

## **Madan Mohan Malaviya : A Great Nation Builder**

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A great patriot, an eminent educationist, a teacher of teachers, a supreme architect of the temple of rational learning at Varanasi, a silver tongued transcendental orator, an ancient as well as a modern leader, a reluctant but an eminent lawyer, a great social reformer, a great human, a torch bearer of the downtrodden, one of the founders of Indian freedom struggle, and above all a great Nation builder, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya lived for us and future generations.

Mahatama Gandhi compared Tilak to the lofty Himalaya, Gokhale to the deep sea and Malaviya to the crystal-clear sacred river in which he decided to have ablution. He aptly called Malaviyaji as Devata Purush (a Man of God) or addressed as 'Mahamana'<sup>1</sup>

Malaviyaji rendered a long and remarkable service to his motherland. He born in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh on 25 December 1861 in a Brahmin family of Brijnath and Moona Devi. His ancestors were known for their Sanskrit scholarship, originally hailing from Malwa<sup>2</sup> and hence came to be known as 'Malaviyas'.

Malaviya's father Pandit Brijnath was a learned man in Sanskrit scriptures and used to recite the 'Bhagvat Katha' to earn a living.<sup>3</sup> Malaviya's education began at age of five in Sanskrit, when he was sent to Pt. Hardeva's Dharma Gyanopadesh Pathsala, 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.<sup>4</sup> Pt. Malaviya matriculated in 1879 from the Muir Central college, now known as Allahabad University.

Harrison College's principal provided a monthly scholarship to Pt. Malaviya, whose family had been facing financial hardships, and he was able to complete his B.A. at University of Calcutta. Though he wanted to pursue M.A. in Sanskrit, his family conditions did not allow it and his father wanted him to take his family profession of Bhagavat recital. In this hard situation Malaviya started his career as teacher in July 1884 at Allahabad District School.

Malaviya was one of the earliest protagonists of the Indian National Congress.<sup>6</sup> In December 1886, he attended the second congress session in Calcutta under chairmanship of Dada Bhai Naoroji, where he spoke on the issue of representation in Councils. His address not only impressed Dada Bhai 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. Thus in July 1887, he left his school job and joined as the editor of the National weekly. He remained here for two and a half years, and left for Allahabad to join L.L.B, it was here that he was offered co-editorship of 'The Indian Union' an English daily. After finishing his law degree, he started practicing law at Allahabad District Court in 1891 and moved to Allahabad Highcourt by December 1893.<sup>6</sup>

To redeem his resolve to serve the cause of education and social service, he renounced his well established practice of law. In order to follow the tradition of sannyasa throughout his life he persuaded the commitment to live on the society's support.<sup>7</sup>

Could the Harijans as they were called, be reclaimed into the Hindu fold? It was no fault of the Harijans that they were born of certain Harijan parents. Malaviyaji pleaded passionately for the removal of untouchability. To him, God was 'love' and asked his

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fellowmen to love one another. He started the 'Suddhi Movement' through 'Mantra Diksha' to abolish the blemish of untouchability. He worked very hard for the eradication of caste barrier in temples and other social barriers. He is believed to have undergone a rejuvenation. Also, he organized a mass of 200 dalit peoples, including the Hindu Dalit (Harijan) leader P.N. Rajbhoj to demand entry at the Kalaram Temple on a Rath Yatra day. All those who participated in this event took a deep in the Godavari River and chanted Hindu mantras.<sup>8</sup> Pt. Malaviya made massive efforts for the entry of every caste into any Hindu temple.

Pt. Malaviya's work for the upliftment of women is both remarkable and notable. He would always address them as 'Deviyon' and established women colleague in BHU. Reciting immortal stories of Sita, Arundhati, Draupadi, Maitreyi, Gargi, Savitri, he would exhort them to become brave and fearless. After his release from Mumbai Arthur Road Jail in 1930, he gave an awakening speech to thousands of women at Mumbai beach.

