

Dr. Zakir Husain's public profile as a statesman of destiny and an educationist is so distinguished that it frequently throws into shade his outstanding contribution to the field of Indian literature in Urdu. This contribution however is one which no history of Indian literature can afford to ignore. A philosopher, educationist, economist, sociologist and statesman, his scholarship extended to various branches of knowledge.

He defined culture as the sum total of Man's art, architecture, language, literature, religion, philosophy, morals, manners, faith, belief and any other capability which Man has acquired as a social being. Zakir Husain's efforts at preserving, examining and disseminating cultural values resulted in a body of literature, which though different from the traditional pattern of creative writing is a model of literary excellence.

Zakir Husain as an original thinker, is widely regarded as the apostle of a new humanism and liberalism "a nightingale of a garden which is yet to be born".

Dr. Khurshed Alam Khan (b. 1919) the author is a writer and presently the Governor of Karnataka.

Dr. B. Sheikh Ali the co-author is a scholar, writer, editor, translator, and the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi.



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Dr. Zakir Husain

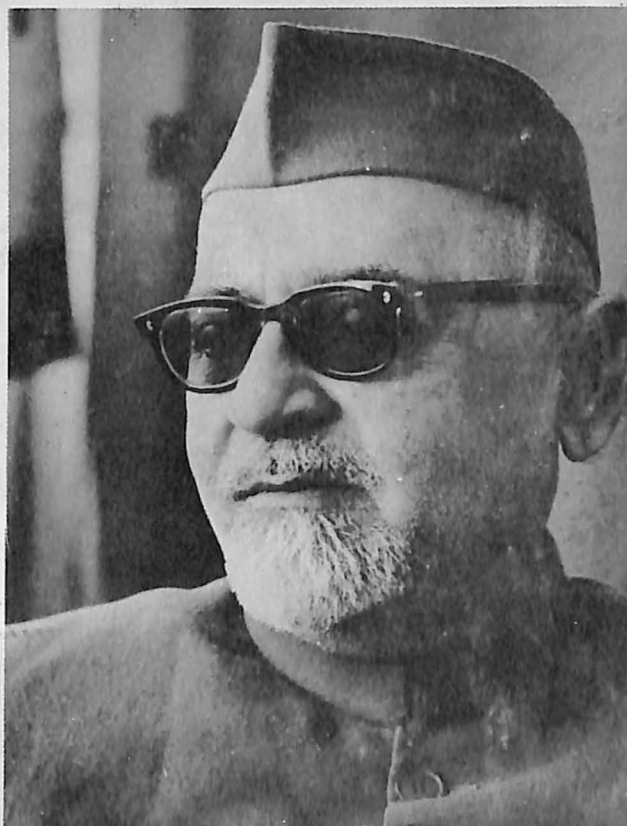
Khurshed Alam Khan

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Liberty

Dr. Zakir Husain

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From Nagarjunkonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

DR. ZAKIR HUSAIN

Khurshed Alam Khan

B. Sheik Ali

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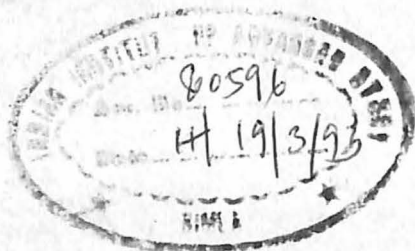


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Preface

Zakir Husain's integrated personality imbibed within itself multifaceted interests of rare excellence. A child of Indian renaissance and nationalism, he was a renowned educationist and a humanist. But he cannot be ignored as a luminary of literary art as well, for despite the shortage in his strictly literary output, his writings, covering the entire gamut of human experience, would make him the pace-setter of a new trend in literary craft. All exposure of sensitivities, impulses, emotions, joys, pathos, ideals, and failings of man associated with great literature are also reflected in the writings of Zakir Saheb with one difference. They are all channelised into his own value system with the intention of making man a better man. Literature, after all, is the reflection of life, and Zakir Saheb being fully immersed in the substance of life would inevitably cast the reflection of that substance on all he thought, spoke and wrote. This inner link between life and literature, and his full involvement in all aspects to make man the prime concern of his study would surely entitle him to a place among the literary figures of our land. Moreover, his essays, speeches, addresses, books and writings on varied themes, are, by themselves, in their own right—such gems of exquisite beauty that they touch, stir and move the hearts of the people and teach delightfully, which is the function of poetry. Therefore, this small venture to present a profile of his main work would perhaps be regarded as a bouquet to his memory from the grateful hands of literary craftsmen of this country.

The genesis of this work owes entirely to the initiative of Sahitya Akademi in general, and to its enlightened Secretary, Professor Indra Nath Choudhury, in particular.

Therefore, the authors place on record their grateful thanks to Sahitya Akademi for its imaginative step in recalling the fragrance of the rose that Zakir Saheb was.

GOA
14 December 1990

KHURSHED ALAM KHAN
B. SHEIK ALI

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A Dynamic Life

Zakir Husain belonged to a very noble family of Afridi Pathans who had settled down in Qaimganj, a small town in Farukhabad district of Uttar Pradesh. He was the third son in the family of seven sons of Fida Husain who had moved to Hyderabad and had become a successful lawyer. Zakir Husain was born on 8 February, 1897, and was brought up with tender care in the traditional manner of an upper class Muslim family, with a tutor to teach him even English. However, Fida Husain did not live long. He died in 1907 at the young age of 39, and the family had to move back to their ancestral home town of Qaimganj. Zakir Husain was sent to a reputed residential school, the Islamic School, at Etawah, where the training he received from his headmaster, Maulvi Altaf Husain, proved a solid foundation for his later achievements. Zakir Saheb acknowledged that two persons had exerted great influence of him, one, his school headmaster, and the other, his mother, a lady of great will, ability and strength. Unfortunately, she too died in 1911 in the terrible bubonic plague epidemic when he was only 14 years old.

Zakir Husain proved to be an intelligent child at Etawah. The six years he spent there from 1907 to 1913 were very fruitful. His teachers were deeply impressed by his intelligence, integrity and industry. His headmaster could detect in him signs of greatness, and he took unusual interest in him. This was the time of the Balkan Wars, when Turkey was in great trouble. Zakir Husain's sense of humanity compelled him at that age not only to collect funds for war relief but also to induce the boarders of the hostel to give up eating meat so that the money saved thereby could be sent to the Turks. In shaping the character of Zakir Husain in his early life, one more person, a Sufi Saint, Hasan Shah, had played a major role. He was a family friend, and became the spiritual teacher

of Zakir Husain, who learnt from him the essential unity of all religions, love of all mankind and a passion for books. Hasan Shah had learnt to respect all religions the hard way, when his own spiritual teacher, Shah Talib Husain, had made him walk from Kashmir to Rameshwaram, for having once objected to a Hindu devotee wearing a *tilak* on his forehead.

Zakir Husain went from Etawah to Aligarh for his college studies. Aligarh opened a new chapter in his life. He got a wider field for his talents to bloom. He excelled in his studies and secured the first rank in B.A. of Allahabad University. In debates he emerged as an unsurpassed speaker in all the competitions of the Students' Union. In social life he was a popular figure, almost a hero. His wit, humour, friendliness, charm and deep interest in every worthwhile venture soon made him a celebrity in the student community. But he did not waste his time in unnecessary affairs. He was a voracious reader which gave him a good grip over general knowledge. He was a good conversationalist and debator which sharpened his skill to put across his ideas effectively. He was a dynamic man with an avid zeal to dip into every pool of man's life, whether social, political, religious, or cultural. This was the time when he started thinking and writing on all these aspects, and won many laurels and prizes for his efforts. No one in Aligarh had thought that Plato's *Republic* was worth translating into Urdu. He did it in record time. No one was so prolific in filling the columns of *Aligarh Magazine* as he. Above all, no one had the guts to write that historic essay, "Eternity or Toy", which was destined to annihilate the illusion that Muslims would benefit by supporting the British Raj. Again, he became the leader of the youth to join the nationalists in the demand to make Aligarh college a centre of national learning, and not allow it to remain a pocket of British influence in the land.

Zakir Saheb was foremost in the struggle for freedom, and for joining Gandhiji, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and others, who as Khilafat leaders had made common cause with the Indian National Congress. The first fruit of this collaboration was Jamia Millia, which came into existence on 29 October, 1920. It was building up

Jamia that sucked the very life-blood of Zakir Saheb. He dedicated a good part of his prime life to make Jamia a national centre of learning. It was not an easy task. He had to suffer and sacrifice his all to make it grow. His own community was against it. The government of the day was against it. A decision had been taken at one time to close it down for want of support from any quarter. It was his initiative to dedicate his whole life to Jamia that saved the situation. The way he struggled to keep it alive and make it grow would ever remain a golden chapter in the history of our national movement.

For the first three and a half years, from October 1920 to May 1925, Jamia functioned in Aligarh as a rival centre to Aligarh College. After teaching for two years at Jamia, Zakir Saheb went to Germany in September 1922 for higher studies, where he took his Ph.D. in Economics under the renowned Professor Sombart. Germany was another turning point in his life. It opened his eyes to the finest in Europe. Germans were horny-handed sons of toil, and that instilled hardwork in his bone and marrow. German thoroughness had reached the perfectionist level, and that taught him never to be satisfied with anything but the best. German intellect had lifted them high in every branch of learning, and that made the quest of knowledge the hunger of his soul. German music, German culture, and German refinement impressed him so much as to make him a lover of beauty, music, painting and other subjects of the fine arts. And more than all that, German's progress in educational technology, higher thought, philosophy, religion, ethics, literature, inventiveness and creativeness fascinated him so much that he remained life-long an admirer of Germany. He attempted to absorb a good deal of the positive aspects of the Germans—their industry, their integrity, their resourcefulness, and their capacity to transform their knowledge into power. In particular, he appreciated German superiority in two areas—in organizing their educational system, and in making their cultural ethos a part of their life. These were the two aspects to which he dedicated his life later in India.

After his return from Germany, he found Jamia in a mess. It needed every ounce of his energy and all the knowledge and

skill he had learnt in Germany to give it a semblance of life. At first it seemed to be an unsurmountable task. But his patience, perseverance, sincerity, service and spirit of sacrifice finally paid the dividend and Jamia was stabilised. Zakir Saheb was associated with Gandhiji's Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. Had the nation accepted the Zakir Husain Report and implemented it sincerely, many of our present educational problems could have been easily solved.

When India became free, Muslim University, Aligarh needed his assistance to remove the difficulties which were self-inflicted. Zakir Saheb did exceedingly good work at Aligarh to restore its primacy in the scholarly world. He desired to do much more, but he found his attempts were not appreciated by a section of the staff, and he resigned after eight years of sincere work. The nation elevated him as the Governor of Bihar, and later as the Vice-President of India, and, finally, as the Rashtrapati of the country. Wherever he went and whatever he did, he left an indelible imprint of his excellence, a deep trace of his humanity, and an exquisite mark of his gentleness, graciousness and goodness. He was the path-finder of new attitudes and new values, and the apostle of a new humanism and liberalism. He passed away on 3 May, 1969, still in harness, serving the nation, leaving behind on a piece of paper his own epitaph, "I am a nightingale of a garden which is yet to be born."

Literary Pursuits

Zakir Saheb was a great scholar, and his scholarship extended to various branches of knowledge. Literature too came under its purview. He was mostly interested in the improvement of man, and since literature too is broadly concerned with the same objective, he earned a place, in his own right, as a litterateur. His contribution to this branch of knowledge is more significant as he enriched it by his fund of knowledge of various other fields. As a thinker, philosopher, educationist, psychologist, economist, sociologist, nationalist, reformist, humanist and statesman, he had to think, speak and write enormously. Profundity of thought flowing from these sources and assuming a beautiful shape because of his own inimitable style, enriched the treasure not only of knowledge but also of literature. Literature is the reflection of life, and life was the subject matter of Zakir Saheb's interest. He covered the entire gamut of human experience, and made man the centre of his study. Sometimes he went beyond the life of man, and reflected deeply even on plants and stones. When he reconstructed all his thoughts and expressed them in a scholarly way, in a simple, effective, lucid and captivating manner, the output could not but be a beautiful piece of literature.

Literature is the creative aspect of man's culture, and culture is the sum and substance of man's destiny. "Cultural goods" is the new concept Zakir Saheb introduced into our literature. It is so fascinating a field that it touches everything worthwhile in man's imagination. Culture is the sum total of man's art, architecture, language, literature, religion, philosophy, morals, manners, faith, belief and any other capability which man has acquired as a social being. Education promotes this culture, and literature also deals with culture. Since Zakir Saheb was interested in both, and had dedicated

his entire life for promoting, preserving, examining and disseminating cultural values, his efforts resulted in a body of literature, which may be different from the traditional pattern of fiction, drama, novel, stories, poetry, and so on, yet even on sheer literary criteria of diction, style, naturalness and beauty, his writings reach a high water-mark of excellence. His main contribution is the addition of a new type of literature in Urdu.

No one before Zakir Saheb had touched the virgin soil of education in its multi-dimensional aspects. He had a mission in life, and that was the education of the masses. It needed different techniques. And literature was the most effective technique. He had to take the message to the people, and to touch, to move and to stir their hearts for removing ignorance. Only effective literary art could do the magic. Therefore, he developed a technique of his own. Anyone who reads his *Talim-i-Khutbat* would be wonder-struck by its sheer literary excellence, apart from the fund of ideas it contains. Anyone who glances at his fifteen stories for children in *Abu Khan Ki Bakri* would not be able to resist the temptation of calling him the father of children's literature. In fact, he was a pioneer in that field. Almost all his stories are moral fables. He wrote them first for *Payam-e-Talim*, the Jamia's magazine, under an assumed name. Eventually, these stories were collected and published. In bulk and quantity, his writings did not assume massive proportions, but in quality they remain unsurpassed. While he was a voracious reader, his output as a writer was limited. But whatever he has written is almost classic in that sector.

His dynamism did not believe in writing; it believed in action. Action needed thought and speech, which when translated into reality would result in deeds. Their spill-over was the literature he produced. But even that was quite sizeable, and enough to assure him a high place in the list of literary figures. He occupied high positions in life, and it was his privilege to advise, guide, help, warn and lead the nation in several walks of life. This offered him a rare opportunity to address people on several occasions. His rich experience of life, knowledge, wisdom, wit, humour, all churned in the reflective chamber of his integrated personality found ex-

pression in those radio talks, convocation addresses, presidential speeches, and so on, which form the bulk of his literary output. Fortunately, most of those speeches have been published, and would ever remain the rich heritage of the nation.

His second great contribution was in the promotion of literary output. If his own writings did not fill many volumes, his initiative, his motivation, his planning and his efforts in organising a band of dedicated scholars in Jamia Millia to plunge themselves deep into literary creative activity would ever stand as his outstanding contribution to the promotion of literature. Fortunately, the small seeds he sowed at that time are bearing good fruits even today. Maktab-e-Jamia has grown into a big institution and has rendered yeoman service to the cause of Urdu literature. It has brought out scores and scores of works—dramas, novels, fiction, essays, biographies, poetry, short stories, literary criticisms, and so on. It has grown into a rich academy whose main purpose is to fulfil the ideals with which Jamia was conceived. It was the reformation of the society through the creative work of the scholars; it was the renaissance of wonder in the thinking of the people through exposing the fund of knowledge; it was the integration of the communities through enlarging the areas of agreement; it was the synthesis of human culture through blending of the best of the East with the finest of the West; and it was the concentration on the development of Islamic learning through the Urdu language. This grand design of Zakir Saheb's, so carefully nourished by him, was sustained by his associates, who at least in that area have not let him down. It is indeed a matter of pride that the good work he started is still continuing in Jamia.

The third great contribution of Zakir Saheb was to excite interest in people to read books. Production of books would have some meaning only if they are fully used. The reading habit was the first step to educate people. The super-market is meant for consumers. Therefore, he wrote, "The book, indeed is the life companion of the modern man. And it is, indeed, a marvellous companion. It never speaks unless it is spoken to, and alternatives listened to. It can wait extremely for your approach. It is ever ready at all hours of the day and

night to oblige and to offer the best it has, to whosoever seeks it. It instructs, advises, inspires, rebukes but stops immediately you have had enough of these. It never gets irritated at the silly questions one sometimes tends to put to it. It just smiles and holds its breath. Yet, the book is a wonderful companion. It is a wonderful teacher for those who wish to learn, and it is a wonderful source of enjoyment." This statement shows what a wonderful teacher Zakir Saheb was, and what sort of fascinating literature he produced ! Each word goes deep down into the heart to excite interest in what he says on books, to love books, to read books and to learn from books. What psychology, what force, what interest he puts into the thought that books are the treasure house of knowledge; knowledge is life and knowledge is divine.

How exhaustive, how fascinating, how tempting and how profound is the appeal he makes to people to read ! This is characteristic of Zakir Saheb's writing, full of meaning, exhaustive in treatment, forceful in appeal, interesting in nature, and fascinating in style.

Fourthly, Zakir Saheb loved literature, particularly poetry, Urdu, Persian, English and German. Hafiz, Sa'di, Rumi, Jami, Urfl, Nizami, Ghalib, Mir, Iqbal, all attracted his attention. Mujeeb Saheb says that the ultimate source of Zakir Saheb's spiritual and moral strength was the Quran and Persian poetry. In his note-book, *bayaz*, he had written hundreds of verses of his favourite poets, and he remembered quite a few of them, which he quoted appropriately in his writings, and speeches. He was brought up in a society where poetry was the symbol of aesthetic and intellectual excellence. It was the medium of man's assertion of his refined taste. It was the most sensitive vehicle of thought for the expression of man's wisdom, knowledge, love and even law of higher values. It was the music of love, mirror of beauty, treasure of ideas, fountain of emotions, food for thought, vehicle of the mystics, ornament of the wise, outburst of the imaginative, and reflections of the sensitive. It touches, moves and stirs the heart to teach delightfully. Naturally, the sensitive heart of Zakir Saheb was very fond of such a medium, which took under its fold several areas of his interest—religion, philosophy, ethics, morality, knowledge

and wisdom. Every movement, every significant event has produced poetry. He was particularly fond of those poets whose thoughts had defied time and had retained the freshness of the inspired moment when they were conceived. Zakir Saheb got the quotation of the mystic Sarmad beautifully written up by the master calligraphist of Jamia, Ustad Ali Muhammad Khan:

Sarmad, cut short your tedious tale of woe
There are two ways, one of them you must go;
Surrender yourself utterly to His Will
Or say He is nothing to you, friend nor foe.¹

Zakir Saheb was very fond of the mystic poet Jalaluddin Rumi, who answered his question of how knowledge is to be attained :

The thirsty look for water everywhere
Know that water too is in search of thirsty seekers
Ask not for water but attain the thirst
And you will have water bursting out on all sides.²

And also :

Knock at its body, knowledge is a snake
Knock at its heart, it is your friend.

Poetry was an inspiring source to Zakir Saheb, who read Indian and Persian poets widely, and took from them what strengthened his inner soul.

Zakir Saheb was the child of Indian nationalism. He lived in an exciting age which was causing convulsions in the thought process of many sincere souls. From the latter part of the 19th century, a new consciousness arose in the enlightened Muslims which excited pride in their own culture, which revived its own literature, and which warned the community not to become a prey to the glittering glow of the West. If anyone were to glance the biting sarcasm of *Akbar Allahabadi*, the historical treasures dug out by Shibli Noamani, the soul-stirring *Mussadus* of Hall, the captivating novels of Nazeer Ahmed, the intoxicating flow of flowers from the pen of Muhammad Husain Azad, the nationalist fervour in the poems of Iqbal, and the passion-exciting columns of *Hamdard*, *Comrade*, *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh* (all of which Zakir Saheb

had pondered over and assessed) one would find that it was an all-out literary war against the British.

The immediate effect of Zakir Saheb's nationalist spirit is seen in the fine essay he wrote some time between March and August 1920 on "Eternity or Toy" published in the *Aligarh Magazine* of that year. That was a historical essay, a very thought provoking piece potent to demolish the illusion of the Aligarh School that Muslims would gain by remaining loyal to the British. The point to note here is not the political content of the essay but the effective literary art in presenting events in their correct perspective, the analysis of men and affairs in words that would have powerful appeal, and the skilful technique adopted to bring about a radical change in the political thought of the time. He used the literary craft, like a poet, to make the people believe that Aligarh had belied the expectations of the community, and that it had served the interest of only a few narrow-minded, selfish and immature persons. With forceful logic, he argued that to convert a sacred instrument of national renaissance into a machine to produce subordinate cadres of the State machinery was to play with the lives of the community. At the age of 23, he surprised all by his command over the English language, and the literary excellence he had attained.

Let alone at Aligarh, even at Etawah, when he was in the eighth standard, he would debate in English. Once a year, Hidayat-e-Islam would hold its function and he would address it, when he was hardly thirteen or fourteen years old so powerfully as to elicit appreciation from all. During the same year, 1911, he wrote a speech which he read in the Students' Union on "A Student's Life." He defined a student as one "who wants to improve his present condition, who wants to develop his faculties as much as he can, who wants to derive benefit from those treasures of knowledge and thought which hundreds of people in thousands of years have left us as a heritage for posterity, who is desirous of getting all that he can for the guidance of his reason, for knowledge of finer things, for wisdom and lofty ideas of which he is not aware and the awareness of which will help him in this world. . . He should not let the thought enter his heart that he can do nothing, because if he allows that, he will not

be able to achieve anything. He should continue acting courageously; if he does that, he will most certainly succeed in his endeavours. . . . He should, and it is his duty to, propagate education among his illiterate brothers and to consider the propagation of education as part of his own education. If he is not educated he is not a man at all and he cannot do anything worthwhile in this world".³ It is surprising that at a young age he fixed such high ideals before himself. No doubt, education seemed to be his destiny. His own criterion of a good student as revealed in this speech, contained all the moral values and principles which would shape any learner into a great humanist.

Aligarh College offered a wider scope for his talents to grow. On the very first day of the college, when he went to the dining hall for lunch, he witnessed a culture that shocked him. Describing the senior Food Monitor who supervised the food arrangements, he wrote, "I saw a gentleman standing in the middle of the hall, who appeared to be quite elderly by the size of his body and by the trimming of his moustaches, although by some device his beard had disappeared. He had put on a very expensive English suit; there was nowhere any crease on his trousers. He had taken particular care to match his suit, his neck-tie and shirt; his hand was thrust in one of the pockets of the trousers, his sight was focussed on something in front; and he was standing like a statue. In a few moments this doll began walking, causing a tuck, tuck sound from the heels of his shoe; the whole hall got the resonance of the tuck, tuck sound. After walking a few steps, this statue would again come to a dead halt and would start again. It looked as if some novice sculptor had carved a statue which was the mixture of his false pride, empty-headedness and slavish imitation, and some great English tailor having bought the statue at a cheap price had fixed wooden legs into in with the mechanised device, which by winding would make this statue walk with a tuck, tuck sound."⁴

This unconventional impression of a student of the Western manners and dress of the educated dons of the University is reflective of his nationalist spirit, of how much he hated imitating the colonials, but it is also suggestive of his literary art, of how graphic a picture he could paint. The effect

of this passage in its chaste Urdu is enhanced manifold in conveying the idea that slavish mentality, loss of self-respect and cultural degradation had reached the limit.

