

Abul Kalam Azad And M. K. Gandhi: An Example Of Composite Nationalism In A Multicultural Society

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ABSTRACT

This paper will try to scrutinise the relationship between Abul Kalam Azad and M. K. Gandhi vis-a-vis the Indian National Movement. It was their relationship, which to a large extent motivated and inspired both the Hindus and Muslims in the pluralistic society of India to struggle against the colonial rule unitedly. Azad was among those nationalist Muslims of India, who promoted and propagated the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity along with Gandhi, and other leaders of the Indian National Congress. After joining the Indian National Congress formally, Azad participated in various programs started by Gandhi and Congress. From Non-Co-operation to the Civil Disobedience Movement, Azad fully supported Gandhi, to fight against the imperial power. Azad along with Gandhi, was a symbol of 'Composite Nationalism'. However, when it comes to the idea of Non-Violence, Azad did not agree with Gandhi.

This paper will also try to analyse the response of Azad towards the Quit India Movement. Besides, the present study will try to discuss role of Azad and Gandhi in the partition of India. Azad appreciates Gandhi for being principled but expressed his extreme disappointment in his stance on partition and how the Vallabhai Patel-Jawaharlal Nehru-Lord Mountbatten trio influenced Gandhi's political decision-making.

Keywords: Abul Kalam Azad, M. K. Gandhi, Composite Nationalism, Indian National Movement, Multicultural Society, Hindu-Muslim Unity, Partition of India.

Introduction:

This paper will try to scrutinise the relation between Abul Kalam Azad and Gandhi vis-a-vis Indian National Movement. It was their relationship, which motivated and inspired both the Hindus and Muslims of India to struggle against the colonial rule unitedly. Azad was among those nationalist Muslims of India, who promoted and propagated idea of Hindu-Muslim unity along with Gandhi, and other leaders of Indian National Congress. After joining the Indian National Congress formally, Azad participated in various programs started by Gandhi and Congress. From Non-Co-operation to Civil Disobedience Movement, Azad fully supported Gandhi, in order to fight against the imperial power. For Azad, Gandhi was one of the role models in the field of politics. Azad along with Gandhi, was a symbol of 'Composite Nationalism'. He was an advocate of Gandhi's principles and methods to maintain peace. However, when it comes to idea of Non-Violence, Azad didn't support it blindly. He was not hesitant, unlike some other leaders in using the word 'Mahatma' (the great soul). Besides, he agreed with Gandhi on most of the issues regarding freedom struggle. Although, many Congress leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Mrs. Annie Besant and others were opposing the Non-cooperation Movement started by Gandhi, under the leadership of Azad, Muslim representatives played an important role by giving their support in favour of the resolution that suggested the boycott of foreign cloth and adoption of Khadi. On the other hand, for Gandhi, his support for Khilafat Movement was a religious duty. In May 1920, he said that if he would keep himself away from the Khilafat movement then he would consider it as a loss of the worth of

his life. By getting the support of Congress under Gandhi and Azad, Khilafat Movement reached out to all the sections of Muslim society and mobilized them as a force which shook the structure of British rule to its very foundations.

This paper will also try to analyse the response of Azad towards Quit India Movement. In 1942, when Gandhi launched Quit India Movement. He, Azad and other main leaders were arrested and sent to Ahmednagar Fort for imprisonment. Azad guided the destiny of the Congress both inside and outside the prison during this period. He also acted as the sole spokesman of the Congress during the negotiations with the Cripps Mission in 1942. Besides, present study will try to analyze the role of Azad and Gandhi in the partition of India. Azad appreciates Gandhi for being principled, but expressed his extreme disappointment on his stance on partition and how the Vallabhai Patel-Jawaharlal Nehru-Lord Mountbatten trio influenced his political decision-making.

During Indian National Movement of India, some of the leaders held the view that Muslim community was being used by Britishers against the Hindus. Azad tried to convince his contemporaries to avoid this type of hostility towards Muslims. Azad was influenced by his contemporaries like M. K. Gandhi (hereafter Gandhi), Aurobindo Gosh, and Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan. He supported the Non-cooperation Movement started by Gandhi in 1920.

