that is against man is against God. God is not an illogical or unreasonable hypothesis. Those who present Him such a way they befool humanity. ‘Religion of God’ is not an accumulation of the forces of war, hatred and disintegration? Such impediments in human progress cannot be given the sanctity of religion. An institution which claims to command the obedience of the whole mankind must be based on sanity.

Thus Azad presents a rational view of religion. He differentiates between the feelings of sanctity, obedience, worship, discipline and order in men on the one hand and instincts of war, hatred, and disruption on the other. The two cannot go together. Their manifestation in a single institution is a treachery. This treachery should be detected and be put to an end.

Azad never considered religion as a complicated thing which is above common sense of common man. He was never tired of repeating that religion is nothing but faith and good deeds. These are the two aspects of the religion, i.e. theory and practice. Faith is the theoretical aspect of religion. It means belief in God and sound thinking which is above selfish and narrow prejudices. It should reflect God and Godliness – a pure crystalline reasoning, dictates of pure and selfless consciousness it should be in the larger good of society. As God stands for all, so should do the men of God they should stand for the whole mankind and think in their term. One who does not think in keeping with the principles of God is definitely not a religious man. He has no true faith in God. Selfish narrow thinking cannot be given the status of faith. ‘Good deeds’ is the
practical aspect of the religion. The faith should be put into practice. What is not implemented is not worth believing. Implementation too should be on broader lines and for the larger good of the society. Naturally the good of society is not a discretionary term. The society too should acknowledge it as a social good. The issue maybe decided by consensus.

Azad says that straightness of the ‘Religion of God’ and the crudeness of man-made religions is such a simple reality that every man can distinguish the two without any mental gymnastics. 42 If religion is meant for guidance of man, it should essentially be simple and pure, not mysterious, complex and insoluble; it should be simple to believe and easy to implement; a common man should understand and it should be satisfied with it. A man--made religion is obscure and super intellectual. The religious leaders think that the obscurity is the life and soul of religion. Azad is opposed to the obscurity in religion. Faith and good deeds, is simple to understand, and easy to implement. This is not the monopoly of any group, race, nation or age. It is universal; for all the ages and all the times. It is above territorial and racial limits. 43 Men by nature desires simple and straight ways. In every aspect of life the principle of simple ness and straightness is always a healthy and a sound way. In 400 B.C. Darius I, the king of Iran encarved certain inscription on the “Be–Sutun” (A mountain in Iran) one of them runs as under:

“O’Man, this is the command of Ormuzd (of God) for thee: Do not think of evils, do not leave the right path: avoid the sins.” 44
The universal fault that all the religious leaders committed is that they have lost the truth they were endowed with by encircling themselves into narrow separate groups. Now every group denies the other and claims itself to be the only inheritor of truth. How to solve this dispute? If one group is true why is not the other? If all are true, none is true. Because every group is denying the other. If all are untrue, where has the truth gone? So everybody has committed the same mistake. Instead of realising the truth they concentrated more upon narrowness. Azad holds that truth is universal. Anybody can have it. The seeker of truth must keep his eyes and mind open. Wherever one observes it he should support it. This is the most democratic principle of ‘hear and be heard’. To suppress truth intentionally is a great sin against God.45

The orthodoxy has become a cursed knot for the humanity. It has become the toughest job for man to come out of rigidity. He is too firmly attached to the past. But the Quran says, ‘there was a group in the past which has now passed. It will not benefit you if you are still after it. Take care of yourself. Their deeds were for them; your are for you.’46

The relation between God and man is the relation of love and affection. The religion dose not merely demands worship of God but it demands the worship with affection and sincerity. God is not only God but also beloved of man. Faith in God also includes the love of God. And those who love God love His creatures also. The love for God is attained and perfected through the love for His creatures. Azad has quoted a saying of the prophet: ‘It will so happen
on the Day of Judgment that God will ask a man, ‘O, Son of Adam, I got sick but you did not attend me’. The man will be surprised and will say, ‘How is it possible? You are God of the Universe.’ God will say, ‘Don’t you know that such and such man of mine fell sick but you neglected him. Had you gone there to look after him you would have found me there.’ Again God will ask another man, ‘O, son of Adam, I had asked you for food but you refused.’ The man will reply, ‘How is it that you are in need?’ God will remind him ‘Don’t you remember that a hungry man of mine had asked you for food and you refused him. Had you fed him, you would have found me there’. Again God will ask another man, ‘O, son of Adam, I had asked you for water but you refused.’ The man will reply, ‘You are God Almighty; how can you feel thirsty?’ God will reply that ‘a certain man of mine had asked you for water but you refused. Had you given him water you would have found me with him.’