As early as 1915, as a student of the Intermediate class, he translated a paper by Professor Browne which was published in a Lucknow magazine, *Al-Nazir*. In 1917, when he wrote an essay on Muslim education, it fetched for him the first prize, again the foreboding of his future interest. More important was his translation of Plato's *Republic*. Within a month, he had translated four of its chapters. Such was his grip over the Urdu language, and skill in translation that his friend, Rashid Ahmed Siddiqui, would read the text and he would go on rendering it in Urdu so perfectly that another friend of his, Maulana Suhail, remarked, "If Plato knew Urdu, he would have adopted only this language." Both Zakir Saheb and Rasheed Saheb had pseudonyms for their writings. Zakir Saheb would write under "Rip" and Rasheed Saheb, under "Bohemian." The column which Zakir Saheb contributed was under the series "From the Sleeping Hollow." Both these young writers had become so popular that people were eager to know when their next article would appear. Zakir Saheb's writings were packed with rare wit and humour, whose contents were meant to bring about a social change. In the November 1919 issue of *Aligarh Magazine*, he made bitter comments on the visit of Harcourt Butler to Aligarh College. Zakir Saheb did not like the idea that the University should become an instrument to serve the cause of the foreigners.

Besides Plato's *Republic*, Zakir Saheb translated at Aligarh Edwin Cannon's *Elementary Political Economy* which was published from Jamia in 1922. In the initial stages, Jamia undertook all the three important functions of a University, namely, teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge through publication. In the May-June 1921 issue of *Aligarh Magazine*, he wrote an interesting article on "Life's Forum Needs a Dynamic Soul". The editor of that magazine had added a very hilarious introduction to another piece of work Zakir Saheb had done for the magazine. He had translated G.K. Chesterton's essay on "Wind and Tree" in the

record time of just one hour. The translation was perfect and a beautiful piece of Urdu literature.

When Zakir Saheb went to Germany in 1922 for higher studies, he learnt the German language so well that he confessed later at Poona University in 1964 that his intellectual growth was due to his constant touch with German literature. While in Germany, in the midst of his studies for Ph.D. in Economics, he took time off to publish the life of Gandhiji in the German language *Die Botschaft des Mahatma Gandhi*. For student to launch that kind of project in a foreign country, where funding was a problem, where inflation had reached a high peak, and in a venture where no returns were expected, was an amazing thing. One of the objectives was to make the Germans know the tribulations of the nationalists struggling for freedom in India. In Germany, Zakir Saheb did one more thing, he brought out a deluxe edition of *Diwan-e-Ghalib* in a manner which would have delighted the refined taste of Ghalib himself. When that edition reached India, Hakim Ajmal Khan liked it so much that he got the Persian *Diwan* of Ghalib also printed in Germany and named it *Diwan-e-Shaida*.

In 1924, when he undertook a tour of Europe, he went to Sweden with a friend, Peterson. In Stockholm both of them fell into the embarrassing situation of having no money to pay their hotel bill. Peterson suggested that Zakir Saheb write a feature article on Gandhiji, and he did it so well that a Swedish daily paid him enough to defray the hotel bill as also to cover the cost of the return journey to Berlin. From Germany, he would supply Jamia frequently with articles of scholarly interest. In the issue of *Risal-e-Jamia* of April 1923, he wrote an article entitled "Rah-e-Amal" which was the translation of one of the chapters of Bertrand Russel's work on *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, and subsequently for the July 1923 issue, he sent one more article on "Roads to Freedom" by the same author. In his "Rah-e-Amal" or Activity Road, he wrote: "Even the weakest element in life-giving and life-promoting persons was stronger than what appeared to those who were incompetent politicians of the age.... Those who have the ability to think and the capacity to reflect on the problems of society would surely be successful one day in

their aims and objectives.... All those who promote life do not live for themselves; they exist for others; they create within themselves the quality of the creator, which manifests itself in the form of their concern for others. Even such thoughts, if not action, bring us immense pleasure." In his article on education, Zakir Saheb wrote that education was a mixture on what was imposed and what was acquired. The teachers should attempt to impose less of their own ideas, and help the students more to acquire ideas on their own. The kind of discipline and control which was practised in our schools was not desirable. Zakir Saheb felt discipline should originate from one's own free will and not be imposed from above.

After Zakir Saheb's return from Germany, building up Jamia engaged his full attention. Jamia was to become not merely a centre of learning but also an agent of social change. For this purpose, a serious publication programme was undertaken. A literary magazine, *The Jamia* was being brought out regularly since 1923 to inform people about what Jamia was doing; and to invite their attention to their cultural heritage. Zakir Saheb took up its editorship himself. For several months he wrote almost all the articles himself under different names. *Jamia* was later upgraded into *Payam-e-Talim* which became a classic in children's literature. It was brought out regularly every fortnight. Zakir Saheb's series *Abu Khan ki Bakri* and fourteen other stories excited the imagination of the children. Children appreciated the attributes present in God's creatures; the cleverness of a fox, the fidelity of a dog, the gentleness of a cat, the timidity of a lamb, the swiftness of a horse, the patience of a camel, the beauty of a peacock, were all so skilfully presented in the stories that the children would learn the moral of how essential it was for man to learn from those animals.

But the greatest service Jamia has done to the community was through the setting up of the publishing house, Maktab-e-Jamia. Hardly any other University has beaten its record in disseminating Islamic learning so well. Jamia also established an Urdu Academy with such a distinguished scholar as Abid Saheb as its Secretary. It has rendered yeoman service not only to the Urdu language but also to

Islamic culture. Very soon, this Academy brought out several course books as also numerous useful works, which earned Jamia great credit as a centre of creative thought. The Maktab-e-Jamia and the Urdu Academy were mutually complementary, one was to produce a book and the other was to publish it. Both became very useful agencies to bring out healthy, useful, relevant and thought provoking literature on every aspect of the Islamic "cultural goods."

Zakir Saheb's efforts, however, were not appreciated by all. There were critics who saw even in the children's stories Zakir Saheb's nationalist ideas, and opposed them. An article in *Suhal* of Aligarh in its issue of January 1936 carried the sarcastic remarks of Dr. Muhammad Ashraf who ridiculed Zakir Saheb's story "Abu Khan ki Bakri" and linked Jamia to the social and political life of the Muslims who had not reconciled themselves to its existence. Nevertheless, Zakir Saheb's literary output provoked the thoughts of the people and they started analysing the problems of the day.

More fruitful work was done when Zakir Saheb went on to experimenting his grand design of mass education for India. His *Talim-i-Khutbat* was the outcome of his several speeches and addresses on various occasions, all touching on education.⁵ They are about national education, nursery education, basic education, education at the secondary stage, technical education, training programme, character building programme, qualities of a good teacher, educational problems of Muslims, problems of Aligarh, and so on. These lectures are not merely informative in nature but are almost policy papers which the nation could have utilised with great benefit. They are unique even from the literary point of view. The style here is not of an author but of a speaker. Whatever he has said goes deep down into the heart as if someone is drilling wisdom into our ears.

Many are radio talks where, in a matter of a few minutes, he had to unfold vast vistas of knowledge. It was not an easy task. It needed all the artistry of literary craft. Since the subject is addressed to the common man, the simplicity, lucidity and naturalness make the speeches a delight to read. It is the spontaneous flow of a great master who speaks with

authority on a subject linked with the nation's destiny, in words that touch the soul, all with the intention of reforming the society. The substance of his talks was how to remove ignorance from our land, and how to integrate our culture with the educational processes of our country. We have inherited something precious from the past—love, humanism, devotion, reason and creativity—all in order to make man a better man. Philosophy has been the soul of this country, religion its symbol, *bhakti* its spirit, tolerance its technique, knowledge its source of joy, humanism its pride, beauty its object of pursuit, and God its subject of worship. These are the values which Zakir Saheb cherished most, and which got elaborated in all his writings and speeches—these are the themes on which any litterateur would dwell at length. Hence, we can justify a place for Zakir Saheb among literary figures.

Addressing the graduates of Kashi Vidyapith he enumerated all our weaknesses, social, political, cultural, psychological and economic. He sketched a picture of how miserable we had become because of hunger, poverty, injustice, ignorance, cruelty, laziness, helplessness, bigotry, fanaticism, short-sightedness, selfishness, snobbishness, acquisitiveness, haughtiness, arrogance, and so on, which literary figures too use to reform the society. He went a step further, to suggest ways and means of how to remove these weaknesses. It was not that he had imagined that these shortcomings existed in our society, but had experienced their ill impact on his personal life. It was not a drama visualised to excite interest in the audience, but the reality of the day which had made a great and beautiful country suffer because of the selfishness of a few. Others would paint a picture, but he narrated reality and the truth. Others would imagine the scene, he had witnessed the show. Therefore, there was greater force in his writings.

If *Talim-i-Khutbat* deals with primary and secondary education of the children, his *Dynamic University* concentrates on the problems of higher education. As the Vice-President of India he delivered a dozen convocation addresses, which comprise the theme of *Dynamic University*, and as the President of India, he delivered more than two

dozen addresses within a period of less than two years. These lectures were delivered during the last twelve years of his life, when he was in the political field, not the educational one. Almost forty years of intensive work in the educational sector had broadened his vision to enable him to speak on any subject of man's life. In his *Dynamic University* he touched on the problems of higher education, and said that national education must remain under national control, and not slip out of our hands to become a foreign baby in our land. He touched on the spiritual regeneration of our youth in our Colleges and Universities. He defined the objectives of higher education. He lit the lamp of freedom in the mind of our scholars. He dreamt of a true University which would lift our soul. He stressed on manual work as an essential component of education. He desired that the alienation that existed between the theoretical study in the classroom and the realities of the outside world should be removed. He said that such an alienation had created a dichotomy which had distorted the methods and goals of higher education. Being cut off from the mainstream of life, our academics live in ivory towers of their own, and they should be made to interact with the society. They had remained for too long away from their cultural roots and mooring, being buried too deeply in abstract concepts, which did not make them aware of their social responsibility. Hence, he suggested that linkages be established between education on the one hand and real life on the other, so that a basic cycle could be evolved whereby our youth could get an opportunity to fit themselves into the hot arena of the outer world. Education should transform them into useful citizens and offer them enough kinetic energy for creative thinking and active deeds in order to face the challenges of real life.

From this point of view, these addresses assume paramount importance. Emphasising the need at Jadavpur for applied knowledge he said, "The growing complexity of human social existence and the rapid expansion of human knowledge make some kind of specialisation inevitable ... Is it not possible to fashion our first degree course so as to aim at giving some measure of the essential scientific, aesthetic and moral culture by having represented in them the broad

fields of humanities, the physical sciences and the social sciences ?”⁶

He propounded his philosophy of life in such words: “Life, friends, is composed of sterner stuff than words. It is more than the mere glamour of phrases. The axis on which worthwhile life rotates is not the axis of pleasure and pain, but one of progress and retrogression; not the axis of profit and loss, but one of self-realisation and self-abasement; not the axis of self-seeking and self-aggrandisement, but one of service and sacrifice. It rotates round the axis of the noble and the ignoble, of the worthy and the unworthy. Life is striving for ever higher ends, life is a mission, life is service, life is worship. To be worthy worshippers at the shrine of life, you have to work hard and you have to work incessantly to develop to their fullest extent the capacities with which nature has endowed you.”

He would always exhort the youth to pursue knowledge. “Education is a process that never ends and in its essence it is always self-education ...Go ahead steadily with courage and humanity on the road that leads from individuality through character to personality.” He would urge our youth “to change from places of passive receptivity to those of spontaneous activity, from centres of mere acquisition of knowledge to those of its right use, from seats of individual competitive ambition to those of social cooperation, readiness to serve, from places of intellectual one-sidedness to those of practical human many-sidedness.”⁷ He hoped “no normal young person will hesitate to choose health against disease, strength against weakness, beauty against ugliness, and cleanliness against filth.” He shared the secret of success with the youth, “If you are carrying with you a disciplined mind that can think systematically and look at things objectively; if you have acquired the precious habit of self-criticism with a view to constant self-improvement; if you have learnt to live hopefully with others; if, while obliged to take, you are also ready to give; if you can put in honest and sustained work; if you have learnt to get pleasure out of work well done and can refuse to be easily disappointed if all does not go well; if you can think with the sage and the saint but talk with common man, you will go far in life. If you stay at

the University has not equipped you with these qualities, it is indeed a pity."⁸

Words of wisdom would flow from his lips. They were all draped in such colourful language as to make a deep impression on young minds. The purpose of poetry is to touch, to stir and move the hearts, and teach delightfully. That was exactly the impact of his speeches, which were not poems, but passages of great force. Only a mature, sensitive, philosophic and profound mind could convey such great thoughts with such felicity. His speeches focussed on "the illimitable freedom of the mind," the "fundamental themes of organic life," the "plan of the universe," the "search for truth" and several other issues of great import. He would remind that education was to "preserve the unity of life, the integrity of the personality and harmony between man and nature." According to him "There can be no national integration unless we succeed in making of our national state demonstrably a moral entity." He would always indicate the "upward look and the light" to rebuild a new universe of his dream. He would say that this was no dream, but a possibility provided one was involved in the constant pursuit of excellence.

Thus, the *Dynamic University* is a veritable treasure trove of educational philosophy and wisdom. It was the fruit of his earlier labour and rich experience. When he became the President of India, he was called upon to speak on a still larger variety of subjects. He was now like a jeweller who got a wider opportunity to display his intellectual gems which he had collected over the years. He defined the job of a good teacher as one whose essence of work was "to get values realised in other young persons with loving sympathy for the understanding of the needs and gifts of these persons. His chief pre-occupation is with unripe, growing lives, with personality, as it were, in the bud... he seeks to help the bud into full bloom and not to make paper flowers to satisfy his whim and fancy."⁹ Analysing the factors concerning why campus peace is disturbed in our Universities, he said that instead of serving as the conscience centres of the nation, they had become information distribution centres; instead of fostering a sense of social responsibility, they had become

production centres of unemployable youths; instead of forming a bulwark against such social evils as strikes, lawlessness, violence, communal tension, caste, creed, class, region and language conflicts, they are becoming instruments to make the people forget "India" herself. He wanted out national leaders to set matters right. "If they cannot do so, let them at least leave the Universities and Colleges to function in peace and not try to convert them into foci of discontent deliberately fostered for narrow and short-term political ends."¹⁰

Thus, Zakir Saheb found numerous occasions to pour out his knowledge and wisdom. As the Rashtrapati, he was wanted everywhere. He added lustre and grace to whatever he touched or to whatever he said. His helpful advice, philosophic reflections and sincerity of purpose earned for him respect and love from all quarters. As the President he would be called upon to speak to a social milieu of all grades, to touch upon the obvious needs of the day. Therefore, the quality of his speeches as President were different from those of his earlier days when he would fly high on the intellectual plane. They were not convocation addresses where the beauty and the profundity of his thought could be appreciated. He was now right in the midst of a mundane society which was too full of its own problems to have a corner in its heart for the sublimity of his thoughts. He had to admonish them, cajole them, and explain to them the basic issues of the day in the language they could understand and not roll pearls of wisdom. Anyone who glances at his presidential speeches would find a gloom in them that the nation was going downhill, and that he was arresting its further fall. He would also get an impression that the days of growing the rose garden of his thoughts had gone by, and that he was merely making an intelligent "Ikebana" of cut roses from the garden of his rich experience which he had nourished with such tender care in the years past.

As a contrast, in an essay he wrote as early as March 1927 in *Jamia* magazine on "East and West", he had so beautifully analysed the issue of nationalism, which was not the freedom of this country or that country but the problem of the whole of humanity.¹¹ He said that every element in

nature, whether animals in the jungle, birds on the trees, or fish in the sea, all enjoy freedom, but man in India was so helpless that he had neither food to eat, nor clothes to wear, nor a house to live in. If this was the picture in the East, the West was no better for the common man, where a factory worker spent all his life oiling a machine. Zakir Saheb analysed the reasons why man had lost his liberty. This was because of two things; the pressure of population and the change of weather. Man had thought of four devices to overcome these difficulties. First, he moved from cold to warm regions. Many migrations to, and invasions on, India, have been from cold regions. Secondly, man used physical force to overcome obstacles. Wars were the result. Thirdly, he thought of moral and spiritual means to meet the demand, and retreated into a life of penance. Fourthly, he used his art and craft, skill and technology to solve the problem. If population increased, production also increased. Man became industrious and inventive. The first two devices were relative in importance, to move away from home and use force to meet the challenge of population pressure and inclement weather, for all could not migrate and all could not conquer and dominate. But the last two were absolute in importance, the moral way and the rational way. The moral spirit brings out the best within us, and like Buddha one becomes enlightened. The skill and inventive spirit in man would exploit the natural resources and make something new. But these devices are mutually complementary and should be integrated in the right proportion. Zakir Saheb's point was that neither was deserting the land good nor was the use of brutal force desirable. Man should use the other two devices of moral integrity which should be blended with intellectual ingenuity to meet the challenges of the time.

This essay is very fascinating and sums up the genesis of man's culture and also the factors responsible for the growth and decay of the culture. Such creative thought was missing when he became the Governor of Bihar or the Vice-President of the country or the President of India. In this illuminating essay, he had sketched the entire panorama of how since the dawn of history mankind passed through several phases until he reached the present age of colonialism and imperi-

alism. He said India's greatness was in spiritualism and of Europe, in industrialisation. Asia is known for its moral force, and Europe for its physical strength. Asia has the problem of population, and Europe, of inclement weather. Asia responded to its challenge of population pressure through self-suffering and moral resignation, and Europe, through its skill, invention and industrialisation. Asian cultures are thousands of years old, but European cultures are only two or three hundred years old, since industrialisation. From the time of Nietzsche, the anti-Christ movement destroyed European spiritualism and pushed it towards materialism. Europe was lost in excessive production of material goods, and Asia in spiritual retreat. Zakir Saheb's analysis was that both were dangerous. A balance was required. Both East and West must meet somewhere. The East has to offer its quality of heart, and the West its intellect. Europe experienced renaissance and reformation, ended feudalism, improved standards of living but lost the soul in the process, destroyed the bond with others, and diluted all cultural values. Values shifted from the beautiful and ugly to the costly and cheap, and humanity was divided into rich and poor, and not noble and ignoble.

The East too was no better. Excessive withdrawal of the self and retreat destroyed the creative faculties. Inertness and inertia became virtues. Zakir Saheb's conclusions were interesting. When Europe was under Christian influence during the medieval times, Asia was safe, but with the reformation and renaissance, it started dominating over others. When Asia too fell a victim to this new currency of nationalism, one Asian nation attempted to dominate over another. Japanese imperialism was an example. Asia suffered under a double disadvantage. The threat was both from the powerful European and the powerful Asian. Asia was killing Asia. Zakir Saheb's keen perception made him declare in 1927 so prophetically, "If the European madness for work was not reformed by religious and moral revival, even before he recovered from the sorrow of one war, he would be involved in another"¹² True to his forecast, Hitler plunged Europe into another catastrophe only 12 years later. Zakir Saheb added that nationalism, either of the East or of the West should have

an ideal of social good. Europe is proud of its power, and Asia, of its balanced mind. Europe is industry, Asia is morality. Europe is body, Asia is soul. Zakir Saheb desired that there must be a healthy interaction of both East and West. His humanism gave a new interpretation to nationalism, which was the product of his intellectualism. Such creative thoughts are missing in his later speeches, when he rose high on the political ladder.

The finest productive part of Zakir Saheb's literature was while he was building up Jamia, and when he was training the children at Jamia. His great aim was to make the child, the father of man, worthy to inherit the world. Nature intends the child to be the vicegerent of God on earth, but the parents, the teachers and all around him were not helping this cause. Parents spoil children by needless patting, and teachers ruin them by needless spanking. "When he enters into this world as vicegerent of God to run the show, he is neither healthy nor enthusiastic; neither courageous nor determined; frightened of everything, doubtful of everything; neither attached to anyone nor trusting anyone; neither desirous of doing a job nor knowing what recreation is; if he does something, it is like a slave, either under the fear of punishment or under the greed of reward; neither knowing the realities around nor having the ability to deal with them; lost in day-dreaming and in useless planning, whom hard realities of life shatter at every step; they regard life as useless and life is disgusted of them; the world is a prison for them and they are an agony to the world."

Zakir Saheb has sketched this pathetic picture of children, which is not an exaggeration. Forty years in free India have still left over 60 per cent of its family in ignorance. Zakir Saheb thought intensively, spoke forcefully, wrote effectively and did sincerely what he could to educate the teeming millions of India, and in the process has left behind precious material, which was his literary output. It is not enormous in size, for he used his hands less to hold a pen than to help men eradicate ignorance. He was in the thick of the battle where he believed more in action than in theory. Consequently, his literary output took the shape not of theses but of sermons; not of books but of speeches; not of fiction but of facts; not to

amuse the fancy but to improve things, to awaken the nation, and to excite, inspire and to be up and doing, for "there would be enough sleeping in the grave."

Yet whatever he has said or written is extremely precious. His writings bear the mark of a genius, and seem to be the life-blood of a master mind. Everything is useful, lofty, relevant, heart-warming and soul-stirring. Everything is put in beautiful language, in chaste diction, in attractive style, like a heart-to-heart talk. His thoughts are like a running brook flowing uninterruptedly with fresh and pure ideas of life-giving potentiality. Each drop of that brook was saturated with a value system, which wished to change the teeming millions for the better. With education as the base, he desired to change the total personality of man, whose intellect was to be fully used to make his body function in an organic way. He wanted us to resolve the crisis of the present day by integrating the best of the past with the finest of the present to build a glorious future. Like a poet, he too was dreaming of a new world and a regenerate man, but did not remain content at that. Like a crusader he carried on a campaign to bring about a change. His heart would bleed for his country and his mind would suggest what should be done to avert the disaster. He said that our country did not need our warm blood to ooze out from our necks, but it needed the sweat of our hard work, sincere work, ceaseless work, and serious work. The peasant, the artisan and the teacher were the three parameters round whom he built his social philosophy, but the teacher was the main focus of his attention. His purpose was to unite the whole of mankind into one brotherhood. That was also the purpose of all the prophets, all the sages, all the philosophers, all the poets, all the literary figures. In his efforts to reach the ideal he has left us an output of literature which would surely entitle him to a high place in the list of great litterateurs of our land.