With the passage of time, Azad started taking part in revolutionary activities. He came in contact with Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, who, according to him, was one of the important revolutionary workers of his time. Through Chakravarty, he met Aurobindo on two or three occasions. The result was that Azad got attracted to revolutionary politics and joined one of the groups. But later on, he got influenced by Gandhi in national movement. For Azad, Gandhi was one of the role models in the field of politics. Azad was a symbol, along with Gandhi, of Indian 'Composite Nationalism'¹. He was an advocate of Gandhi's principles and methods to maintain peace. He was not hesitant, unlike some other leaders in using the word 'Mahatma' (the great soul). Besides this, he agreed with Gandhi on most of the issues regarding freedom struggle. (Miller, 2003).

Azad, Gandhi and the Indian National Movement

Ziya-Ul-Hasan Faruqi (1997) has observed that Azad, Gandhi and Nehru were known as trinity of Indian secularism. It is the modern ideology that free India has adopted. It is the soul of Indian constitution to which every Indian politician swears. This is the approach which helped India become a modern nation-state, and also to sustain its unity through the course of time. Secularism is the path through which these three national leaders led the Indian people in freedom struggle against foreign rule and all of them gave shape to this principle through their lives. They were different personalities born in different religions and from different background, but they moulded the rich diversity of this sub-continent into a united nation. For the cause of freedom these three had respect for each other and they worked jointly.² Gandhi, while talking about Azad argued that Azad was among those persons who had a vast knowledge of Islam. His faith in nationalism was as strong as his faith in Islam and it was only because of that faith that he became the president of the INC. (Gandhi, 1990).

During the time of British rule it was not easy for any leader to lead the country towards freedom and fight against imperialistic rule. There were many religions and various sects. The need was to build unity among different religious communities and it became a primary task connected to the struggle. Obviously, the struggle could not be carried on by adopting any anti-religious attitude in a religious country like India. There was a need of leadership that could interpret the religion in a manner favourable to diversity. Both Gandhi and Azad were extremely suitable for this job because of their religious outlook. They saw religious faith as a spiritual force. Gandhi appealed to the Hindus to take part in Khilafat Movement, because if they respected the sentiments of their Muslim brothers, in response they would get sympathy for their religious sentiments (Bhutani, 2006).

The same responsibility was upon Azad, he had to interpret Islam in that context and he made it an integral part of his political life. As he was from an orthodox religious family, he wanted to break the chains of old traditions and he felt the need to go beyond orthodoxy. His interpretation of Islam is known as one of the important and humane interpretation. (Engineer, 1985). Z. A. Nizami has appreciated Azad's positive role for

¹ If in a nation, state or country people with different religions, Islamic and non-Islamic, completely incorporate in a manner so that there is no social or cultural distinction among them, it is called as composite nationalism. In other words people following different religions constitute one single nation such that no one have a separate title, rather, they are collectively known by a combined title because of their common land or origin or colour. Engineer (2000) argues that in 1947 when British power was ready to leave India over the concept of Nation-state, several conflicts started. The concept of Composite Nationalism, though propounded by several secular Muslim leaders, was rejected by the League. There were some Muslim leaders who rejected the *two nation theory* and advocated or, in other words, justified Composite Nationalism on the basis of religion. According to them, it is territory, not religion, which forms the basis of nationalism. Among these Muslim leaders, most important thinker was Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani of the Deoband School of Thought, who rejected religious nationalism. He wrote a book called as "*Muttahida Quamiyyat aur Islam* (Composite Nationalism and Islam).

Muslims by saying that it was he who made the Muslim community partners in governance of India, and also provided a strong foundation of secular and free India (Bhutani, 2006). Right from his youth he participated in various movements started by Gandhi and other freedom fighters. He participated in various movements such as Non-cooperation Movement, Khilafat Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movement.