Malaviyaji harnessed forces of an awakened people for the country's service through political social, cultural and economic channels. His religion was of universal nature,<sup>9</sup> with 'Abhay' (freedom from fear and integrity of spirit), 'Ahimsa' (nonviolence, love and friendship) and 'Asanga' (free from desire without any attachment). He believed in the presence of God not only in mankind but also in animals, birds, insects and plants. He regarded the cultivation of a religious spirit of dutifulness, devoutness and dedication as the pathway to National rejuvenation, solidarity and greatness. He was in favour of imparting religious instruction in schools and Universities.<sup>10</sup> He served the nation and humanity and harboured no greed, no passion and no hatred. He ranks high among the illustrious builders of the nation.

Ever steeped in the idealism and traditions and unshakable faith in the greatness of its future, Malaviyaji was fully aware of two main weaknesses of our society and the nation. The first related to certain social evils for which he worked tirelessly not merely through legislation but by mass appeal to reason and social conscience. The second was the backwardness of the economic development for which he appealed for popular enterprise and initiative as well as a broad-based state policy. He was keenly interested in the industrial advancement of India. He was one of those responsible for holding the Indian industrial Conference at Banaras in 1905 and the U.P. Industrial conference and the meeting of the U.P. Industrial Association of Allahabad in 1907. He was also partly responsible for starting the Prayag Sugar Company.<sup>11</sup> Malaviya was a great supporter of Swadeshi Movement.<sup>12</sup> But it was inspired by no ill-will or hatred. There was no political bias in it. It was a sacred duty imposed on Indians for diminishing the poverty of the country and for finding bread and employment for the inhabitants. His work on the Industrial commission (1916-1918) and his note of dissent to its report reveal markedly his ever active spirit of constructive criticism and realistic outlook.

His most monumental work was the foundation of Banaras Hindu University 'The very heart and soul' in the words of Dr. Annie Besant, its vice chancellor for twenty years and seven years as rector, Malaviyaji created a vast reservoir of human resources in the service of his motherland. BHU was established "to preserve and popularise all that was good and great in the ancient civilization of India and, at the same time, to impart instructions along lines of the best of Modern Universities." His vision was to generate national spirit through the power of education and righteousness, achieving the economic development of the country by combining the teaching of science and technology with that of religion. But the story behind the 'BHU Establishment Movement' was very interesting. It was the result of very tedious efforts of almost eleven years.

Though it is not known, when and how the idea of a Hindi University at Banaras originated but it acquired a concrete shape in 1905 when Madan Mohan Malaviya submitted a proposal to the Government of India for the establishment of a Hindu University, with Hindi as

the medium of instruction.<sup>13</sup> The proposal, according to Malaviya was widely approved and he received several promises of support.<sup>14</sup> One such promise came from the Government of the United Provinces, which no doubt, described the scheme as 'large and ambitious'.<sup>15</sup> Lt. Governor of the United Provinces wrote to Malaviya on 26 March 1906:

"If the cultured classes throughout India are willing to establish a Hindu University with its colleges clustered round it, they have my best wishes for their success...but if the institution has to be first rate, the cost will be very great, and the bulk of the money must be found elsewhere than in this province. At this era of the world's progress no one will desire or approve a second rate institution."<sup>16</sup>

Due to some reasons Malaviya could not push forward the idea immediately and the proposal had to mark time till 1908 when he submitted a modified scheme for the foundation of an 'Indian University' at Banaras. This scheme was in the form of a prospectus. In a letter to the Government of the United Provinces, he wrote on 10 December 1908: "If the sufficient funds can be collected, the present idea is to begin humbly by founding three colleges only:

- 1- A Vaidik College for training teachers of religion;
- 2- An Ayurvaidik college to train vidayas (Medical Practitioners) and
- 3- An Industrial college or a technological institution to teach the practical application of science to promote industries."

