



# Kazi Nazrul Islam : The Voice Of Protest Against The British Rule

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## Abstract :-

Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) was one of the finest poets and best known for his pioneering role in Bengali literature. He is the national Poet of Bangladesh. His poems, songs and writings are equally admired in both India and Bangladesh. He is called 'Rebel Poet', because of his rebellious attitude in his poetry. As a poet, writer, musician, journalist, politician, soldier, Nazrul has been a remarkable and firm voice against injustice, inequality, human oppression and slavery. He has composed many songs to sing and let the youths to become enthusiastic for ingrained nationalism and patriotism. He Criticized the British rule and called for revolution through his poetic works, such as 'Bidrohi' (The Rebel) and 'Bhangar Gan' (The Song of Destruction). Nazrul Poetry Played a crucial role in uniting the oppressed and providing them with an intense sense of nationalism. 'Bidrohi' is one of his famous anti – British writing piece. Which has immediately placed him in the public eye.

**Keywords :-**Kazi Nazrul Islam, Journalist, Poetry, Prose, Songs, Colonialism, Rebellion, Nationalism, Patriotism

## Introduction :-

When Nazrul was born then India was a British colony. He was born on Tuesday, may 24, 1899 in a poor Muslim family in the village of churulia in the Asansol subdivision of the Burdwan district of undivided Bengal. His father's name is Kazi Fakir Ahmad and mother's name is Zaheda Khatun. Kazi Nazrul Islam strives boldly to decolonized the territory of the Indian Subcontinent through the voice in his rebellious poetry. He hurled his fire throwing shells of poetry as protests against the British Raj in india and preached revolution through his Literary works such as 'Jugobani (The message of the Age)', 'Rudra mangal' (The violent God), 'Anandamoyir Agamone' (1922) and his publication 'Dhumketu' (The Comet). The British Raj was enraged at his activities and imprisoned him for his earnest and passionate involvement in the Indian Independence movement. Nazrul's revolutionary activities did not stop in the prison and there he wrote 'Rajbandir Jabanbandi' (Deposition of a political prisoner). In his writings he explored the life and conditions of the downtrodden masses of the undivided Bengal and worked for their emancipation. He understood very well that without armed revolt and organizing The Proletariats for self rule, it was impossible to attain Freedom. Nazrul Islam inspired millions of Indians whether the Hindu or the Muslims with his writing to rise against all socio-political and economic oppression.

## Research methodology :

This Study is purely theoretical investigation. A quality approach has been followed in this study. This study is based on primary source and secondary source. Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings as a primary source and various books, journals, articles written by various resource person are used as a secondary data.

**Objectives of the Study :****This Paper aims at the following objectives-**

- 1) To determine the context and the reasons of opposition to the British rule by Kazi Nazrul Islam.
- 2) To search the opposition to the British rule through newspapers by him.
- 3) To review how Nazrul opposed to the British rule by his works of protest.
- 4) To search deeply what the outcome of Nazrul's opposition to the British rule was.

**Research questions of the Study :-** The Present Study Seeks to explore the following research questions through the present study-

- I) What was the Context of the opposition to the British rule by Nazrul Islam?
- II) What Were the reasons for his opposition to the British rule ?
- III) How did he oppose to the British rule as a Journalist ?
- IV) Were his writing anti – British?
- V) Was Nazru really a 'Rebel Poet' ?
- VI) What was the outcome of Nazrul's opposition to the British rule ?

**Interpretation and Analysis: Objective -1, Determination the Context and the reasons of opposition to the British rule by Kazi Nazrul Islam.**

Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) had bequeathed to the people a social perspective which was activist to a heightened awareness of their national existence. The writing of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the anti – colonial movement started growing on both the political and literary fronts. Through their works, a new language with promise subtly confronted colonialism's dominant cultural ideology. Which always tends to weaken the potential power of the colonized.