Khilafat Movement: An attempt to unite the Communities

Azad claimed that it was the religious duty for all of the Muslims to support and protect the Khilafat by means of Jihad. He said that Jihad did not always mean only violence. He declared non-cooperation with the British as they had conquered the Muslim lands, and they also endangered the very old Islamic institution of the Khilafat. Indian Muslims should search for the cooperation of Hindus in this struggle of religion if they required, as they were at peace with them (Faruqi, 1997).

Gail Minault and Christian W. Troll (1988) argued that Azad joined Khilafat Movement because his main stress was on active co-operation between Muslims and Hindus for the freedom of India. He always saw it as a way towards the achievement of India's freedom. By using the arguments of Quran and Sunnah, Azad justified the Hindu-Muslim unity and non-cooperation with British. He was the main ideologue of the Khilafat Movement, while the Ali Brothers were its chief leaders. The Khilafat Movement continued for four years and became a matter of history. However, Hindu-Muslim unity remained the main principle of his political faith.

On the other hand, for Gandhi's support for Khilafat Movement was his religious duty. In May 1920, he said that if he would keep himself away from the Khilafat movement then he would consider it as a loss of the worth of his life. He further argued that participation in this movement was his religious duty. He said, "It is through the Khilafat that I am doing the triple duty of showing to the world what Ahimsa means, of uniting Hindus and Muslims and of coming in contact with one and all" (Gandhi quoted in Qaiser, 2011: 79).

All these things helped them to work towards the freedom struggle and also in looking for co-operation with Hindus and non-co-operation with government (ibid). Further Azad added that the real aim of Khilafat Movement was freedom of India. He appealed to the Muslims to remain in the front and work for Hindu-Muslim unity which according to him could guarantee for them a distinguished future in India. He criticized the government for arresting the leaders of Khilafat Movement. He asked why the government had arrested a few leaders of Khilafat, when all Muslims had participated in it. He argued that Islam had designed that Muslims had only two options: either to remain free or to die. They should remain ready to go to jail willingly because the case for which main leaders were arrested was the cause for all of them (Ansari, 1982).

Azad, Gandhi and the Non Co-operation Movement

B. R. Nanda (2004) claims that in February 1920, after presiding over the Khilafat Conference in Calcutta, Azad advocated the acceptance of Gandhi's programme of Non-cooperation Movement. Minault (1982) argued that Gandhi was anxious when he saw that the Muslims were determined to take dynamic political action and they were moving forward with a new method of Non Cooperation. He declared his support in favour of the Calcutta resolution and rushed to Meerut to announce the program of Non-cooperation Movement which was jointly decided by Hindu and Muslim leaders. There were four main agendas of this movement:

1. Rejection of titles.
2. Resignation from the government services.
3. Resignation from the police and military services.
4. Non-payment of taxes.

Azad perceived Non-cooperation Movement as a method of anti-imperialist struggle. Azad supported Gandhi's Non-cooperation Movement without any delay. He said that those Indian Muslims who really wanted to help Turkey should accept the programme immediately (Bhutani, 2006). According to Hiren Mookerjee, "The role of Maulana Azad in the launching of the movement was equal to that of Gandhiji" (Mookerjee quoted in Bhutani, 2006: 70). Gandhi's support for Khilafat Movement and Azad's support for Non-cooperation Movement marked the beginning of the cooperation between the two leaders who wanted to solve problems in the same way though they were from different religions.

A. B. Rajput (1946) claimed that as a supporter of Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement, Azad enjoyed full confidence of Gandhi, who travelled widely with Azad and Ali Brothers and electrified the whole country. While some Muslims had doubt regarding Non-cooperation Movement and Swadeshi Movement, Azad tried to persuade large number of such Muslims about the correctness of joining these movements. He argued on the basis of the Islamic ethical norms in favour of these movements.

