

Poet Qazi Nazrul Islam's contribution to Muslim Nationalism in South Asia

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Qazi Nazrul Islam was a great poet and writer of ghazals. His literary activities were spread over a period of about twenty five years from 1917 to 1942. His writings exude strength and boldness. However his chequered career was underlined with ups and down, poverty and sufferings. He always believed that Islam gives great importance to the spirit of independence and bravery. He was greatly impressed by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and the bravery of great Muslim Generals like Khalid bin Waleed, Musa Bin Nusair, and Tariq Bin Ziyad etc. He imbibed teachings of the Prophet and pristine achievements of the Muslim caliphs and Generals to evolve an equalitarian outlook. In his zeal for the upliftment of Muslim Bengal, Nazrul Islam wrote a large number of poems on the theme of Islamic Universal brotherhood and the Muslim glories. Of recent history he regarded Mustafa Kamal Pasha 'Attaturk' as the savior and builder of Modern Turkey. Nazrul Islam believed with the ideal of Kamal Attaturk Muslim prestige and political status can be regained. He revolted against the British occupation of India. British rulers put him into prison for about one year (November 23, 1922 to December 15, 1923), a charge of sedition and proscribed his

books and writings for what they called radical. Nazrul Islam's writings proved catalyst in awakening the Muslim Bengal. His contributions to building Muslim identity can be equated with poet Allama Iqbal no doubt of contradiction. Such contributions by the two undeniably paved the way to creation of Pakistan. Hence research like under consideration, based on 'objective explorations and critical analysis' is needed most to keep the young generations both in Pakistan and Bangladesh acquainted with sustained efforts of Allama Iqbal and Qazi Nazrul Islam in the creation of Muslim states. Such studies are vital to ensure 'unity of thoughts and actions' to forge onward march. Had not Nazrul Islam created 'cultural consciousness' not only among the Muslims of Bengal but also in South Asian Muslims.

Nazrul's contribution to Muslim Nationalism.

Qazi Nazrul Islam's poems and ghazals aroused an all pervading Muslims renaissance in Bengal and added irresistible strength to the cultural consciousness that Muslims were a nation. Like Allama Iqbal, Nazrul drew inspirations from Qur'anic teachings and imbibed the progressive spirit of Islam. Nazrul single handedly gave life to Muslim Bengal and eventually galvanized Bengali Muslim mind for collective struggle to accomplish the aspirations of the Muslims in South Asia as is evidenced in his letters and writings.

Qazi Nazrul Islam's ghazals were tinged with 'fragrance aroma' of Iranian Saadi, Hafiz, Jaami and for the first time he introduced and assimilated their genres in Bengali literature.¹ This had pastive telling

effects on Bengali Muslims psyche. His songs on Makka (Mecca), Medina, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), Eid, Moharram, and the Azan bespeak eloquently and elegantly his devotion to Islam and Muslim achievements during the hey-day of Muslim rules beyond Arab world.

In such poems Nazrul emerges as an inspiring Muslim renaissance figure. On the one hand he sang of Islam's pristine glories, on the other, he tried to rouse the Muslims from their 'inertia' by satirizing their backward-looking, narrow and selfish preoccupations and mourning the past. The moving Islamic songs of Nazrul touched the hearts of all segments of Bengali population and forced them to review their attitude to modernity.

His poetic works contain evocative similes, imageries, allegories and soothing rhythm and music. Combined together, these fall on the ears as cascade. It was unique in Bengali literature as not seen earlier. His poetry infused self-confidence and respect in the mind of Bengali Muslims, effecting at the same time a link of continuity with the processes of their past history. He attained the magnificence because of his adherence to Qur'an and its intrinsic teachings.

He abhorred fanaticism and all the above fundamentalism. He also initially championed the Hindu – Muslim unity, apparently under the Qur'anic belief i.e. Man's greatness.

Nazrul in his writings appears unhappy at the sight of demoralized and decaying Muslims. He felt that it was so because Muslims had forsaken path of truth, justice and forgotten the teachings of equality, liberty and

fraternity of Islam. They had steeped themselves in a life of inertia and sloth.