Bikaner, Mysore, Gwalior, Darbhanga and other Indian states had their sympathy with Malaviya's scheme, but at the same time they were not prepared to openly support the scheme so long as it was not vouchsafed by the government. It should not be presumed that the movement was monolithic in character. There were Three distinct schemes for the establishment of a University at Banaras by 1911, put forward by Annie Besant, Maharaja Rameshwar Singh of Darbhanga and Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was indeed the pioneer.<sup>17</sup> But the government found all these schemes far from practicable and in some respects "Open to much criticism."<sup>18</sup> It however did not ignore the suitability of Banaras as a seat of University. Harcourt Butler in a Confidential demi-official letter to J.P. Hewett wrote on 26 May 1911:

"Conditions are different at Banaras, and if there is to be a teaching University, I personally should like to work the Government college into it if this can be done. It is the only place in India where I have seen anything of the spirit of an English University College. There is an air of study and research and detachment which reminds me at times strangely of Oxford."<sup>19</sup>

Immediately after the submission of his scheme Malaviya started on his campaign for listing the sympathy and support of the people and creating a congenial climate for establishment of the University.<sup>20</sup> He made a tour of different parts of the country with the aim of collecting funds for the proposed University.<sup>21</sup> Though the Government was noncommittal on the point of denominationalism yet some of the British officials presided over the meetings addressed by Malaviya, and it looked as if his scheme had the official sanction.<sup>22</sup> The Maharaja of Darbhanga, who kept the government informed on every detail of Malaviya's activities, remained completely in its "hands", and his ambivalence became perspicuous, when he suggested a counter scheme to "resist" Malaviya's advances.<sup>23</sup>

The Government was opposed to denominationalism J.P. Hewett, Lt. Governor of the United Provinces, Harold Stuart, Home Secretary, and earlier the Indian Universities Commission had disapproved the idea of denominational Universities, Nevertheless it adopted a noncommittal attitude towards the whole question for a long time. Only the statements of Annie Besant and Malaviya on the university question had laid bare in unequivocal terms the diffidence, nonchalance and at the same time the tacit support of the Government to the whole movement.<sup>24</sup> The Government was unmoved. It was indifferent to its criticism. It was not the

least unnerved by the movement, but the “steadily growing Hindu-Muslim feeling” made it apprehensive and nervous.<sup>25</sup> It sought in 1911 the Viceroy’s approval to the following communiqué for circulation,:

It is understood that statements are being made to the effect that the Government of India are in sympathy with one or other of the proposals for a Hindu University which have been put forward. There is no foundation whatever for any such statements.<sup>26</sup>

Commenting on the subject, Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, remarked on 1 September 1911: “I entirely agree with....the terms of the communiqué. The Pandit.<sup>27</sup> is a real rascal.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike the Maharaja of Darbhanga. who was vacillating and indecisive, Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner was prepared to extend his cooperation to the Movement,<sup>29</sup> provided the schemes for the University were amalgamated.<sup>30</sup> In a letter to Malaviya on 31 August 1911 he wrote about the complexity of situation on account of the three distinct proposals.<sup>31</sup> He said:

“...apart from the many difficulties already existing which would have to be faced and overcome, the situation has been rendered still more complex and the object still more difficult of attainment by the fact that three distinct schemes have been put before the public in connection with the proposed University, i.e., your own, and those of Mrs. Besant and the Mahamandal; and still some general understanding is possible tending to the unification of the three schemes.....there is not much hope of immediate success.”<sup>32</sup>

Soon the Maharaja of Dharbhanga was faced with a challenging task. He was in a predicament. Malaviya asked him for a donation of five lakhs of rupees and warned him that his inaction would be construed in a most unfavourable manner by the entire Hindu Community and he would lose all his public reputation if he failed to head the movement and give it full financial support.<sup>33</sup> Malaviya had already collected a huge fund for the University and in 1911 Dr. Rash Behari Ghosh announced a donation of one lakh of rupees.<sup>34</sup>

On 12 October 1911 the Government indicated the conditions on which it must insist as antecedent for the establishment of a Hindu University.<sup>35</sup> The conditions were as follows