III

Educational Endeavours

Zakir Husain, a distinguished scholar, writer, teacher, preacher, thinker, statesman and philosopher, has made outstanding contributions to the development of modern Indian thought in the realms of education and social philosophy. He is rated as the father of the humanistic trend in educational philosophy which blended in itself all other trends, whether realistic, idealistic, aesthetic, pragmatic, utilitarian or intellectual. The essence of the humanistic trend intended to make education a system which would uplift the moral stature of man in order to help him lead a dignified life. He mooted the idea that real education should combine science and ethics. It should stimulate a search for values. It should promote a passionate quest for truth. It should aim at perfection and excellence. It should become an instrument of social change and of national development, and it should contribute effectively to the development of the individual personality.

Zakir Saheb's main contribution to literature is in the field of education. All that he wrote and spoke about education moves between "poles of the eternal and the temporal, between the awakened conscience and skilled efficiency, between conviction and achievement."¹ His writings exhibit an idealism in education which dreamt of developing the individual personality not merely to train the mind, body and soul, but also to promote the art of living harmoniously and graciously with one's fellowmen. His educational structure did not envisage merely imparting of information and knowledge, but desired to inculcate a sense of social responsibility, a sense of pride, hope and faith in the future of our country, and a sense of feeling to improve the quality of life by respecting the dignity of man, his faith, belief and religion, and his life, labour and intelligence. Education was to

promote a rational outlook, scientific temper, work ethics and creative thinking on which would depend national development. Education was also to promote such moral, mental and manual skill, and such liberal, professional, scientific and humanistic training, which would be needed for the progress of man. Education was also to foster such new attitudes and values, which would enhance knowledge and culture, peace and solidarity, and unity and harmony. Education was to be the agent of social change whereby our youth would be engaged in the quest of a new humanism and a new creative force, where truth and beauty, virtue and valour, justice and courage would enhance the quality of life.

Zakir Saheb dedicated his entire life to the thought process of educating the masses of India. No wonder, he is acknowledged as one of the greatest educationists of modern India. His deep insight into the sector of removing the ignorance of our land has gifted us a very sound, pragmatic and progressive system of education suited to Indian conditions. He made Jamia Millia a national laboratory wherein he experimented with his ideas on how to eradicate ignorance, how to integrate our cultural ethos in the learning process, how to make applied knowledge the basis of our education, how to impart skill and craft without affecting creative thinking, and how to balance mental and manual work in the correct proportion. His expertise on education ranged from man's birth to his death. He fixed social good as the goal of education, and humanism as the destiny of man. All his writings indicate that with the right type of education, most of our problems would be solved. Political awakening to liberate the land from the foreign yoke, social awareness to remove the rigidities and disparities of life, economic imbalances in the distribution of wealth, and a cultural renaissance to gain a dignified life, would all be possible, if man were to be saturated with knowledge and wisdom.

The pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of knowledge were the main objectives of his life. This could be known by his interest to translate Plato's *Republic* even when he was a student at Aligarh. Translation of a philosopher's masterpiece meant absorbing the essence of his thought. It was Plato at that distant point of time who had said that

education was not a process of teaching anything to anyone but a process of teaching everything to ourselves. The teacher teaches himself first, and only guides others. The child is in the dark cave of ignorance. It is not that it cannot see. There is no light for him to see. The teacher turns the child towards the opening from where the sun's rays enter the cave, and the child is then able to see. The teacher is not giving eyes to the child to see but is merely guiding him towards the light. In other words, education is mostly a self-learning process by interacting with a teacher and the environment. It is the inner ability of the pupil to grasp, comprehend and understand, that is more important than pouring information into him. It is like the patient's innate immunity that cures his illness. Voltaire rightly says, "The art of medicine consists in keeping the patient amused while nature cures the disease."

Plato had discussed the ideal of humanistic education, which took man from darkness to light and freedom. A good teacher merely stimulates the student and provokes his questioning ability. He merely excites interest in the pupil. The stimulated student solves his own problem. His discovery would thrill him. If the spark in him is to become a flame, he must think for himself. In this type of education, man is led to awareness of truth and reality but not without struggle and pain. Translation of Plato's *Republic* made Zakir Saheb realise the importance of three basic concepts: society, state and education, which became the three parameters of his intellectual growth. Even in these three parameters, the key concept was education which happens to be the substance and soul of the other two concepts; Plato had hinted that education was a humanising process, and Zakir Saheb has elaborated enormously on that concept.

Apart from Plato, Zakir Saheb was influenced by three other great teachers: Dewey, Kerschensteiner and Gandhiji. It was a happy amalgam of Greek, German, American and Indian thought which melted in the reflective crucible of his Islamic thinking. He picked the best from all, sifted and filtered them on the screen of his humanistic outlook, took the fine thought that came through, and evolved a value system of his own, which found expression in his writings, speeches, thoughts and deeds. The stream of his thought, fed

from several sources, prevented him from fixing any narrow or rigid objective of education. He made it as wide as the universe. He said, "Education is the process of the individual mind getting to its full possible development." Education has to span the whole of life, as does literature which is the mirror of life, in its various aspects. He did not make it a prison hole. He lifted its scope to cover the whole of humanity.

Zakir Saheb's ideas on education were first formulated in Germany, where he spent four years for higher education, from 1922 to 1926. Germany at this time had a galaxy of brilliant educationists: Kerschensteiner, Rickert, Dilthey, Schlermacher, Spranger and others, who were shedding new light on the philosophy of education. The high priest of this new philosophy was Kerschensteiner whose "Activity School" and "cultural goods" were intended to bring about a metamorphic change in the known principles of education. This new thinking aimed at integrating the principle of applied knowledge with the mental growth of the child, as also the understanding of the basic values of any given society, which should become an integral part of all educational programmes. Zakir Saheb was greatly excited by Kerschensteiner's thinking that education was the synthesis of mental powers with "cultural goods" which offer food to the mind, and that educational activity involved the use of all the three faculties associated with the head, heart and hands. Zakir Saheb appreciated this kind of thinking so much that he dedicated his whole life to evolve an educational pattern on these lines in India.

Yet another great thinker who left deep impressions on Zakir Saheb's mind was Edward Spranger, the leading exponent in education and psychology, who initiated a new trend in the philosophy of understanding. His philosophy of education aimed at exciting in learners great interest in truth and beauty, sensitivity and consciousness, understanding and wisdom, which were to originate from the cultural base of the individual. Such an activity sustained a steady growth of his personality through service and love towards humanity, as also by submission to the Divine Will of the Supreme and the Sublime. Spranger stressed the point that life needed both material and physical support as also intellectual,

aesthetic, cultural, social and religious strength. The values of the latter group were more important which would give life new meaning and a destiny. Education becomes the medium to make the child adopt those moral values that are ingrained in a society's culture. Zakir Saheb's ideas on values and their impact on individuals and groups, his approach to the integration of religious beliefs with social realities, and his thought on the impact of faiths and beliefs on the cultural pattern of a society, were all influenced by Sprangler's thinking.

Kerschensteiner had fixed five conditions to determine whether a person was truly educated or not. First, an educated person would have a particular view-point about the values of men and things; he does not wear any blinkers. Second, he accepts wholeheartedly new values and new concepts; he is not tied down to traditions and inhibitions. Third, he would have an inner urge for moral values, and he would be moving from the stage of good to the stage of better; he would not be complacent, or have the feeling of being perfect. Fourth, he would not be dogmatic or a bigoted priest or imperious ruler; he would be flexible to accommodate the view-points of others. Fifth, he would base his values on critical faculty, and he would strive for enlightenment of his self which would illumine his thoughts, deeds and feelings; he is not a confused vagabond. Zakir Saheb expounded these thoughts in his Patel Memorial Lectures of 1958.

In several other sectors, the German influence was apparent on Zakir Saheb. He considered education as essentially a process of bringing to the surface the values contained in cultural goods. Just as the body grows by the good nourishment of food, so does the mind grow by the supply of fine cultural goods. Just as the same food is not relished by the body at all times, so does the mind need a change, and manual work comes as a relief in the routine. The cultural goods of a society are its heritage from the past in the realms of literature, music, philosophy, religion, morals, manners, arts and crafts, which happen to be "mind objectified". They are the products of man's mind at its best in the past. Education picks up these cultural goods and converts them into kinetic energy in the individual mind.

This process is not easy. The individual has to establish a link with the past, and be on the same wavelength to transform the messages of the past in order to make them intelligible to him. He has to bear an affinity with that mind of the past which had created these cultural goods.

Dewey's influence on Zakir Saheb is seen on several aspects. First, it is seen in his acceptance of the totality of man's experience, its reorganisation and its reconstruction, its ability to find new meaning in those experiences, and also the ability to add and direct the course of subsequent experiences. Secondly, Dewey's social dimension of learning impressed Zakir Saheb the most, as it brought him very close to Islamic cultural ethos, where the human ideal expected the individual to subordinate his self to cultivate, as the highest aim of life, the mystical experience of complete unity with the Divine Essence. This is the religious vocabulary to say that the human ideal is to reflect on the universe, to accept nature as an object of human understanding, and to regard an individual as a tiny pin in the vast machine, where the pin gains identity only as a part of the machine. Dewey conceived the individual mind as a function of social life, and not as a separate unit. It needed continual support from social agencies. Zakir Saheb stressed this aspect of social value of education in all his writings and speeches.

Thirdly, Dewey regarded the school as an integral part of the social life where children gained experience of social life. In reality, Zakir Saheb desired to make the school a laboratory where a better model of social functioning could be evolved. Fourthly, Dewey had emphasised on the applied component of education. Zakir Saheb was the first in India to conduct an experiment on this line. Work experience was given great prominence in his scheme of education. In formulating his ideas of the work-school at Jamia, he was influenced by all the three great thinkers, Kerschensteiner, Dewey and Gandhiji. From Kerschensteiner he took the concept of "Activity School", from Dewey, his ideas on work-experience, and from Gandhiji, his thoughts on skills and craft as essential aspects of education. But Zakir Saheb gave a new orientation to this applied component, and his report on Basic Education is his unique contribution to educational

reforms in our country. Dewey's recommendation that children should be taught science in such a manner that the applied aspect of the theoretical knowledge should become a part of their experience, was successfully experimented upon at Jamia. The chemical properties of oil, fat, acids and so on would be understood better if the children learnt bleaching, dyeing, soap-making and candle-making.

Fifthly, Zakir Saheb contributed much to the art of pedagogy. He was sensitive to the conditions which fostered the growth of the child. This naturally involved deep insight into educational psychology which enhanced the teacher's professional skill. He established a teachers' training college at Jamia, where he tested his improved methods of training. The teacher was expected first to teach himself so fully that he should be abundant to the point of overflow. Speaking on the theme of a "Good Teacher" he dwelt at length on several aspects, of how a good teacher belonged to the social category of moral and religious values, how he fostered the ideas of excellence in children, how he attempted to make them see beauty in men and things, how he would make them appreciate goodness in others, and how he shaped them into useful beings first by making himself one such. The imprint on the life volume of a good teacher was not "Knowledge" but "Love". He loved mankind. He loved those who loved beauty and goodness. When the whole world gets disappointed in a child, only two souls cling fast to him with hope, one is his mother, and the other is his good teacher.

Zakir Saheb has elaborated his ideas on the teaching profession. A teacher who is a mercenary is not a teacher. Education is not a trade or business. It is a mission. It is a trust to build the future. It is a challenge to improve things. A teacher's business is helpfulness, to facilitate development of human faculties in order to enable an individual to discharge his duties to society and to the country successfully and fruitfully. He endorsed the view of Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, an eminent economist, who in his book, *The Asian Drama : An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, says that the poverty of Asia was largely due to the "inappropriate" educational system which was inadequate in coverage, poor in quality and defective in contents. Therefore, the urgent need was a

radical transformation of the educational system. It needs large investment. The poorer the country, the greater is the need for investment. Poorer nations in Asia are in a vicious circle. Good education is not possible because of poverty, and poverty would not disappear without proper education. Zakir Saheb was of the firm view that if India were to make fast progress, she has to break this vicious circle. It can be broken only through "better planning, greater human effort, a sense of dedication and idealism, austerity, and an intensive utilisation of all available resources."

The third great impact on Zakir Saheb was from Gandhiji. Jamia Millia itself was the product of the Gandhian dream of a national centre of learning. Zakir Saheb had great faith in the Gandhian philosophy of education, which did not suddenly emerge with the Wardha Scheme. It had its roots in the Tolstoy Farm of South Africa, which later found expression at Sabarmati Ashram and also at Sevagram. The Wardha Scheme appeared on the stage in 1937 with the formation of Congress Ministries in the provinces, which raised the hope of translating national ideas in the educational sector. Education till then had been only book-oriented. It had no relevance to the realities of life, and no bearing on the daily life of the children. It had no moorings on the cultural ethos of the people. It had become merely an instrument to earn one's daily bread. Such a system had resulted in tremendous wastage of time, money and energy. The problem before the nation was to relate education to life, and also to make it universal in order to remove the ignorance of the masses.

Zakir Saheb took great interest in preparing a scheme which would reject bookish knowledge, and train children to become useful citizens of the land. If education meant training of the mind, body and soul, then the head, hand and heart, all three were to be fully utilised. The training of the hand was through a craft which should become productive. Gandhiji overemphasised the productive aspect, but Zakir Saheb was interested in integrating it with the intellectual part. Gandhiji felt that unless a part of the expenses of education was met through productive activity, it would be difficult to make it universal. One more aspect which Gandhiji had in view was to teach the child a skill which would be

useful to him in his later life to earn his livelihood. Weaving and spinning would be good avocations which needed a large labour force to meet the demands of the teeming millions. They would also sow the seeds of cottage industries in India.

Zakir Saheb agreed with this view but was aware of the danger of laying excessive emphasis on it, which would retard good use of the head and heart. He was for the correct involvement of all three faculties: mental, moral and physical, in order to help the child grow into an integrated personality, and not to make him a factory worker. The child had till then, been sent to school in order to make him a quill driver, and now he was not to be trained merely to turn a screw-driver. Between the two professions, the parents would opt for the former, as they thought that it was a respectable job. It was Gandhiji's idea, but would the nation accept the proposal relating to the future of their children? How would big business and industry react to a situation where their interests were concerned? How would India emerge as a strong economic power, if its planning was to be entirely cottage-industry oriented? Zakir Saheb bestowed a lot of thought on these problems and suggested suitable changes in his Basic Education Scheme. His recommendations pleased many realists, displeased many Gandhians, and disturbed many bureaucrats. As long as the Congress Ministries were in power, the officials vied with one another in praising the scheme but caused such a web of complications on paper that nothing could be implemented. When the Congress Ministries resigned in 1939, the bureaucrats turned so hostile to the proposals, that Zakir Saheb resigned in disgust his Chairmanship of the Advisory Board in 1948.

Although the Wardha Scheme was not implemented at the national level, Zakir Saheb pursued his interest in the programme, and the Activity School was fully sustained at Jamia. He reflected deeply on this issue and brought out a few crucial points. First, any educational activity is the product of man's mind. Secondly, its purpose is to help man grow into a useful citizen. Thirdly, manual work is an integral part of mental work, and it passes for educational work, as it involves four different types of mental activity. First, clear thinking is required as to what should be done. Second,

proper planning, procuring of the necessary material, and fixing the time schedule for completion of the task, all comprise mental work. Third, actually executing the job with quality as its aim also requires thinking. Finally, assessing its results in the light of what was originally conceived also invites mental attention. Thus, conceiving, planning, executing and assessing a project educates the child in such a way as to make demands on many of his faculties. The entire process is educational, as it promotes thinking ability, creative faculty, work ethics, patience and skill.

Thus, the Wardha Scheme as suggested by Gandhiji and amended by Zakir Saheb contained two central points, compulsory education and vocational orientation. Both were essential. The crafts that were thought of were weaving, embroidery, tailoring, cutting, book-binding, paper-making, carpentry and spinning. Zakir Saheb firmly believed that true learning could be imparted only through doing. Many educationists had made manual work the centre of education. In America, this method was called the Project Method, and in Russia, the Complex Method. The concept of "Activity School" had excited the whole of Germany. In India too, an attempt was made to make some skill compulsory at the school level. The scheme Zakir Saheb prepared intended to make education compulsory for seven years on a nationwide scale. The medium of instruction was to be the mother-tongue of the child. Some form of manual and productive work was compulsory at all levels of education. All the instruction and training that were to be given were to be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child. The education and training thus imparted should aim at covering at least a part of the expenses incurred in running the school.

Zakir Saheb had already experimented with these concepts in Jamia, where he had set up the work school. It was different from book-schools where memory training would make a machine of the child. In the new work school, the applied component was so devised as to improve both the intellect and the skill of the child. Such a training would

excite curiosity in him. It would give him pleasure in performing a task manually. He would be delighted to witness the outcome of his own labour. He would get an opportunity to be a planner of his own project. He would learn an art or craft he was familiar with in his surroundings. Such a training would inculcate in the child some social values to live and work together with his peers. The child would appreciate the dignity of labour. The poverty of the land was to some extent due to the lack of work-ethics. However, Zakir Saheb did not assure anyone that such schools offered the panacea for all the evils of unemployment and poverty in the land. He would go only to the extent of saying that the pupils of the work-schools would be more employable because these pupils would look upon all kinds of useful work as desirable and honourable, and they would be relatively more inclined to stand on their own feet.

This experiment at the national level was not a success. A hue and cry was raised that such a scheme neglected religious instruction, and was entirely secular. Zakir Saheb explained that the inclusion of religious instruction was fraught with numerous difficulties in a complex social set-up, but one of the major premises of the scheme was respect for all religions. The primary consideration in his mind was to unify the land and bring about national integration through the right type of education. This process could begin at the school level where the emphasis was to be on the forces of common agreement, and not disagreement. The idea was to have composite schools where children of all religious segments could study. He took great interest in basic education, not only because Gandhiji took interest in it, but also because that was his special area of interest. He had thought a good deal about it. He had seen its functioning in Germany. He had made a study of that experiment in England, America and Russia. He was interested in educating the masses of India. The difficulty was that he was ahead of his age, and that the people would not catch up with the flow of his thoughts. In a way, he belonged to posterity, as people would understand him and appreciate him better as time passes on.

Apart from the work-experience and Activity School concept the second great reform Zakir Saheb desired to inject into our educational system related to the imparting of cultural ethos to our children. He argued that the cultural goods are of immense variety in our land. They are religious, social, literary, philosophical, artistic and technical in nature. They are the products of the several types of minds: contemplative, pragmatic, aesthetic, egocentric, altruistic, social and impersonal minds. A good teacher should first absorb these ideas, and then make the minds of the students receptive to them. The teacher should make these cultural goods interesting, instructive and useful through his professional skill of pedagogy, through reason and logic, through illustration and analogy, and, above all, by being himself an example of what he teaches. The teacher should also know as to whom he is teaching. A student interested in aesthetic things would not appreciate machine wonders; a mechanical oriented child would not like contemplative achievements; and a business-minded child would not evince interest in ethics and morality.

Yet another change Zakir Saheb wanted to bring about was to make the school an instrument of character formation. He was interested in value-oriented education. He was fortunate in having at Jamia a band of dedicated teachers who helped him enormously in all his inventive endeavours. They allowed the children a free hand to distance themselves from mere bookish knowledge by placing them into the centres of cooperative activity, where even a sense of social and political responsibility was injected into young minds. Zakir Saheb envisaged that we should give our children more edifying ideals of personal and national existence. Jamia had come into existence only for that purpose. The ideals of valour and virtue, truth and beauty, justice and fair play, sacrifice and service were all essential bricks to build an enlightened mansion in the land. Zakir Saheb looked forward to the day when our educational institutions would adopt the ideals of cooperative endeavour and produce young men who would be healthy in mind, body and soul. They would be trained in strong will to possess sound judgment and refined feelings. They would be tutored to grow honest and frank, trustful and

trustworthy, as also generous and tolerant. Thus, Zakir Saheb wanted to transform our educational institutions from places of individual self-seeking into places of sincere work for the social good, and from seats of theoretical study into centres of practical applied and useful training with the many-sidedness of human values.

Zakir Saheb's contribution to education could be classified under three heads: his ideas on values and their impact on individuals in society; his approach to make those values yield good social results; and the elements of humanism in his thoughts which offer his philosophic rationale. First, the question of values stands uppermost in his entire philosophy. In education, facts, figures and information are not as important as the attitudes, behaviour and morals of the learners. Zakir Saheb felt education implied "an individually organised sense of values". Each child has an individuality of its own which must be respected. An educated person has a certain breadth of intellectual horizon on which values shine like stars.

Zakir Saheb took great pains to elaborate the concept of values. Value is that which satisfies human desire. All things that satisfy human desire have values, and hence they are good. But desire should not be taken in the lower sense; it should be an inner urge for something good and great. Education is an upward movement. It should not have debased values. Value becomes something that conserves life, comforts life, promotes and protects life, and fosters peace, order, dignity, beauty and grace. Value helps man gain his self-realisation and his destiny, which is a happy and dignified life. The child has the potentiality to lead a good life, and that potentiality is the value innate in him. It should be brought to the surface which is the teacher's job.

Values are taught everywhere, not necessarily only in the classroom or play fields. We detect eight different types of values in his educational thought: values of recreation, of association, of character, of economic nature, and of aesthetic, intellectual, religious and physical character. Material values are economic values whose necessity is the

motivating factor for all labour. Zakir Saheb would inject the moral element into economic factors. Man should earn his living through fair means, and not through wrong means. In Zakir Saheb's scheme of things, educating India's masses meant educating them to fix their priorities of life. He thought that his work-schools, manual labour and craft skill were the right steps to solve the problems of the land.

Secondly, his concept of individual values took care of such necessities as health, strength, cleanliness, and body upkeep to keep the children happy and cheerful. Good habits, regularity, exercise, nutrition, rest, recreation were all essential for a healthy life. Besides, children should acquire such values as orderliness, decency, decorum, dignity of behaviour, discipline, generosity, helpfulness and compassion as part of their education. To these values he added excellence of character, integrity of purpose, punctuality, regularity, frugality, modesty, sincerity and humility as essential aspects of good education.

Thirdly, along with individual values, he advocated social values, which meant a sense of responsibility one owed to others, a sense of concern and compassion for the poor, a sense of human dignity, a sense of respect for all religions, and a sense of understanding to know the distress of the rejected and the dejected. Zakir Saheb would recommend under social values such concepts as service, sacrifice, tolerance, love, patriotism, nationalism, humanism, solidarity, unity, harmony and cooperation.