India had already experienced the first stirrings of political awakening. Bengal, in a few year's time, was to be engulfed by a movement which, though immediately aiming at annulment of the partition imposed on the province by the British government in 1905, spontaneously projected itself in to a sustained struggle for national freedom. The seeds had already been sown by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's 'Anandamath' (1882) and other historical works which harked back to be the people's tradition of struggle for liberty. The soul-stirring song 'Bande Mataram' was itself a great force that moved the people's hearts. <sup>1</sup> It was first published in 1882 as part of Chatterjee's Bengali novel 'Anandamath', it is an ode to the motherland, personified as the 'Mother Goddess' in later verses, of the people. The poem played a vital role in the Indian independence movement. It first gained political significance when it was recited by Rabindranath Tagore at Indian National Congress in 1896. By 1905, it had become a popular amongst political activists and freedom fighters as marching song. Kazi Nazrul Islam also led the anti-colonial linguistic movement. The British oppressors correctly recognized that Nazrul's literature contained all the necessary ingredients for a revolution against them. <sup>2</sup>

Nazrul was an anti – imperialist. He declared that he would oppose until the imperialist rule was ended. The intent of Nazrul's resistance was to achieve both Political and spiritual freedom. He received the fervent inspiration to end British rule of India by armed resistance from Nibaran Chandra Ghatak, a teacher who was connected with the revolutionary Jugantar Party (1906) and whose aunt Dukuribala Debi was the first woman in Bengal to suffer imprisonment under the Arms Act. <sup>3</sup> Nazrul has owned to the deep impression left on him by Nibaran Chandra Ghatak and it was from a patriotic motive – that military training would some day come useful in the fight for country's liberation – that he enlist in the Bengali Double company, subsequently known as 49<sup>th</sup> Bengali Regiment. <sup>4</sup> He fights against the western overlords and their native collaborators after leaving the army. Once more, under the influence of revolutionary covert groups for India's freedom, his explosive outburst for freedom took shape.

Nazrul recognized that only an armed insurrection could result in liberty. Self – confidently, he stated, "On one side is the crown, on the other flames of the comet". Whether he be a King or an ordinary person, to him, everyone was equal in the eyes of justice. For restoring justice and truth to the Indian subcontinent, he declares boldly, "Truth is self – evident. It cannot be destroyed by any angry eyed scepter. I am the instrument of that eternal self – evident truth, an instrument that voices forth the message of the ever – true. I am an instrument of God. The instrument is not unbreakable, but who is there to break God?" <sup>5</sup>

## Objective – 2, To Search the opposition to the British rule through news papers by Nazrul.

The people's anger at the massacre at Jallianwallah Bagh and other atrocities in the Punjab in 1919 coupled with the deep resentment of the Muslim against the dissolution of the Caliphate and dismemberment of Turkey, as also discontent over the utter inadequacy of the Montagu- Chelmsford Constitutional Reforms introduced in 1919, led to the launching "of the non-cooperation movement under the leadership of the Mahatma Gandhi. A special session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta endorsed the movement and the country was in a state of ferment. It was on this background that Nazrul joined the Bengali evening daily 'Nabayug' (The New Era) founded by the well-known leader, A.K. Fazlul Huq. On 12 July in 1920, the first issue of the evening daily 'Nabajug' saw the light of day. 'Nabajug', literally meaning 'a new age'. This newspaper used to published a very high – spirited writings. The tone of the writings were strongly anti- British.<sup>6</sup> On 27 October in 1922, Metcalfe Press published a collection of essays by the name of 'jugobani' comprising twenty-one selected 'Nabajug' editorials. The Jugobani published to important articles – Nabajug (The New Age), 'Gechhe Desh Dukkho Nai,' 'Abar Tora Manush Ho' (Though the Nation is Lost, Grieve Not, be Human Again), 'Muhajirin Hotyar Jonno Dayi Ke'? (Who Responsible for Mujahirin Killings?), 'Jagorani' (The Awakening) etc.

The name 'Nabajug' itself signifies a herald of novelty. Nazrul envisioned 'Nabajug' as a tool to fight against British imperialism. Limited to neither the Non-Cooperation nor the Khilafat Movements, his vision touched much broader horizons. He intended to align Indian revolutions in tune with other movements going on at an international scale. This idea echoed in the essay "The New Age" in the following lines –

"Standing on this blood-tinged dawn, humanity  
has taken up strains of a new prabhati- 'The night  
ebbs, on the eastern gate I hear the flute!" This is the  
tune of the new age, The music of this destructive  
flute has been heard by Russia, by Ireland, by  
Turkey, and by so many others, and with them,  
Our Hindustan has heard it – battered,  
Oppressed, chained and bound India.<sup>7</sup>"

Nazrul realized that the main obstacle in the fight against imperialism was that of a biracial mentality. Therefore, from the beginning, he actively encouraged being liberated from the narrowness of religious polarization. He tried to instigate a fellow feeling of brotherhood. Jibananda Das 'poem '1946-47' appears prominently relevant in this context –