Nazrul sensibilities as a poet were touched, his emotions as a Muslim were roused, and hence we find Nazrul writing poem after poem, song after song, in a bid to rouse his fellow-brethren from their stupor. The Bengali Muslims of the twenties and thirties saw him with Pride that here was a Muslim poet who could write with such beauty and power to elicit the unstinted admiration of millions of Bengali readers. Only the Muslims of that time could feel how wonderful it was to see the elements of Islamic faith and culture, its past history and wealth of thought made a vital part of Bengali literature in a style where Bengali Persian and Arabic words and idioms blended together effectively and harmoniously.

Nazrul's poetic works are largely inspired by Qur'anic verses and pristine Islamic history. His attachment to Holy Qur'an may be gauged from the fact that his greatest desire was to render Qur'an in poetry. In the preface of his *Kybbyo Anpara*, a poetic translation of the last para (verse) of the Holy Qur'an he wrote: "The biggest desire of my life was to render a rhymed, poetic translation of the Holy Qur'an".² It was an important milestone in his life as he wanted to define himself categorically. However, he could not accomplish his precious desire as he suffered paralytic attack in 1942 when he was at his prime.

Nazrul always believed that the undecaying verses of Qur'an are to guide the entire mankind and not specifically the Muslims. Hence he always drew inspirations from the Qur'anic verses to write his poetry. He absorbed the Qur'anic intrinsic spirit as is reflected in his huge number

of songs and poems. Apparently enthused by Qur'anic verses he became a messenger of free human spirit, of universal brotherhood, of courage, of dignity, of peace and harmony, of unity and co-operation, of what is right and just, of what is true and beautiful of love and compassion, of non-dogmatism and non-fanaticism.

Therefore, his works must not be viewed with myopic sight. He was a great poet by any standard. He had never subscribed to any political creed and always denounced all social and religious bigotry as prevalent in India in his time. Hence his songs and poems became instantly popular and are still revered.

Great writers invariably introduce multiple strands in their writing which inspire people in various ways. Awareness of the range, variety and many dimensions in their works are essential for a balanced appraisal of their merit. In piecemeal treatment one is apt to get a lopsided view and encourage faulty assessment. We can safely approach the parts only when we have a sound appreciation of the whole; if we do not remember this in our preoccupation with Nazrul's poems on Islamic themes we shall, on the one hand, diminish his stature as a poet and on the other, betray the basic canons of literary judgment. By virtue of his poems on Islamic themes Nazrul has undoubtedly become a great poet of Muslim renaissance.³

Hence Nazrul is, above all, a poet of humanism, of spirited revolt against injustice and of the liberation of humanity from all suffocating bonds as also advocated by the Holy Qur'an through its ever lasting verses. As

Nazrul calls himself says in his one of the poem as the "Poet of the world".

Qazi Nazrul Islam appeared on the horizon of Bengali literature when the Muslims in particular and the Indian in general were passing through a crucial phase of history in the twentieth century. With the fall of Osmani Khilafat, the Khilafat movement in India as elsewhere lost its momentum and gradually died. In this situation, Qazi Nazrul Islam took upon himself the responsibility and penned 'fiery poems and songs' to stir the Muslims from stupor to attain the objective.

Eminent Bengali writer Principal Ibrahim Khan of Karatian College (Mymensingh) in Nazrul Parichiti (Introduction of Nazrul) wrote: "I have been charmed. Whoever has read him had become charmed. Nobody could imagine that Islamic words could be set in Bengali language just like pieces of diamond. Bengali Muslim youths were charmed and enchanted and convinced."