Thus religion does not demand only worship of God; love of man is an essential part of it. He who does not love man can not love God. The requisites of religion are so wide and so elaborate that all the principles of humanitarianism are circumscribed by it. Azad says that in fact Quran has laid stress on God – worship so that man should try to cultivate Godliness in himself. The existence of man is a line of demarcation where brutality in animal beings ends and spur animal being begins. The essence of humanity which distinguishes man form animals is the manifestation of God in him. There the evolution of humanity lies in man’s resembling God more and more.
In other words it is the march of humanity towards divinity. When God breathed His own spirit in Adam, it kindled wisdom and conscience in him.\footnote{48}

The conclusions drawn by Dr. Radhakrishnan are from the impact of the non Aryan culture on the Aryan culture. But the principle that is laid down is sound. If the evils and vices practiced in the name of the religion are not fought out and expelled from the society, they will beat the true religion itself. True religious forces have always been and are still silent in the name of democracy and tolerance but this tolerance of theirs is at the cost of morality, religion and humanity. Therefore, the moral duty of the true religious forces or those who claim to possess the truth and the principles of relief for the humanity is that they should come forward with all vigour and must fight out the evil forces working in the name of religion for their selfish motives.

In the later phase of the national struggle, the political opponents of Azad labelled serious charges against him. They blamed that he had gone anti-Muslim and had deviated from the principles of Islam under the spell of nationalist leaders. Therefore, his rulings were irrelevant. Hence the Muslims must not listen to him.

The charge is falsely deceptive. Azad never deviated from the religious principles. His arguments were based on the authenticity of the Quran. He could never speak, nor could write even a paragraph without referring to either Quran or Hadis. Right form the year 1912, the year of the inception of the Al-Hilal to his historic speech in 1947 after the partition of the country in Jamia
Masjid, Delhi, he always addressed the Indian Muslim in the same style and in the same tone. He emphasized the same points he had raised in 1912. He always asked Muslims to think freely and independently be it a problem of Khilafat or the partition of the country. Neither he was anti–India nor anti-Hindu in early phase of his life nor he became anti religion and anti- Muslim in the later phase. He never uttered a single word against the Hindus or the country in any of the phases. It was not only in the 1912, but always he appealed the Muslims in the name of Islam and religion. His interpretation of religion was broad enough to encompass all problems of life, be it Hindu–Muslim unity, or Khilafat, passive resistance or non-co-operation, liberty or nationalism, he has produced authentic examples and Quranic commands on the topics concerned. He never failed to support any of his convictions from the authority of Quran. Therefore, to say that he ever deviated from religion or from Islam or from the service of his community is an absolute lie against him which was devised out of political motivation.

Azad wrote the ‘Tarjuman-ul-Quran’, the most part of it during his first internment in Ranchi and completed its two volumes in 1930. One can go through it and find that even at the time of writing commentary on Quran he never turns into a narrow communal ideology nor he deviates from the right path. The ‘Tarjuman-ul-Quran’ is the widest secular interpretation of Islam. He remained true to that ideology throughout the life. Therefore, it does not seem justified to break the period of 1906-20 from his life and treat it separate. 49 No
such ideological deviations took place in his life he went under an ideological evolution, not deviation.