"I am the brother of the deceased,  
Along the paths of this world; having Known me as one of his own  
Yet, he killed me mercilessly, I lay close to the  
Murmur of a blood – stained river  
I sleep, having Killed bafflement  
Also Known as' next to my kin"

Nazrul never desired such tendencies of kin-destroying idiocy. Rather, he points out the crux of the potential mistakes at the very beginning. In the essay 'The New Age', he thus beckons,

"Come, o brother Hindu! Come, o Muslim! Buddhist,  
come forth! Come, Christian! Let us leave behind all  
boundaries, narrow divides, all falsehood and selfishness  
forever, filling our souls with love, call a brother by a  
brother's name."

Let us consider the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, one of the most infamous examples of genocide in the history of our subcontinent. On 13 April in 1919, this massacre was carried out under the orders of the English Brigadier Reginald Dyer in the city of Amritsar in Punjab of undivided India. Unarmed civilians, who had assembled at a protest meeting, were mercilessly shot dead in the enclosed territory of the Jallianwala Bagh. Nazrul wrote multiple articles in 'Nabajug' on the Jallianwala Bagh incident. He even called Dyer an executioner. Nazrul considered this genocide as a starting point for mobilizing the masses for a larger revolution.<sup>8</sup>

In 2020, the world woke up to furious protests against the murder of an African-American man, George Floyd. Police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee onto George's throat, as Floyd gradually choked to death, writhing and begging for his life, pleading, 'I can't breathe'. The impact of this incident rekindled the 'Black Lives Matter' movement denouveau. The whole world joined forces to demonstrate against racial discrimination. Surprisingly, Nazrul was able to identify and point out the structures of this social malady, almost a century ago. This is what made Nazrul an indomitable and visionary journalist. It is our misfortune that he has not been evaluated through this particular lens as much as it ought to be. Nazrul, while portraying the imperial nature of the British Government, also efficiently brought their hateful racism into light. In the editorial titled "To Shoot Black People", published in 'Nabajug,' it is mentioned that the British unflinchingly shot dead the Indians, perceiving them as inferior to even animals. Although, Nazrul did not stop at identifying the problem; he wished for destroying the curse altogether as he writes:

"Here, these tortured minds' curse is internally crushing you to death.  
It is inciting your morality, your humanity. These bullets will eventually  
pierce through your hearts and rot you to death. We are rising – we are  
surviving -You are dying, you are ones walking the path of destruction!"

The Newspapers edited by Kazi Nazrul Islam became mouthpieces of Bengali nationalism and anti-British movement.<sup>9</sup> The 'Dhumketu' newspaper debuted on 11<sup>th</sup> August in 1922 under his editorship, which played an important role in reviving the concept of armed revolution after the failure of the Non-cooperation movement (1920-1922) and Khilafat movement. In a sense the 'Dhumketu' became the mouthpiece of revolutionaries. Nazrul himself christened his newspaper, Dhumketu. The word 'Dhumketu' literally means 'a comet'. In his first ever editorial of 'Dhumketu', which was entitled 'News of a charioteer's Trail,' Nazrul himself explains the significance of this naming with the help of an analogy drawn from Hindu mythology. He writes – "It calls for protest, revolution and the cataclysm." The 'Dhumketu' took on the difficult task of proclaiming the power of life and making the countrymen aware of the oppression of the British. A world poet, Rabindranath Tagore blessed this magazine and he wrote –

"To Kazi Nazrul Islam  
Come, ye comet,  
Come to build a bridge of fire across the dark,  
Hoist up on the castle top of evil days  
Your flag of victory!"<sup>10</sup>

Possibly, the first issue of 'Dhumketu' carried a prominent portrait of the revolutionist Barindra Ghosh on its fifth page. The portrait was captioned 'Bengal's first comet, the martyr Barindra'. The usage of the word 'comet', qualifying a convict, is certainly intriguing. As the paper progressed, its submission to revolutionary ideologies became even more prominent. The third issue itself featured a portrait of Kanailal Dutta, renowned personality of the Manicktala Blast Incident. The twelfth issue of 'Dhumketu,' entitled 'Mayer Dak' (The Call of the Mother) dedicated an entire page to commemorating the martyrs. There it featured photographs of legends such as Khudiram Basu, Prafulla Chaki, Satyen Basu and Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay. Prior to this, the sixth issue printed Khudiram's image in a memorandum. Moreover, the editorial of Dhumketu's tenth issue was titled "Khudiram's mother". Based on the intense desire for freedom, Nazrul reached his message directed at every mother of the country to urge them to let go of their emancipated children to dedicate their lives for the country. He writes:

"You fail to recognize them, as you are tied in affection.  
Let go, let go of our Khudiram-let go of your sons,  
They are one of us- they are members of our unfortunate clan.  
They do not belong to mothers, neither do they belong to homes,  
Nor forests. They do not align with laughter; they are for execution."

Nazrul's idea of the mother-nation, as projected in 'Dhumketu', is particularly relevant in this context. His ideal mother-nation is not a damsel in distress. She embodies a bloodthirsty, aggressive demon- incarnate, akin to Kali, who adorns herself with a garland of skulls. Initially, the essays published in 'Dhumketu' encouraged the youth of the nation to join the revolution, being empowered by their inherent strength. The editorial of the issue published on 10 September 1922, titled 'I Am Starving' projected Nazrul's own idea of the mother-nation. According to him, this bloodthirsty beheaded representation is yet another face of the comparatively docile Annapurna herself. Nazrul's mother-nation is the one who herself commands for worship, orders the sacrifice of her own children in order to protect herself. Thus, Nazrul imparts complete agency to the mother-nation who wants to redeem herself. Here, Nazrul perhaps makes quite a departure from the traditionally established image of the mother- nation, whose salvage depended entirely on the intentions of the saviors, instead of herself. In the fourth issue of 'Dhumketu,' Nazrul printed the poem entitled 'Roktambor Dhoroni maa' (The Mother Clad in Red) on the first page as an editorial. In the worship of his mother-nation, Nazrul wrote,

“ Be clad in red, oh Mother,  
Let the bland white be scorched  
Let's watch how our Mother adorns herself  
As we hear the clamor of the swords.”

Undoubtedly, such aggressive writing ought to have encouraged a revolutionary spirit.<sup>11</sup> Alongside, being in the black books of the authorities came hand-in-hand with this, only history bears witness to which truth. Nazrul first clearly demanded for freedom in his editorial 'The Course of 'Dhumketu''. He wrote:

“ First of all, Dhumketu wants complete freedom of India.  
I don't care much for words like swaraj, as this word  
Is differently interpreted by each of the several stalwarts.  
Not a single atomic part of India shall be under foreign rule.  
Full responsibility of India, its freedom, governance,  
All shall be in the hands of Indians.”

Kazi Nazrul Islam wrote many articles in 'Dhumketu' newspaper and inspired the freedom struggle of the nation.<sup>12</sup> At this time, the country needs the kind of servant who is capable of becoming a soldier. The responsibility for service will be taken up by women, or by those men in whose nature the feminine quality of compassion is strong. A woman's way of loving is different from that of men. In a woman's love, tenderness and tears born of compassion are more pronounced. In a man's love, violence and rebellion are dominant. The one who serves the country with the compassion of a woman is not a man, but probably a great man, a sage. But what the nation needs now is not a great man. The nation wants a man whose love is violent and rebellious. The one who loves his country will not only shed tears, but, if necessary, be also prepared to inflict violence, face retaliation and rebel. The sensibility that condemns or finds intolerable the animalist or bestiality of revolt and violence is the sensibility of a woman. That is the trace of divinity in human nature. Those who will be men, who will be soldiers of the nation, must put up with that minor, superficial slur on their name, that charge of behaving like.<sup>13</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> Kartika 1329, the editorial of 'Dhumketu' magazine was written by Kazi Nazrul Islam on 'I Am a Soldier'. He wrote-“ Come soldier to raise our flag of victory. The colour of the flag will be red, it should be painted with murder. Say, we won't be late. Say, we are lion cubs, we don't fear killing. We play with murder. Say, victory is the victory of truth.” This article ignited passion and fervor against the British rule.