- (1) The Hindus should approach the Government in a body as the Muhammadans did.<sup>36</sup>
- (2) A strong, efficient and financially sound college with an adequate European staff should be the basis of the scheme;
- (3) The University should be a modern one differing from the existing Universities mainly in being teaching and residential and offering religious instruction;
- (4) The movement should be entirely educational;
- (5) There should be the same measure of government supervision and opportunity to give advice as in the case of the proposed University at Aligarh.<sup>37</sup>

The promoters did not want to lose time and soon a draft bill was prepared for the proposed University.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime successful attempt was made for a rapprochement and the unification of all the schemes.<sup>39</sup> In 1912 a committee of management of the Hindu University society.<sup>40</sup> was formed under the presidentship of Rameshwar Sing with Annie Beasnt, Malaviya, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sundar Lal, Gurudas Banerjee and Ras Behari Ghosh as members; and on 30 October 1912, the draft bill was submitted to the Government.<sup>41</sup> On 28 April 1913 the Maharaja of Darbhanga reported to the Government regarding the financial position of the proposed University and informed it that in case of its approval Sundar Lal would draft the constitution for submission for submission to the Government.<sup>42</sup>

On 2 June 1913, the Government imposed fress conditions, “precedent to the introduction of any scheme.” The conditions were:

- (i) That a suitable site be provided
- (ii) That the Central Hindu College be transferred to the University.
- (iii) That a sum of Rs.50 Lakhs be collected.

- (iv) That the constitution of the University proceeds on lines to be indicated later.
- (v) That a committee appointed for the purpose must report that the Central Hindu College is fit to be developed into a residential and teaching University.<sup>43</sup>

Ultimately on 10 July 1913, the Government laid before the Secretary of State, proposals for the foundation of a teaching and residential University at Banaras.<sup>44</sup> On 24 June 1914, after a long waiting came the Secretary of State's approval of the Government of India's proposals for a University at Banaras.<sup>45</sup> It was, however, made clear that final orders could not be passed until a draft bill was submitted in consultation with James Meston, Lt. Governor of the United Provinces and the committee.<sup>46</sup>

In November 1914, the Viceroy recommended to the Secretary of State the early establishment of a University at Banaras "in view of the political importance of removing the question from the arena of controversy."<sup>47</sup> On 15 December 1914, the Secretary of State accepted the proposals.<sup>48</sup> He also agreed for the immediate introduction of the Banaras Hindu University Bill.<sup>49</sup> On 1 October 1915 the Banaras University Act was passed<sup>50</sup> and it came into operation on 1 April 1916.<sup>51</sup>

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru said "Malaviyaji was a giant among men, one of those who laid the foundation of Modern Indian Nationalism and year by year built up brick by brick and stone by stone, the noble edifice of Indian freedom." Malaviya was an eminent maker of Modern India.

Malaviya believed like Vivekananda and Aurobindo in the superiority of Hindu Culture.<sup>52</sup> But he had a large and generous heart and even the Ali Brothers accepted the magnanimity of his political tactics. He did not sanction Hindu domination. A genuine Indian patriotism postulated the cultivation of the good and interest of all sections of the population. It was essential to promote sentiments of brotherliness and patriotism for 'welding the people of all communities into a great and united nation.'<sup>53</sup>

As a politician, he worked for the next generations and growth of the country. He built in India the temple of India's freedom. Generations to come will salute him as a great builder of the Indian Nation, an apostle of Indian ideals and pioneer who called India to the great future. His enthusiasm to serve the Nation and humanity was infectious. As a matter of fact, he was greater than his achievements.

