THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTY OF GOD

Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958)

Abul Kalam Azad was the most outstanding figure among the Nationalist Muslims, i.e. those Muslims who stood with the Indian National Congress in its struggle for freedom from British rule and refused to be a part of any movement associated with Muslim separatism. But, like many of his colleagues and followers, he never divorced religion from politics. As the following article indicates, he maintained that Islam enjoined upon the Muslims to fight for freedom. In all these respects he held a unique position among Indian Muslims.

He wrote extensively in Urdu. The translation of his writings rarely appeared in any other language. The following is the English version of one of his most important writings.

1. Preface

It is commonly said that the recent turmoils and calamities that befell the Muslim world have created such extraordinary signs of awareness and awakening among the Muslims as were totally non-existent a couple of years ago. Such opinions are always bound to be conjectured and dependent on future happenings for their correctness. The arguments for and against their truth change their worth within minutes by virtue of ever changing circumstances and events. That wise and Almighty Being who brings an insignificant seed to the stage of a magnificent vegetational entity and then creates

(1) From Al Hilal, 2 (20 June 1913) 436-40.
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for that entity again a thousand seeds, it is only in His hands to grant permanency to awakenings, fruitfulness to lessons and transform apparently moving but actually dead bodies into alive and stable forms.

Doubtless it is God only who makes the buried and the expectant, uncertain seed burst into a strong and tall tree. It is He only who extracts death from life and life from death. That Holy Being who reveals to you the wonders of Nature is you God, then why do you stray from him? (The Koran).

2. The Tokens

But there is no doubt that the waters of the ocean take wing and then pervade in the form of clouds. It is certain that the weather changes before the rain and the rain before her coming sends her tokens. Before the rainy cyclone there are winds and before the rains the dark sheets of clouds are spread over the sky.

It is only God who sends the winds which disturb the clouds from their place and then He makes them work as He wills. Sometimes He spreads them upon the sky, sometimes He shatters them to pieces and you perceive the rain falling from out of them, and then He makes the rains fall on those whom He wills (to benefit) and they make rejoicing.

These natural tokens and physical symbols which are apparent to you in the world without are present in the world within too. You, who worship every atom and manifestation of the world of face and body, forget that there is a kingdom of soul and meaning too. And whatever is apparent in this minor universe is a reflection of the major one.
Did you not see the might and wisdom of your Master and sustainer as to how He has made the reflection pervade? (The Koran).

Claimest thou to know the soul, but sawst not thyself.

Come out of thy sleep that thou mightest see the place where those of the soul make worship.

The sun rises and sinks taking its shadows along with itself, the moon rises and is seen passing through the stages of growing and waning. The seasons change and the new winds blow. Hurricanes rise on the waters and lightnings wink in the heavens. When the weather is hot and dry the heralds of the approaching storm appear, and after these heralds are gone, the rain precipitates. Thus the world which is apparent to you is a picture of rising and sinking, growing and waning, decline and sway, clash and conflict, going forward and falling behind, progression and retrogression, of change and invention, whose scenes are changeful and whose aspects and manifestations dynamic.

The same is the state of the world which is unapparent but is present in you. There too there are sinkings and risings, and when darkness holds sway the sun shows his head through magic casement of the dark. There too the seasons change and minds alter. Spring brings messages of joy in life and winter appears in death and sadness. There too storms arise on the waters and fierce and high seasonal winds blow on land. And when the weather breaks, the heavens there too change their aspect as here. And before it rains the sky is
darkened with thick straggling clouds and moist squalls of chill winds arrive. Famine and draught are considered the greatest calamities of this world, but there too these are no greater. When the earth shuts the doors of its bounty and the heavens of their wide generosity, the rivers recede, and fertile land dries into barrenness. Then men starve and death and desolation overrun the world.

This is the state of the inner world too but with the difference that a dry spell here starves the body and the famine there presages death for heart and soul. Thus there is death here for the body even after which life remains and there it is death for the heart after which life does not subsist.

Body and soul, colour and fragrance, word and meaning, appearance and reality, these are the two worlds, the two kingdoms of seeing and being which are known as the inner and the universal world in the divine tongue.

We will reveal our signs in the universal and also in their souls, till it becomes known to them that doubtless He (God) is the truth. (The Koran).

And this is that world of the mind to whose tokens and symbols, and signs and mysteries the Koran draws attention and on whose neglect by the sons of Adam it is perpetually said:

And do you not see that which is present into yourselves? (The Koran).
3. **After the Tokens**

Thus though the tokens are always guessed and the face of future always enveloped in the dark, yet there is no doubt that tokens appear. It is true that the weather is changing. Eyes seek the spreading sheets of clouds, bodies feel the cool breeze and the advent of rain is certain. The greater the heat of summer, equally greater is the conviction that rain will come.