**Pan–Islamism**

The nations of Asia and Africa were the main target of the European imperialism and colonialism. Most of the battles were fought on the Afro-Asian Soil. The world wars were the climax of their inherent conflict. The high handedness of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal was increasing day by day. Most of these states affected by imperialism were Muslim states. They were struggling hard against the imperial powers. There was unrest among the Muslims of the world. Azad too was anxious about their fate. As a journalist he commented on the day to day incidents occurring on those lands. He admired them for their chivalry and their devotion for freedom. He also criticised them if there was any flaw in their policy. He drew conclusions form those events for his fellow countrymen for moral lesson. He joined the organizations which used to do the relief works for the sick and wounded. Nevertheless, he was aware of the nature of the national and international events which had awakened the Muslims of India. The terror of the imperialism was not experienced in India only but it had become a world wide problem. There were ant-imperialist movements throughout the world. The cause and enemy both were common to the people of the colonies. Thus various nations who were fighting against the same enemy for the same cause were having common ties and sentimental attachment. There were two movements in India as Azad analysed: One was the nationalist which was born in the biggest nation of the
world and Bengal was its centre: Second was an Islamic movement among the Indian Muslims. The Movement in Bengal was crushed by Lord Curzon by partitioning the province. Force and coercion was used. The papers and press were confiscated, the meetings and processions were banned; prohibitory orders were resorted to. It resulted in the form of underground terrorist and revolutionary movements which had rocked the empire. But the case was different with the Islamic movement. It started as peaceful movement and though it appeared because of Islamic troubles soon it took the shape of national awakening due to occurrences of some events within the country. As it was not suppressed with force and violence like the former, it could not be turned into violence. Although Azad supported Islamic movement he did not neglect the national struggle which was going on within India. Rather, he opposed the idea that it was a mere reaction of foreign Islamic troubles. A deputation waited on Lord Harding’s in Delhi on March 25, 1914, who presented a memorandum to the Viceroy wherein it was said that the cause of the unrest among the Muslims was ‘foreign Islamic troubles.’ Azad called it a lie; cannot be called even diplomacy. He asserted that their unrest was caused by both the national as well as international causes. If at all Azad may be called a Pan–Isalmist, it was most during Khilafat and Non-co-operation movements than either before or after. The way Azad responded to the abolition of institution of Khilafat in Turkey is evident that how was he clear in his approach towards the problem.
The Khilafat and no-co-operation movements in the post war period had an international perspective as well. Just as the British imperialism was a part of the world imperialist movement and was a result of industrialisation and economic growth in the developed countries, so was the case with the national liberation movements in the colonial countries which were rallying against it. Hence to think that the Khilafat movement was merely a movement of Pan-Islamism is a blunder. Had there been not a single Muslim on the soil of India and had there been no Khilafat committees organised by them, there would have certainly been a stir in India against imperialist advances in Turkey which is also an Asian country. The British hold of Turkey had certainly strengthened its hold not only in west Asia but throughout Asia and Africa. When Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian leaders supported the Khilafat movement, it was not a shallow policy of merely appeasing the Indian Muslims. They were supporting the national movement of the Turks against the world imperialism. It was the demand of the Indian national movement to hit imperialist encroachment wherever it might be. The support of Gandhiji and the like minded people to Khilafat movement was a mistake, as it is conceived by some contemporary writers, but it was the mistake of those who had understood it otherwise. In the Presidential address of 1923, Azad pointed out that ‘the new born nationalism of Turkey and her overwhelming victories appeared as a miracle before the world and her courageous and exemplary patriotism infused a new life into all the nations of the East’ and that ‘India viewed in the success of Turkey not only the fulfillment of the Turkish aims but the victory of the whole east.’
In the success of Turkey the victory of Asian nations was foresees. It was considered the victory of justice and justice sees no distinction between East and West. Azad congratulated the whole of mankind on her victory, and every individual on earth who was a lover of justice and respected the freedom of man. That is why it was impossible for India to ignore the natural and geographical connections with the Universal struggle of the East, and in making common cause with it she harbored all those emotions of sympathy which the similarity of time, conditions and aims naturally produced among people of the same regions. She welcomed every Eastern nation that embarked on a struggle for justices and freedom, and regretted the fate of those nations which had been left behind their comrades. She assured the nationalists of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, morocco and all other Eastern countries that the hearts of India’s millions were eager for their success and held their freedom no less dear than the freedom of their own beloved motherland.