Malaviyaji played a central role in the freedom movement, starting from his maiden speech at the second session of Indian National Congress in 1886 at Calcutta. He became the president of Indian National Congress for four times 1909, 1918, 1930 and 1932. Like many of the contemporary leaders of Congress he was a moderate. He generally belong to the group associated with Phirozeshah and Gokhale although he had kinship of ideal also with Tilak.<sup>54</sup>

In 1902, Malaviya was elected to the Provincial Legislative Council. He was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council in 1910 and was its member till 1920. In 1924 he entered the Central Legislative Assembly as an independent congressman. In 1927 he was the president of the Nationalist party in the Assembly.<sup>55</sup>

Malaviya became one of the important figures at the time of the Non cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>56</sup> At the Calcutta Congress of 1920, Malaviya alongwith Bipin Chandra Pal, Annie Besant and C.R. Das was opposed to the adoption of Gandhian programme of Non cooperation. In December 1921, Malaviya alongwith Besant and others led a deputation to the Viceroy for the purpose of negotiating to end the unrest consequent upon the Non Cooperation movement.<sup>57</sup> Though he had renounced his well established practice of law in 1911. for ever, but when one hundred seventy seven freedom fighters were convicted to be hanged in the 'Chouri-Choura Case' he appeared before the court despite his vow and got acquitted one hundred fifty six freedom fighters.<sup>58</sup>

In 1928 he joined Lala Lajpat Rai, Jawaharlal Nehru and many others in protesting against the Simon commission, which had been setup by the British to consider India's future.

Totally opposed to the politics of appeasement, Malaviya had opposed the separate electorates for Muslims under the Lucknow Pact of 1916 and also opposed the Participation of Congress in the 'Khilafat Movement' in early 20's. Giving his clear verdict against the division of the country, he cautioned Gandhiji against bargaining for freedom at the cost of division of the country. He vehemently opposed the 'Communal Award' in 1932 to bring about societal harmony.

Let it be the Dandi March or Civil Disobedience Movement or Second round table conference, Malaviyaji was as the forefront of serving the nation and its people. 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.<sup>59</sup> He was sent to prison for six times while struggle of freedom was on.

Exhorting graduates in his convocation address on 14 December 1929, Malaviyaji said, "you must always be prepared to do the duty that your country may demand of you. Love your countrymen and promote unity among them. A large spirit of tolerance and forbearance, and a larger spirit of loving service is demanded of you. I call upon everyone of you, young men and young women, to take a vow that you will start a crusade against illiteracy, a campaign to spread knowledge and enlightenment among the teeming millions of India. Be determined to dispel the darkness which envelops our masses. We have only to combine and work. Success is certain to crown you."

Malaviyaji popularised the slogan 'Satyameva Jayate' (Truth alone will triumph).<sup>60</sup> He graced the position of chairman of 'Hindustan Times' from 1924 to 1946. His efforts resulted in the launch of its Hindi edition in 1936. The paper was saved from an untimely demise when he stepped into realise his vision of a newspaper in Delhi.<sup>61</sup> Malaviya raised Rs.50,000 to acquire the 'Hindustan Times' along with the help of Nationalist leaders Lala Lajpat Rai and M.R. Jayakar and industrialist Ghanshyam Das Birla, who paid most of the cash. The paper is now owned by the Birla family. He had also started the Hindi weekly 'Abhyudaya,' and a highly influential English news paper 'The Leader' published from Allahabad in 1909.

Pt. Malaviya was one of the founders of scouting in India.<sup>62</sup> Though Scouting in British India was officially, founded in 1909 at Bishop Cotton's Boys School in Bangalore, Scouting for Native Indians was started by Justice Vivian Bose, Pt. Malaviya, Pt. Hridayanath Kunzru, Girija Shankar Bajpai, Annie Besant and George Arundale In 1913, he also started a Scouting inspired organization called 'seva samithi'.<sup>63</sup>

Pt. Malaviya had been one of the venerated public leaders of his time.<sup>64</sup> he was a sagacious statesman, a scholar and tireless worker till the last moment of his life for the greatness of India. He was a unique and rare combination of a political leader of mass acceptance, together with being a widely respected educational and legal luminary. As a great leader both of the Indian National Congress and Hindu Mahasabha and as the prime architect of the Banaras Hindu University, Malaviya's principal contributions are to the significant domain of constructive nation building. Mahatma Gandhi regarded him as an elder brother and a valued colleague and comrade in the great struggle of India's liberation. His work for the upliftment of India, Indian society, Indian political, cultural and economic status, proves him as a great Nation Builder.

