

BARTH RATNA PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA HIGH - PRIEST OF INDIAN NATIONALISM (1861-1946.A.D)

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Madan Mohan Malaviya was an Indian educationist and politician notable for his role in the Indian independence movement and as the two time president of Indian National Congress. He was respectfully addressed as Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Malviya was one of the founders of Scouting in India. He also founded a highly influential, English-newspaper, *The Leader* published from Allahabad in 1909. He was also the Chairman of *Hindustan Times* from 1924 to 1946. His efforts resulted in the launch of its Hindi edition named *Hindustan Dainik* in 1936.¹ He was posthumously conferred with Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, on 24 December 2014, a day before his 153rd Birth Anniversary.

Child Hood and Education

Malviya was born in Allahabad, North-Western Provinces, India on 25 December 1861,² in a Sri Gaud Brahmin family to Pandit Brij Nath and Moona Devi. His ancestors, known for their Sanskrit scholarship, originally hailed from Malwa, Madhya Pradesh and hence came to be known as 'Malviyas'. While their original surname were Vyas. Malviyas were the house priests for the Agarwal merchants of Benares. His father was also a learned man in Sanskrit scriptures, and used to recite the *Bhagvat Katha* to earn a living.³ Malviya was traditionally educated at two Sanskrit Pathshalas and later continued education at an English school.

Malviya started his schooling at Hardeva's Dharma Gyanopadesh Pathshala, where he completed his primary education and later another school run by Vidha Vardini Sabha. He then joined Allahabad Zila School (Allahabad District School), where he started writing poems under the pen name *Makarand* which were published in journals and magazines.

Political Life

In December 1886, Malviya attended the 2nd Indian National Congress session in Calcutta under chairmanship of Dadabhai Naoroji, where he spoke on the issue of representation in Councils. His address not only impressed Dadabhai but also Raja Rampal Singh, ruler of Kalakankar estate near Allahabad, who started a Hindi weekly *Hindustan* but was looking for a suitable editor to turn it into a daily. Malviya said at Calcutta

session “for the development of a civilized society it is essential to have a representative government. Thus it is the duty of the British to found representative institutions. The right of representative is the basic right of British subjects, which we too should get”. People lauded his speech. Surendranath Banerjea said, “ This speech is the best I have heard till now.” The chairman of the session Dadabhai Naroji, said, “This young man has given a voice to Bharatmata”.⁴

To redeem his resolve to serve the cause of education and social-service he renounced his well established practice of law in 1911, forever. In order to follow the tradition of Sannyasa throughout his life, he pursued the avowed commitment to live on the society's support. But when 177 freedom fighters were convicted to be hanged in the Chouri-choura case he appeared before the court, despite his vow and got acquitted 156 freedom fighters.⁵

He remained a member of the Imperial Legislative Council from 1912 and when in 1919 it was converted to the Central Legislative Assembly he remained its member as well, till 1926. Malaviya was an important figure in the Non-cooperation movement. However, he was opposed to the politics of appeasement and the participation of Congress in the Khilafat movement.

In 1928 he joined Lala Lajpat Rai, Jawaharlal Nehru and many others in protesting against the Simon Commission, which had been set up by the British to consider India's future. Just as the "Buy British" campaign was sweeping England, he issued, on 30 May 1932, a manifesto urging concentration on the "Buy Indian" movement in India. Malaviya was a delegate at the second Round Table Conference in 1931.

However, during the Civil Disobedience Movement, he was arrested on 25 April 1932, along with 450 other Congress volunteers in Delhi, only a few days after he was appointed the President of Congress after the arrest of Sarojini Naidu.

On 25 September 1932, an agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Dr. Ambedkar (on behalf of the depressed classes among Hindus) and Malaviya (on behalf of the other Hindus). The agreement gave reserved seats for the depressed classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate and not by creating a separate electorate. Due to the pact, the depressed class received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award proposal of the British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. After the pact, the Communal Award was modified to include the terms as per the pacts. The text uses the term "Depressed Classes" to denote Untouchables among Hindus who were later called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under India Act 1935, and the later Indian Constitution of 1950.