Dr. Qazi Motahar Hussain says: "Nazrul's mind was concentrated towards the main teachings of Islam".⁴ Munir Chouduary says: "Nazrul Islam is the poet of rebellion, poet of revolution, poet of equality. He is the poet of love and hatred, unity and struggle... The political struggle that ended with the achievement of Pakistan was getting emotional root in the hearts of people through the songs of Nazrul."⁵

Afsanuddin in his Shahitter Pathe says: "He (Nazrul) will always be remembered as an epoch making poet. He attained the position of National poet of the Muslims of Pak-Bengal" (Bangladesh).⁶

Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, an eminent writer, says Nazrul Islam, "is another epoch making poet, he introduced a complete separate poetic style against (the then established) Michel Madhusudan Dutta and Rabindranath Tagore".⁷

Nazrul's contemporary writer Qazi Abdul Wadud has remarked: "The poetry of Nazrul has been one of the contributing factors to the awakening of the (Muslim) masses that we now see around us. From that point of view, his historical importance is very great indeed".⁸

Nazrul Islam won the hearts of the Muslims of Bengal. He became a national poet. But how it was possible? He was a Muslim and had a great love for the Muslims. His heart ached when he saw the oppressing condition of the Muslims throughout the world. He attacked the ruling English authority in India through his mighty pen. Similarly, he appealed to the Muslims to get up, give up lethargy, rise and play the authoritative role in the world. He did not give any philosophy, nor any formula from his own. He called upon the Muslims to take lessons from the Holy Qur'an and tread the path of the Prophet. (Peace be upon him).

Nazrul conceived very well the fact that the fall of the Muslims is due to the degradation and derailment from the real track of Islam. They have failed to produce men of real faith and action like Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Usman and Hazrat Ali. He cherished to have again braves and warriors like Khalid bin Walid, Tarik bin Ziyad and Musa bin Nussair. He sang on each of them to incalculable the ethos of Islam among the demoralized Muslims of Bengal. He appealed to the Muslims to light the candle of knowledge, which springs from the Qur'an. Right

from the first book of poem 'Agra Bina' to the last speech he delivered at a literary conference held at Calcutta in 1941 he focused on a central point and the point is Islam.⁹

How much regard he had for Islam can be visualized from his poetic books. That was a time when the secularists and the socialists made the torch bearers of Islam their target of attack. These anti-Islamic forces understood that if the sense of regard from the hearts of the common Muslims for Ulama could be removed and instead of love and hatred could be generated, their purpose would be served. Ulama have a special place in Muslim society. Common men are ready to come to the street at their call and can stand as a 'hill rock' against anti-Islamic way of life. Therefore, the shrewd policy makers of so-called Congress secularist and communist lobby charged the Ulama for backwardness and liability on the society. Just at that moment Nazrul wrote, "The Moulvi of Maktab is just like our father, he is the representative of the Holy Prophet (SAWS). The worldly men remain busy in worldly affairs but according to him the Moulvi Sahib works day and night for keeping the light of 'Deen' aflame. It is he who gives us knowledge of Qur'an. It is due to him we can claim to be man. When people sleep he lets them know that the dawn has appeared. Without him we cannot think of 'Maulud Sharif'. He comes to console us at the time of sorrows and depression. He does not hanker after wealth; it is due to his untiring struggle and sermons the villagers can pass a peaceful life. We are free from all sorts of evils due to his moral teachings."¹⁰

In his poem entitled 'Azan' Nazrul says, "When we remain busy in worldly affairs, when we pass our valuable time in idle gossip, when we

make our mind vicious just contemplating on heinous affairs, when we forget the fact that in every passing moment we are proceeding to the grave to rise again before our Lord for accountability, we hear the melodious sound of Azan-Allah is Great, Allah is Great. Though we do not understand the real significance of this call, yet a particular type of spiritual change is felt in our inner core of heart. Just at that moment, though for a while, we feel that we will have to leave this world. Through this call of Azan we can realize the fact that we, the creature on earth, have a relation with our Lord. Lest we forget this fact Azan makes us aware and reminds us five times a day that we should get ready for all sorts of sacrifices as we practice at dawn, at noon, at afternoon, after sunset and at midnight".¹¹

Hundreds of quotations can be cited from his poetic collections in this regard. Nazrul Islam always felt for the downtrodden Muslims of Bengal and of the world. He appealed to the Muslims for getting up again and fight tooth and nail for taking the leadership of the world. He enlivened the conscience of the Muslims of Bengal, got them prepared for rising against the British and Hindus domination and exploitation. He made them know their role in the world again. He was really a poet of Islamic Renaissance. The future generations of the Muslims of Bengal in particular will remember him with best regards, honour and compliments.