Along with Muhammad Ali and other Khilafat leaders in September and October 1920, Azad addressed a number of meetings from Calcutta to Lahore and Amritsar, in which he encouraged the Ulama and Sufis to come forward and work for the Non-cooperation Movement and enrol the support of the Muslim masses for the movement. He also persuaded the students to boycott the government institutions and join the Non-

cooperation Movement. He addressed the students of Madrasah Aliya³ of Calcutta, and asked them to leave it and join the new institution Madrasah Islamiya. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani,⁴ as the Sadri Mudarris, started Madrasah Islamiya, which was inaugurated by Gandhi in December 1920 (Dwarkadas, 1966). Gandhi in his inaugural speech said, "Let this Madrasa produce true Muslim and true Indian, ... who would avoid slavery and die for independence" (Gandhi quoted in Sharma, 2010: 39).

One of the things worth mentioning here is that was Gandhi really a supporter of non-violence. Although, he was talking about non-violence, he was sometimes propagating violence also. From his support to British as a volunteer in Boer War, (as a part of British Colonialism in South Africa) and then in crushing the Zulu rebellion of 1906 (Anderson, 2015). Further, he once said, "The ability to use physical force is necessary for a true appreciation of Satyagraha. He alone can practice ahimsa who knows how to kill, in fact practice of ahimsa may even necessitate killing (ibid: 28). While talking about how to end the British govt. he supported violence. He further argued, "We have to take the risk of violence to shake off the great calamity of slavery. Indeed supposing a non-violent struggle has been started at my behest and later on there is an outbreak of violence, I will put up with that too, because it is God who is inspiring me and things will shape as He wills. If he wants to destroy the world through violence using me as his instrument, how can I prevent it?" (ibid: 29).

Civil Disobedience Movement

On 12th March, 1930 with his famous Dandi March Gandhi started Civil Disobedience Movement, from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, he walked 375 km along with followers. The news spread throughout the country and there was a vast impact on people because of his speeches, and a large number of people resigned from the government posts. Gandhi picked a handful of salt and broke the salt law after reaching Dandi on 6 April. He broke this law as a symbol of the fact that now Indian people were not ready to live under British made laws (Chandra, 2009). On the occasion of Dandi March Gandhi argued that it was the British rule in India which had brought about moral, material, cultural and spiritual downfall of the great country. He considered the British rule as a curse. He wanted to demolish that system of government. To agitate against that system had become his religion. The battle that he fought was fully non-violent. It was his religious duty to fight against the British non-violently (ibid).

Ravindra Kumar (1991) argues that there is no doubt that Azad played an important role in making this movement a successful one. Along with Gandhi he made a significant contribution in this critical time to the national movement. In this connection he went to jail thrice. During the salt campaign he established before the people those ideas which were suitable for the attainment of Swaraj. There were four main ideas provided by Azad to achieve freedom, those are as follows:

- i. Try to become Non-violent revolutionary.
- ii. Demand for linking freedom struggle with constructive program.
- iii. Call for unity.
- iv. Appeal to be fearless (pp: 52-53).

Quit India Movement

In 1940 when Azad, for the second time, became the president of the INC, various events happened during his tenure up to 1946. Quit India Movement was one of the main events among them. In Second World War which started from 1939 and lasted until 1945, Britain, France, Russia and United States of America fought together against Germany, Japan and Italy. During this period India was a British colony, and for this war they wanted to use the people and money of India. Congress accepted their proposal but in return demanded the self-rule for India. However, colonial masters were not in any mood to accept this demand. Ultimately Indian soldiers fought for the British (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2006). It was in this context in 1942 Gandhi launched Quit India Movement. He, Azad and other main leaders were arrested and sent to Ahmednagar Fort for imprisonment. Azad guided the destiny of the INC both inside and outside the prison during this period. He also acted as the sole spokesman of the INC during the negotiations with the Cripps Mission in 1942 (Chopra, 2014).

Quit India Movement was one of the main anti-imperialist struggle. Nehru referred to Quit India Movement as the important event after the mutiny of 1857, but also expressed grief that the people forgot the lesson of non-violence which had been taught them for more than twenty years (Pandey, 2009). Quit India Movement, Gandhi's last movement, offered a pride and sadness. It was the movement which saved the India's self-respect and made freedom predictable, but in the form of blood a price was paid by the people of India. Leaders like Mahadev Desai and Kasturbai died in detention in 1944, because, they had been arrested in 1942. Azad's wife, Zuluikha died in Calcutta, while Azad was a prisoner at Ahmednagar Fort (Gandhi, 1995).