Fourthly, Zakir Saheb valued highly the cultural heritage of a society. The appreciation of man's mind, man's intelligence and how he used it to discover better ways of living and to build orderly societies is called culture. Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, faith, belief, art, morals, manners, customs and any other capabilities or habits acquired by man as a member of the society. Cultures take care of those forces, social, political, economic, religious, philosophic, literary and psychological that shape the course of human progress. This cultural ethos

form a rich treasure which becomes the pride of a nation. The importance of its role in the educational sector was greatly emphasised by Zakir Saheb. That is the base on which he desired the entire educational structure should stand.

Fifthly, Zakir Saheb would not ignore spiritual values. Cultures are close to religions. They are almost the product of religions. Religions offer a moral code of conduct which is essential for a good life. Religious spirit and scientific temper both are needed for man's progress. It is rightly said that religion without science is blind, and science without religion is lame. Religion has some special significance in India. Every Hindu house has a *puja* room, every Muslim house has a prayer carpet, every Christian house has an image of Jesus, and every Sikh wears a religious symbol. God is the chief guest in the *puja* room, God is the highest radiance in Muslim prayer, and God is the subject of the Christian sermon. Whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Parsi or Jain, the feeling is the same towards the Ultimate Reality, the cosmic consciousness, the Supreme and the Sublime, who sustains all. Hence, Zakir Saheb desired that religious values should become an integral part of our educational programme.

But this was an extremely sensitive area. India which is a museum of religions would have a problem if religious instruction were to be made compulsory. Religion has not been a unifying force in our country. It has been a divisive force with such potency as to divide man from man. Zakir Saheb, who was every inch a religious man, thought that all our difficulties had arisen because of the wrong interpretation of all great religions. Therefore, for religious values he gave a different character. He highlighted such values of religion as love, sincerity, brotherhood, equality, tolerance, patience, non-violence and truth, which have been the teachings of all great religions. In religion he differentiated the faith part from the moral part. He did not touch the first, and emphasised the second. The true spirit of any religion is love and liberalism which levels down the barriers of caste and creeds, and takes a stand on the bedrock of humanity.

Zakir Saheb elaborated these moral values. He opted for man-making, character-building and value-oriented education. He fixed the destiny of man as that where moral values were ingrained in his bone and marrow. He desired to blend in our national life "power with morality, technique with ethics and action with dedication." He knew the seven sins of our national character which Gandhiji had listed: politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice. Zakir Saheb did not merely preach moral values, he practised them as well. He never deviated from his principle that all development must take place within the framework of life which should be ethically sound, morally correct and spiritually awake to the cosmic design of perfection in everything.

Thus, Zakir Saheb's educational philosophy centres around a sound value system. His material values were organic in nature, as they were needed for the physical growth of man, but his social and cultural values touched the spiritual sphere, which were needed to humanise man. The organic values had biological implications, whereas the cultural values were ethical in character, philosophical in content and spiritual in nature. The organic values nourished the tissues but the moral values touched the soul. The organic values were relative in importance, but the social values were absolute, as they were eternally valid. Zakir Saheb regarded organic values as a means to reach the destiny of social values. He wanted the whole nation to be free from narrow chauvinism, parochialism, sectarianism, linguism, regionalism, casteism and communalism.

Yet another very important aspect of Zakir Saheb's educational thought was the role of the individual in society. Both the individual and the society have a positive responsibility towards each other. The interests of an individual could be best served only in the context of social purpose. Away from his milieu he would be a fish out of water. Both the individual and the society have their own roles to play, and they should interact in a rational and healthy way. Education offers them both the right directions to follow, and if they do

so, they would reach their destiny of a fine culture. The development of human freedom, both qualitatively and quantitatively, is also the destiny of man. Much of Zakir Saheb's creative thought on education was prior to 1947 when India was not yet free. When such thoughts as all history is nothing but the unfolding of the drama of human freedom crossed the mind of Zakir Saheb he reflected deeply on how education could be of help in the struggle for freedom. He was excited by the thought that the essence of the human spirit being freedom, it manifested itself in the concrete form of legal, political, social and religious institution. Every age is a step in the journey towards freedom. Freedom is the reward of right action on the part of both the individual and society. Zakir Saheb desired to cut the colonial consciousness from our mind and conscience, and to inject within us a sensibility that our survival as a dignified nation would depend not merely on our winning of political freedom but also economic, social and cultural freedom which he regarded as more important.

Zakir Saheb had bestowed a good deal of thought on personal freedom. He seemed to agree with Sigmund Freud who said that the liberty of the individual was no gift of civilisation. Man was fully in the state of nature. Slowly civilisation went on putting fetters on him, and he had to lose one liberty after another in exchange for safety and security. He had to obey the law, or else if everyone were to take law into his own hands, chaos would result. The modern democratic state was not a heaven of liberty, but an all-powerful despotism in the hands of a gifted minority, who get a license for a time, to do what it pleases under the pretext of law and order. Such a state was coming closer to Darwin's law of natural selection, where the strong were always destined to rule. The modern governments are militarily so strong that people are forced to be submissive. The military strength and economic wealth have left no choice to the people except to settle their differences through the counting of heads rather than the breaking of heads. The ideal of happiness has not remained constant, and has gone on fluctuating from time to time.

In such a situation, how to preserve individual liberty agitated the mind of Zakir Saheb. He suggested that the

intellectuals should act as a bulwark to avert the danger of the state destroying individual liberty. He had hopes that education would be one of the most effective civilising agents of society, but he was sadly disappointed to see that at a time when it was not possible to introduce even basic structural changes in the educational system, it was too much to expect that education would come to the rescue of the individual in guarding his liberty. It should also be remembered that the liberty of the days when man lived in the state of nature, also had no value. Then also the law of the jungle prevailed, where the weak submitted to the strong: Civilisation gradually used suppression and repression but with a purpose, to protect man. Education was introduced to make everyone aware how much of liberty was to be surrendered in exchange for how much of safety, security and opportunity for a better life. Zakir Saheb thought that the modern state could work out a formula wherein a healthy social relationship between man and man, and political relationship with the authorities could be achieved. He would also agree with a thinker, "We are born into a world where alienation awaits us." This alienation could end only with a conscious awareness that give and take alone would solve our problems.

Thus, Zakir Saheb's value-oriented educational philosophy intended to make man a better man. He should seek knowledge because it gives him light to see this universe in its true perspective. He should use knowledge for social ends because that is the creative process to add substance to the good he has inherited from the past. He should act ceaselessly, intelligently and patiently, because the great aim of education is not knowledge but action. Zakir Saheb's entire educational thought hinges on his dream to evolve a new society, which is yet to come.

The realities of modern life stood in the way of his dream coming true. He could speak of moral values but it was difficult to translate them into action. The rich would become richer, and the poor, the poorer. Zakir Saheb would agree with the great humanist of the Victorian era, John Ruskin, who felt that increase in wealth enhanced inequality. The more a nation produced, the greater was the disparity in the income levels of its nationals. Riches in the prevailing social

set-up meant inequality of possession, for if all were equally rich, the concept of riches would not arise. Some should have much less to make others have more. Ruskin would say, "The force of a guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you." ² The question of privileged and underprivileged disturbed the area of education as well. The elite were better placed to educate their children who would gain superior minds in the course of time, and the poorer section would be denied that opportunity. Since the wealth of a nation is measured in terms of the superior minds it harbours the non-elites would never be able to compete with the elites. Hence, this would result in social tensions. Zakir Saheb's suggestion was that education should be nationalised, and that every child up to the age of 14 should be given the basic education, so that at the base of the pyramid all were equal. The upper strata of education, whether technical, professional or liberal, should be thrown open to competition, and the most merited in the field should receive state support for their studies.

Yet another problem Zakir Saheb faced in the way of his programme attaining success was the attitude of the people towards education. The value system of our education was linked to its capacity to provide sustenance to the learners in their later life. Students went to schools and colleges not for the love of knowledge, but only for getting jobs, and these jobs were also of a degrading type. The Utilitarian concept that education yielded pleasure, and hence it should be acquired, did not appeal to Zakir Saheb. Even John Stuart Mill, the father of the Utilitarian school, did not believe that all pleasures counted equally. The satisfaction of a poet would be different from the satisfaction of a drunkard. Therefore, educational problems were linked with the social problems where the change of mind, the right attitudes and the correct approach to the future of the children were preconditions for any educational reform.

Zakir Saheb considered education to be the process of guided development of the individual and the society in its rational, moral and spiritual capacities. Education would have a formative effect on the mind, character and appear-

ance of an individual. Education is handing down a cultural heritage, values, skills, knowledge and wisdom by means of schools, colleges and other agencies. This process results in the transmission of arts and sciences to posterity, and it also leads to promotion, growth and extension of such capabilities. Education is a purposive activity with the intention of acquiring something worthwhile. In such a situation, Zakir Saheb reflected deeply on Plato's remark that common humanity could be educated according to an ideal that was different from what their society wanted. The masses would get the type of education which would have an ideal different from what the elite would fix for their own children. From a society which is soaked in moral degradation, one cannot expect values of higher order to be indoctrinated into common humanity. Therefore, a microscopic intelligentsia makes separate arrangements for its own progeny. This was happening in India also when the craze for foreign degrees seized a small section of the society. The planners would devise one set of rules for the masses, and another for their own children. Zakir Saheb bitterly opposed this dichotomy in education, and vehemently supported for a common pattern of education for all. He advocated aristocracy of intellect which was gifted to all, and not aristocracy of opportunity which a few would grab.

Zakir Saheb vehemently fought against dehumanised, irrelevant and alienating education. He was all for humanising education, and he would say education was of humanity, by humanity and for humanity. Education is fostering excellences or desirable dispositions, but these dispositions should serve social good. Education which does this is humanised education. Education should have something to do with the improvement of man, or else it would be dehumanised education. Some ideal, some norm, some standard must exist in order to make education relevant. If this aspect is missing, then education would be degraded to the level of the graduate who boasted that he was a B.A. or an M.A. and the wise man retorted, "Sit down, young man, now you learn the rest of the alphabet."

Zakir Saheb wanted not only to humanise but also to socialise education. This process meant disseminating or

transmitting the cultural heritage of a society into as large a segment of its people as possible. This does not mean education is a process to control people or indoctrinate them through the device of making them all appreciate their heritage. It only means promoting a rational, detached and unbiased outlook to appreciate goodness wherever it exists. William James described philosophy as the art of developing alternatives. Zakir Saheb would agree with that view. He was never dogmatic in his field. When Gandhiji suggested a type of work-school, Zakir Saheb developed alternatives to it, keeping in mind the fundamentals. With the concept of freedom in mind, the ceaseless search for better models, and the constant thought process would yield illuminating results in man's progress.

In another respect Zakir Saheb's philosophy of education comes close to Sartre's philosophy of "nihilism". We have to "nihilate" things to nothingness in order to illumine them. The very existence of something provokes the feeling of a change in it, either for good or for bad. People of noble temperaments desire a change for the better, and a few others for the worse. Change is the law of nature and constancy is death. It is the tendency of man to change things from what they are, and many a time that sows the seed for man's progress. If we have an urge to create beautiful things, we have to pull down the ugly. Zakir Saheb's life illustrates the truth of this concept. In 1920, he saw Aligarh in a mess. He rebelled against that order, and came close to Sartre's "nihilism" to produce something new. Jamia was the result. He wanted to study abroad. Britain was the favourite country for others, but the British type of education repelled him. He landed in Germany. The point is that education also needs radical surgery. He incorporated in his scheme of basic education, ideas which were new in India. "Nihilism" is sometimes a positive concept. A child breaks a toy to know how it functions so that in good time, he may improve upon the old models. Such a concept comes close to the Toynbean thesis of withdrawal and return, differentiation and integration, conquest and consolidation, firmness and concillation, which are all opposite forces which help growth. Hegel had also explained the same thing in his thesis, antithesis and

synthesis. In nature, too, we see "nihilism". The seed destroys itself to become a sapling, the flower withers to become fruit. Womanhood does not become motherhood until virginhood is discarded.

In education "nihilism" is to be understood in the sense of transformation. Zakir Saheb's good teacher is not a good teacher until he becomes a child to understand a child's psychology. Zakir Saheb was all along a rebel. He goes to Aligarh to build Jamia. He goes to Germany to study Economics but ends up in Education. He goes to Wardha, but had the boldness to oppose the Gandhian model of the *charkha* school. He calls himself a teacher but loved gardening more. From the Jamia job of a builder, he hops to Aligarh as an administrator. He wins the election to the Presidency, and yet goes to thank Shankaracharya who had campaigned fiercely against him. This is all because of "nihilism" which requires one to kill oneself in order to live in others. He was almost assassinated at Jullundar railway station, and he took it as no surprise in the light of what was happening on the other side of the border. That was the kind of education he wanted to impart to the children of India.

"Nihilism" is required to give value to what we see. Giving and seeing are related to freedom and education. We cannot give anything until we have the freedom to give. A prisoner is not free to give anyone anything. We cannot see anything until we have the light to see and the sight to see. Seeing involves insight, insight is knowledge, knowledge is education, and education has values. Thus, education, freedom and value have inner links, and they are cogs of the same machine. "Nihilism" is its oil; freedom is its kingpin; value is its motivating force; and social good is its destiny. Zakir Saheb would say that if education has to become a part of one's life, one has to sacrifice some other part of his life, for two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Zakir Saheb's philosophy is saturated with the wisdom of the sages past.

In conclusion, we have to say Zakir Saheb's educational thought is extremely fascinating, profound and instructive. He has shown how knowledge, value and freedom are three dimensions of his educational pyramid; how head, heart and

hands are organic elements of his educational structure; how realism, idealism and pragmatism could be beautifully integrated into his educational mansion; and how state, society and individual could become the three sides of his educational triangle. Above all, how the cultural goods of love, goodness, humanity, truth, beauty, justice and honour could be the merchandise with which to stock his educational supermarket.

Zakir Saheb was the most creative thinker of our times in the educational sector. His deep insight and comprehensive vision have gifted to us an extremely useful, progressive and dynamic educational structure which is suited to the genius of India. He conceptualised education as a system which should uplift the moral stature of man. He had a high vision of human destiny which should excite reverence for every individual as a value in himself. He desired education to become a deep commitment as a social function to play the role of an instrument of national development and of social change. It should aim at perfection and excellence in whatever man did.

Zakir Saheb's greatest contribution to educational thought is his philosophy of work. "Psychologically, work relieves the child from the tyranny of purely academic instruction; socially, it breaks the prejudice against manual work; economically it helps in increasing the production; and educationally, it is realistic." He observed, "I have after years of thinking on the subject come to the conviction that work is the only instrument of effective education. It may sometimes be manual work, at others, non-manual work." Zakir Saheb was a realist to prescribe only a reasonable measure of work in his concept of the basic craft of work school. Gandhiji desired the work-experience to be productive enough to meet the cost of maintaining the school, but Zakir Saheb differed from this idea, and worked out only just that much of labour as was required for the mental growth of the child. He recommended a basic cycle of thinking and doing, and doing and thinking through his project method. K.G. Saiyadain rightly observes, "The Jamia was one of the first to try the project method, to develop a community approach in living and learning, to encourage self-government amongst students and train them

for responsible citizenship, to arouse interest in art which did not find any place in the ordinary schools, and above all, to inculcate in the students and the teacher a spirit of idealism and social and national service. The students learnt to realise that education could have objectives other than securing Government jobs after taking a certificate or degree."³

Zakir Saheb was a great moralist, a reformist, a humanist, a nationalist and an optimist who synthesised all his thoughts for the social purpose of pushing India to its destiny of a spiritual renaissance. In this respect he was an idealist who fixed too high a goal for less perfectionists to attain. His idealism did not work, but his concept of a cultural resurgence made a deep impact. The nation got excited by reflecting on its own heritage. In art, philosophy, literature, language, music, morals, manners and higher thought, there was enough to intoxicate with pride any sensitive soul. Zakir Saheb attempted to project these cultural treasures as the most precious assets of the land. Cultural goods were linked to values. Values were the product of well-organised education. Values imposed moral and social responsibilities on individuals. Values would kindle the conscience in man. Such a conscience would enlighten the soul. An enlightened soul would serve the society which was the purpose of education. Ideas, values, individuals, society, states and nation are the basic components of a growing culture, which draws sustenance from man's labour, knowledge and wisdom. In short, values or "cultural goods" formed the very matrix of Zakir Saheb's educational thought.

Education was a mission to Zakir Saheb. From his early life itself he had taken a conscious decision that he would serve the cause of education throughout his life. He considered education as a key factor in improving the lot of the developing nations. He sincerely believed that there was no greater poverty than ignorance, and no greater wealth than knowledge. Even when he was elected as the President of India, he admitted that the nation perhaps had elevated him to the highest office considering him as a teacher. He believed that the destiny of a nation is shaped in the classroom and that the architect of that destiny is the

teacher. It is a known fact that when he was the Governor of Bihar, the Government introduced a Bill which, had it been passed in its original draft, would have affected adversely the autonomy of the State Universities. Zakir Saheb pointed this out to the Chief Minister and ensured that the Bill was suitably amended to safeguard the autonomy of the Universities.

Perhaps nothing brings out better his passionate love for education as also his deep anguish at the way things were shaping during the fateful days prior to partition. On the historic occasion of the Silver Jubilee Function of Jamia in November, 1946, addressing all the great political leaders assembled there he said :

"You are all stars of the political firmament; there is love and respect for you not only in thousands but in millions of hearts. I wish to take advantage of your presence here to convey to you with the deepest sorrow the sentiments of those engaged in educational work. The fire of mutual hatred which is ablaze in this country makes our work of laying out and tending gardens appear as sheer madness. This fire is scorching the very earth in which nobility and humanity are bred; how can the flowers of virtuous and balanced personalities be made to grow on it ? How can we provide adornment for the moral nature of man when the level of conduct is lower than that of beasts ? How shall we save culture when barbarism holds sway everywhere, how shall we train men for its service ? How shall we safeguard human values in a world of wild beasts ? These words might appear harsh to you, but the harshest words would be too mild to describe the conditions that prevail around us. We are obliged by the demands of our own vocation to cultivate reverence for children; how shall I tell you of the anguish we suffer when we hear that in this upsurge of bestiality even innocent children are not spared ? An Indian poet has said that every child that is born brings with it the message that God has not altogether despaired of mankind, but has human nature in our country so lost hope in itself that it wants to crush these blossoms even before they have opened? For God's sake, put your heads together and extinguish this fire ! This is not the time to investigate and determine who

lighted this fire, how it was lighted. The fire is blazing. It has to be put out. It is not a question of the survival of this nation or that nation, it is a question of choosing between civilised human life and the savagery of wild beasts. For God's sake, do not allow the very foundations of civilised life in this country to be destroyed as they are being destroyed now."⁴

IV

National Fervour

Zakir Saheb was a great nationalist, but his nationalism did not conform to the traditional pattern. It went beyond knowing the land, loving the land and serving the land. His nationalism had a value system of its own. Its basis was rationalism. Its spirit was humanism. Its objective was social good. Its ideal was enlightenment. It was an offshoot of his educational and social philosophy which aimed at unifying all our people into one homogeneous whole, and making them an integrated part of a bigger family of the entire humanity. He desired nationalism to be an instrument to evolve a society which would be liberal in outlook, secular in character, rational in approach, tolerant in behaviour and democratic in functioning. His nationalism would eliminate such negative aspects as short-sightedness, self-centredness, despotism, dictatorship, revivalism and fundamentalism, and it would herald the dawn of a new era with such healthy forces as humanism, liberalism, secularism, socialism, universalism and democracy.

Nationalism is a western concept which from the fifteenth century had unified a large number of people of mainly common descent and common heritage, usually inhabiting a territory bounded by defined limits and forming a society under one government. The seeds of nationalism were sown by the British in India. It was only after Macaulay's introduction of the Education Bill in 1835 and the study of Mill's *Liberty* in schools and colleges that a new consciousness of nationalism arose. It is debatable whether even the events of 1857 when the English came close to losing their entire Indian empire, were inspired by nationalism. Undoubtedly, we have a cut off date for the dawn of nationalism in India. It was with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1884. The father of the Congress who

sowed the seeds of nationalism was not an Indian but an Englishman, A.O. Hume. Once nationalism was ignited in the soul of India, it became a blazing flame consuming towns and villages, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, enlightened and ignorant, merchant and peasant.

Indian nationalism soon ran into difficulties. The Congress which was the main agency to win freedom was an omnibus which carried all shades of opinion. The leaders were united in the purpose to eliminate the foreigners, but differed widely in the *modus operandi* to achieve the goal. Some were moderates, some extremists, some socialists some revolutionaries, and some reactionaries, but all of them wanted their own will to prevail. This caused friction. Worse still, it gave an excuse to the colonials to delay the transfer of power. The moderates desired to adopt constitutional methods to win freedom, but the extremists preferred force. The cutting of telegraph wires, removing of fish-plates of railway lines, throwing of bombs and other acts of violence made the British say we were still immature. When Gandhiji injected the non-violent technique of peaceful *Satyagraha*, all accepted and respected that in principle, but with mental reservations. The Swarajists wanted to have their own way, so too the socialists, the communists and the revivalists. The zamindar lobby was also powerful. Those in the services had their own interests. The western educated Indians pulled in a different direction. The big business and the industrialists wanted their interests to be protected. The backward and depressed classes acted as a different pressure group. The anxiety of every group to safeguard its own interests created an impression of divided loyalty to the main cause.

But the most intractable issue of all was the question of Muslim minorities. They were quite sizeable in number, more than a quarter in the all-India picture. They were in the majority in four or five provinces. They suffered from some peculiar complexes. Their assimilation in the mainstream was a problem because of their anxiety to have a separate identity of their own. They acted as a sub-nation within the nation. It was not possible to gain freedom without their cooperation or without solving their problems. Zakir

Saheb's ideas on nationalism are to be assessed in this perspective.

It was Zakir Saheb's firm conviction that the colonials should be first eliminated from our land. This idea had agitated his mind ever since he was a student of Aligarh in the second decade of this century. That was the reason why he wrote as early as 1920 a thought provoking essay on *Eternity or Toy*. It was an outright condemnation of the political thinking associated with the Aligarh Movement. That was the reason why he rebelled against those Muslims leaders who acted as agents of the English. That was the reason why he was one of the first and foremost among the Muslim youths of the land who responded to the call of Gandhiji, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr. Ansari and Maulana Muhammad Ali, who wanted to transform Aligarh into a national centre of learning. When that did not happen, he was again in the vanguard of those who established Jamia. It was he who made Jamia a nursery for national ideas to grow, where he exerted his utmost to make the Muslims join the mainstream of Indian national life.