Qazi Nazrul Islam's sentiments and subjects were also unmistakably Islamic in characters and identity, the heroes he introduced and popularized in Bengali literature were not self-conscious in the least. They were Muslim in name as well as in conduct. Nazrul Islam made

them a part of the world of Bengali literature and increased thereby the resources of its expressiveness. Thus, more than any other single modern writer in the language, even more than Tagore, he was responsible for making the literature of Bengal non-communal; hitherto it had been an exclusive, belonging to a Hindu particular community.¹²

Nazrul for the first time demonstrated that excellent literature could be written in the spoken language of the Muslims. The psychological reaction among the Muslims was sudden and spontaneous. He made them to realize that they were not inferior to any one and that they need not be ashamed of their identity.

Mizanur Rehman writes:

“To say this is not, however, to suggest that his role was mainly, or even largely, negative. Because he not only dispelled the feeling of inferiority of awareness of what the Muslims lacked as also a desire to achieve what they did not have”.¹³

Ismail Hossain Shirajee, the great orator and writer, who was then working for the regeneration of the community, read Nazrul's ‘The Rebel’ and got inspired Shirajee, impetuous as he was, wired ten rupees to the poet and wrote on the money-order form, ‘Don't refuse the money. I would have sent you ten thousand if I could.’¹⁴ He did something which most of his Muslim readers had felt like doing. Nazrul accepted the gift and said: “I read the above several times with tears tricking down my cheeks. I placed the sum on my head. I had not yet seen Shirajee, but sure to read his writings with great interest and even memorise them.

Shirajee's whole life was a flow of fire. His fire is reflected in my writings.¹⁴⁵

Shirajee himself was profound scholar in several languages and was senior to Nazrul by 19 years. He was decorated by the then Sultan, Abdul Hamid of Turkey as a 'Ghazee' for his scholastic achievements. His poetic collection 'Anal-Prabaha' was published in 1900.

'Anal Prabaha' threw Shirajee into jail for sedition, and his works remained proscribed from 1910 to 1951.

The book contains thirteen long poems in stirring language, touching India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Egypt, Morocco, Persia, Arabia, Spain etc. The book displays excellent grasp of the world situation vis-à-vis Islam and Shirajee's remarkable study of Islamic history.

It is true that Nazrul Islam like Shirajee and Allama Iqbal had sung to the past. He could hardly avoid doing that, but he did not sing in the strain of an impoverished aristocrat boasting of his ancestors wealth. He knew that the past was dead, but he also knew that the past could be used to measure the indignity of the present. That is why the past and the present work out a parallelism in his writings. His eyes were firmly planted on the present more instead of the physical glories and grandeur of the past. He loved and cherished the values that he thought gave the past its glory. He wanted the present to be overhauled in accordance with those values.

Hence Nazrul's poems Kamal Pasha, Anwar Pasha and Khalid should be read in this background. Apparently they all dreamt of and sought to 're-enliven'¹⁶ Islamic tenets and teaching among the Muslims mass.

The method was characteristic of the patriot Muslim but the sentiment and the gesture embodied in Shirajees works was shared by Muslim writers who followed him.

Justice Syed Mahboob Mughed, former Chief Justice of erstwhile East Pakistan, says: I was a school-boy when Nazrul Islam burst into our cosy domestic parlour in Calcutta like a gust of storm and recited the unforgettable poem, Bidrohi – The Rebel. It was a revelation to my juvenile mind, as it was to the Muslim society of Bengal and to the people of our great sub-continent. It gave a message of hope to a despondent community. It gave life to brighten the world. The message of the poet moved, with compelling attraction, the youthful heart about renaissance Islam in Bengal”.¹⁷

True, there were some who were initially hostile to the poet. They were opposed to the practice of the arts on what they called moral and vice versa. But once they had read his poems or, as more likely heard his songs on Islamic subjects like Allah, Prophet, Caliph and religious occasions, they became, very soon, the hero and darling that the Muslim community was yearning for long. They had to surrender he did not take much time to make the conquest of his community complete. After Nazrul Islam, Bengali Muslims were not what they had been before as pointed by Principal Ibrahim Khan.