There is an acute turbulence in the kingdom of the mind. Its seas are being cleft into chasms, surf rages under the slaps of gales. The heavens were red first but are now dark and frowning — lightning first scintillated, but now roars to strike. The heavens have become a battlefield, a picture of the doomsday and every object of the universe is straining to rise and spring. If there are no armies in the offing why this cloud of dust? If there is no fire wherefore is this smoke? And if nothing is to happen why these signs of happening?

The peasant looks at the sky and knows what he has to do and the boatman bring the boat safely ashore before the tempest. Hence it is proper that that the restless turbulence of hearts should not be considered meaningless and the events and changes in this kingdom be considered eloquent, though silent.

The Muslim world today is on the verge of a final, decisive revolution and the portents which have always appeared before the fruition of the greatest revolutions of the past are apparent in it all round. Those mighty revolutions which
completely overturned the world, those great changes which of a sudden changed the courses of the histories of nations and kingdoms, those which altered their geographies, their physical boundaries of sea and land, those which dismantled the structures of the civilizations and cultures and habits and characteristics of men and people, those which appear so that they may, according to the law of God, change the earth and her inhabitants all over, had the same scenes before and around them, heralding them as are apparent today. This has always happened in human history and such a happening is under an eternal law of the change that governs the lands and the peoples for "no nation can go beyond, nor remain behind its appointed time." (The Koran).

4. The Resolution to March

Among the peculiar tokens one is the preparedness of many minds to act and not to lament only for all that is past. This feeling is common, and is present even in India in spite of the dominance of a sense of pessimism, and may really be considered the first seed of the change if properly channelized.

The care for tomorrow is before every individual today. The worry for the future is now not the privilege of the chosen few. Even the rough peasant woman knows and understands. Till yesterday when there was only fear of the coming events only minds could visualize them. But now when events have come to pass and others are happening, only eyes are required to see,
and there may be a dearth of minds, but not of eyes. Some are without hopes and some question, but both await. If the first are shown the way they would not refuse to march. Only at present their feet are frozen. Others are amazed as to which way to go, though the destination is known, the path is not open.

5. **Sleep After Awakening**

Our fellows have lost the way long ago; 'tis sad for them! again 'tis said for them (Persian verse).

But as I have said before and want to repeat today in greater detail, sleep is not physical sleep only, but only indifference, and the traveller who wakes up and sleeps on the way, though once shaken from his indifference, is yet asleep.

Only the resolution to march is not required, but first to determine the right way, and then to journey on it, these two conditions require fulfilling. What is the use if you bid farewell to the comforts of the warm bed when instead of being wasted in slumber, life is being whittled away in lost paths and their shameful degeneracies?

Today the further horizon and the high aim of thought and questioning that we have is nothing but to collect a huge fund for the protection of Islam and its holy places of pilgrimage and that each Muslim should contribute to it and show how that he shall keep the safety of the Caaba foremost in his mind.
There is no doubt that out of the heritage of the wide earth and its kingdom and power and glory whatever was left to us has been lost thanks to our indifference and our follies. Whatever little remains is in danger, and all that remains of the glorious heritage is the holy place where dawned Islam and wherefrom sprang the well of the divine invitation and teaching, where are the peaks of "Faran" and where after the ruinous devastations the God of Sinai reappeared with the book of the law and the sword of justice, where is the holy cave in whose darkness the light of the "brilliant lamp, the caller towards God" first appeared and which is the memorial to the Islamic movement and that first messenger who laid the foundations of Islamic truth by showing the gentle example of his sacrifices:

That first house of the worship of God which was built for men to pray in was this (Ka'aba) only, which is the converging point of divine beneficence in Mecca and the spring well of divine instruction for the world. In it are many clear tokens of the might and wisdom of God and one among such tokens is the place of Abraham. For him who enters there is peace for ever. (The Koran).

So it is imperative that every Muslim vow to sacrifice himself in its service and this also is imperative that for the future a huge Islamic fund be founded with all labour and effort and which may be a means to our ends and to the satisfaction of our needs, and for which the best of us spend their time and effort without stint.

All this is undeniably true. But the question is if this alone is enough for the need which faces us, the destination
for which we quest, the object in search of which we have resolved to advance? Is only the making of a firm resolve, the establishment of a fund the sole object of our efforts and the only cure of our malady?