Zakir Saheb never deviated from the national path, never made compromises with the communalists, and never hesitated to speak freely, fully and frankly to his co-religionists to identify themselves without any inhibitions in the struggle for freedom. He believed sincerely that the history of all humanity was nothing but a record of human struggle for freedom. But there was one great difference between his concept of freedom and the concept of the general Indian public. Whereas the latter thought that winning of political freedom was the be-all and end-all of Indian nationalism, he thought that it was only the beginning and the first step in liberating ourselves from several other bondages. He aimed at not only political freedom but also economic, social, intellectual and cultural freedom. His plan of action included a progressive programme whereby the colonial shackles imposed on the educational sector of our land would be removed ; his anxiety to remove the scourge of ignorance from our land was also an aspect of his struggle for freedom; his zeal to evolve a broad-based educational

system for the masses of India was also a feature of his patriotic fervour; and his sensibility to identify himself with the hopes and aspirations of his people was also a significant part of his nationalism. He was an Indian first, and Indian last. No one could doubt his integrity and loyalty to the land. He loved India passionately. But it was not blind love, like that of an ignorant in things unseen, but the faith of an enlightened soul. His love was based on wisdom and knowledge, reason and logic, how essential it was for all members of the family to stand united. His patriotic fervour concealed a fond hope that he should be an agent to wipe tears from every distressed eye and to remove ignorance from every human soul.

Zakir Saheb belonged to that element of Muslim leadership which stood for a liberal, democratic, secular and composite culture. Muslims have lived with Hindus for centuries together, like brothers in the same land, and he could not understand why they should demand now a separate state. He did not agree that Muslims formed a separate nation. He could smell self-interest in quarters which advocated such views. He refuted all their arguments that Muslims formed a different nation on the basis of their religion. Religion has nothing to do with politics, and it would be a dangerous game if religion was mixed with politics. In politics passions play a vital role. Immediate interests gain preference over long-time benefits. Exigencies of the hour blur the vision, obstructing the nobler objectives. Pressures and pulls push wisdom and understanding to the background. This is what was happening in India. Zakir Saheb as a good teacher exerted his utmost to teach his community the basic lessons of democracy and nationalism. The defiant community would not listen to him, and paid heavily for its intransigence.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism was the product of his mature thought. Being a rationalist, an educationalist, a philosopher and a humanist, he reflected deeply on this concept, analysed all its aspects and formed his own views. Nationalism formed an important principle of his philosophy. He thought loyalty to the land was the first duty an individual owed to himself as the citizen of the country he

belonged to. He proudly declared, "It is out of the earth of this country that we were fashioned and it is to this earth that we shall return." His nationalism was rooted deep in his intellectualism. He firmly believed in the profound thought that the essence of the spirit was freedom, that the theme of world history was freedom, and let alone man, even animals loved freedom. Which bird, which bear would like to be shut up in a cage ? Every age is a step in the journey towards freedom. Zakir Saheb considered the individual mind as a function of social life, and social life would bloom only in a free atmosphere and not in bondage. If an individual is to effectively contribute something to the social good, he should possess something very special, very precious and very intrinsic which pumps all energy to the individual and acts as the driving force. That is his freedom, all sorts of freedom, political, social, economic and cultural. A prisoner in a jail is incapacitated from creative work. Therefore, Zakir Saheb's concept of freedom and nationalism had struck deep roots in his mind and conscience as a result of his study on the individual's role in the society, and the society's role in the nation, and the larger context of humanity.

The best part of Zakir Saheb's life, the creative part, was spent when the nation was under the yoke of foreign rule. Obviously, his mental wave focussed on factors which widened the dimensions of man's liberty. Sartre was right in saying that the mind works hard and fast in a crisis. A sick man appreciates the value of health better, a beggar, the value of wealth, and prisoner, the value of freedom, better. The whole of India was a big prison, and all Indians were getting suffocated under the oppressive rule of the foreigners, particularly when Indians started demanding freedom. Therefore the very nationalism and the concept of freedom of Zakir Saheb, which he linked to his educational philosophy, were all the products of his bitter experience of colonial rule, which found expression both in his writings and speeches. In his educational philosophy, he has made knowledge, value and freedom the three dimensions of his thought process.

A deep study of Zakir Saheb's life would reveal that the main thrust of his thinking was on education and freedom. That was the *raison d'être* for Jamia, and Jamia was the heart and soul of his life. He was the child of the Indian nationalism, and our nationalism before 1947 was all about our struggle for freedom. His educational thought received sustenance from the national movement and his basic education policy revolved around two basic concepts, one, the work-school, and the other, freedom of thought to the child. He could not offer freedom to the child when he himself was not free. Philosophically speaking, education and freedom are two indispensable and fundamental conditions of all creativity in this world. Every act of man that moves the wheels of progress is unique, and every such act needs freedom of thought to perform the deed. Zakir Saheb considered that education without freedom would be a bird in a cage. Education is light and freedom is the motivating force to march. Without freedom, man would be tied down to a pole, unable to move. However brilliant the thought faculty may be, the external constraints would kill the soul of a creative mind.

Freedom of the creative resources of man needs innate potentials as well, or else he would be marching without knowing the direction. The knowledge of direction is education, and the liberty to choose the direction, and the mode of journey, is freedom. Some may walk, enjoying the beauty of the path, and others may cover the journey in a flash, but all need the freedom to choose the mode of journey suited to their own genius. Zakir Saheb felt that in the absence of freedom, education would be reduced to nothingness, just as prior to 1947 the purpose of education had been reduced to just getting a government job. That was why Gandhiji thought of national centres of learning which should be free from governmental control. Zakir Saheb was at once excited by this idea, and worked hard to make Jamia a great success. It became a national laboratory to experiment with education and freedom. In numerous ways, including by writing children's stories, Zakir Saheb attempted to make his ideas on education and freedom relevant, useful, simple and interesting.

It should be remembered that Zakir Saheb was not in politics until India gained freedom. After that also he occupied only ceremonial posts, which carried less power and more prestige. He was an intellectual and not a politician. Politics was a dangerous game to Zakir Saheb, and he never felt at home in it. Politics deals with policy, and a policy is "the blackmail levelled on the fool by the unforeseen" which no wise man would embrace. He was quite aloof from all that was humdrum, never involved actively in it, but examined all aspects intellectually to say that the Muslims did not form a separate nation to demand a separate state. His devotion to national and secular ideals never wavered even during periods of stress and storm. His greatest service was the unifying influence he exerted in the nourishment and sustenance of secularism in India.

Zakir Saheb's life-span covered the pulsating phase of Indian nationalism. He attained maturity at the height of political excitement, when Gandhiji first tested his weapon of *Satyagraha*. The off-shoot of that movement was the concept of national centres of learning with Jamia as its fruit. Jamia became the centre of all that was good and great in our "cultural goods", including nationhood. Our nationalism was to be a new name for our centuries old cultural ethos wherein humanism reigned supreme. Zakir Saheb became the high priest of that humanism to wean the Muslims away from separatist thoughts.

The Muslims had a few reservations in joining the mainstream of national life. They were rooted in the past history of our land. The Muslims had not forgotten the political advantages they had enjoyed as rulers, which created problems for their adjustment in the new set-up. They were caught on the horns of a dilemma. If they reconciled themselves to a united India, they would suffer because of their backwardness in every sector of life. If they did not, they would be dubbed as unpatriotic, sectarian and separatists. Hence, a fear complex seized the Muslims, who were apprehensive that after the British left India, their position would be much worse. They demanded safeguards, which the British should concede and the Congress should guarantee.

Zakir Saheb regarded this as wrong logic. Such a demand had serious flaws in it. It was based on prior distrust of the Hindus whom it was not fair to judge prior to the test. Secondly, it was not fair to demand much more than what was one's due. In a democracy, all were equal, and no one was more than equal. Thirdly, partition of a country was a disastrous concept, which would add to, but not reduce, the misery of at least those Muslims who would be left behind in India. It was strange logic of Jinnah that the sizeable number of Hindus in Pakistan would be the guarantee for the good treatment of Muslims in India. He did not imagine the catastrophe that followed the partition. Fourthly, Zakir Saheb sincerely advocated that Muslims should first be good Muslims before they demanded a Muslims state. His intellectualism had confirmed him in the thought that a good Muslim would never demand Pakistan, for a good Muslim would be a true Indian. He equated a good Muslim with a good Indian. True religion was not an antithesis of true nationalism. The two were identical. Many good Muslims were in the Congress camp. Maulana Azad was a Congress leader. Jinnah himself was once renowned as the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Congress claimed the support of such Muslim organisations as Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, the All-India Shia Conference, the All-India Momin Conference, and the Majlis-e-Ahrar. The Congress claimed that it represented the Muslims as well, but Jinnah would not concede this point.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism would not comprehend what was in Jinnah's mind. Ever since 1921, Zakir Saheb had been imbued in the Congress culture, Gandhiji was his ideal, and Panditji, his hero, whom he respected as the builders of modern India. His refined thoughts saturated in the philosophy of the Sufis and the wisest from Socrates to Gandhiji would not appreciate the power game of Jinnah. The question before Jinnah was not of safeguarding the interests of Muslims all over India, but of winning power and changing the map of India. This was not an easy task as the Congress was determined to defeat his designs. It was a well-organised body with a mature, skilful, enlight-

ened and dynamic leadership. It commanded a powerful Press, a prosperous middle class, wealthy industrialists, big business, well placed officers in the services and so on. Jinnah's only asset was his brain. He thought that unless he demanded a share higher than what could be conceded, he would not get even what possibly could be conceded. In the power game to alter the map of India, he finally settled for what was given. All this was a nightmare to Zakir Saheb whose noble nature could not comprehend what Jinnah had in mind.

It was very strange that Jinnah, who was well versed in Western law and well groomed in western ways of living and thinking became the greatest spokesman of Muslim culture although his knowledge of that culture was nowhere near the Islamic learning of either Zakir Saheb or Maulana Azad or Maulana Mohammad Ali. He was a good lawyer, and a good lawyer's only business was to win a case, no matter what logic he used. Law is social engineering where fabrication is inevitable. But Zakir Saheb was a teacher wedded to his own set of values, whose ethics would not permit a united and unified India with a common culture to be cut into two.

It was again strange that even those who were destined to be Pakistanis did not press for Pakistan. The Hindus did not like Pakistan. The Muslims in many parts of India did not demand Pakistan. The British were not willing to concede Pakistan. It was Jinnah alone who wanted Pakistan. The man whose life was least tuned to Islamic ethos became the father of an Islamic State, while Maulana Azad, the symbol of all that was profound in Islamic learning, and Zakir Saheb, who was the Islamic mind personified opposed the creation of an Islamic State. It was strange again that the fate of Indian nationalism was decided in the Council Halls, in the Legislature Chambers, in the Viceregal Lodge, in Round-Table Conferences, in seminars and the Press, where the exigencies of the hour gained prominence. Our nationalism became a subject of debating skill where mighty issues of the future were decided by the cleverness of the speakers. Our nationalism became a wrestling yard where political shrewdness decided the destiny of the teeming

millions. Nobody bothered about the ultimate good of the country, and no one was inclined to say what was just and right. The heat of the discussions yielded no light at any time. Naturally, sober, mature and reflective persons of the order of Zakir Saheb would not enter that arena of political activity. He was sure that the nation would not listen to his advice. It is a pity that thinkers, philosophers and teachers were not there when the nation's destiny was decided by politicians whose legal and political craft was conditioned more to make war than peace.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism was of a higher order. It was an aspect of his value system. That system was essential for man's mental, physical and spiritual growth. He visualised that our nationalism should be an agency to free our people from economic exploitation, political degradation, social inhibitions and cultural humiliation. It was also to be an instrument of social change where the landlords did not oppress the peasants, the money-lenders did not terrorise the borrowers, and the bureaucrats did not harass the common man. Nationalism is linked to the freedom of man, and freedom was not merely political but comprehensive enough to cover all walks of life.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism meant the elimination of landlords and other feudal elements. It was here that he clashed with the pressure groups of upper middle class Muslims who were all with the League to protect their own vested interests. While opposing the reactionary forces, he did not support the revolutionary elements either, who opposed the reformists and the compromising type of agitation. He was for the Gandhian way of non-violent action which differed from the leftist style of the Congress led by Panditji, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jayaprakash Narayan and others. Their approach was revolutionary which was preached by the Communists as well. If there was a clash outside the Congress between the League and the Congress, there was internal strife within the Congress itself. One group followed Gandhiji, the other, Panditji, a third, Subhas Chandra Bose, and a fourth Jayaprakash Narayan, and so on. Zakir Saheb preferred not to meddle in this confusing division of ideological clashes. He was an

intellectual *par excellence*, a patriot of unflinching loyalty and a great humanist whose main concern was to shed light so that others could see the darker corners of their own pet ideologies.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism intended to unite all Indians against the colonials as also against the indigenous oppressors. The landlords, both Hindu and Muslim, formed an obstacle in the national movement. They became apprehensive of an agrarian revolution, such as had taken place in Russia. The landlords, the princes and the money-lenders were backed by the colonials. But the most important issue of the day was the communal tangle. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity. When the Congress formed Ministries in U.P. to persuade the Muslims to join the mainstream of the national movement, but this programme did not yield good results.

Zakir Saheb reflected on another aspects of the modern age. Industrialisation of India had raised certain serious issues. Modern science and technology, democracy and nationalism had upset old values.. British Liberalism, German Idealism, French Socialism, Russian Communism and American Capitalism, had all entered India, but had not been able to evolve a system suitable to India. The impact of Western thought jammed the Indian mind and created more confusion. In Britain, liberal democratic ideas and socialistic tendencies had crystallised in the emergence of the Labour Party, but when those progressive forces travelled to India, they filtered themselves into such fissiparous tendencies that more confusion was created. When ideas do not find a congenial soil to grow, they do not yield the desired results. This was another aspect that agitated Zakir Saheb. He was of the view that while grafting foreign ideas on to our own traditional values, care should be taken to see that our own base of moral, cultural and spiritual strength was not weakened.

Zakir Saheb opposed revivalism both of the Hindus and of the Muslims. His liberalism did not permit any reactionary forces to emerge. If the Hindus attempted to build Indian nationalism on the Hindu faith, and the Muslims, on the

Muslim faith, a clash would become inevitable. He would say that the nation had already suffered on that score, and had paid a heavy penalty for it. At least now, let us read the writing on the wall, and avoid the mistakes of the past. Because of the Muslim revivalism in the pre-partition days, a catastrophe had befallen the land. He would remind us of the lesson of history that those who ignored it would be condemned to re-live it. His simple formula was to regard political freedom as an effective instrument for the nation building programme, in which everyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, would be benefited.

Zakir Saheb as an educationist wanted our nationalism to be an agent of change for the better at all levels of the society, and in all segments of the society. Among all these segments, the Muslims segment was the most difficult to change. They were steeped in traditionalism and nationalism was a concept of modernity. Ever since the time of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan a serious debate had been going on among Muslims on modernity and traditionalism. Sir Syed had attempted to reconcile the Muslim mind to modernity even in such areas as religion, faith and belief. He had simplified the concept of modernity as that which relates to rationalism and scientific outlook, discarding dogmas and supernaturalism. Modernity insists on a fully integrated human personality. It makes a distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values. It promotes ceaseless creativity of values rather than conservation of values. Modernity believes in the running brook of new ideas rather than in the cesspool of old ideas. Zakir Saheb's nationalism leaned more on this kind of modernity in his thought process. But the Muslim community steeped in the old ideas, would not change for the better.

Zakir Saheb desired that nationalism should help our society in the crystallisation of new values. Our nationalism should give a helpful response to the technological processes of the Western civilisation that were penetrating our value system. Everything in them was not good, but quite a lot was good. We have to be selective in taking the good, and rejecting the bad. The Muslim community had more inhibitions in this regard. That was why he did not want

an exclusive, insular and isolated society. A separate state for Muslims would make them more insular. Nationalism, he thought, had offered the Indians a fine opportunity to meet, mix, share and work together for the common good of all. Nationalism was to be integrated in the broad context of humanism and secularism, and not revivalism and fundamentalism. Increasing secularism would close up the divide which religion generates between man and man. Secularism was the key to a composite culture and it was ideally suited to Indian conditions where several cultural groups were proud of their possessions and desired to retain their identities. Nationalism would be a cementing bond to weld them together in a homogenous whole. Zakir Saheb fostered such a concept of nationalism. Zakir Saheb's nationalism did not mean rejection of old values. He thought that the creation of new values and the retention of the old, which have withstood the test of time, both were essential. Secularism was the agency for the protection of the old values and the promotion of new ones. Humanism, which stood for the social good of all, was the purpose for which both values should exist. Thus, Zakir Saheb would link nationalism, secularism and humanism in one chain as different units of his new value system. Eternal and intelligent vigilance was required to obtain the best out of these new values, which were a mixture of modernism and traditionalism.

The same crystallisation process agitated Zakir Saheb's mind when he reflected on the pulls of democracy and theocracy, secularism and fundamentalism, and modernity and traditionalism. The average Indian Muslim appeared to him a split personality, and Zakir Saheb desired to help him to integrate himself. He wanted him to find a place in Indian nationalism. Many did not respond to his call, but he was very firm that an integrated personality was required to appreciate Indian nationalism. The push of science, the pull of reason and the love of the land were rousing a new spirit in all, but the Muslims were living in a land of their own illusion, of past glory. Zakir Saheb did his best to open the eyes of the Muslims to see the light of the day, but they refused to do so.

There were some historical reasons for the Muslims' intransigence. Nationalism was an ideology with which Indian Muslims had some problems in adjusting as Islam does not recognise national boundaries. It was the Khilafat call that had excited them more than the call for national liberation from colonial rule. The majority could not appreciate this sentiment. Zakir Saheb did not subscribe to the view that Muslims should have extra-territorial loyalties. Nowhere in his speeches or writings do we have any reference to an advocacy that pan-Islamism was in the interest of the Muslims. His nationalism stood for progressive ideals. When he found the Muslims steeped in ignorance, he devoted all his time to help them in education as he regarded that also as an essential aspect of national service.

The Muslim intransigence should also be viewed in the light of a few other issues. A serious debate was going on among Muslims whether they should first join the mainstream of Indian nationalism and fight with others to remove the colonials, and then sort out their problems with the majority community, or stand aloof for a while from the main current in order to reconstruct their economic, social, cultural and educational position, and bring them on par with the majority community, and then enter the political arena. The Aligarh school of thought which had a grip over the majority of the Muslims preferred the latter course, but a small band of Muslims led by Zakir Saheb opted for the former course. In the race between the two camps, the majority view prevailed. In other words, the historical rivalry of Aligarh and Jamia persisted until the partition days, and the two seemed to stand poles apart. Zakir Saheb being an educationist and humanist, and not a trained lawyer or a politician, could not stand the machinations of the Aligarh camp.

There was one more reason for the Muslims' intransigence. Unlike the Hindus, the Muslims had a strong sense of history, which was both a positive factor and a negative one. The Muslims had not forgotten their past in India. They had given the concept of a strong, centralised and unified government. They had brought about a new social order which had reduced the rigidity of the caste system and had

promoted art, craft and the growth of urban life. They had contributed much to the cultural life in respect of language, literature, religion and philosophy, and they had been instrumental in the building of numerous palaces, tombs, mosques, gardens, forts, fountains, roads, bridges and a host of other things. The Muslims felt proud of having made these contributions.

All this had happened because of one more powerful factor—their political hegemony in the land. They clung fast to the memory of the past. That was their comfort, solace and joy. But its negative element soon depressed them. Would they be able to repeat their performance in the future as well? It was good to know they were once rulers, but what are they now? History began to sting their conscience. They became lifeless. The future prospects made them more miserable. In this confusion they lost their balance. They judged things from a lower logic. For so long, they had been British subjects; tomorrow they would be Hindu subjects. They did not think that freedom meant freedom for all. That they would also be partners in the common concern. That they would also be the sharers of the same joys and sorrows of the nation. That they would also be members of the same family. It was Zakir Saheb who gave this sane advice.

Unfortunately, apart from Zakir Saheb, there were other tutors of the Muslims, to whom a higher logic did not appeal. They misguided the Muslims. They glorified the past with the hope that they could revive the past. They forgot the fact that history is more often linear than cyclical. It does not repeat itself exactly in the way people desire. It was only Zakir Saheb, Maulana Azad, Ajmal Khan, Ansari, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and such other nationalists who knew what was in the best interest of the Muslims. But they were in the minority. The majority led by Jinnah excited the Muslim masses by wrong psychology. They were not aware of Montesquieu's dictum, "Don't cut a tree to get at the fruit." They did not know Sartre's saying, "Sacrifice is the seed of new life." They ignored the Sufi teachings, that you have to kill yourself in order to live in God. For short-time benefits they sacrificed the future. It is for such occasions an Urdu poet says

that history has seen that phase also when mistakes are done in moments but punishment is for centuries.