His poetry, and prose and music heightened the community's sensibility and sharpened its sensitivity. Now, as never before in recent history, the members of the community could vaunt his name, recite his poems, sing his songs and feel that they were not without their own treasure of

literature. Once Nazrul had come to Bengal, the Bengali Muslims were not the same as before. They were richer men and women.¹⁸

Contemporary Politicians including Moulvi A. K. Fazlul Haq and writers had tried with Nazrul to rouse the Muslims. But their success could hardly be compared with Nazrul's. The reason is obvious, he worked as an artist and through his audience's feelings. His words touch the hard for the people. Undeniably he was the greater among the poets the Muslim society in Bengal had produced since the loss of independence to the British.¹⁹

Nazrul wrote in a language which the Bengali Muslims used in everyday conversation but felt ashamed to use in public. He used ideas and sentiments which every Muslim held dear. Both the matter and the volumes were new; they had never been used in Bengal since the British occupations.

How Muslim Bengal felt about Nazrul is illustrated by the letter written by Mr. Ebrahim Khan:

Dear Nazrul,

I have never seen you. I tried to meet you quite a few times, but in vain. From a distance I have read your writing, have been charmed and have bowed my head in reverence to the genius that lies in you.

'Almighty' I have prayed to God, 'if you have been merciful enough to grant a jewel to the poor Bengali Muslim community. You will also be his guardian. You will make the people appreciate him

The Bengali Muslims are poor, not only in material wealth but also in mind. The society is dying we require elixir to save it. But who will bring it we do not know.

It seems to me that God has provided you with something of that precious gift. There is something in the heart of your heart that can be diligence and devotion that bring forth life giving potion.

The Bengali Muslims are looking forward to you for the message of Islam, resounding in your voice like the trumpet of awakening for this sleeping nation.

The place of Rumi in Bengal lies vacant. Step in and crown with success yourself as well as the Bengali Muslim nation and Bengali literature.²⁰

Nazrul replied to the letter dwelling upon the Muslims backwardness and reasons for this.

Qazi Nazrul Islam was popular among the Muslim youths. This was because he represented the hopes and dreams of the Muslim youths of the country, who at that time were engaged in a determined struggle for independence of a Muslims state.

In reply to the letter Nazrul states his position very clearly:

“Whether the Bengali Muslims are poor in material wealth I do not know, but I have the painful realization that they are really poor in mind and that to excess. It is not true that I have not won recognition from the Muslims. The love and affection with which the young Muslims, the real life of the country, have received me have buried all the thorns of depreciation underneath. The real vitality of Islam lies in its recognition

of the worth of the people, its democratic ideal, and its faith in universal brotherhood and equality of man. The uniqueness and greatness of Islam is recognized not only by me, but also by those who are not Muslims. This great truth of Islam can be the theme of not only a poem but an epic. An insignificant poet that I am, in many of my writings I have tried to sing the glory of Islam. But these efforts have never overstepped poetry, nor can they. In that case they will cease to be poetry... I know that the greatest good of the country lies in the uplift of the Bengali Muslims. The fact that the awakening of their self is yet to take place is the greatest obstacle in the way of the independence".²¹

Qazi Nazrul Islam sang opening songs at political gatherings, addressed huge conferences and traveled the length and breadth of Bengal inspiring Muslims wherever he went.

Muslims rulers of Bengal succeeded in overthrowing the Hindu rule, and effectively ruled for over five hundred years. They patronized the local language rather than Sanskrit. And it was under their patronage that Bengali language tinged with Islamic words emerged as a social instrument of expression.

Likewise Qazi Nazrul Islam through his resounding poems and songs represented the Muslims spirit of the time. He voiced the courage and determination and resentment of Muslims in Bengal successfully.