The solution to which the problem led, again becomes a problem once it is reached: "The mystery when resolved became another mystery" (says the Persian poet). Time and time again I was blamed of being a lamentor only. They say that a cry is being raised but to what end? The reasons for this I will have to discuss in detail sometime or the other, and may probably do so in the end of this essay, but this I would like to mention here that my inactivity was not without reason. To reach the goal is perhaps not so easy as our fellow marchers think:

Come! the riddle of love is more complex than all that; when did the base thinking of the vulgar come by the solution? (Persian verse).

We are too hasty in announcing a march, but better would it be if this same hurry was used in thinking rather than moving.

To collect money is very important and the service of the Kaaba is the national duty of all Muslims. Will our hearts not turn once towards that house of God's light to which our faces are turned five times a day? We should kindle the fire of this ambition as bright as possible, and should fan it well once it lights up. But the whole point is that the problem does not resolve itself with this; it does not cut the gordian knot. I repeat that these indeed are the branches, but where
is the root. To water the branches is not the way to make a garden grow. First thing is to irrigate and to freshen up the root. If you know not how to do this, others might be knowing:

Thou seekst a blossom for the bower, I am bower from the blossom. I see the smoke from the fire thou see fire from the smoke (Persian verse).

And then if you know not, ask those who have sight and sense. (The Koran).

It is a fatal mistake to stress on money only. In truth circumstances have taught us how necessary it is to keep in readiness a national fund to meet the national requirements. So it is imperative that we strive for it. But how will the establishment of such an institution meet the difficulties which are to enwrap us from all round? Are the revolutions in the histories of nations and peoples a matter which may be bribed into settlement by a mere few millions of rupees? Is an army and is zeal available for hire in London and in Berlin that we shall telegraphically settle their wages and deploy them before the evening if one invades the Islamic peoples? Was all our ruins and frustration only because we did not accumulate wealth? Has Europe snatched away from us Adrianople and Salonika by branding us as beggars? If tomorrow France intended to openly occupy Syria and the news is transmitted to us and we had a mighty organization, boosting of funds accumulated over 2 years, what indeed shall we be able to do in spite of this generous supply of wealth?
Shall we telegraph the French Prime Minister that he desist from invading Syria and accept 14 crores of rupees from us? Or shall we request the British Prime Minister that he accept from us that huge amount of money and retract from the avowed aims of his triple alliance and the decisions taken by them in regard to the Middle Eastern problem and be good enough to land a mighty army on hire on the sea shore of Beirut? Possibly some wishful thinkers believe in this, but

I pronounce openly and I am satisfied with what I say; I am the slave of love and free from all other bondage (Persian verse).

And why not take a better example. Let us suppose that Britain decides to resolve the problem of Iraq and announces it to be her colony, then what shall this splendid fund of ours be able to perform? My friends! this is not an auction of property that we should keep ourselves ready to bid the highest. This is the clash of mights, empty hearts will not help heavy purses:

Say again, if thou hast the kingdom of the heart, for here the law of the Sultan does not hold (Persian verse).

It would be tantamount to losing our last chance if we spent all our zeal and awakened senses on building up a fund. The might and necessity of money is undeniable. But let us not worship Mammon so as to waste all our potentialities on it. Today we are witnessing our own decline and fall. We stand on the brink of ruin and see for ourselves the preparations for our funeral. We do not have time enough to try diverse
remedies and diverse physicians. We now require only one remedy and one physician. True, our maladies are numerous, and time permitting, we would have tried to cure all of them. But now the hope of survival rests on one panacea. And then if we decide to serve the Caaba and earmark a monthly or annual sum for this purpose, it would though be useful in many ways but will this cure those hundreds of ills which have been pulverising our body politic and now we have come to the stage that "if this patient lives very long, he will die by the evening."

It is said that the end of Islamic states and the gradual decline of Turkey is a situation which has endangered the safety of the Caaba and therefore we should rise as one for this. But the question is that even if this is accepted as the final goal, how are we to achieve it? We shall have only two weapons: the vows of the contributors or their money. No vows can replace weapons of war and no money can refute the invader. "Then, O friends, what are our ways and means after this?" If the Indian Muslims today had vowed to protect and serve the Salimite mosque of Adrianople instead of the Caaba, and they had a fund also for this purpose, would they have been able to stop the fall of Adrianople? Whatever monetary help we gave them during the battle did not need any results, for that was a clash of the cross and the crescent and it was our pious duty not to stint whatever help we could muster for them. Today also when we are aware of the miseries
of the refugees, it is our duty to redress them and this is not because this would end the calamities which have befallen the Islamic world. But when we wish to plan for the future, when we think of the future of the Muslim world and when we give a call to the nation of this account then our duty should be to take into grave consideration the results and the aftermaths of our actions and should try to achieve a means of redress whose attainment will permanently abolish all our ills and evils.