تاریخ کی نظروں نے وہ دور بھی دیکھا ہے
لمحوں نے خطا کی ہے صدیوں نے سزا پائی

The reactionaries sheltered themselves in one of the traditions of Islam, where the concept of nationalism does not exist. Islam claims that all people of all races and of all countries, whether Semetic, Hemitic, Negro, Iberian, Caucasian, Iranian, Turanian, or Indian were all members of the same family, and should be treated as such on the basis of the faith. Islam does not insist on habitation within defined geographical limits to recognise people as sharers of a common political life. This gave a handle to the separatists to demand a separate state, although the same logic could have been used to 'demolish the demand as Islam does not insist on geographical boundaries. Nationalism did not exist at the time Islam came into existence, and Islam does not prohibit Muslims from adopting any useful concept. At a time when the whole world was entranced by nationalism and even when poet Allama Iqbal, who subsequently became the father of Pakistan, had burst out, "You consider a stone idol as your God, but to me every particle of the dust of this land is Divine,"

پتھر کی مورتی کو سمجھا ہے تو خدا ہے
خاک و طن کا مجھ کو ہر ذرہ دیتا ہے

the Muslims were harping that nationalism was outside the pale of Islam. Zakir Saheb realised this serious flaw in the Muslims' thinking, and he attempted to rectify it to the best of his ability. His difficulty was that he was not a political activist. He was only a thinker and a teacher who had no sanction to impose his will on others.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism had to answer one more serious problem of the Muslims—their economic backward-

ness. Their poverty was increasing in proportion to their population. Poverty, ignorance, superstition, apathy and ill-wealth had added to their misery. Many of the measures the British had adopted had adversely affected the Muslims. The permanent settlement of Cornwallis, the political unification of India, the land reforms, the administrative changes, the educational policy, the judicial, industrial, commercial, and all other reforms the British introduced in India had helped the majority community more. Zakir Saheb analysed that this was due to the Muslims not keeping pace with the Hindus in the educational sector. That was the reason why he dedicated his whole life to the cause of educating the Muslim masses. The Muslims needed greater attention in this regard. Aligarh was paying no attention to mass education. Jamia took up that responsibility. Educating the Muslim masses did not mean making them graduates. Their basic education was to be taken care of. For this purpose Zakir Saheb thought of the adult literacy programme. It had considerable local success. Its greater significance was its national character, where the objective was to train people to be good citizens, and not to merely seek government jobs. In these adult literacy campaigns, the need was emphasised for all to live in amity and concord, and to make them aware of the elementary features of our culture, its unity, diversity, continuity, flexibility and humanity.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism is reflected in his educational thought. A Muslim would not be a good Muslim unless he was a true Indian. Being a true Indian, he would not cease to be a good Muslim. Islam does not stand in the way of its followers becoming good Indians. Addressing a gathering in Kerala, he explained the point with reference to his own personal life. He said every inch of his body was Muslim, and that every inch of the same body was Indian as well. It is like a man having filial bonds ; the same man could be the father of someone or brother or husband or friend or son of someone, and there would be no conflict in those relationships. So also, the faith of a man need not have any apprehensions of conflict with such a noble sentiment as nationalism. The social ethics of Islam and

the guiding principles of nationalism were identical. The human ideal in both is the same social good. Therefore, according to Zakir Saheb there was no conflict between Islam and nationalism. His great contribution was his reconciliation of traditional cultures with modernity. He would accept modern science and technology, industrialisation and urbanisation, new ways of thought and living, inventions and discoveries, and all the other paraphernalia of the modern age, and graft them on to the traditional cultures of the past. But while doing so, he would not blindly accept anything either of the past or of the present unless he filtered it through the screen of reason. He would take whatever good came through.

Zakir Saheb's nationalism was the outcome of his intellectual exercise. It occurred to him that the Muslim leadership under the guise of protecting Muslim interests was not progressive enough to think of the larger interests of the community. The Congress ideology appeared to him to be very sound. It stood for democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism, which would serve the interests of all. The Congress would not deny the Muslims their due, although it was not willing to give them more than their due. It did not like separate electorates, safeguards, reservations, guarantees, weightage and so on, which in the context of equal rights, justice and fair play seemed to tilt the balance more in favour of the minorities. Moreover, the Congress was anxious to remove the colonials first and then sort out the internal problems of adjustment. The Congress had a national character of its own, which it was not prepared to give up. The League, on the other hand, insisted on reservations in the Legislatures, in the Cabinets and in the services. Zakir Saheb thought that the Muslims should first deserve a thing and then desire it and that they should first improve their social, cultural and economic conditions before they plunged deep into politics. It occurred to him that the partition of a country where millions of souls had lived together for centuries was not a correct proposition. He advocated cooperation and not competitiveness, concord and not discord, unity and not division. The League argued in a different way: since democracy

means majority rule, the Muslims would ever be condemned to remain subordinates, and would never be able to form their own government at the Centre. The British were inclined to listen to the Muslims. Why not ask for safeguards? The British had conceded separate electorates, reservation of seats in the Legislatures and also in the services. They had recognised the special status of the Muslims giving them even veto power to any possible solution to the tangled affair. But the only tragedy was that the Muslims did not realise that the British had done all this not out of love for the Muslims but to serve their own imperial interests. It was Zakir Saheb who could infer that this game was only to checkmate the nationalist demand for self-government by raising the bogey of "first solve the communal divide."

Zakir Saheb grew more perturbed after the 1937 elections to the provincial assemblies where the political situation became more complicated. The Congress won a massive majority in eight provinces, and the League, in none. The resulting controversy over Muslim representation in the Cabinets acted as a communal virus which destroyed all hopes of a united India. The Congress would take only such Muslims members on the Cabinet who subscribed to the Congress ideology. It meant the League had no right to nominate any of its members. This was a serious issue and that sowed the seeds for the demand for Pakistan. In U.P., the Congress invited Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman to join the Cabinet without consulting Jinnah, on terms which would have dissolved the League. Jinnah was furious. R.C. Majumdar writes, "The Muslims now fully realised that as a separate community they had no political future. The Congress ultimatum was the signal for the parting of ways which by inevitable stages led to the formation of Pakistan."¹

Zakir Saheb was a teacher and not a politician to offer any solution. As an intellectual he would argue that orthodox parliamentary systems required joint responsibility where unity of ideology and mutual trust were absolutely essential for smooth functioning. If the League members retained their League identity, it would be a

coalition government, which is formed only in exceptional circumstances. When the Congress had a massive majority in the House, it had every right not to resort to a coalition government. This is the legal position, but in the circumstances of the time when much more was at stake from the national point of view perhaps the Congress could have been more considerate. But Zakir Saheb did not think that the heavens would fall if the Muslim ministers subscribed to the Congress ideology. He seems to be right in such a thought because an experiment was made later in the Interim Government of 1946, and we know what its outcome was.

Jinnah was a leader who would not let history ignore him. He gave new life to the dead League. A society in a desperate situation surrenders itself to a domineering man. He exploited fully the sensitive policies of the Congress ministry. The Muslim mass contact programme, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the promotion and postings of Muslim officers in the services, the Wardha Scheme of education, the tenancy legislation, the Congress flag, "Bande Mataram," all were blown up to the sky to evolve the cry, "Islam is in danger." Jinnah used the most powerful trump card in his pack to defeat the Congress. He started using religious vocabulary for the first time. He promised political power which "the Quran had promised to them and which their forbears had wielded in India." The Muslims got intoxicated.

Apart from Jinnah, Zakir Saheb had to confront two more forces which stood in the way of Muslim nationalism. They were the U.P. Muslim zamindars, and the educated Muslims in the services, who acted as powerful pressure groups in frustrating the dream of a united India. The zamindars were apprehensive of the Congress which desired to do away with feudalism. The League which was supported by the zamindars exploited the situation. The British had favoured them by reserving for them 30 per cent of seats in provincial, municipal and local bodies. In the services too their children found entry because of their Western education. By careful formation of family trusts, they had successfully retained their landed property;

through education, they got good jobs; and through political pressure they enjoyed good influence in the ruling circles. When the Congress came to power in 1937 all this was in danger. Zakir Saheb was all alone against such mighty forces.

In conclusion, we can say that Zakir Saheb's nationalism must be viewed in the context of his intellectualism. He was not an activist in the political arena to translate his thoughts into deeds. He is to be judged from what he thought, said and wrote. He was not a theorist of any particular brand to be characterised as an extremist or moderate or revolutionary or reactionary. He was a nationalist with a value system of his own. He based his nationalism on his rationalism. It was to yield humanistic results. It was to make his compatriots better human beings. It was to stimulate them to high ideals of unity and harmony. Its operational method was through knowledge and learning, and its objective was to create a happy, integrated, and united India.

But Zakir Saheb rose out of the debris of a despondent community which was crushed under the heel of false pride, prejudice, ignorance and superstition. He had to sail against the current, as his co-religionists blackmailed him as a deserter to the Muslim cause. He had to suffer enormously to sustain his national spirit which acted as an adverse factor even for building up his Jamia. He was a staunch nationalist and a loyal Congressman which isolated him from his community. Yet he was the only Muslim leader who had the vision to work for educating the masses of India in the medium of their mother tongue. His educated men were to be creative, cultured and committed citizens to perform social good, and not seek government jobs. He did not want them to perpetuate colonial rule. If that rule were to end, he did not want them to be subordinates in a massive governmental machinery just to oil its different parts. He wanted them to be dignified and useful citizens of the land engaged in creative endeavours.

Zakir Saheb was a nationalist, Indian first, Indian last. He never compromised with the British. He fought for their

elimination from the land. He joined the mainstream of the Indian struggle for freedom. He rebelled against the Aligarh movement. He left his *alma mater*, and came away to Delhi to build his Jamia. He never took a paisa from the Government. He suffered and sacrificed his all for Jamia. Whereas Sir Syed's policy ultimately led to the partition of the country, Zakir Saheb's policy proved a healing balm to the suffering psyche of the Muslims who were left behind in India. Zakir Saheb had the heart to feel for the misery of man. In an address to the graduates, he reminded them that if the wretched conditions of the Indians, their poverty, hunger, ignorance, sorrow and suffering were to be kept in view, "you will not be able to sleep well." He would exhort them, "life is a mission; life is service; life is worship. In order to perform this mission, and to meet the obligations of this worship, you have to hunt and search for your natural potentialities, and bring about harmony and balance in them. It would be necessary to strengthen them and make them everlasting by purifying them in the candid fire of thought and by beating them with your sincere hammer of action."²

Zakir Saheb's nationalism had pitched its target too high, and it touched humanity, and not this nation or that nation. His job was to teach that nationalism was too sacred a sentiment to be taken lightly. It should be a cementing bond to unite people. It should be a healing balm to remove any malady. It should be a unifying and pacifying force to regard everyone in the land as a member of the same family. Every nation has to add something to the entire heritage of mankind. Europe had given nationalism. France had gifted Socialism. Britain has added Liberalism, America, Capitalism and Russia Communism. Like Panditji, Zakir Saheb wanted India to gift mankind, humanism, secularism, universalism and an exquisite model of composite culture.

Knowing the rich heritage of the past it was not difficult to expect this from India's genius. It had a culture that was 5000 years old with a breath-taking record of several luminaries. It was the land of Buddha and Mahavira, Asoka and Akbar. Kabir and Nanak, Vivekanand and Tagore,

Gandhiji and Panditji. It was a land where the sublimity of man's intellect had touched Himalayan heights in religion and philosophy, art and literature, society and politics, and in creative ventures of every type. The currents of India thought had cut across the barriers of time, region and race to excite interest at the global level. The parameters of Indian traditions being intellectual and spiritual, Zakir Saheb was very keen that its nationalism should become the instrument to reconcile the irreconcilable. It should be an agent to absorb every shade of thought, to assimilate every type of culture and to accommodate every variety of faith. Its unity, its diversity, its continuity, its flexibility and its humanity could become the hallmarks of an exquisite pattern of culture. This is the destiny Zakir Saheb set before the nation, and that is the outcome of his thoughts on nationalism. His optimism made him declare, "it is my firm faith that it is India's destiny that the blending of different types of mankind would create a new Adam who would evolve a new culture."³

V

Humanistic Trends

Zakir Saheb was a great educationist and a nationalist, but he was greater as a humanist. The gentleness of his mature mind, the compassion and love of his tender heart, the humanism and liberalism of his inner soul, and the simplicity, purity and nobility of his life mark him out as one of the finest flowers of the Indian renaissance. Among the illustrious souls of India who nourished a perfectionist conscience in the quest of new humanism and peace, Zakir Saheb's name too would find a prominent place. His significant contribution was his 'life-long commitment to the promotion of new attitudes and values in the society, to the dissemination of knowledge and culture among all segments of the land, and to the pursuit of excellence in his soul. Life was a mission to him where his humanism took concrete shape in his quest for knowledge and in his search for the higher values of life. His humanism aimed at unifying all mankind into one family. He regarded the whole world as his country ; the whole of Bharat as his home, and the whole of humanity as members of his family.

His humanism found expression in his love of beauty. Beauty of nature, of hills and dales, rivers and brooks, meadows and fields, plants and trees, all would excite his great interest. He loved beauty in things from flowers to stones, poetry to calligraphy, music to painting, and from children to animals. He would not only appreciate beauty, but also create beauty, and perpetuate beauty. The artistry and the creativity of the universe, the perfection and order in the system, the uniqueness and excellence in things, would all create a renaissance of wonder in his heart, which found beautiful expression both in his writings and his speech.

Yet another aspect of his humanism was love. "Love is not a passing sentiment or a feeble emotion, but an attitude of life, involving the mind, feeling, and will, strong, deep and enduring." Love is the motivating force for all creativity in the universe. Love purifies the soul from earthly temptations. Love is the manifestation of the Divine Absolute in man. Love is the appreciation of beauty. It is a movement towards the idea of perfection. It reveals the inner relation to reality. It resolves differences between man and man. It prompts respect for man. It fulfils the destiny of man. It confers peace, comfort and happiness to man. Zakir Saheb's humanism was based on such concepts of love. His aim was to synthesise the cultural heritage of mankind. His goal was the assertion of human dignity and the happiness of all humanity.

Zakir Saheb's humanism took him from beauty and love to service and sacrifice, which promote knowledge, deepen wisdom, enhance beauty, increase love, strengthen virtue and improve understanding. Service transforms love into reality. Service is the objectified form of all other virtues. The hand that helps is holier than the lips that pray. Where the service concept was absent in a society, that society would not prosper. All progress would spring from mutual cooperation and help. Service and help were the cardinal principles of Zakir Saheb's humanism. Zakir Saheb's humanism was the product of the wisdom of the past. He had drawn freely from all. The Greek reason, the Buddhist patience, the Hindu liberalism, the Christian compassion, the Islamic brotherhood, the Sufi love, the Arabic diction, the Indian intelligence, the Persian refinement, the German idealism and the Western pragmatism, had all gone to shape his humanism. He would say life did not rotate on the axis of pleasure or pain; it rotated on the axis of progress or decay. Profit or loss should not be the consideration of life; it should be the improvement of the self. Self-seeking and self-aggrandisement should not be the goal of man; it should be service and sacrifice. He would excite people to be up and doing, for there would be sleeping enough in the grave. He would remind us. "Work sits in judgement on itself with the strictures of an enemy

and when it passes the test, it yields joy unparalleled and unsurpassed. Work is worship."

Let us reflect a little on the theme of humanism. It stands for certain values. They are the assertion of human dignity, the sentiment of a common ideal of universal brotherhood, the concept of the unity of mankind, the recognition of man's right to free development, respect for his labour, faith, strength and intelligence, and the understanding that nothing is greater than man himself. The basis of humanism is the righteous liberalism that the whole of humanity is one great family. It is the essence of all great religions of the world ; it is the spirit of all saints, sages and Sufis; and it is the teaching of all thinkers, philosophers and reformers. It is a movement from traditionalism and fundamentalism towards universalism and secularism. It is an attempt to synthesise the finest elements in every culture. The sociological purpose of man, the philosophical essence of the mind, the biological necessities of life, the intellectual urge of the wise, and the moral, ethical and spiritual essence of the soul, when churned in man's melting pot of hope for a better society, yield humanism. Zakir Saheb prayed that India would wake into that realm of humanism.

His humanism manifested itself in several ways. In the sociological purpose of man he desired to remove inequities in our social system as pertained to the domain of his interest. There was a dichotomy between intellectual and manual labour in our country. The upper class of leisure and culture received education but refused to work with their hands. The masses who received little or no education worked their fingers to the bone. This led to disparity not only in incomes but also in social status. The upper strata had almost become parasites.

Zakir Saheb thought that in a truly democratic society, the distinction between intellectual and manual work must go. The dignity of working with one's hands must be recognised. Everyone must receive his full due and also be respected. It was to create a new social order of his type that Zakir Saheb involved himself so seriously with the system of basic education, where some form of socially productive work became the central point in the process

of education. Such a scheme of education would make no distinction between the elite and non-elite.

Secondly, Zakir Saheb thought that the exploitation of the masses by the privileged few should stop. There must be a radical change in the attitude of people towards work. The old tradition in human affairs was that a person who had a special gift or power in him would feel superior, and would exploit others. Zakir Saheb thought such a person should hold his talent or skill as a trust from God, and help others. This was a part of his social philosophy which he attempted to disseminate to the best of his ability. It is difficult to change human nature, but he exerted his utmost to foster the concept of concern and compassion for the poor. As a teacher, the burden of his labour was to stress the dignity of man and the need for social service to remove human distress. This was the subject of his exhortation on all occasions. He would emphasise basic social values whose main thrust was to work for a social order in which the weakest and the lowest had the same dignity as the strongest and the highest.

Thirdly, Zakir Saheb felt that the sociological purpose of humanism was linked to a moral law. No people or nation could live and prosper outside the moral law, which required justice and equity in order to remove subjection and exploitation. Zakir Saheb's concept of the new society came close to Gandhiji's idea on *Sarvodaya* where discipline and self-control would lend support to peaceful democracy. He thought that democracy and non-violence were two concepts which were of supreme importance to world peace. He felt that on the broader synthesis of democracy and non-violence would depend "the survival of our civilisation and our composite human culture in the march towards a greater destiny of India and of mankind."

Zakir Saheb had great faith in non-violent action. Using non-violent action as an instrument people had achieved many things in the past. They had won great victories, had changed governments, had frustrated invaders, had paralysed empires, had dissolved dictatorship, had broken social barriers and had gained economic equality. The Plebeians in ancient Rome were victorious over the Patricians through

non-violent action. The Dutch War of Independence, the bloodless Revolution of England, the Bhakti movement in India, the Sufi trend in Islam, the Christian philosophy of love, the Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina faith in *ahimsa*, were all based on non-violent action. And above all, the Indian experiment of winning independence from the British proved beyond doubt that moral force was more powerful than physical force. The political power of a Government depended on a delicate balance of support from the base, and once that support was withdrawn by the political will of the people, the Government would fall. Non-violent action was surely an aspect of humanism which Zakir Saheb emphasised greatly.

Another aspect of our social and political life connected with humanism was secularism, which was again a product of our cultural ethos, which Zakir Saheb wanted to be imbued into the conscience of every Indian. Secularism is non-sectarian, non-dogmatic, non-ritualistic, non-traditional and non-religious humanism. It accepts unity in diversity and identity in multiplicity. It allows full and free scope to every segment of the society to develop its cultural heritage. It is not an authoritarian concept, but an accommodative one. It is not a competitive idea to prove the superiority of one culture over the other, but a cooperative spirit to regard all cultures as branches of the same tree. It is not an exclusive or insular approach to problems but a broad-based concept to allow all patterns to exist. It is an attempt to evolve a composite picture like a mosaic or a tapestry into which all elements would be integrated. In other words, it was a liberal concept which accepted the diverse faiths—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and so on—all to exist side by side, and enrich the glory of India. It advocated an open society in which there was room for all religions, regions, languages, cultures, customs or any other capability.

Secularism was greatly emphasised by Panditji, and Zakir Saheb did his utmost to help it strike deep roots in India.

Religious bigotry and caste rigidities were not the only two aspects against which Zakir Saheb's humanism made

him launch a campaign. They are not the only two divisive factors in our country. Wealth and power, language and region, ideologies, economic imbalances, social inequities, cultural disparities, educational opportunities, have all been powerful divisive factors. The elite and the non-elite, the employers and the employees, the rich and poor, the backward and the forward, the majority and the minority, the modernist and the traditionalist, have all become pressure groups pulling in opposite directions. In the political sphere, ideologies, whether Socialism, Revivalism, Conservatism, Liberalism, Communism, communalism, have all divided us into segments. In this tug of war, the binding rope of national integration runs the risk of snapping at any time. These distinctions become a barrier to progress. They sow the seeds of isolationism, exclusiveness, disintegration and separatism. Zakir Saheb would offer only the platform of humanism for them to fraternise. He carried on an intensive campaign to convince all sections of the society to ignore the trivialities, to minimise the area of disagreement and enlarge the area of agreement, so that a beautiful and great nation could again be on the right track of progress.

Humanism implies sensitivity to the sorrow of others. Zakir Saheb would agree with Schopenhauer that each one of us must bear all the sufferings of the world as our own. He spent the best part of his life, over 20 years, at Jamia, facing stupendous problems under the most trying circumstances, but he never felt frustrated or dejected. Every difficulty would draw the best out of him and he would provide the required motivation and a creative sense of direction. Although he remained away from the rough weather of active politics, he was deeply influenced by Gandhiji. He believed like Gandhiji that mud could never be washed with mud ; it could be done only with clean water. Darkness could never be removed by darkness ; it could be done only by light. Hatred could never end hatred ; only love could end hatred. No bitter words ever escaped his lips even about those who almost killed him in 1947 at Jullundar railway station. Purity of thought, purity of action and purity of purpose were the main principles of his humanism.

The purpose of his humanism was to build a happy, healthy, peaceful, creative and enlightened society. He desired to make the whole of Bharat a "worthy home for a great people engaged in the fascinating task of building up a just and prosperous and graceful life."¹ This great task demanded selflessness and sacrifice such as any mother could offer to her children or the father to his family. Man is the reflex of the Divine Being, and he is the master of his destiny. If he intended to attain an enlightened destiny he should perceive goodness everywhere, beauty in all things, and nobility in all souls. He would agree with Emerson, "Every man I meet is my superior in some way. In that I learn of him." Happiness was to be sought not in objects but in service. Every man is capable of leading a happy life provided he understands that he exists for someone else. Zakir Saheb has elaborated this point. He says that even in the animal kingdom, and also in the inanimate world, everything is for everything else, and nothing is for itself. The candle burns itself to give light to others. The firewood glows into flames to cook food for others. The tree stands in the sun to give shade to others. It does not deny shade even to the woodcutter. The cow grazes on the grass to give milk to others. The sun shines to give heat and light to others. It is only man who is different. Brutus eats his dinner at Caesar's table tonight and puts a dagger into his back tomorrow. Zakir Saheb has reflected deeply on the nature of man, and has suggested only humanism as the remedy for most of his diseases.

Zakir Saheb's humanism is active and not passive. It believes in dynamism and action. He was himself a man of action. It is the law of dynamics that has produced the wonders of the modern age, helping man to land on the moon. Zakir Saheb believed that man could lead a good life only when he faced the challenges of life boldly and successfully. He would channelise man's actions in the right direction. He would, like a Sufi, be at war with himself to overcome his shortcomings. He was silent when words hurt others. He was patient when others were curt to him. He was deaf to scandals. He was thoughtful to the woes of others. And he practised the virtues he preached to others. He sought

those things which are eternally the best. He was dedicated to the service of man. He rushed into a storm to save others from drowning. At a time when Jamia itself was in danger of attack from the refugees, Zakir Saheb arranged relief camps to relieve the distress of others. Jamia itself was the result of his sweat and tears and blood. Aligarh was in a crisis ; he rushed there to set things right. Patna politics was in trouble ; he went there to resolve the strife. His election to the Presidency heralded the brewing of a storm ; he responded to the challenge gracefully. As the President, he was a unifying force to the divergent elements in the party. Everywhere, because of his humanism, he was a pillar of strength, a wise counsel, a trusted guide and a moral force. His essential good nature, nobility and sincerity sustained the inner strength of the nation. His tactful way of handling things would remove any rift. He sincerely believed in the dictum, whether in the case of individuals or nations, that self-sacrifice and selflessness provide the only unfailing guidance to freedom and happiness. Zakir Saheb suffered all his life in some way or other. Sorrows and sufferings would strengthen his soul, and he would be motivated to greater action. He was a humanist with a passionate love for mankind, with an intense desire to serve his fellow beings, and with infinite compassion for all living creatures.