He himself said, "I am a poet of the present and not a 'prophet' of the future".²² And hence he gained extraordinary popularity among Muslims of Bengal in particular.

Nazrul Islam is a splendid genius on the one hand and sings of 'fire and destruction' to create a new world of freedom and equality. On the other hand he can play softly on the 'flute of love'.

He says "In one hand I carry twisted flute, a war bugle in the other." His fiery patriotism and volcanic fury against injustice and oppression mellow into rich throbbing humanism in his works.

The silent tree, the melancholy sky, the slow moving river, the plowman and the shy villager girls are some of his frequent images in love poetry.

In brief we can safely sum up that the Greek Dionysian in him gets along with the Apollonian, creating 'the music of the spheres'.

He has written between three and four thousand songs (according to record) for freedom fighters, for lovers, for peasants, for political procession, on religious festivities and religious occasions like Eid, Ramazan, Moharram. He also wrote 'Naat' (rhymed songs) in praise of the Holy Prophet of Islam. In his Naats he has poured out his love for the Holy prophet as a true devout, which has rarely been excelled to-date. Rightly critics compare his songs to the Azan (Clanion call) of Hazrat Bilal. Undoubtedly these served as clanion call to the Muslim Bengal to awaked from mental stupor and physical inertia.

Nazrul Islam, though a great poet, was an embodiment of humility. As he himself says in his poem "An insignificant poet as I am, in my writings I have tried to sing the glory of Islam. The real vitality of Islam lies in the recognition of the worth of the people, the democratic ideal, the concepts of universal brotherhood and equality of man."²³

We see Nazrul Islam's greatness very clearly when we compare him with his contemporaries, both Muslim and Hindu. His contemporary ambitious Ghulam Mustafa was envious of Nazrul Islam's reputation, and had parodied him in one of his poems. The difference between the two poets does not lie only in their technical skill, although that difference is not small: it lies also in Nazrul Islam's wide-awake acquaintance with what was happening around him and, more importantly, in his ability to grasp the new spirit that was abroad, in Bengal after the First World War.

"Though a galaxy of poets and literateurs in subsequent years followed Nazrul Islam but they could not come even closer to his towering contribution in Bengali literature. While commenting on Nazrul Islam's contribution towards Bengali literature Prof. Shirazul Islam in his book "Poet And More" writes: Ebrahim Khan, who wrote plays on the heroes of modern Turkey, Jasimuddin, who delineated excellently Bengali villages in his poems and Qazi Emdadul Haq, a competent novelist, were all incapable of growth, they lacked a consistent way of looking at life. Nazrul Islam's superiority was more qualitative than quantitative".²⁴

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'Shaheen', and thus drew the world – portrait of the Hero:

"Then came a youthful Hero, armed from head to foot,

With his towering turban touching the date-palm top:

And his iron writs grayish green,

From constant touch with hilts of shining swords!

In his eyes glistened the flow of Hope and Faith

Like the sparking streams of the Tigris and Euphrates

Fastened round his mighty arm was the Holy Quran!

Within his breast was desperate dash, and in his hand,

The shining sword to smash Al-Burz the Strong!¹²⁵

Nazrul's writings, which at once set him apart from his generation of writers, were on themes of Muslim tradition and were marked by the generous and very effective use of Arabic and Persian words and expressions, written in rhythm and metre. These, though within the rhythmic pattern of Bengali Poetry, were strikingly original. These poems attracted wide attention not merely because of their theme, but also for the resonance of their metre as well as vigour and passion.

In one of his poems entitled *Korbani*, the Muslim festival in which animals are sacrificed but some Muslim pacifists in those days termed it as 'barbarous', Nazrul Islam defended it as not mere killing, but as a discovery of one's strength and courage, the killing of fear and timidity. In another poem entitled *Muhanam*, the period of mourning commemorating the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A.), he called for sacrifice instead of lamenting the Martyrdom at Karbala, a symbol of battle for justice and truth. In yet another poem entitled the 'Ferry Boat', symbolizes salvation through the cardinals of Islamic faith, un-attainable is a

remarkable resonance of sublime thought and mastery with words and rhyme, evocative of the measured rhythm of the oarsmen.²⁶

It is presumed Iqbal's popular poem in Urdu 'SHIKWA' (Complaint to God) from Muslims must have inspired Nazrul Islam to write FARIYAD, which is synonymous with 'Shikwa'.