After the publication of the editorial 'The Course of 'Dhumketu'', the British government remained unresponsive. They stung hard, however, after 'On the Mother of Happiness' Advent' ('Anondomoyeer Agomone') was published as an editorial on 26 September 1922 in the twelfth issue of 'Dhumketu'. Nazrul has first sent this poem to Anandabazar for publication. According to Muzaffar Ahmed, the newly formed team at Anandabazar perhaps anticipated the prowess of this poem. Being rejected, Nazrul decided to publish it in his own newspaper. In this symbolic poem, in the disguise of heralding the demon-slayer Mahishashurmardini, there was a hidden message, encouraging bringing down the British rule. It said, 'The whole country is a slaughterhouse/When will you come, O deadly queen?'

On 16<sup>th</sup> December in 1925, Nazrul started publishing the weekly 'Langal' (The plough) with himself as chief editor. The title of page of this weekly, too, carried benedictory message in verse from Rabindranath Tagore—"Take up the plough, Balaram, bring the desert-breaking plough. Bring strength and plenty and let vain wrangles die"<sup>13</sup>. The 'Langal' was the mouthpiece of the 'Sramik-Praja-Swaraj Dal,' which aimed to eradicate class differences in society. The manifesto of the party, which was published in the paper, demand full independence for India. At this time Nazrul published his book 'Samyabadi'(Song of Equality) O 'Sarbahara' containing songs for workers and peasants. Many critics have opined about 'Langal' that Nazrul has indulged here in enormous contradictions; however, a closer look at this particular editorial proves rather be on the contrary. Here, Nazrul criticizes and protests against the double-edged sword of capitalism as well as imperialism. He dreamed of a society compassionate to wards agriculturists. Perhaps unknowingly, he gave birth to a journalistic model, which would evoke agro-economic ideas, henceforth. In this brief editorial, Nazrul also highlights—

"The farmers do not have rights to their land.  
Without proper care, land arability is deteriorating.  
The subjects do not have their fair share from the  
Produce. We are cutting the roots and then watering  
the tips. In the council and the newspapers, we are  
raising our voices, enough to crack the sky, yelling  
for swaraj. On top of this, we are claiming that all  
these problems will solve themselves as soon as  
swaraj is achieved."

On 12<sup>th</sup> August in 1927, 'Ganavani' and 'Langal' were merged.' Ganavani' magazine was more political than Langal magazine. Muzaffar Ahmed took charge of this newspaper Kazi Nazrul Islam used to write regularly in this newspaper till the middle of 1927. In the background of the 1926 riots, the article 'Mandir – Masjid' written by Nazrul was printed in this newspaper in one place of the article his words – "Maro Shala Javander, Maro shala kaferder." Later the article called 'Hindu – Muslim' written by Nazrul was printed in this newspaper. In fact, Nazrul's writings based on journalistic and newspaper editing created the anti - British mentality of the Indian people.

### **Objective – 3, To Review the opposed to the British rule by Nazrul's works of protest.**

Nazrul's protest writings (poetry, prose, song) created a public awakening against the British rule. The prima characteristics of Nazrul's Poetry are his rebellious resistance to submit before prevailing social stagnation and bow down under the yolk of colonial cruelty. That's why Nazrul is remembered as the Rebel Poet. To take pragmatic instances, his charming attraction of poetry and resistance can be assessed in the lines 'Banduler 'Atmakahini' (1919. Life of Vagabond) 'Mukti' (Freedom), 'Bidrohi' (1921, The Rebel), 'Bhangar Gaan' (1924, The Song of Destruction), 'Coolie- Mujur' (Coolie and Labourers), 'Samyabadi'/ 'Manus' (1926. The Proclaimer of Equality, Man) 'Praloy Sikha' (1930, Doomsday Flame), etc. Published in December 1922 and later collected in his collection of fierce poetry 'Agnibeena' (The flute of Fire), the poem 'Bidrohi' (The Rebel) brought him the all laurels and established him as a new figure of fire in Bengali literature overnight. This revolutionary poem with heroic sentiments and imaginative portrayal of the Rebel called upon the weaker section of society as well as all Indians to confront the mighty British tyrannical power.

"Say, Valiant,  
Ever high is my head!  
I am creation, I am destruction,  
I am habitation: I am the grave-yard. "<sup>14</sup>

Nazrul reached the peak of reputation with the publication of 'Bidrohi' (The Rebel) in 1922. Nazrul urged upon every Indian in general and every Bengali in particular to challenge the mighty British rule with great courage. The poem is his most renowned work that admiration of India's literati by his portrayal of the rebel whose impact is fierce and ruthless even as its spirit is high. He utters in 'The Rebel'.