Having examined some aspects of Zakir Saheb's humanism, it may be interesting to compare him with some other great humanists of our land such as Tagore, Gandhiji, Panditji, Maulana Azad and Allama Iqbal. Both Tagore and Zakir Saheb were lovers of beauty. Both were the products of the Indian renaissance, which had witnessed three main movements, the socio-religious movement, the literary movement, and the national movement. Both were visionaries, so much so that Zakir Saheb called himself a nightingale of a garden which was yet to come into existence. Both were great lovers of humanity, apostles of peace, and votaries of universal brotherhood. Zakir Saheb agreed with Tagore, "from now onward, any nation which takes an isolated view of its own safety will run counter to the spirit of the New Age, and know no peace. From now onward, the anxiety that each country has for

its own safety must embrace the welfare of the world."² Both raised the dignity of man to the level of "man universal". Both reflected deeply on man, on nature, on the universe and its creator. Both conceived of a new social order by the synthesis of the Eastern and Western cultures. The East had harmonised life with nature, and the West had subjugated nature for man's benefit. One was idealism, and the other pragmatism. Both wanted the Eastern spiritualism to blend with Western rationalism. Both wanted knowledge, skill and wisdom to help man reach his destiny, and that destiny according to Tagore was to prove that "the truth of the universe is human truth." The theme of many stories that Zakir Saheb wrote for children is the same which Tagore summed up in his poems : "He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower and his garment is covered with dust. Put off the holy mantle and even like him come down the dusty soil."³ There is close identity of thought between Zakir Saheb and Tagore. If Tagore was a poet of human joys and sorrows, Zakir Saheb was the high priest of human feelings and pathos.

Gandhiji was a humanist *par excellence*. Zakir Saheb was greatly influenced by him, and had implicit faith in his ideals. Gandhiji's humanism was based on truth. He said truth led humanity directly to God, for God is truth, and truth is God. Zakir Saheb provided the means to seek truth. It was knowledge which illumined the path of truth. Truth is the destiny, and knowledge is the guide to that destiny. Gandhiji not only spoke of truth, but also marched on the path of truth, and laid the path to find the truth. That was why as early as 1920 he thought of national centres of learning, and Jamia was one of the first fruits. Both Gandhiji and Zakir Saheb attempted to objectify the concept of truth in the form of love, compassion, service, sacrifice and non-violence.

Along with truth, Gandhiji's humanism manifested itself in non-violent action in the service of man. His *Satyagraha*, *Ahimsa*, and *Sarvodaya* were three powerful concepts of his social philosophy, which intended to make

the means to achieve an end as pure as the end itself. Zakir Saheb not only fully agreed with these concepts, but proved himself a living embodiment of these concepts. Gandhiji's social service resulted in his constructive programme to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity, to remove untouchability, to popularise *Swadeshi* goods and to help cottage industries. Zakir Saheb subscribed to this entire programme. He further analysed the situation and discovered that the key to solve all our problems was to remove ignorance from the land. Even the gospel of truth and love which Gandhiji preached would have some effect only when people understood their meaning. Hence, Zakir Saheb rightly fixed education as priority number one. In the heat of democracy, freedom, industrialisation, modernisation and several other attractive features of nationalism we neglected the task of educating the masses of India, and if the trend remained unchanged, we would have had, within a decade, the shameful distinction of being the most ignorant nation on earth.

Zakir Saheb's humanism stands in good comparison with that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Both agreed on the socialist thought of equal opportunity to all, eradication of poverty and exploitation, improvement in the living standard of the masses, and equal distribution of all services connected with wealth, society and education. Both agreed to galvanise the Indian masses into a force so that this human resource could have a powerful impact on the world scene. Both joined in the crusade against communalism, casteism, linguism and regionalism. Both were the votaries of liberalism, humanism, secularism, democracy and a composite culture. Zakir Saheb fully agreed with Panditji's sentiment, "I am attracted to socialism because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage." Zakir Saheb and Panditji had a similar approach to most of the national problems.

A comparison of Zakir Saheb's idea with those of Sir Syed also yields interesting results. Both stood for a social change in the conditions of the Muslims. Both desired to revive the morbid Muslim community. Both wanted to give

self-respect and dignity to the community. Both wanted the change to be brought about through education. Both built up great educational institutions which have attained today the status of Central Universities, the only two which the Muslims can be proud of. Both commanded the respect of the nation, although in varying degrees. Both were great scholars in their own right. Both were the products of the Islamic ethos. Both were proud of their cultural goods. Both were humanists and reformers. But there the comparison ends and the points of divergence begin. Sir Syed concentrated only on Muslims; Zakir Saheb's vision was broader; Sir Syed wanted the Muslims to stay away from politics; Zakir Saheb was a staunch nationalist who wanted the Muslims to join the mainstream of the national struggle. He was the child of the freedom movement and wanted the colonials to leave the country. Sir Syed made a compromise with the colonials; Zakir Saheb was bitterly opposed to that view. On 28 July, 1859, about 15,000 Muslims assembled in a Delhi mosque under the leadership of Sir Syed to thank the Queen for the general amnesty, forgetting the havoc the British had caused on Muslims since the Battle of Plassey. But on 20 October, 1920, Zakir Saheb was in the vanguard of the Muslim youth who took a pledge in the Aligarh mosque that they would not rest until the British were expelled from the land.

We should hasten to add that in social and cultural life, Sir Syed was secular and regarded Hindus and Muslims as "two eyes of a beautiful bride whose face would be disfigured if either one or the other was injured." Sir Syed is on record as saying, "Now both of us live on the air of India, drink the holy water of Ganga and Jamuna. We both feed upon the products of the Indian soil. We are together in life and death; living in India both of us have changed....ill feeling are sure to destroy us."⁴ He added again somewhere else, "the word Hindu does not denote a particular religion, but on the contrary, everyone who lives in India has the right to call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that although I live in India, you do not consider me a Hindu." Sir Syed further felt that the Hindu or Muslim or Christian were all one nation for "the

time is past when merely on the ground of religion the inhabitants of our country could be regarded as members of two nations." He was of the opinion that both communities should stand together, "if not, the effect on one against the other would tend to destruction and downfall of both."

Zakir Saheb was fully in accord with the above sentiments. The only snag was in the powerful political sector where the ethical, social and cultural harmony was all destroyed by the single sin of touching the forbidden fruit of compromise with the British. Zakir Saheb never committed that sin. His task was more arduous than that of Sir Syed, for he had to fight on three fronts. Whereas Sir Syed had to fight only against his own co-religionists in order to induce them to change for the better, Zakir Saheb had to fight not only against his own co-religionists, to face the realities of life, but against the colonials, to change their hostility towards Jamia, and also against the majority community, to get them to accept the cultural identity of Muslims, particularly in respect of the Urdu language. Again, Zakir Saheb differed with Sir Syed not only in respect of loyalism in politics but also modernism in education. Zakir Saheb's ideas on mass education of the Muslims, on value-oriented education with manual work as its basic core, on the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, on integrating cultural ethos with the intellectual growth of the child, and on de-linking education with government jobs, were different from the ideas of Sir Syed.

Allama Iqbal is another great thinker of the Indian sub-continent who was also the product of the Indian renaissance of the 19th century. His humanism was also influenced, like that of Zakir Saheb, by German idealism and Islamic philosophy. Both attempted to interpret Islamic ethos in the light of Western reason. Both were lovers of Islamic teachings, values and culture. Both were great scholars of Islamic learning, and both have thought, spoken and written much on the subject. Both desired to

reconstruct Islamic thought, life and society in the light of the realities of the modern age. Both have left indelible imprints on sands of time. Both were philosophers, teachers, leaders, builders, thinkers, inspirers and architects of the destiny of millions. Both were intellectuals *par excellence*. Both attempted to give life to a dead community. Both were anxious for the community to see better days. Both were hostile to the machinations of the colonials.

There again the comparison ends and the contrast begins. Whereas Iqbal began as a passionate nationalist, he ended up as a separatist in politics, Zakir Saheb remained an ardent nationalist all his life; whereas Iqbal's philosophy put on the garb of revivalism in Islamic thought, Zakir Saheb's thought process remained constant on universal humanism. Whereas Iqbal preferred poetry as the medium to convey his thought, Zakir Saheb was a pace-setter in Urdu prose to which he gave a wider dimension to gain currency as a powerful medium ; whereas Iqbal touched the soul of the intellectuals and roused them to great heights, Zakir Saheb had to perform the spade-work at the grassroots level to educate the masses of India. Whereas Iqbal excited the imagination of the people by intoxicating them with the glory of the past, Zakir Saheb had to suffer untold misery to build Jamia. At one time, while collecting pennies in the streets of Bombay for his educational temple he asked his student, "Harris Saheb.....I can't walk any more; see these sores on my soles ; for God's sake at least now, please arrange a taxi."⁵ Iqbal never had to say that to anyone.

We confess both were great in their own fields. Zakir Saheb was a great admirer of Iqbal. He was his hero. He remembered scores of his verses. Although he differed from his politics, he respected his intellectual heights. Iqbal's philosophy is the essence of Islamic thought filtered on the German screen of reason. The central concepts of his philosophy are consciousness of the self (*khudi*), action (*amal*), creativity (*taqliq*), intense love (*ishq*), progress, power, purposiveness, liberty and free will. Zakir Saheb

seemed to have absorbed fully the essence of all these concepts which find expression both in his life and in his speeches and writings.

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad is yet another intellectual with whom Zakir Saheb stands comparison in certain respects, and does not in certain others. The Maulana was also a great luminary of Islamic learning. Both Zakir Saheb and the Maulana were great nationalists, who never swerved from their path. Both had the same mission in life, to help Muslims lead a dignified life, and help the nation build a composite culture. Both rose to very high positions, and contributed much to the nation. Both suffered for the country and both incurred the displeasure of their own community. Both were leaders of exceptional ability. But they differed in certain other respects. Born in Mecca, the Maulana was a great scholar of Arabic and Islamic learning with only a marginal grip over Western thought and philosophy. Zakir Saheb was proficient in both Eastern and Western learning. His stay in Germany had opened the vistas of Western thought and knowledge whose essence his hungry soul had assimilated to a great degree. The Maulana had carved out a different path. He was a political activist, whose pen had ignited a new blaze to consume the colonials. Zakir Saheb was not a political activist. He remained behind the curtain. He prepared the actors for the drama. He supplied the gunpowder for the fight. The eradication of ignorance was a higher crusade in the national struggle. The Maulana was a politician and a statesman. Zakir Saheb was a patriot and a humanist. The Maulana was lost in councils, committees, meetings, government, media, viceroys and leaders, in the thick jungle of political manoeuvring. Zakir Saheb had been immersed in teaching, helping and guiding the youth to grow into useful citizens. He was in the educational sector, helping the tender rose buds to bloom.

On the intellectual plane also there was slight divergence between the two. The Maulana believed in reconsolidation (*tasis*) of the Islamic learning, and argued

that what was needed was not the interpretation of our thought in the light of the West, but the consolidation of our basic truths in the light of our own Eastern wisdom. Zakir Saheb would use reason and Western techniques to assess Islamic values. There was much in the tradition of Islamic scholars which leaned on conservative, isolationist and dogmatic trends. Zakir Saheb opposed this tendency and desired to make it broad-based, humane and universal. The Maulana's method was dialectical and metaphysical, touching the traditionalistic approach. Zakir Saheb would vote for a liberal, rational and pragmatic approach. The Maulana had studied in Syria, Iraq and Hijaz, but Zakir Saheb's study in India and Germany had widened his vision. The Maulana sought all answers to his problems of life, ethics and morality in the Quran. Zakir Saheb had a wider choice in the total experience of mankind. Nevertheless, both were mutually complementary to the sum total of the factors needed to make an individual an 'enlightened soul, which is the purpose of humanism.

Zakir Saheb's humanism must be seen in the kind of life he led. God's best witnesses to truth are those who show its light in their life. He desired to promote certain virtues and values not by precepts and preaching only but through practice and action as well. He made himself a mode for others to copy. His nobility was such that it needed no propaganda. Just a few moments in his company would have a metamorphic change on a visitor. He was like Gandhiji, a charismatic personality of the youth. He carried on a campaign against the existing pattern of education which took no notice of social good. He emphasised on the cultural aspects of the society, which was the key to all his reforms. He reminded us that we had inherited something precious from the past, and that was humanism, love, devotion, reason and creativity of things beautiful. Pursuit of truth by the sages of the past has been the hallmark of this country. Philosophy has been its soul ; religion has been its symbol ; tolerance has been its technique ; *bhakti* has been its spirit ; God has been the centre of its thought ; beauty has been the object of

worship; knowledge has been the source of joy; and humanism has been its pride. Zakir Saheb thought that modernism had pushed all our cultural goods into the background. His humanism desired that these values be given a new life.

His heart would bleed for his country. Addressing the graduates of Kashi Vidyapith he said, "The country you are going into is a country of great misfortune. It is a country of slaves, a country of ignorant people, a country of hard-heartedness, a country of hatred between brother and bother, a country of laziness, a country of poverty and helplessness, a country of cruel customs, a country of indifferent priests, a country of hunger and sufferings; in short, a country of great misfortunes. But what should be done. It is your and our country. We have to live in it, and die in it. Therefore, it is a country which would test your courage, your strength and your love."⁶ Only a sensitive heart could feel so strongly for the country. He had placed a finger on the tender nerve, and exposed the malady within the system. A beautiful country had become the victim of the cancer virus. His tender heart could not stand its misery. He did not remain merely a passive spectator to the wretched conditions but attempted to heal the wounds. He suggested what should be done to remove hunger, ignorance, cruelty, laziness, selfishness, jealousy, bigotry, arrogance, and acquisitiveness. He said:

Our country does not need warm blood oozing out from our necks, but it needs the sweat of our brow that would flow twelve months in a year. The need is great for work, sincere work, serious work. Our future would be made or marred by the broken hut of the farmer, by the dark roof of the artisan, and by the straw-covered school of a village. It is possible to settle the disputes of a day or two in political strifes, in conferences and congresses, but those places which I have indicated have been for centuries the centres of our destiny. Work in these areas requires patience and perseverance. It tires you much and it is thankless too; it does not yield quick

results ; but yes, if someone holds on for long, it would give him sweet fruit.⁷

Zakir Saheb has offered the remedy that our own sweat is the answer to all our problems. His heart bleeds for the labour of a poor peasant, for the skill of the neglected artisan, and for the intellect of the ignored teacher. The tiller, the fitter and the teacher are the three agents who feed the mind, body and soul. They are your head, heart and hands. Take care of them, and all be well. His humanism gave us a message. "My message to you is this : have your character-building programme in your own hands. Develop all its elements by self-control, and selfless service. Build good character, and making it an instrument of high and absolute values, elevate it to the level of faithful man (*banda-e-momin*) and struggling man (*mard-e-mujahid*). It is a difficult job and it is a life-long job, but you get life only by working for it. How can it be achieved by sitting idle ? Life itself should be invested in it."

Zakir Saheb's humanism aimed at developing the personality of the young man who would win the battle of life. Distributing degrees to graduates he said, "Education alone would give you the power of balanced judgement, and the ability to examine correctly all facts and evidence. You would not be lost in any political illusion; you would not be a camp follower of every religious magician; you would be able to test people and distinguish between glitter and gold. You would not forget the eternal for the sake of the immediate." His humanism would find solutions to all problems. To a question as to what should be done in order to remove poverty, he said, if God has given us one mouth, He has given us two hands.

In conclusion, we may say that Zakir Saheb desired to preserve the essence of the past heritage and integrate it with the present value system. It was a grand and bold design which took concrete shape in the form of his humanism.

All his educational, social, political and cultural ideas were merely the inputs for his humanistic output, which

embraced his life mission. It had in it the cultural values of all great religions, the wisdom of all sages and philosophers and the experience of all mankind. It explained the purpose of life, and the meaning of life. It indicated how to live and how to be happy. It intended to unite mankind into one organic whole, and into one human bond of common fellowship. It demanded sacrifice from all. It demanded political and social will. It demanded reformatory education. Zakir Saheb perceived the inner relationship between humanism and enlightenment. Humanism was opposed to the relative values of power and position, pleasure and pomp, and wealth and luxury. Humanism guides us towards absolute values which are truth and justice, love and beauty, and goodness and righteousness. Humanism lifts man to the position of *man universal*.

VI

Personality Traits

Zakir Saheb's entire life was characterised by rare simplicity, sincerity, purity, nobility, service, sacrifice and love. The story of his life is the story of a man who was wedded to the highest values of his land. The matrix of the whole Indian ethos has been the aspiration of the nobler souls for an enlightened life, and for the appreciation and pursuit of finer things, which make life a mission to ever strive for high ends, and to ever support a passion for excellence. Zakir Saheb's significant contribution to the country was his life-long commitment to the promotion of new attitudes and values in the society, to the enhancement of knowledge and culture among all sections of his people, and to the pursuit of excellence in the finer aspects of life. He struggled all his life to bring about a creative integration of that composite culture which finds expression in unity in diversity, and identity in multiplicity. His main aim was to inspire in his people a sense of urgency to live harmoniously and graciously with their own fellowmen. He wanted to be an agent of a great social change, which would integrate the best of the past with the finest of the present.

In his personal life Zakir Saheb built up a system of values in which honest thoughts were his assets. His eternal quest for love, beauty and excellence remained the hunger of his soul. Service and toil marked the traits of his character. Patience and perseverance never forsook him at any time. Humility was the crown of his character. Nobility added luster to his manners. Benevolence and generosity were the secrets of his joy. He believed in the dictum, "A little that you give in the way of God will bring great returns to you," and that "All true progress is progress in charity, every other progress being secondary." He believed in purity of motives, in purity of life and in purity of mind.

He had a tender heart, and he believed in love, kindness and compassion. His tender heart would bear the sorrows and sufferings of the whole world as his own. He held his talent, knowledge and wisdom as a trust to do good to his fellowmen. His humanism manifested itself in goodness towards all, malice towards none, and respect for each and every kind of life. He came up to Hazrat Ali's expectation of life, "Treat people in such a way and live amongst them in such a manner that if you die, they weep over you, and if you are alive, they crave your company."

It is said that behind every successful man there is always a woman. It was true in the case of Zakir Saheb as well. In fact, once he himself acknowledged this and told his daughter, Saeeda Khurshed, that if her mother was not so simple, good natured, generous and expert in management of the household, he would not have been whatever he was. It is a fact that through the thick and thin of Zakir Saheb's life of service and sacrifice, Begum Saheba proved a pillar of moral support, and bore all the burden of the family chores. She suffered silently and cheerfully faced all the problems during the trying days of Jamia without letting Zakir Saheb know how she managed the household in the paltry sum that was available. Besides, it is common knowledge that ignoring her own problems and worries she was always ready to share and solve the problems of all others of Jamia's brotherhood. In fact for her generosity, friendliness and willingness to share the joys and sorrows of all, she was almost considered as the mother of Jamia.

Till she breathed her last on 20 October, 1990, she took keen interest in the affairs of Jamia and the well-being of those connected with Jamia. Very few people know about the last service she rendered to Jamia. When things appeared to be not in favour of Jamia being given the status of a Central University, she asked her daughter, Saeeda Khurshed, to write a letter to the Prime Minister and say that "this is my last desire and I wish to see Jamia getting the status of a Central University before my eyes are closed forever." The response was quick and positive.

Begum Zakir Husain was such a simple and unassuming lady that one never noticed any change in her dress,

habits, nature or style of living from the days when she lived in Okhla or shifted to the Vice-Chancellor's bungalow in Aligarh or moved to the Patna Raj Bhawan or finally to the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. Changes in Zakir Saheb's status and position least affected her, and she continued to live her life as always. Her only interest in life was to look after Zakir Saheb's comforts and needs, and bestow her love and care on her two daughters. Zakir Saheb's needs and preferences ever remained uppermost in her mind. Even when he died, at the moment of deep grief and sorrow to her, she did not fail to remind that Zakir Saheb had all his life used *khadi* for his clothes and, therefore, his shroud should also be of *khadi*. Zakir Saheb was indeed fortunate in having a life-companion of such an angelic nature. It looked as if nature had made them for each other.

Zakir Saheb's lifespan covered fascinating aspects which witnessed him as a crusader of righteous causes, as a rebel against wrong, as a builder of institutions, as the architect of the destiny of the youth, as a writer of high repute, as a speaker of great force, as the father of new trends in pedagogy, as a humanist of noble ideals, as a nationalist of unswerving loyalty, as an agent of social change, as an ardent lover of beauty, as a person of refined culture, as a statesman of great ideas and as a poet of the mind. No wonder, his personality was an institution in itself.

Born in an affluent family and breathing his last in Rashtrapati Bhawan, Zakir Saheb had suffered and sacrificed a good deal in life to play a historic role as a man, as a scholar, as a statesman, as a teacher and as a leader. As a man, his interests seemed of infinite variety. As a lover of plants, flowers and gardens, "he would clean the foliage in such a manner as if a mother was washing the hands and face of her baby." He was fond of collecting, not gold, money or other objects of common interest, but paintings, rare stones, rare plants, rare calligraphy, rare books, rare fossils and rocks and records and cassettes of music, Indian, Western, Arabic and Persian. He was a lover of literature. Himself a great litterateur, and a voracious reader, he would enter in his note-book verses of his choice,

and he carried that book wherever he went. He used them appropriately in his writings and speeches. He liked learning new languages, and had a good command over Urdu, Persian, English, German and Arabic. His hobby was to collect stones. In Russia he was presented with a tree studded with rare stones of the Ural. Many halls of Rashtrapati Bhawan were full of his collections. He said, "What can be a more precious thing than these stones. They neither deceive anyone nor complain about anyone. They have neither any enemy nor assert anybody's right. They neither conceal their real self nor reveal anyone else's secret." When someone asked him why he was fond of stones, he humourously replied that the flowers disappoint you due to their shortlived life, but stones do not ; and if the need arises, they can also be used for keeping people away.

He loved children. His life was dedicated to children. To bring up children as useful citizens was his job; to educate them was his mission; to love them was his pleasure; their company was his solace and comfort. His grandchildren would often disturb him in his work, but if anyone prevented them from doing so, he would say that when the Prophet at his prayers did not object to the disturbance of children's play, why should one be angry when one was just involved in worldly affairs. His stories on children are ample proof of his understanding of children's nature, feelings, psychology, mood and attitude.