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- 20- BHU Document No.7, Education Department, A Proceedings, August 1911, Nos. 1-2.
- 21- BHU Document No.6, Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, Nos 54-59; for details of Malaviya's tours see : Dhar, S.L. and Soaskandan, S., *op.cit.*, pp.157-192.
- 22- BHU Document No.10, Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, No.62.
- 23- BHU Document No.6, *op.cit.*
- 24- BHU Document No.7, *op.cit.*
- 25- *ibid*; Later in a speech as Education Member, on the occasion of the introduction of the Banaras Hindu University Bill in the Imperial Legislative council on 22 March 1915, Harcourt Butler confessed that the government was taking grave risks. "risks graver than any government ought to face"with regard to the Banaras Hindu University. *Speeches by H.E. sir Harcourt Butler* (1923). Allahabad pp. 21-23.
- 26- *ibid.*
- 27- Madan Mohan Malaviya.
- 28- *ibid*; for details see : Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, Nos. 54-59.
- 29- BHU Document No.8, Education Department, A Proceedings, February 1912, Nos. 12-15.
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- 31- *ibid.*
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- 33- BHU Document No.9, Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, No.60.
- 34- *ibid.*
- 35- BHU Document No.11, Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, Nos.54-59.
- 36- *ibid.*
- 37- *ibid.*
- 38- BHU Document No.12, Education Department, A Proceedings, March 1912, Nos. 54-59.
- 39- *ibid.*
- 40- The Society played a significant role in the establishment of the Banaras Hindu University. Its membership comprised a large number of distinguished individuals, apart from those mentioned above, such as Motilal Nehru, Ganga Nath Jha, Bhagwan Das, P.C. Chatterjee, Mahendra Pratap,

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  - 46- *ibid.*
  - 47- BHU Document No.22, Education Department, A Proceedings, July 1915, No. 62.
  - 48- BHU Document No.23, Education Department, A Proceedings, July 1915, No. 63.
  - 49- BHU Document No.25, Education Department, A Proceedings, July 1915, No. 66.
  - 50- BHU Document No.26 : Act XVI of 1915, passed by the Governor General of India in Council to establish and incorporate a teaching and residential Hindu University at Banaras, 1 October 1915, Legislative Department, A proceedings, October 1915, Nos. 59-76.
  - 51- The foundation stone of the University was laid by Lord Hardinge who had earlier described Malaviya, the chief architect of the movement, as “a real rascal.”
  - 52- Verma, V.P., *op.cit.*, p. 374.
  - 53- Speeches and writings, *op.cit.*, p.119.
  - 54- In an article entitled “Lokamanya Tilak”, *Abhyudaya*, August 6, 1935, included in P. Malaviya (ed.). (1962), *Malaviyaji Ke Lekh*, Delhi, pp. 21-23, M.M. Malaviya hailed the Extremist leader as a “very extraordinary person”. In his view Tilak was an embodiment of physical, intellectual and religious strength. Service, patriotism, deep scholarship, political intelligence, fearlessness and immense patience were the dominating elements in the personality of Lokamanya Tilak. Few leaders had so keen of awareness of the working of the British political mind. Malaviya affirmed about Tilak, ‘देश ही उनका सर्वस्व था’ (The Country was his all in all).
  - 55- Verma, V.P., *op.cit.*, p.373
  - 56- “Gandhi is urged to Delay Break”, *The New York Times*, 11feb, 1922.
  - 57- Verma, V.P., *op.cit.*, p.373.
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  - 62- *Our Leaders*, *op.cit.*
  - 63- “Honouring the Oath : The Beginning” , *The Hindu*, 17 August, 2007
  - 64- In an article entitled “My Political Creed” published in ‘The People’ on July 26, 1925, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote “Mahatma Gandhi and Malaviyaji are for me the two greatest personalities in the country...I love and respect them both as I love no other in public and private.