

Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya: A true saviour of Indian Religious and Social transformation

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Abstract

This paper deals with the epochal contribution of *Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya* in the realm of Indian religion and society and because of such virtues the foundation of modern progressive oriented Indian society had been laid down. Pt. Malaviya had been staunch supporter of the fact that the foundation of new India can only be built upon its historical ponderosity values rather upon the tenets of western civilization. Thus this paper will highlights the primordial foundation of the philosophy of Mahamana as well as his legendary efforts at the inception of Indian national freedom movement which on one hand provided vision & preamble to the patriotic passion to assure Independence and on other demolishes the ignoble attempts of British to divide the people of our country on basis of religion.

The philosophy of Pt. Madan Mohan manifested a peculiar coalescence of the ancient and the modern, of the Eastern and the Western cultures. He was a modern sage in his credence in terms that he was a devout follower of Sanatan but his thoughts were open to modern ideas. During his life in serving mankind he remain always keen to promote the scientific and technological studies and his words & actions show how he had absorbed the best of civilizations.

Mahamana was an epitome of Sanatani dharma. To *Malaviyaji* Sanātana Dharma is the base of all happiness and wealth and of all greatness and goodness¹. He was the firm believer of the diversity of Indian culture. His thoughts strengthen the immense variety of our culture belonging to diverse religion, castes, region follow their own tradition and culture. During his Presidential address in the Lahore session of Congress in 1909, he said "*I have faith in the future of my country. I have no doubt that the policy of the preferential treatment of one community over another and all other obstacles which keep the great communities of India from acting together, will slowly but*

¹Sanātana Dharma, varsha 2, vol. I, 17 July 1934

steadily disappear, and that under the guidance of the benign Providence feelings of patriotism and brotherliness will continue to increase among Hindus, Mohemmedans, Christians and Parsees, until they shall flow like a smooth but mighty river welding the people of all communities into a great and united nation, which shall realize a glorious future for India and secure to it a place of honor among the nations of the world."

Such enriched outlook of Mahamana unleashed his vision towards the making of new India free from dogmatism and donnish bondages where equality & justice finds its true colour ensuring the undercurrent of state of nation in a harmonious manner.

The philosophical grundnorm of Malaviya jeeoriginates from the learning, and understanding of Bhagvad Gita. In the words of Mahamana, *"As a lantern illuminates our way in the darkness, Gita enlighten us with the knowledge of our duties. It provides us the best of best teachings of both spiritual and wordly wisdom"*. Perhaps, this is the reason that almost every great leader of the freedom movement was influenced by it Malaviyajji.

In order to solidify the diverse culture and religious belief Mahamana opined that all the scriptures of the Indian soil postulate the existence of one God who is known by different names. Malaviya ji accepted the teaching of VedVyasa that the light of Brahm is in our heart, not anywhere else and it is equally present in all living beings thus being a creature of one God we must adhere our outlook our life in treating every creature with same compassion and love without any discrimination. In his own words, *"if you keep this in your mind that God is present in all living creature, you would always be truly in the company of God and fellow brethren"*.

Mahamana was a stalwart supporter of Indian egalitarianism as he believed that it forms a vital part of our culture which tends to remind us in light of our holy tradition that our diverse Indian culture can't affirm any discrimination as our God himself does not discriminate human beings on the basis of their social status. As Malaviya ji says, *"The soul of such a person does not belong to any individual being rather it is an elevated soul which is universal"*. The realisation of Sacchidananda obliterates all the malice for *"he is in me and in you. Now who is the enemy of whom?"* This thought leads to a perfect harmony in the world²

Because of such holistic and consecrate approach of Malaviya ji aims to bring equality in the society the famous philosopher *Prof. S K Maitra*³ gives him the epithet of Practical Vedanti. In the words of *Prof. Maitra*, “He had not only imbibed the Practical Vedanti, which has been referred as a soul content with the Jnana and Vigyana, but he also attained contentment through this insight of Wisdom (Jnana) and science (Vigyana). Not only this, he had also imbibed the Vairagya (asceticism), Shraddha (faith), and Bhakti (by devotion), mentioned in the gita as the purpose of human life. Inculcating these ideals and values and leading a spiritual life every individual can contribute to strengthening the nation in every sphere. Therefore, he used to tell the students, “Work hard and never forget your high and pure ideals. Acquiring the knowledge of both- the scriptures and the arms and attain both intellectual and physical powers”.

In the sanctified words of Malaviya ji, “selfless action requires two values first the act should be done in the interest of people for their upliftment and secondly it should be done without any personal inherent interest as the vested interest makes the person diminutive in the hour of difficulty but those who contribute selflessly never turns back however difficult times they have to face, for they take it as the work of God. Like Vivekananda, he considered selfless service as true worship of the God. Malaviya ji inculcated the essence of the following shloka into his life:

Sarvebhavantusukhina

sarveshnatuniramaya

sarvebhadranipasyanti

maakasvitdukhbhagbhavet

(May all be prosperous and happy

May all be free from illness

May all see what is spiritually elevated

May no one suffer)

Malaviya ji did not wish to bring down God to the level of humans rather he wanted the human beings to attain godliness.

³ Prof. Maitra observation has been provided at BHU website.

