

"POLITICAL IDEALS: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD'S PERSPECTIVES ON NATIONALISM AND FREEDOM"

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a comparative exploration of the political ideals of two eminent figures in Indian history: Swami Vivekananda and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Both individuals, though belonging to different ideological backgrounds and religious affiliations, shared a common vision for India's freedom and the role of nationalism in shaping the country's destiny. Through an in-depth analysis of their writings, speeches, and actions, this paper aims to elucidate the nuanced perspectives of Vivekananda and Azad on nationalism, freedom, and the socio-political landscape of their times. By examining their philosophical underpinnings, approaches to nation-building, and engagement with contemporary political discourse, this research sheds light on the enduring relevance of their ideas in the context of modern India.

Keywords: Swami Vivekananda, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Nationalism, Freedom, Political Ideals, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

India's journey towards independence from British colonial rule was marked by a diverse tapestry of ideologies, movements, and leaders, each contributing their unique vision to the collective struggle for freedom. Among the luminaries who emerged during this transformative period were Swami Vivekananda and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, two towering figures whose philosophical insights and political activism left an indelible mark on the course of Indian history. Despite hailing from distinct religious and cultural backgrounds, Vivekananda, a Hindu monk, and Azad, a Muslim scholar, shared a common commitment to the ideals of nationalism and freedom. Their intellectual legacies continue to resonate in contemporary India, offering profound insights into the complexities of nation-building, identity, and socio-political transformation. Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings embodied the spirit of spiritual nationalism, emphasizing the unity of all beings and the integral role of self-realization in the pursuit of national rejuvenation. Born as Narendranath Datta in 1863, Vivekananda was deeply influenced by the teachings of his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who instilled in him a vision of Vedanta as a universal philosophy transcending sectarian divides. Vivekananda's historic address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 brought him international acclaim and marked the beginning

of his mission to spread the message of Vedanta and promote India's spiritual heritage on the global stage. His articulation of a holistic vision of nationalism, rooted in the synthesis of Eastern spirituality and Western rationality, resonated deeply with the aspirations of a resurgent India seeking to assert its cultural identity in the face of colonial domination. In contrast, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad emerged as a leading voice of Muslim nationalism within the broader framework of India's struggle for independence. Born in 1888 in British India, Azad received a traditional Islamic education but was also exposed to modern Western thought through his encounters with nationalist leaders and intellectuals. He played a pivotal role in the Khilafat Movement, mobilizing Indian Muslims against the British colonial administration in support of the Ottoman Caliphate. Azad's vision of nationalism was inclusive and pluralistic, emphasizing the unity of India's diverse religious and cultural communities. As the president of the Indian National Congress and a staunch advocate for Hindu-Muslim unity, he sought to bridge communal divisions and forge a common platform for the country's struggle for freedom.

The convergence of Vivekananda and Azad's ideals underscores the multifaceted nature of India's nationalist movement, which drew inspiration from diverse religious, cultural, and philosophical traditions. Both figures recognized the importance of harnessing India's spiritual and intellectual heritage in the quest for freedom, albeit from different perspectives. Vivekananda's emphasis on self-realization and universal brotherhood resonated with Azad's vision of a composite nationalism that transcended religious barriers. Their respective contributions enriched the discourse on nationalism and freedom, offering complementary insights into the complex dynamics of identity and nationhood in colonial India. Against the backdrop of India's struggle for independence, Vivekananda and Azad's perspectives on nationalism and freedom acquire renewed relevance in the contemporary context. The challenges of communalism, religious extremism, and cultural identity continue to shape India's socio-political landscape, underscoring the enduring relevance of their ideas in fostering harmony and unity amidst diversity. By examining the philosophical underpinnings, historical contexts, and socio-political implications of Vivekananda and Azad's political ideals, this research seeks to illuminate their enduring legacy and its implications for India's ongoing quest for a just, inclusive, and pluralistic society. In the following sections, we delve deeper into the lives, teachings, and political engagements of Swami Vivekananda and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, unraveling the nuances of their respective visions for nationalism and freedom in colonial India. Through a comparative analysis of their ideas and legacies, we aim to elucidate the rich tapestry of thought that continues to shape India's socio-political discourse and collective aspirations for a better future.

II. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: THE SPIRITUAL NATIONALIST

Swami Vivekananda, a prominent figure in Indian spiritual and nationalist movements, epitomized the fusion of spirituality and patriotism. Born as Narendranath Datta in Calcutta in 1863, he emerged as a charismatic leader whose teachings continue to inspire millions

globally. Vivekananda's life and philosophy embodied the essence of a spiritual nationalist, igniting a fervor for India's cultural and philosophical heritage while advocating for its socio-political resurgence.