Azad correctly understood the logical relations between Constantinople and the Yervada jail, where Mahatma Gandhi was kept a political convict. He paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi for his political consciousness of international happenings. He said, ‘it was his perception of fact and insight into reality which at the very first survey enabled him to grasp all the depths and bearings of this problem, and to not merely a demand of the Mohammedans of India but of the entire country.
Estimating the consequences of the Khilafat movement Azad enumerated that: Firstly it brought Hindu–Muslim unity, and secondly it brought international prestige and honour for India in the entire Orient ‘a prestige which has given India an eminent position amongst the newly-awakened lands of the East’.57 But, had India not started a movement in favour of Arabian countries and Turkey, her prestige would have been much lowered in the eyes of the Oriental countries. The reason was that ‘it was her armies that had trampled under-foot the freedom of Turkey and Arabia; hence it is obvious that the contempt and reprobation of the entire East would have fallen on her. Wherever a single Indian showed his face the finger or scorn would have been lifted: “Lo! There goes a follow of an unfortunate country! He is not only the cause of his own miserable lot; he is the cause of the sad plight of the free nations of the East.”58 But the Indian movement in support of those countries had changed her image in their eyes. Now she could lift her head and say “The stain wherewith helplessness had sullied my garments, my will and desire have washed away.” “If it had so happened that without their will and desire thousands of Indians marched to the field of battle to unsheathe their swords against the Turks and Arabs, then of their wish and desire thousands of Indians marched to jail that justice might be meted out to the Arabs and Turks.”59 The movement raised the prestige of India so much so that “there were choral voices raised to proclaim India’s honour and reputation. In Constantinople her name was bounded as though she were the standard-bearer of the freedom of the East. In the Bazaars of Cairo there was on every tongue
the cry, “God grant thee victory, O Gandhi!” this was an honour like that usually accorded only to free nations and which subjugated India had acquired undoubtedly as a result of the Khilafat struggle.”

Whatever Azad did during Khilafat movement was his duty not only as a Muslim but also as an Indian and he also believed that the support of Mahatma Gandhi to the Khilafat movement was ‘the greatest service which that great personality in Indian history has rendered to his country.’

Azad had relished that India could not remain indifferent to the international situation even when she had not achieved her own independence. He advised that we should not restrain our vision around us only but should keep a watch on the world politics too. The changes that took place in the various aspects of life have brought the world closer and had affected all the aspects of human life. It was almost impossible for India to think over her problems exclusively within her four walls and not to react to the external politics and happenings. Similarly the world reflected the events which occurred within the territory of India. That is why Azad declared in his Presidential address of 1940, that India thinks the reactionary forces of Fascism and Nazism which are raising their heads in Europe, as the greatest challenge to democracy, individual freedom and national liberties. She thinks them a serious universal threat to the world peace and progress. India stands with the democratic and liberal forces which are determined to accept the challenge of the threat.
While taking the grave note of the threat of Fascism and Nazism, Azad recalled that India could not forget the old and persistent threat she was facing and which had proved more fatal for the national peace and independence and which was, in fact, responsible for the birth of new reactionary forces of Fascism and Nazism. That was British imperialism. The British imperialism was not a far off danger for India rather she was crumbling under its tyrannical clutches. India, no doubt, was displeased with Fascism and Nazism, but she was more displeased with the British imperialism. 63

This was the originality of Azad which put him among the prominent theoreticians of the world. Fear on any ground was an unpardonable offence to him.

Azad never believed that the independence of the country would be a disadvantage to any community which was residing in the country. A question may arise as to why Azad not considered the parliamentary democracy a danger for the safety and security of Islam and Muslims in India who were in minority? Azad believed that Islam was a truth and no truth has any threat from any quarter what so ever it may be. To him it was an eternal truth and hence no force can hold threat for it. Even if it is suppressed temporarily again it will reappear. Moreover, the struggle between truth and untruth is a perpetual struggle. Again and again the truth is suppressed and again emerges victorious. The truth is to prove itself as many times as it is challenged. It cannot avoid the challenges even by making a separate state in the name of this religion or that. So no truth on earth can ever be afraid of any threat and it needs no safeguard.
Secondly in a democracy all should be treated on the basis of social, political and economic parity. Therefore, to think that in a democracy any minority would be crushed socially, culturally, politically or economically is an undemocratic idea. Even if any democracy is prejudicial to her minorities and subjects them to social, political, economic and cultural discriminations, the healthy methods before them are to struggle constitutionally for eradicating the evil. The separation or continuation of the foreign rule was no solution of the problem. If the foreign rule can be compelled to bow before the progressive and the democratic forces of the masses why cannot the self-rule be compelled to bow to the right and just demands of the residents of the same country who are consisting of hundreds of million of people? This was what Azad concluded in the early teens of this century, and remained firmly stuck to it till the last moment of his life. The decision of the partition taken by the Working Committee of the All India National Congress in 1947 was decision of the party and not of an individual.
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