“ I’ m the tempest I’ m the cyclone,  
I destroy everything I find in my path  
I’ m the dance-loving rhythm  
I dance to my own beats. ”

Nazrul imagines himself as the cyclone, the symbol of destruction; he can destroy everything that comes in his path. He shows an amalgamation of different forces in a rebel who is a destroyer and a preserver, and who expresses wrath as well as beauty and sensitivity. Through the poem, Nazrul celebrates human creative powers, asserts his affirmation of the individual human capacity for heroic action and human unity, and solemnly calls for rebellion against all forms of oppression including that of the British in India, and all these elevate him to the status of a national figure.<sup>15</sup>

Nazrul is the defender of the poor and defenseless. His thoughts and spirit were filled with a desire for India's imprisonment to end. 'The Ecstasy of Destruction' (Pralayollas), another of his revolutionary poems, was released in the Bangla year 1329. In this poem, he inspired the oppressed to resist the British Raj while erasing past suffering and loss. He asserted that the emancipation of the Indian subcontinent is certain if people faced up to the faithlessness, deception, and oppression of the foreign rulers. As result, he enthused the locals to celebrate the abdication of the foreign malevolent authority beforehand. He repeated: "Come, make merry and rejoice! What fear has he for whom all this destruction and rebuilding is but a game? Come, make merry and rejoice, and welcome the Beautiful Who comes today in the garb of the Terrible"

The War-drum, a poem by Nazrul, is another work that embodies the spirit of revolution. In this poem, he revealed how the devil was cruelly playing the holy game of blood in the motherland where innocent people were drowning every day. He fervently agitated the common man of India to resist British rulers against all difficulties in order to re-secure the sovereignty of their motherland in order to revive the old rights of natives. He commanded, "O come, come along! There you can hear the ringing of the weapons! Alas, how can one stay away and tolerate this disgrace? O come, come along!"<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, decolonizing the land is possible until the decolonization of the mind is executed. In his time the colonizers successfully broke the community among the natives. Different kinds of rifts like discrimination among some social classes and religious groups destroyed ethnicity in the country. In the name of freedom movement and nationalism, they were busy with their selfish motives like taking a position in parliament or government jobs and the general mass was suffering due to their selfish competition. This selfishness and fraudulent commitment of the Swaraj Movement could not escape from Nazrul's eyes. He threw ridiculous dust on this hollow nationalism. It was expressed in his poem. 'My Answer' (Amar Kaifiyat)-

“We know it well-by trying to bring Swaraj  
We have ended up with a worthless pile of trash  
By depriving crores of hungry children of their food  
Came a crore rupees-but not Swaraj.”<sup>17</sup>

In 'The Complaint' (Fariyad), Nazrul also wished to fight with the oppressed to re-establish the natives right by decolonizing the unjust violation of the colonizers from the Indian Subcontinent. We see his indirect resistance in 'The Complaint' against the colonial unjust—

“This day and night, this sky and air, belong to none alone!  
 The be-all and the end-all of this earth  
 The scented flowers and the juicy fruits.  
 The soothing earth, the nectared water and the songs of birds-  
 All have equal shares in these, O God, O God!”

Nazrul’s Sucking ‘Blood of Indomitability’ (Dushasoner Roktopan), published in the Bangla year 1329 gave mental strength to the countrymen for the military movement against the British Empire. He wrote that the British existence in Indian land is illegal. They had been here for a long time with their mistreating power. So, it is duty of Indians to cast them away at any cost, even if the way is a terrorized one. With standing the colonial bottom line Nazrul openly declared that abruptly and illogically few white-skinned men had come to strain natives in their homeland--

“O, this is tyranny  
 Giving thousand heroes in exile  
 Beating the infants tightened with rope  
 Creating anarchy  
 Molesting the mothers-sisters.  
 Heinously in the daylight.”