However the treatment of the subject matter by the two great poets apparently are different. While 'Shikwa' lodges complaint to Allah Almighty over Muslims deprivations, Nazrul's 'Fariyad' evoked Allah's blessings to uplift the humanity from deprivations. Hence two are not different in poetic essence.

Nazrul Islam did what no other Muslim poet in modern Bengal had dared to do; he created images and symbols out of the well-known heroes from the Muslim history. Thus, Tariq Bin Ziyad and Qasim, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Imam Hasan and Hazrat Imam Hussain and even the Prophet himself figure in his poetry to infuse life among the suppressed and deprived Muslim community. He also transformed character like Kamal Pasha and Anwar Pasha into symbols with excellent methodology to inspire Muslim to come out from the cow-webs of inaction and laziness.²⁷

Nazrul Islam like Allama Iqbal had been a great motivating force for the regeneration of Muslims nationalism in Bengal. He was first ever successful harbinger of Muslim renaissance and was prominent among the great pioneers of the cultural renaissance in the Eastern part for the

Qazi Nazrul Islam, who started as a folk-based Leto poet, was Named National laureate ever since the partitioned of India was effected on August 14, 1947. He was pronounced as National Poet of Pakistan along with Allama Muhammad Iqbal for his resplendent and contributions to the Independence. Like many other Muslim leaders of the Sub-continent he pursued relentless struggle against the colonial British rules and raised his vociferous voice for freedom of Sub-continent viz-a-viz a homeland of the Muslims.

One of the great architects of the Independence Movement as well as the resurgence of Muslim in the socio cultural arena, Qazi Nazrul Islam enriched and glorified the Bengali language, literature, culture and music with his immense creative talents and prolific pen and thereby enthused Muslims to yearn for unity and liberty. Though a romantic poet of par excellence, Nazrul, conscious of his community's deprivations and dreams, used his poetic qualities effectively to free them from colonial oppression, and all other socio-economic and political deprivations and superstitions.

On many occasions Nazrul himself declared that his rebellion was something total, he wanted to totally change the old descript social order that overtook his community in the Sub-Continent in the walk of British advent. He is rightly acclaimed as a poet of freedom by his community universally.

Following are a few illuminating quotes from Nazrul Islam's numerous songs and poems that he consistently wrote to acquaint and inspire Muslims in South Asia with intrinsic and great teaching of Islam and its

glorious heritage to ride over their socio-economic and spiritual backwardness and to carve out their destined place among the civilized community of the world. The quotes amply reflect his deep commitment to Islam and its illustrious characters contrary to misconceived perception about him, emanating from the usage of some symbolism and phrases:²⁸

- i) "We preached the doctrine of equality and love.
Not for the Muslims alone had Islam come,
and sought truth above all things was indeed a true Muslim".
- ii) Give Islam again its Rumi and Saadi and Hafiz,
once more bless it with Khayyam and Tabriz,
give it again its Akbar and Its Shahjehan,
bless it again with that dream in white marble,
the Tajmahal!
- iii) You exist, that is why Islam still lives.
It was because of you that no amount of neglect
could bring about its destruction.
O pure deep serene call!
O Azan!
- iv) Some called it Hazrat Muhammad(S .A. W),
Some simply "Kamilwallah!"
- v) All praise to Allah, all glory to Him
Let peace prevail and equality win,
let truth reign supreme,
let all unhappiness and misery,
all oppression and tyranny,

All praise to Allah, all glory to Him

- vii) Allah is my Lord, I fear no one,
Muhammad is my prophet,
Throughout the world his praise is sung.
I have my Quran
Why should I fear any one?
I am a Muslim, Islam is my religion.

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