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Mahamana- Visionary Indian

The Indian freedom struggle is enriched with prominent figures who influenced the masses through actions and words. Following the 1857 War of Independence, India saw the emergence of numerous leaders, including Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Mahadev Govind Ranade as leaders of the moderate faction, and other charismatic personalities like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Shri Aurobindo, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal as leaders of the radical faction. Upon his return to India, Mahatma Gandhi aligned himself with leaders such as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and C. Rajagopalachari, all of whom are well-known figures. However, one significant figure that historians have overlooked is Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya.



Madan Mohan Malviya was born in Prayagraj on December 25, 1861. In 1879, he completed his matriculation at Muir Central College, now known as Allahabad University. Following this, he pursued his undergraduate studies at the University of Calcutta. He earned the famous moniker "Mahamana." He was indeed a versatile individual, encompassing roles as a social reformer, a prolific writer, a captivating orator, a prominent lawyer, and an exceptional political leader, having been elected as the President of the Indian National Congress four times.

Malviya was a fervent advocate for social reform and dedicated his efforts to secure the entry of Dalits into temples and Hindu shrines. He ardently promoted the idea that "India belongs to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, and others." This stance led him to oppose the communal award presented by British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald. Additionally, he was the signatory of the renowned 'Poona Pact' on behalf of the Hindu community.

Madan Mohan Malviya staunchly opposed all forms of caste-based discrimination. He adopted the approach of imparting Mantra Diksha to untouchables. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya has suggested that untouchables may be converted into touchable by preaching to them the mantra 'Om Namoh Bhagwate Vasudevay'. Venkatesh Narayan, an observer of Malviya's unwavering efforts on behalf of untouchables, recounts, "Even before the arrival of Basant Panchami, Mahamana had already instructed the workers and organizers of Prayag Sewa Samiti that Dhoti and other garments should be provided to the deprived class people. The workers faithfully obeyed his orders, and invited them to partake in meals. Malviya himself ensured that everyone should get food. Following their meal, the deprived communities' people were invited to listen to religious sermons. Describing those sermons is truly challenging. They were profoundly soothing to the ears. Mahamana, in his discourse, deliberately used local vernacular to establish a more profound connection. His speech was a delightful experience for all those present."

Venkatesh Narayan Tiwari provides another perspective on the ceremony in which Madan Mohan Malviya bestowed Diksha upon the untouchables in Calcutta in 1934. During this event, he passionately called upon the public to reject any form of discrimination. He advocated for the fundamental rights of untouchables, emphasizing that they should have access to education, use public wells for drinking water, and freely walk on the roads because they, too, are human beings. Mahamana emphasized that necessities such as food, water, and shelter should not be denied to them.

His political ideology was moderate. He wholeheartedly participated in the civil disobedience movement. Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, he travelled to London to take part in the round table conferences. In his memoirs, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru noted that "No other Indian in the conference commanded as much respect from British politicians as he did." Despite their ideological differences, even Mahatma Gandhi couldn't overlook his contributions. Gandhi, while praising Mahamana, wrote, "The name of Malviya is enchanting for the people. Since my return to India, I have enjoyed a close relationship with him, having extensive interactions and a deep understanding of him. His vision for society is brimming with compassion and love. We share a bond stronger than that of real brothers. I hold no one in higher regard as a patriot than Malviya. I revere him and see no one among the present Indians who serve the country better than he does

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY – MAHAMANA'S LEGACY TO INDIA

In the historical context of India during that era, the mere concept of a university like BHU would have seemed like an unattainable dream. However, Mahamana brought this dream to fruition for the people of India. On February 4, 1916, Lord Hardinge laid the foundation stone of BHU.

Malviya declared, "I am establishing a university that will harmoniously blend ancient wisdom with the knowledge of modern science and technology." Malviya stood at the forefront of the freedom struggle, aiming to secure India's independence. He understood this noble goal required relentless toil, tears, sacrifices, and unwavering determination. Firmly believing in the pivotal role of sound education as a prerequisite for freedom, Malviya channelled his tenacious spirit into creating the 'Banaras Hindu University.' He envisioned that India's liberation could be achieved through learning and education. BHU is an enduring monument of which he was both the architect and builder.

He also epitomized and promoted the motto 'Satyamev Jayate,' a well-recognized mantra from the Mundaka Upanishad. This mantra later became the official motto of our nation upon gaining independence. Malviya frequently emphasized, "God loves light; man must strive for illumination and enlightenment in both his mind and life."

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