The contribution of Mahamana over Indian society is so profound as the philosophy of Mahamana reflects the true colour of Indian Secularism. Mahamana believed that one should be resolute in one's beliefs and should never resort to speaking ill of others, be tolerant to one's antagonists (whether in matters of religion or social relations) and bear love towards all the creatures of the world"⁴Malaviyaji did not aspire for himself even liberation but always thought of other's welfare. His creed was:

“न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम्।
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम्”

(which in translation reads:)

“I do not for a royal realm aspire, for release or for paradise. To serve those bent with grief I desire and calm their sorrows and help them rise.”

However it is a matter of extreme disappointing for all of us that majority of us have forgotten the contribution of *Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya* towards making our new India as when it is declared that Malaviya ji will be given the highest civilian honour of Bharat Ratna along with AtalBihari Vajpayee some concluded that he was honoured only because the BJP was ruling and Malaviya was known as a Hindu nationalist⁵.

But nationalist like *Dr. Viswanath Pandey*⁶ countered such fabled propaganda by highlighting the importance of Malaviya teaching and its relevance in our contemporary society, he brought out Malaviya's epochal role in the Indian Independence movement as well as in making our society value oriented in a very intelligible and comprehensive manner

Pandey focussed upon the sagacious vision of Mahamana that he advocated rapid industrial and agricultural development with advancement of education at same time. His farsightedness towards the Indian Industrial issue and economic problems is candidly manifested when he dissented on the report of the Indian

⁴Malaviya's Hindu Dharmopadesh

⁵ Historian Ramachandra Guha criticised the choice of Madan Mohan Malaviya for Bharat Ratna posthumously, saying it is “indefensible” and there were “far greater Indians” eligible for the highest honour than the late freedom fighter and Hindu Mahasabha leader.

⁶Visionary of Modern India; Madan Mohan Malaviya by Vishwanath Pandey.

Industrial Commission. His major contribution is the founding of the Banaras Hindu University in 1916 and working ceaselessly for it with funds from donations showing his selfless devotion to the cause of education.

Dr. Vishwanath in his book constructively collected the important speeches of Mahamana in order to highlight his ideology, efforts, and movements which have provided a coherent basis to the freedom movement of India. He referred Mahamana's endeavour on the abolition of indentured labour at the meeting of the Imperial Council held on March 20, 1916 which shows his firm commitment towards the protection of labours. It was clear that indentured labour was merely a different name for slavery and had come into force in the 1830s. Mahamana brought out the point that the recruiting depots for indentured labour resorted to all sorts of malpractices including kidnapping. He quoted from the reports of various westerners themselves to prove his point. Mahamana declared, "My Lord, no reforms will prove sufficient; tinkering will not do; the system must be abolished root and branch. During the last three-quarters of a century a policy of tinkering has been tried and has failed."

Mahamana's contribution towards the protection of the freedom of speech and of Press was also so notable when he fiercely agitated against the Press Bill. Speaking on April 4, 1910, he vociferously opposed the Bill. Similarly in 1910 he argued against the Seditious Meeting Act. He pointed out how easily a repressive law may be abused - a prophetic statement indeed! His support to *Gopal Krishna Gokhale's* motion on education showed his commitment to education from the beginning. Similarly he pleaded for simultaneous examinations in India and England for the Civil Services⁷.

Malaviyaji's entire life reveals that he had never been a sectarian or fundamentalist in his outlook. According to him, "India is a home for all religions and the diverse religious and ethnic activities form the very basis of our vibrant culture. In fact it is our cultural mutual trust and harmony which according to Mahamana embolden the people of this country as well as the fraternity of our nation. It should be noted that the same primordial principle has also been adopted while drafting the essence of our Constitution which became the Supreme law of our India & embodiment of fundamental regulations and principles according to which our country, state & people work. For instance the basic structure of Indian Secularism manifested the very same principle in consonance of the philosophy of Mahamana as it stipulates that the essence of

⁷The Many Facets of Malaviya: K.R.A.Narasiah

mutual trust and harmony with religious fraternity between different religious groups to be the most important tenet of it. Moreover there must be a guarantee of non-discrimination in the matter of religion. According to Malaviyaji there cannot be contradiction between truly religious men belonging to different faiths and communities. Because all living beings are the creation of the omnipotent God and the ‘ray divine shines equally in every man’.

J.B. Kripalanion accusation on Malaviya ji of being anti-Muslim remarked that: “Malaviyaji was a passionate advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity⁸ His dream of future India was not of a Hindu India but of a strong secular India.

According to *Dr.Bhagavan Das*, “Next after Swami DayanandaSaraswati and the AryaSamaja, the creation of what may be called a common Hindu sentiment is due to him (Malaviyaji)”⁹

In conclusion Malaviya ji can be regarded as a great Indian educationist and freedom fighter, distinguished from others for his significant role in the Indian independence and his support of Hindu nationalism. He always endeavoured for the upliftment of economically weaker sections of the society. Perhaps because of such charismatic personality of Mahamana *SitaramChaturvedi* depicts his greatness in the following words:

“He was neither a theorist nor a propagandist but was a practical philosopher who put all his thoughts to action. Whatever he believed, he sincerely followed it and what he did not believe, he never did it whatever the pressure of public opinion might be. In this respect, he was really a benevolent and a true Hindu who understood the tides of time and lead the nation and Hindu society from good to better and better to best”¹⁰

⁸Mahamana Malaviyaji Birth Centenary commemoration volume, 25th Dec. 1961, P.44.

⁹Malaviya Commemoration volume, BHU, 1932, p. 1007.

¹⁰Chaturvedi, Sitaram, Builders of Modern India, p. 44.