In protest against the Communal Award which sought to provide separate electorates for minorities, Malaviya along with Madhav Shrihari Aney left the Congress and started the Congress Nationalist Party. The party contested the 1934 elections to the central legislature and won 12 seats.⁶

As A Journalist

Malviya started his journalistic career as the Editor of the Hindi daily "Hindusthan" in 1887. Raja Rampal Singh of Kalakankar (Pratapghadh District) impressed by the speech and the personality of Malaviyaji, during the 2nd Congress Session in Calcutta held in 1886. requested Malviya to take up this position.⁷ Then in 1889, he became the Editor of the "Indian Union". After the incorporation of "Indian Union" with the "Advocate" of Lucknow, Malviya started his own Hindi weekly "Abhyudaya"(1907-1909 under his editorship). Also, his poems (sawaiyas) were published (sometime in 1883-84) under the pseudonym of 'Makrand' in 'Harischandra Chandrika' magazine (brought out by the famous Bharatendu), articles on religious and contemporary subjects published in 'Hindi Pradeepa'.

When the English Government tried to bring in the Press Act and Newspaper Act in 1908, Malaviyaji started a campaign against the Act and called an All India Conference in Allahabad. He then realized the need of an English Newspaper to make the campaign effective throughout the country. As a result, with the help of Motilal Nehru. started an English daily the "Leader" in 1909, where he was Editor 1909-1911 and President 1911-1919. In 1910, Malaviyaji started the Hindi paper 'Maryada'. In 1924, Malviya along with the help national leaders Lala Lajpat Rai and M. R. Jayakar and industrialist Ghanshyam Das Birla, acquired Hindustan Times and saved it from an untimely demise . Malaviya raised Rs.50,000 rupees to acquire the Hindustan Times and industrialist Ghanshyam Das Birla paid most of the cash. Malaviya was the Chairman of Hindustan Times from 1924 to 1946. His efforts resulted in the launch of its Hindi edition in 1936. The paper is now owned by the Birla family. In 1933, Malaviya started *Sanatana Dharma* from BHU, a magazine dedicated to religious, dharmic interests.

Social work

Malaviya played an important part in the removal of untouchability and in giving direction to the Harijan movement. The Harijan Sevak Sangh was founded at a meeting in 1933 at which Pandit Malviya presided. Malaviya asserted - if you admit internal purity of human soul, you or your religion can never get impure or defiled in any way by touch or association with any man.⁸ To solve the problem of untouchability, Malaviya followed a Hindu method, by giving Mantradīkshā to untouchables. He said that - Mantras would be a certain means of their upliftment socially, politically and spiritually. He worked for the eradication of caste barrier in temples and other social barriers. Malaviya made massive efforts for the entry into any Hindu temple. In March 1936, Hindu Dalit (Harijan) leader P. N. Rajbhoj along with a group of 200 Dalit people demanded entry at the Kalaram Temple on a Rath Yatra day. Malaviya in the presence of priests of Kalaram Temple, gave diksha to the assembled people and given free entry into the temple.⁹ Then these Dalit members also participated in the Rath Yatra of Kalaram Temple. In 1901 established a boys' hostel named Hindu Hostel(Hindu boarding House) in Allahabad.¹⁰

A Sketch of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya when he presided over the Lahore Congress in 1909 appeared earlier. Here is given Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's appreciation of Panditji.

After the Congress sessions at Banaras and in Calcutta, delegates and visitors on their return home used to regale their friends with stories of a number of eminent speakers of the day and amongst them in particular of one rising man, slim and tall, dressed in spotless white and speaking chaste English in a silvery voice upon subjects of political interest with indefatigable energy and matchless eloquence. The Pandit had a simple, narrative style, recounting the story of England's exploitation of India.

He was temperamentally a moderate who assigned correct values to the opponents' contentions though he would never surrender a jot on the main issue. There was downright honesty in his strategy and moderation in his tactic which developed in him the habit of always acknowledging the merits of the opponent. Pandit Malaviya's aim and purpose was to convince the Judge and he acknowledged the Englishmen as the Judges of India's case. That was why his presentation of his case was simple and unadorned. His arguments were straight and unsophisticated, his eloquence was forensic, not oratorical. His speeches were therefore long but lucid, full without being detailed. To an unprejudiced and dispassionate jury he carried conviction with the profoundest ease. He never quoted out of record and always documented whatever he said profusely.

For nearly four decades the Pandit was a wholehearted, whole-souled Congressman, giving high priority to politics over his profession, and in politics to the Congress and serving the Congress with unbroken zeal and unabated passion. He continued to do so till the end of his life,—now as a humble worker and now as a leader, now as a whole-hogger and now as a part protagonist, now as an opponent to non-co-operation and civil disobedience and now as a true srtiyagrahi and civil resister in British jails.