Gandhi, Azad and Hindu-Muslim Unity

³ Mohammeden College of Calcutta popularly known as Madrasah-I-Aliah or Calcutta Madrasah, the first educational institution set up in India by the then Governor General Warren Hastings in 1780.

⁴ Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani (1879 - 1957) was an Islamic scholar, political activist of Indian sub-continent and supporter of Gandhi during the struggle for India's independence. His followers called him *sheikh-al-Islam* to acknowledge his expertise in *hadith* and *fiqh*.

Like Azad and other the INC leaders Gandhi was also one of the main supporters of Hindu-Muslim unity. To maintain this unity he participated in various movements started by Indian Muslims and the Muslims of world. His keen interest in the unity of these communities can be seen in his statement: "I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two communities with my blood, if necessary" (Gandhi quoted in Desai, 2009: 188). He further said that before he could do so, he wants to prove himself to the Muslims that he loved them equally as he loved the Hindus. It was his religion that taught him to love all equally (ibid).

One of the main contributions of Gandhi was his efforts to bring Hindu-Muslim unity. He fought for its realization throughout his life, but he could not achieve this task at the end. He said "Even if I am killed, I will not give up repeating the names of Ram and Rahim, which mean to me the same God. With these names on my lips, I will die cheerfully" (Gandhi quoted in Ghadai, 2008: 8). Gandhi once said, "I have striven for Hindu-Muslim unity because India cannot live without it" (Gandhi quoted in Rajmohan Gandhi, 1995: 108).

Regarding Hindu-Muslim unity Gandhi often quoted Jalaludin Rumi⁵ who said, "You've been sent to earth to unite people, you've not been sent to divide people" (Rumi quoted in Alam, 2014: 93). Rudolph and Rudolph (2006) argue that in 1927 Gandhi affirmed Hindu-Muslim unity to be the utmost right way. While remaining dedicated to the goal of dominion status, he said that it would help to cultivate and maintain unity. In order to promote this unity he also took on other measures. One of them was that he suggested the name of A. M. Ansari, who was a distinguished and respected Muslim elderly statesman, as the INC president at the Madras annual meeting of INC.

In order to generate goodwill and unity among different communities, Gandhi said for his fellow-workers, Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it respectfully and they will love it even as I do ... If Hindus set their houses in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its liberal traditions. They should understand the meaning of what they read and have equal regard for all religions'- as had been his own life long practice. By doing so, they would be able to 'learn from all' and hence 'forget the communal differences and live together in peace and amity' (Gandhi quoted in Dallmayr, 2006: 217).

While analysing the Gandhi's idea of Hindu-Muslim unity, his approach was selective and sometimes more individualistic rather than political. Although, for him all religions were equal, he was promoting Ramarajya on practical level. While speaking in crowd, he once told, "Ramarajya was within reach if they followed his teachings-the Golden Age of the god-hero Rama" (Anderson, 2015: 23). Besides, he was claiming that both the religions were teaching same truth, and so there was no basis for division. To put in another way, Perry Anderson argued, "At a personal level, he was perfectly sincere in holding that all religions were equal before the Lord. At a political level, one religion was, inevitable, more equal than the other". (ibid: 23). At another occasion Gandhi declared, "I yield to none in my reverence for the cow, and warned his son against marrying a Muslim on grounds that it was contrary to dharma, and a telling like putting two swords in one cover" (ibid: 23).

Azad was among those Muslim leaders of British India who had given first priority to Hindu-Muslim unity. He considered unity as the most important weapon with which people of India could fight the British rule. In order to keep this idea alive, he appealed several times generally to all the Indians and particularly to the Muslims through his speeches and writings. For this unity he fought till the last days of his life. He became very disappointed when the unity of Indian sub-continent broke and the two countries, India and Pakistan came into existence.