He was always gentle in his dealings with others. He would listen with patience to the problems of others. Sometimes he would not sleep all night thinking about how to help them. If someone was ill, he would be worried and unhappy. He had developed a unique style of speech. "You could count his words" while he was speaking. A sweet, melodious voice of chosen diction would captivate the listener. He would never burst out in laughter at any time ; Just a little smile ; never dry, but ever cheerful, witty, humorous, he was excitingly interesting and effective in talk, particularly at the table. People would remember his words as proverbs. He would never hurt the feelings of anyone. Temperamentally cool, sagacious, sincere, compassionate, kind and courteous, he regarded hurting the feelings

of others as a crime. All his life he believed in the principle, "To win a heart is nobler than performing a great pilgrimage." His warm greetings, shining forehead, smiling lips and pleasing manners would radiate joy in any circle, whether of his family or friends or associates or elders or youngsters or children.

Saeeda Saheba tells us that she never found in him at any time any variation between his precepts and practice. He would not assume an advisory role. He was gracious to others but curt to himself. He never underestimated the value of anything useful. He believed that anything worth doing was worth doing well. To reach perfection in the things we do is the ideal of human life. Everyone should aim at leaving the world a little better than he found at his birth. He had implicit faith in destiny and he never gave up hope, even in the most adverse circumstances. He struggled all his life for the fulfilment of his ideals. The main features of his character were integrity, love of fellowmen, patriotism, implicit faith in his friends and colleagues, and a set of values he cherished in all great religions. He respected greatly his elders and teachers. He admitted he was influenced in his life by three persons, his mother, his Etawah Head-master, Maulvi Altaf Hussain, and Gandhiji. The statement he issued on 13 January, 1948, on the occasion of Gandhiji's indefinite fast reflects his genuine sentiments and emotional attachment to Gandhiji. He said :

We have no doubt that you are guided by a superior wisdom, and that you have chosen the right moment to urge your people to purify their hearts. God has given you a strength and a confidence which does not fail, and a faith that adverse circumstances cannot shake. God is with you and you must succeed. Only we are overwhelmed with shame that free India should have nothing to offer you but bitterness and distress. May God spare you to lead us onwards towards the higher freedom for which you have been striving and of which, in spite of all our blindness and misdeeds, you still believe us worthy. If anything can transform us, it is your faith that the highest in us must, and will, assert itself.

Zakir Saheb proved effective and assertive when matters of principles or basic issues were involved. While presenting his report at the Aligarh University Convocation in 1951 when the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was the chief guest, he said frankly, "Our country, in the gigantic task of coming into its own and building up a worthwhile national existence, requires the joyful dedication of every ounce of available human energy. The way Aligarh works, Aligarh thinks, the contribution Aligarh makes to Indian life in its manifold aspects will largely determine the place Musalmans will occupy in the future of Indian life. The way India deals with Aligarh will largely determine the shape of things in the future national position." This was Dr. Zakir Saheb's way of speaking out frankly and boldly. He preferred always to weigh and consider all aspects of the problems justly and wisely, and also had the fairness to see the other man's point of view before coming to a decision. He was never keen to merely score a debating point, and perhaps Professor Mujib was right when he wrote that Zakir Saheb looked defeated when in reality he had won.

Zakir Saheb had firm faith in our composite culture, and he realised that in every sector of our life, in customs, manners, music, fairs, festivals, food, dress and in the details of the domestic life, both Hindus and Muslims were drawn so close to each other that a new common culture had automatically developed which came to be known as the composite culture of India. The blending of the finer elements of this composite culture is seen in art, architecture, language, literature, music, philosophy, religion and science. Zakir Saheb once very rightly commented on this:

What can bring us together and keep us together is not an equally high standard of living but an equally high standard of truthfulness to ourselves, of tolerance of ways of life, different from our own, and effortless sense of equality as men and women. Then we can stand before God and our conscience, united, united in humility and determination to make our lives and action the expression of an inner striving for perfection.

Zakir Saheb was a deeply religious man, but his religiosity was of a different order, not of show but of firm faith from the inner recesses of his heart acknowledging the majesty of God. He would read the Quran and say his *namaz* so secretly that even family members would not know of it. Once he asked Saeeda Saheba to stitch a cap which would cover his forehead, so that no sign could be seen on it of his prostration before God. Who could imagine the purity of his soul who ever prayed for His Will to be accomplished in him, and that "in His Will is my peace !" He was indeed a man of God who had given his heart to God and his hands to work. That was the reason why he proudly declared, "Every inch of me is a Muslim and I am proud of it. But at the same time, every inch of me is an Indian and I am equally proud of it."

Those who had worked with him in Jamia would recall with nostalgic pride the wonderful time they had under his leadership. An English proverb says that a man does not make his own boss his hero, but Zakir Saheb was an exception who had excited respect in every heart. Many would believe in him as saints believe in God. This was because of his goodness and kindness. All those around him would also be involved with the same sincerity of purpose in the life-mission he had set before himself. He would sow the same seeds of goodness in every mind, which would become an irresistible call never to let him down. Others would feel happy that they had found in him a friend, a philosopher and a guide. His sincerity of soul would make them also suffer and sacrifice for the noble purpose he had in view. No wonder he had become a saint (*murshid*) to Rasheed Saheb and a hero to many. He was a moralist who would regard the joy of revenge as a passing phase, but the joy of a peace-maker as an everlasting delight. He knew the distinction between a pious person (*abid*) and an enlightened one (*alim*). A pious person saves his own garment in a storm, but an enlightened one saves others from drowning.

Zakir Saheb's simplicity and purity were reflected even in his dress. From the days of non-cooperation in 1921 he always preferred white *khaddar* for his clothes which were

spotlessly clean. Begum Saheba would herself stitch his clothes. Despite his simplicity he never let his dignity and grace suffer in any way or at any time. His residence indicated his refined taste, where everything was in order. His food was simple, but he loved good food. He had his own way of teaching children in Jamia the art of living. If pieces of papers were lying around, he would not ask anyone to pick them up. He would himself do it. His art of training children was unique. He would not advise them or rebuke them, but would do or say something which would touch their heart. Once he found the boys playing cards and wasting their time. He appeared on the scene and merely said. "I too would have joined you, but I do not know how to play ; I have never played cards in my life." That was sufficient hint to put everyone to shame. Once a dull boy in the class would not understand what he was teaching. Zakir Saheb made persistent efforts to get the right response, but to no effect. The only outcome of this ultimately was the flow of tears from Zakir Saheb's own eyes. That had miraculous effect on the boy, and he must have been different from that day.

One of his traits was not to answer his critics. He would simply ignore anything that was said against him. He would invite any objection or criticism as that would make him more introspective on the subject. He would agree with Ghazali, that one should avoid friends who spoke well of one and prefer a frank person who would reveal like a mirror one's faults to one's face. In building up Jamia he had innumerable critics to face. Some of them were very uncharitable and bitter in their attack. Professor Mujeeb has mentioned that when he was writing Zakir Saheb's biography, a colleague who had retired after forty years of service in Jamia wrote to him that instead of building Jamia, Zakir Saheb had built himself. Professor Mujeeb has also stated that this is also the view of some other friends. This could easily be termed as the most atrocious example of ungratefulness. The whole world knows that Zakir Saheb sacrificed his all to serve Jamia when he could have achieved anything in life, but he preferred self-imposed poverty and suffered unimaginable tribulations to serve and build the Jamia of his dream.

Similarly, some people criticised Zakir Saheb when he agreed to accept the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellorship of Aligarh University in 1948. Who does not know how anxious Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad were that Zakir Saheb should undertake this assignment. They persuaded him to take over the responsibility as in their opinion only Zakir Saheb could save Aligarh at that time from the most uncharitable criticism and the prevailing conditions in the University, and who can deny Zakir Saheb's contribution in giving almost a new life to Aligarh University by helping it gain its original status, respectability, and acceptability both among the public and the academic world ?

Zakir Saheb had rare perception. He would analyse any situation to its logical limits with such incisive thinking that his words would become almost prophetic. In the thick of the campaign for Pakistan, he warned the people of both U.P. and Bihar that they would get nothing out of such demands, and that it would spell disaster for them in the bargain. What happened to the Biharis who went to the then East Pakistan, the present Bangladesh, is common knowledge. Not only on such big issues but even on the most minute details of life, his sharp intellect and sensitivity, would anticipate things to come. This was because of his reasoning power, deep knowledge of men and things, and good grip of wisdom from the past. Therefore, his friends and associates regarded him as an unfailing guide and philosopher.

Zakir Saheb was very large-hearted, benevolent and charitable. When an engineer cheated him, his only reaction was, "Many are the friends of good people, there must be someone for bad people as well." When his daughter informed him of some theft in her house, she was told, "Perhaps you had not paid the *zakat*." When a stranger suddenly demanded money when he was ill and Begum Saheba was away, Zakir Saheb pleaded his inability to help him. But the man said, "What you say is correct. I see that you are ill, and when you say so, it must also be true that Begum Saheba is away. It may also be true you have got no money. But now that I have asked you for money, how

can you refuse to give me what I want ?”¹ Zakir Saheb had no answer to this, except to send the stranger to his Secretary, who arranged to pay what he wanted. He has written a story for children, *Akhiri Kadam*, in which a person known to all as a miser was in reality a generous donor. He would enter all that he had given as charity in a register, hoping that the world would know the truth one day after his death. When he was breathing his last, it occurred to him that he was carrying such a petty idea to his grave. Suddenly he threw the register into the fire in the last act of his life. On good account we have heard that this story was very much true of Zakir Saheb’s life as well.

He never revealed what support he sought in moments of trial and sorrow. He would merely ask people to be grateful for every day that passed and do their duty. It was enough if they lived for a cause. His daughter Safia recalls the tragic scene when Zakir Saheb’s own little child, Rehana, was breathing her last, and he was distributing *batashe* to the children at school. When he came home and saw Begum Saheba grieving and in tears, he seemed a picture of patience and fortitude. He lifted Safia, hugged her, kissed her, as if giving a message to Begum Saheba, “Be grateful for what you still possess. If the Supreme took away one precious little one, He has still left two with us. Let us resign ourselves to the will of God, and pray that His Will will be accomplished in us.” He would say, “God tests sometimes by giving something and sometimes by taking away something.”² His responses to problems were different from the multitudes. A kind of rare tranquillity would never forsake him even under excessive pressure. He would act under the dictum : resolve to perform what you must ; perform without fail what you resolve ; sorrows and suffering will purify us like fire applied to a goldsmith’s crucible to burn out the dross.

Zakir Saheb had a very kind and compassionate heart. When his daughter wanted a kitten for a pet, he said, “You should rear up not the young one of a cat but of a man.”³ Next day he got her from orphanage a little girl, who was named Basheer, and she was brought up like a child of the family. When he was building up Jamia in the most

difficult circumstances, someone remarked that he was digging a well in a desert. Zakir Saheb replied that one day from the same desert would flow streams which would fertilize all. Jamia today is a Central University, the national property, quenching the thirst of knowledge of one and all. Describing the unfortunate incident at Jullundar station where an attempt was made on the life of Zakir Saheb, Rashid Saheb once said, "Those who were at the station at that time have stated that Zakir Saheb was marching towards the scaffold with the same equanimity as if the President of the Indian Republic was going to inaugurate some educational or cultural or some such function."

Industry and integrity were two important aspects of his philosophy. He would say life was no bed of roses. Its centre is neither pleasure nor pain ; it is progress or decay. Profit or loss should not be the motivation ; it should be improvement of the self with intention of conferring benefits on others and some satisfaction to ourselves. Self-seeking and self-advancement should not be the aim of life ; service and sacrifice should be the aim, which turn the wheels of progress. Progress requires total dedication of man to noble and worthy causes, and not in a piecemeal manner. He would say it is not "here business, there morality ; here undeserved gain, there ostentatious sacrifice ; here heartless ruthlessness, there fulsome mercy ; here skills related to values ; there values unassisted by skills." He would urge us to put heart, mind and soul into a thing, and aim at excellence. He would tell us, "Patience and diligence support the passion for excellence, excellence which makes man's work a participation in God's creative activity." He would warn us, "The life of dependence is a narrow, prescribed life... The life of freedom is wide and expansive. It is one long procession of choices." He would remind us that those who wished to destroy others should first prove their power to create. He would caution us, "Religion is a spiritual experience. Those who are authentically religious undergo an inner transformation and they radiate peace, harmony and goodwill." He fixed a norm to judge true religiosity. "The highest principle of the theoretical man is truth, of the imaginative man is beauty, of the religious man is salvation."

of the powerful man is domination, of the economic man is gain, of the social man is love, sympathy and understanding."⁴ That sums up his philosophy.

Zakir Saheb was a voracious reader. He had a high sense of values. Addressing a convocation of Aligarh Muslim University he said, "I expect the teachers and students of this University to go along this path and cultivate among them a profound sense of self-respect and personal integrity. I expect from them a large measure of moral responsibility and self-reliance, tempered by social conscience. I expect from them that unmistakable mark of maturity and self-discipline that gradually develops an inner hardihood that enables one to deal firmly with oneself and gently with others."

Zakir Saheb was an extremely active man. He regarded work as worship. He insisted on the equality of productive work as the hallmark of every educative work. He would say practice and perseverance make all things easy. He hated sloth and laziness. He believed that life would leap like a geyser if only we could cut through the rock of inertia. God helps those who help themselves. "We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our folly."

Zakir Saheb could be compared to Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, about whom this story is told : When he died, a banquet was held in the heavens by the Olympian Gods. Jupiter presided over the show. Other dignitaries were also present—Augustus, Tiberius, Trojan, Hadrian, and even Nero and Caligula. Each emperor went on recalling his achievements, the glorious deeds he had done on earth. When the turn came of Marcus Aurelius, he simply said, "I, a humble philosopher, have cherished the ambition never to give pain to another." Marcus had cherished the ambition, but Zakir Saheb had attained that ideal.

Thus, Zakir Saheb's life was dedicated to fulfil man's higher purpose of life which was to gain wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is required to make us better human beings, and reach the goal of happy life on earth. True happiness comes to us only by a full dedication to a purpose. That

purpose could vary from man to man. It could be power and authority, wealth and property, righteousness and piety or goodness and humanity. Zakir Saheb had chosen goodness and humanity. For transformation of any idea into reality, it should pass through a process. It should become a part of one's own being. It should penetrate mind and spirit. Zakir Saheb had absorbed all his goodness within himself. A mystic says that the attractive features of a man's face and body do not form the symbol of a man's goodness, for "what difference would there be between the painting on the wall and man?" A good man would live for all time by the soul. Zakir Saheb's goodness lay in the assertion of human dignity, and in the unity and oneness of mankind.

His goodness and humanism took shape in several ways. One was the eternal quest of knowledge ; that was the hunger of his soul. Knowledge lights the way of wisdom. It is the key to human progress. It guides us to happiness. It sustains us in misery. It is an ornament in the company of friends and a shield against foes. With knowledge man unravels the mystery of life, exposes the truth, brings out the reality and becomes an agent of change for the better. Knowledge holds the key to the welfare and progress of man. It acts as the conscience of the community. Intellectuals form the inner soul of a nation, and they become pioneers of man's civilisation. They are the path-finders of a new humanism and peace. It was again Zakir Saheb's perception that made him realise that the real wealth of a nation consisted of rearing the intellectuals, the skilled, the artisans, and the creative and critical minds. Therefore, the major premise of his humanism and goodness was the quest of knowledge. He dedicated his life to promote, to disseminate, to generate, to expand and to examine knowledge.

The second aspect of his goodness and humanism was the quest of excellence, of beauty, and refinement in everything he did or said. To seek beauty was also the hunger of his soul. He would admire beauty in everything. He would appreciate more beauty of character. He would not merely perceive, pursue and promote beauty, but he would perpetuate and create beauty as well. He considered man to

be the reflection of divine beauty. He believed God is eternal beauty. Beauty excludes all ugliness. God's beauty is well exposed in the universe, not only to enjoy, appreciate and learn from that beauty but also to imitate, follow and cherish that beauty in everything we do or think.

The third aspect of his goodness and humanism is love which is a noble sentiment that sustains life on earth. It is a strong, deep and enduring emotion, which even in the animal kingdom sustains and perpetuates life. Love is the inner attraction, and beauty is the outer manifestation of perfection. Love is the cement that binds humanity, and beauty is the pleasure humanity draws out of love. Love is the harmony that exists between man and man, and beauty is the garment that puts on love. Love reveals the inner relation to reality and leads directly to God. It is a movement towards the idea of perfect beauty which is Divine. It purifies the soul from earthly temptations, and pushes man from the stage of law to the higher stage of compassion and kindness. Love results in liberalism which levels down the barriers of caste, creed and class, and takes a stand on the bedrock of humanity. Zakir Saheb made love the cardinal principle of his social philosophy, and agreed with Coleridge that he prayeth best who loveth best.

The fourth aspect of his goodness and humanism is the concept of service and sacrifice, which enhances love, promotes solidarity, strengthens harmony and improves understanding. Love is the idea, service is the action and beauty is the output. When love is objectified, it becomes service. Without service, goodness is lifeless. It would be a shadow without substance. He profits most, who serves most. He who serves draws greater pleasure than having a full treasury to himself. Where service is absent in a society, that society is on the decline. Whether in an individual or a nation, the key concept for progress is mutual cooperation and help, and they alone are the sure guides to freedom and happiness. Zakir Saheb's whole life is an entire saga of service and sacrifice.

Zakir Saheb had built up a system of values in which goodness and honest thoughts were his assets, wisdom and knowledge were the objects of his pursuit, love and beauty

were the principles of his life, and service and sacrifice were his basic creed. He held his capabilities as a trust from God to do good to humanity. He believed in generosity and compassion as qualities that were dear to God. He believed in the purity of thought. "The mind in its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven." Universal compassion and love were a part of his moral preparation. Zakir Saheb accepted what Buddha had said, that every individual possessed the essentials of enlightenment ; what Jesus had said that the kingdom of God was within man ; and what Prophet Muhammad had said that God is nearer to us than the very artery of our neck. Zakir Saheb's mission was to plant love where hatred prevailed ; to sow seeds of hope where despair prevailed ; to light the torch of learning where ignorance prevailed ; and to serve and sacrifice where misery prevailed.

Zakir Saheb's life span witnessed his main work in four different positions in four different places ; as the builder of Jamia, as the Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh, as the Governor of Bihar and as the President of India. The most fruitful, as also the most challenging part of his life was at Jamia. It might seem small part, but it was the most precious gift to the nation. It was the first great experiment in education which India had ever witnessed. It was built out of his sweat and tears and blood, in the teeth of opposition even from his own co-religionists. It was the finest fruit of the Indian renaissance, where a galaxy of scholars, all well-versed in Islamic learning, bequeathed to humanity the finer shades of Islamic culture. Zakir Saheb will always be remembered for what he did at Jamia. He now rests there in the hallowed surroundings of a school, a mosque and a library, representing the three parts of his being, his head, heart and body. It was for the growth of man's mind that he thought of the school. It was to acknowledge from the heart the graciousness of God that he built a mosque. It was to treasure the body of knowledge that a library would be required. Whatever other achievements might stand to the glory of Zakir Saheb, they all pale into insignificance compared to his *magnum opus*, the institution of Jamia.

Zakir Saheb's life is an epitome of T.S. Elliot's saying : action is suffering, and suffering is action. Nothing great has ever been achieved without suffering and action. Jamia out of nothing was not easy. To bring order in Aligarh, that web of conflicting interests, was not easy. In retrospect, when we reflect on the significance of his life, we may say that he was a man who defied defeats to prove that there is nothing higher than human will, nothing nobler than acquiring knowledge, nothing more precious than wisdom, and nothing more sacred than service and love. He rightly regarded education as the only hope to help our youth acquire a creative personality, a critical mind and a cultured soul, which could be beneficial not only to themselves but also to the whole of society and the whole world. He devoted a good deal of his life to reconstructing and reorganising a sound educational system which could be helpful to remove the ignorance of our teeming millions. Zakir Saheb would agree with H.G. Wells who said, "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe."

Zakir Saheb was indeed a great man. He had imbibed within himself the wisdom of the philosophers, the humanity of the sages, and the reason of the scientists. He was basically a teacher, and truly there is no one above the level of a teacher. As a teacher, he had taught himself a value system which regarded all mankind as one brotherhood. He was an artist who saw beauty in the whole universe. He contemplated so intensely on that beauty that he became a part of that beauty. He was a great philosopher who reflected on such concepts as value and virtue, truth and honour, justice and courage, and absorbed them so passionately in his life that they elevated his soul to sublimity. He was a scientist with such a rational outlook that he filtered all his thoughts on the screen of truth, and adopted only those that came through. He was a humanist with such passionate love for mankind that he considered every individual as a member of his family. He was such an optimist that his hope for a happy world came close to the dream of a mother that her child would surmount all challenges one day to emerge a great man in life. In short, he touched the border of the Aristotelian concept of a perfect man (*insan-e-kamil*).

In life many people are honoured by the positions they occupy, but Zakir Saheb provided a lustre of his own to the positions he held. He will always be remembered as one of the most outstanding persons of his time who ever lived up to the high ideals which inspired him. Mrs. Indira Gandhi paid glowing tributes to him at the time of his sudden death on 3 May, 1969. She said, "Dr. Zakir Husain was the last of a generation which grew to greatness not merely because of involvement in the struggle for freedom but because of the high sense of mission which inspired it." She added, "Two years ago, in electing Dr. Zakir Husain as the President of the Republic, the people of India honoured themselves. During his short tenure, he added lustre to this office. Perhaps, more than any single individual, he stood for the unity of this country in every sphere of life. Combining in his person the richness of the composite culture of India, he raised the standard of our public life by his words and his actions. The values he cherished, the constructive work he did as an educationist and social worker, the distinction he brought to every position he held in national and international fields will guide generations to come."⁵

"The Undying Fragrance" of Pandit Anand Narain Mulla which he recited in the Parliament is a fitting tribute to Zakir Saheb. A few of the verses are :

Saf-e-awwal se faqat ek he maikhwar uttha sunsan hai lekin teri mahfil saqi	Kitni
Ek-hi shama bujhi maut ke hathon lekin tareek hai qaum ki manzil saqi	kitni
Ek kali aayi thi khushboo liye kuch dam ke liye gayi, phir wahi kanton ki hai mahfil saqi	Woh
Dafn hojaye na khushboo bhi kahin phool ke sath khushboo to hai iss bazam ka hasil saqi	Yehi

[From the front ranks only one has retired ;
How lonely is your assembly, O Saqi

Only one lamp has been extinguished by the
 hands of death ;
Into what darkness the nation's destiny has plunged !
A bud had come to spread fragrance for a while ;
It has gone leaving the assembly of thorns as it was
Let not the fragrance be buried along with the flowers
For this fragrance alone is the gain of this assembly,

O Saqi!

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