Panditji commanded unique respect, one should say veneration, at the hands of all Indians and particularly of the Hindu population of India. He was himself a Sanskrit scholar and Sanatanist of high repute. Purity was to him, not an accident of adornment but an essential of structure. This was indicated by his dress and department. The Pandit cut a characteristic figure in the thousands that gathered year after year at the various sessions of the Indian National Congress. Pandit Malaviya made his mark on the platform of the Congress very early in life. So early as in 1886 he won his spurs in eloquence at the Calcutta session where he made a characteristic speech on a subject nearest to his heart.

He presided over the Congress twice, first over the Lahore session in 1909 and next over the Delhi session in 1918. During the interval he was a member of the Imperial Legislative Council and was made a member of the Industrial Commission for the appointment of which he had pleaded hard and he appended a dissenting note to the Commission's Report, which stands till today as an authoritative exposition on Indian industries. The year that he first presided over the Congress was a crucial year, for in that year (1909) in the Caxton Hall in London in broad day-time, Sir Curzon Wylie, a high, retired Indian officer, was shot dead by a

young man. In 1918 he amended the Congress League Scheme which had almost been finalized urging that dyarchy should be introduced at the Centre while full provincial autonomy should be introduced in the Provinces.

The recommendations of the Industrial Commission were welcomed by the Delhi Congress in 1918 with the demand that encouragement should be given to Indian capital and Indian enterprise and with the regret that the question of tariffs had been excluded altogether from the Report. The Congress further demanded that separate Executive Councillors should be appointed both at the Centre and in the Provinces for Industries and that Provincial as well as Imperial Advisory Boards should be appointed and Trade Associations and Chambers of Commerce should be organized throughout the country. Likewise a demand was made for constituting Imperial and Provincial Industrial Services and for the establishment of Commercial Colleges by Universities, all,—at the Pandit's instance.

In 1919 occurred the Jalianwalabagh massacre following which Martial Law was declared. It is well-known how the news of the Jalianwalabagh massacre was suppressed in India for some months, and it was Pandit Malaviya that revealed the whole story to the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta in July 1919. The credit again of a decision to acquire the Bagh and raise a memorial for the martyrs was mainly the Pandit's.

During the boycott of the Prince of Wales visit to India in 1921, Pandit strove to negotiate with Lord Reading but failed. When in 1925 the Congress was partitioned as it were, Pandit Malaviya moved an amendment to the resolution urging non-co-operation or co-operation to advance the national cause.

In 1929 December, when Lord Irwin was to meet Gandhi on the question of a political settlement, Malaviya was to accompany him. When the talks failed, the Congress members of the Legislatures were called upon to resign from the Legislatures. This did not affect the Pandit who was returned on a different ticket. Early in 1930, however, a Bill called the Textile Industry Protection Bill was introduced virtually to enforce on India 'Imperial preference'. In opposing it, the Pandit made alternative suggestions which were all rejected and he resigned from the Assembly.

When the Salt Satyagraha gained in tempo, the Pandit was drawn into it and he was arrested on 31st July 1930, but shown all possible considerations in jail. When on the eve of the conclusion of the First Round Table Conference, the Working Committee of the Congress passed its famous resolution on the 21st January 1931, the Pandit was present at the meeting advising the country to carry on the struggle with unabated vigour. It was on the 25th January 1931, that the Governor-General issued a statement "giving full liberty of discussion to members of the Working Committee between them-selves and those who have acted as members of the Committee since 1st January 1930." The object was to provide opportunity for consideration of the statement made by the Prime Minister. The Pandit's joining the movement had not a little part in influencing the epilogue of the drama of salt satyagraha.

Pandit Malaviya attended the Second Round Table Conference, but he was unyielding on Muslim representation and negotiations broke over one seat. Gandhi returned and hostilities were resumed. It was then in 1932 that Gandhi undertook a fast to death over the Harijan question and thanks to the liberal view of the Pandit, this question was satisfactorily settled. Thus did the Pandit save Gandhi's life.

Pandit Malaviya was accessible to all. His magnum opus was the Banaras University. He was an example of plain living and high thinking.

If Prophets, Priests and Kings represent the forces that direct the progress of a country, the Pandit surely finds a place amongst them. Verily, Pandit Malaviya was the high-priest of Indian nationalism.

After serving to the nation in various capacities this great man passed away on 12th November 1946. His name and services will be remembered forever in this country as long as people are alive.

—B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA. (Governor of Madhya Pradesh) From a Radio talk at Nagpur, on 24th December 1954; courtesy : All-India Radio

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