His firm belief in Hindu-Muslim unity was expressed in his speech to a special session of the INC in 1923, If an angel were to descend from the clouds today and settle on Delhi's Qutub Minar and proclaim that India can win Swaraj within two hours provided that India renounces Hindu-Muslim unity, then I would renounce Swaraj and not unity, because if Swaraj is delayed that is a loss to India, however, if unity is lost that is a loss to humanity (Azad quoted in Faruqi, 1958: 10-11).

Azad, Gandhi and the Partition of India

Sucheta Mahajan (2012) from a nationalistic point of view explains why Gandhi also accepted partition at the end. Gandhi in 1946 had realized that Muslims of India had now drifted from him. He understood that people were not in any mood to start a mass movement against the partition. Both Hindus and Sikhs were also clamouring for partition. Besides, he found that the top leaders like Nehru and Patel were avoiding him. In order to avoid the partition he requested Mountbatten in March 1947, to offer Jinnah the post of Prime Minister. But both Mountbatten and the INC did not accept.

In 1947 summer Gandhi expressed his anguish at his alienation from the people. He said, "No one listens to me more. I am a small man. True, there was a time when mine was a big voice. Then everyone obeyed what I said; now neither the Congress nor the Hindus nor the Muslims listen to me. Where is the Congress today? It is disintegrated. I am crying in the wilderness" (Gandhi quoted in Mahajan, 2012: 244).

Azad was not ready to accept partition as the acceptance of two nation theory. He said that though they failed politically, yet they should not forget that their nation was one, their cultural life was unique and

⁵ Maulana Jalaludin Rumi, a Persian poet, a Sufi mystic and an Islamic dervish was born in 1207 A.D in Tajikistan. He was also a jurist, theologian and one of the spiritual masters of Islam.

also indivisible. It was their defeat that they were accepting partition. Still they should remain confident so that their culture remained undivided. "If we put a stick into water, it would appear that water has been divided whereas in fact water remains one and the division disappears the moment stick is removed" (Azad, 1988: 214-215).

Hassan (1960) claimed that Azad was among those leaders who had devoted his life in the politics of the Indian sub-continent. Leaders like Sardar Vallabhai Patel (hereafter Patel), Nehru and Gandhi who were earlier totally against the partition, later agreed to it. The first man who fell for the idea of partition was Patel. He told Azad, "That whether we liked it or not, there were two nations in India. He was now convinced that Hindus and Muslims could not be united into one nation. There was no alternative except to recognize this fact" (Patel quoted in Hassan, 1960: 321). Azad was confident that Nehru would not support partition, however, in their first meeting, Nehru, "recognized that partition was evil, but he held that circumstances were inevitable leading in that direction" (Azad quoted in Hassan, 1960: 321). Last hope was Gandhi; Gandhi said, "If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body" (Gandhi quoted in Hassan, 1960: 321). However, this hope also turned into disappointment when Azad met him. Azad received greatest shock of his life: Gandhi too had accepted the idea of partition. Gandhi's justification for changing his perception with the passage of time, can be seen in his statement. Perrey Anderson, while quoting Gandhi, argued, "My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements. It is not necessary for me to prove the rightness of what I said then. It is essential only to know what I feel today" (Anderson, 2015: 30-31).

On the eve of partition addressing a gathering of those who had decided to migrate he said that in order to save their life they wanted to adopt the only alternative of Hijrat⁶. But it was wrong, if they thought seriously. He appealed to them that they should reinforce their hearts and broaden their thinking. Then they would realize that they took the decision in a hurry. While directly addressing them he said,

Where are you going and why? Raise your eyes. The minarets of Jama Masjid want to ask you a question. Where you have lost the glorious pages from your chronicles? Was it only yesterday that on the banks of Jamuna, your Carvan performed Wazu? Today, you are afraid of living here! Remember, Delhi has been nurtured with your blood- I want to remind you that these bright etchings which you see all around you are relics of the Qafilas of your forefathers. Do not forget them. Live life as their worthy inheritors, and, rest assured, that if you do not wish to flee from this scene, nobody can make you flee. Come today, let us pledge that this country is ours, we belong to it and any fundamental decision about its destiny will remain the incomplete without our consent (Azad quoted in Mukherji, 2003: 74-75).