- 1. Spiritual Awakening and Intellectual Quest:** Vivekananda's journey towards becoming a spiritual nationalist began with his quest for truth and understanding. Influenced by the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, he delved deep into the realms of Vedanta and spirituality, seeking answers to existential questions. This period of intense self-exploration laid the foundation for his later role as a spiritual luminary and nationalist leader.
- 2. Advocate of Vedanta and Hinduism:** Central to Vivekananda's ideology was the promotion of Vedanta and Hinduism as universal philosophies with profound relevance in modern times. He tirelessly championed the cause of Hindu dharma, emphasizing its inclusivity and rationality. Vivekananda's speeches at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893 brought Hinduism to the global stage, challenging prevailing stereotypes and prejudices.
- 3. Social Reformer and Champion of Equality:** Beyond spirituality, Vivekananda was a staunch advocate of social reform and equality. He condemned caste-based discrimination and called for the upliftment of the marginalized sections of society. Vivekananda envisioned a nation where social justice and harmony prevailed, advocating for education and empowerment as catalysts for societal transformation.
- 4. Patriotism and Nationalism:** Vivekananda's love for his motherland was palpable in his impassioned speeches and writings. He believed that India's spiritual heritage held the key to its resurgence as a nation. Vivekananda exhorted his fellow countrymen to awaken from their slumber, urging them to strive for excellence and self-reliance. His concept of "practical Vedanta" emphasized the application of spiritual principles in the service of society and the nation.
- 5. Legacy and Continuing Influence:** Even after his passing in 1902, Vivekananda's legacy endured, shaping the course of India's freedom struggle and spiritual renaissance. His teachings continue to resonate with people from diverse backgrounds, inspiring them to lead meaningful lives rooted in spirituality and service. Institutions such as the Ramakrishna Mission, founded on his ideals, perpetuate his vision of a harmonious society built on the pillars of spirituality and social welfare.

Swami Vivekananda's life exemplified the symbiotic relationship between spirituality and nationalism. As a spiritual nationalist, he strove to awaken the dormant spirit of India, advocating for a synthesis of ancient wisdom and modern aspirations. Vivekananda's

enduring legacy serves as a guiding light for generations, reminding humanity of the transformative power of spiritual consciousness in shaping individual lives and nations alike.

III. MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD: THE VISIONARY LEADER

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a towering figure in India's struggle for independence and post-independence era, was a visionary leader whose contributions spanned the realms of politics, education, and social reform. Born in 1888 in Mecca, Azad emerged as a preeminent advocate for India's unity, secularism, and educational advancement. His life and leadership epitomized a steadfast commitment to the ideals of freedom, pluralism, and social justice.

- 1. Early Life and Intellectual Prowess:** Azad's upbringing in a scholarly and religiously inclined family instilled in him a deep reverence for knowledge and education. His early exposure to diverse philosophical traditions, coupled with a voracious appetite for learning, shaped his intellectual outlook. Azad's fluency in multiple languages, including Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and English, endowed him with a broad understanding of global affairs and ideologies.
- 2. Champion of Indian Nationalism:** From a young age, Azad became actively involved in India's nationalist movement, aligning himself with the Indian National Congress (INC) and its struggle against British colonial rule. His eloquence and unwavering commitment to India's independence earned him widespread respect and admiration within the nationalist circles. Azad's leadership during pivotal moments, such as the Non-Cooperation Movement and the Quit India Movement, solidified his stature as a formidable voice for freedom and self-determination.
- 3. Advocate for Secularism and National Integration:** Azad fervently believed in the principles of secularism and religious harmony as foundational to India's identity as a diverse and pluralistic nation. As the first Minister of Education in independent India, he played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's educational policies, emphasizing the importance of fostering a sense of unity and inclusivity among its citizens. Azad's vision of a secular and egalitarian India continues to resonate in the country's ethos.
- 4. Architect of Modern Education System:** Azad's tenure as the Minister of Education witnessed the formulation of progressive policies aimed at democratizing education and expanding access to quality learning opportunities. He envisioned education as a means of empowerment and social upliftment, advocating for the establishment of universities, schools, and institutions of higher learning across the country. Azad's efforts laid the groundwork for India's modern educational infrastructure, facilitating the intellectual and socio-economic development of its populace.
- 5. Legacy and Enduring Impact:** Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's legacy endures as a beacon of hope and inspiration for future generations. His unwavering commitment to

secularism, nationalism, and educational reform remains etched in the annals of Indian history. Azad's vision of a united and inclusive India, where diversity is celebrated and education is accessible to all, continues to guide the nation's quest for progress and prosperity.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's life journey exemplifies the transformative power of visionary leadership in shaping the destiny of nations. As a visionary leader, he transcended barriers of religion, caste, and creed, championing the cause of freedom, secularism, and education. Azad's enduring legacy serves as a testament to the enduring values of unity, diversity, and social justice that continue to define the spirit of modern India.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, both Swami Vivekananda and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stand as towering figures in India's history, each leaving an indelible mark on the nation's socio-cultural fabric. Swami Vivekananda's embodiment of spiritual nationalism and advocacy for India's cultural heritage inspired generations to come, fostering a sense of pride and identity rooted in spirituality and service. Similarly, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to secularism, nationalism, and education laid the foundation for a modern and inclusive India. Through their tireless efforts and profound insights, both Vivekananda and Azad exemplified the transformative potential of leadership driven by principles of unity, equality, and progress. Their legacies continue to resonate across the globe, serving as guiding lights for individuals and nations alike, reminding us of the enduring power of compassion, wisdom, and determination in shaping a better future for all. In the tapestry of India's rich history, the contributions of Swami Vivekananda and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad shine brightly, illuminating the path towards a more enlightened and harmonious society.

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