Rajmohan Gandhi in his book *India Wins Errors - A Scrutiny of Maulana Azad's India Wins Freedom* has argued that Azad did not oppose partition. Quoting the proceedings of the AICC, Rajmohan Gandhi claims that Azad asked the AICC to vote for the resolution. Rajmohan Gandhi argues that Azad was of the opinion that the Cabinet Mission Plan was better than the partition proposal. However, he supported the resolution because he thought a conclusion must be reached at all costs to make the British leave India at the earliest. A compromise had to be made to the League's obstinacy. He had told the Viceroy that the country could brook no delay and the question should be settled either way at once. The separating parts would hurry back to the union (Rajmohan Gandhi, 2002). Rajmohan Gandhi also referred to the meeting of the INC held on 9 June 1947, where along with other leaders Azad was also present. In this meeting, claims Rajmohan Gandhi, Azad did not counter the partition proposal. Acharya J. B. Kriplani has also disproved Azad's claim that he opposed the partition (Kriplani, 1970).

Ram Manohar Lohia in his work 'Guilty Men of India's Partition' held the same view. Lohia states that, Two of us socialists, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and I, were specially invited to this meeting. Barring us two, Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, none spoke a single word in opposition to partition. Maulana Azad sat in a chair throughout the two days of this meeting in a corner of the very small room which packed us all, puffed away at his endless cigarettes, and spoke not a word (Lohia, 1960: 21).

Sharma (2010) writes that Azad had to accept partition when he realized that Gandhi, Nehru and Patel had already accepted it.

Conclusion:

One of the similarities both Gandhi and Azad had that they used the religion as the means for the political end. For them it was through religion that they had mobilized the common people of India, in order to fight against the colonial power. Azad was like other Indian leaders deeply concerned with the political process in order to strengthen Indian nationalism as an integral part of the anti-colonial struggle. The value and importance of the role of Azad in Indian National Movement cannot be minimized. He proved himself to be a leader, a philosopher, a scholar, a true patriotic Indian Muslim and also a true follower of Gandhi. Both Azad and Gandhi propagated the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity for the larger cause of freedom of India. They together participated in one another's programs, so that people get united. In the freedom struggle, Azad was in accord with Gandhi on non-violent means and advised the Muslims to engage in peaceful struggle. In fact,

⁶ To move from one country or region to another, with an intention to reside, The 'Hijra' also 'Hijrat' is the migration or journey of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in June 622AD.

he was one of the leaders who urged them away from the trail of violence. However, he criticized Gandhi for making a mistake in calling off the Non-cooperation Movement. Azad focussed on Khilafat because he thought that the movement was the linking factor between Islamic countries and India. When Khilafat Movement was launched, it was not considered as a foreign problem. Azad argued that it was an essential part of Indian freedom struggle. This logic was completely opposite to his later argument that religion could never be the binding factor to unite Muslims. If Islam could not be the binding factor then how is it possible that Khilafat Movement could be the binding factor? This reflects the inconsistency in Azad's thought.

Azad argued that partition could not be the appropriate solution to Hindu-Muslim problem because partition would create more problems than it would solve. He always suggested for compromise from both the communities. He argued that the Muslims should not distrust their brothers, i.e. Hindus, with whom they had lived in peace since centuries, with whom they lived and died, and with whom they had built a combined culture of the fame of Qutub Minar, Moti Masjid, Taj Mahal and Gol Gumbaz. They should remember that together they developed the Bhakti movement which destroyed the barriers of caste, creed and class, and promoted humanity. They should also remember Nizamuddin Aulia, Amir Khusrau, Baba Farid, Mohiuddin Chisti, Gesu Daraz and a host of others who reminded that, it was a great pilgrimage if they won the hearts of the people.

Azad and Gandhi, both were against the partition of India and tried their best to defeat the communal forces. However, both were not fully successful, the moment India got partitioned.

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