Another notable poem \The Epic Hero SabyaSachi (SabyaSachi) from the volume ‘Fanimanasha’ (The Cactus) predominantly idolises Sabyasachi, the central heroic figure of the Mahabharata to combat against the tyranny of the British Raj. The motherland is symbolically compared with the great battlefield of kurukshetra where the colonial rulers represent the “Evil” and the Indians are for the Good. The whole country has turned into a “prison” of “Tyrant Kansa” and to dismantle the devilish power the great warrior with “ever-new flag” appears. Neither any “spell of false message of Peace” nor a “false promise of a handloom” can ensure the long-cherished independence of India. Therefore, to win over the battle, heroes like the epic hero Partha (another name of Sabyasachi) is coming with his “Gandiva Bow”:

“By the right hand tear off the  
 Fetters and by thy left let go  
 The arrow, O warrior of the age  
 And appear in thy own splendor  
 In this land of unarmed Prisoners!” (Huda 387)

From the above discussion and references of a good number of poems it is vividly clear that Nazrul’s poetry dominantly plays a prime role to alleviate the psychological servitude and tends to uphold a sharp binary self against the oppressive foreign forces of colonial India. The strong sensibility and the sense of identity that the poems inculcate in the minds, ultimately shatter the “colonizers' sense of superiority” (Cesaire 9) as well as the colonized “inferiority complex”.<sup>18</sup>

Nazrul’s prose writings, which cover a remarkable range of subjects, including social reform, politics, communal harmony, calls for radical protest, education, aesthetics, ethics and philosophy. In his political essays, Nazrul relates the Indian freedom struggle to a broader anti-imperialist impulse across the world. He veers away from the Gandhian model, arguing that total independence for the country needs to be won through armed struggle and revolutionary change. He acknowledges the effectiveness of the non-cooperation movement, and appreciates Gandhi’s campaign against untouchability, his wish for Hindu-Muslim unity and the idea of self-reliance expressed in the cult of the charkha. But in texts such as ‘Dhumketur Path’ (The Comet’s Trajectory) and the poem ‘Amar Kaifiyat’ (My Defense), Nazrul critiques Gandhi’s path of non-



violence and his Advocacy of swaraj or dominion status, demanding instead complete sovereign independence for India, to be won through armed resistance.

First of all, 'Dhumketu' desires complete independence for India. <sup>19</sup> Nazrul wrote that I don't comprehend swaraj and such like, for a great legendary warrior interprets that concept differently, Not a single atomic part of India shall remain under foreign rule. The full responsibility for India, the entire business of safeguarding its freedom, the task of governance and all such matters, shall remain in the hands of the people of India, our own Bharatvarsha. No foreigner will have the slightest right to adopt a domineering attitude. As kings or administrators, those who, through their oppression, have turned this land into a cremation ground, will now have to pack up and depart, bag and baggage, for their homes across the ocean. Our pleas and requests will not win their attention, for they have not yet acquired such good sense. We must discard our bad habit of begging and pleading. To achieve complete freedom, we must rebel against all things bound by rules and regulations, bonds and shackles, negations and prohibitions. And to join this rebellion, one must be aware of oneself and be able to declare with pride:

‘I bow before no but myself’.<sup>20</sup>

Many of Nazrul's essays can be read as direct efforts to raise public consciousness, and to stir the people out of their apathy. 'Dyerer Smritistambha' (The Dyer Monument) depicts the nation as a sleeping giant who needs to be aroused. 'Kala Aandmike Guli Mara' (Shooting a Coloured Man) and 'Mukhbandho' (Silencing) react to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, calling for a countrywide political awakening and demanding freedom of expression. 'Kala Aadmike Guli Mara', like 'Shyam Rakhi na Kul Rakhi' (On the Horns of a Dilemma), also condemns racism. 'Rudra-Mangal' (A Propitious Violence), 'Amra Shobi Swadhin, Amra Shobai Raja' (We Are All Free, We Are All Kings), 'Amra Lakshmichharar Dal' (Our Band of Hapless Wretches), 'Ami Sainik' (I am a Soldier) and 'Tomar Pon Ki?' (What is Your Pledge?) were important protest writings of Nazrul. He strongly protested against colonial rule.

Nazrul's nationalistic and patriotic songs articulated the aspirations of the subjugated class. In fact, his songs represented the common people. These celebrated unity and fraternity between Muslims and Hindus and the life struggles of the common people. His .. 'Jogote Laglo Sara Jege Oth Uthe Dera'.. compiled in 'Jugantor Gan' (Songs of Awakening) aroused the feelings of the commoners to a high level assuring them that they are not to be subjugated by Zaminders or Lord of the Zaminders. i.e.. the British any more. These feelings gave birth to revolutionary ideas in the soil Bengal and the first man was none other than Nazrul. <sup>21</sup>

His "Shikal Porar Gan" (The Song on Being in Fetters) is considered as one of the greatest Bangla songs of heroic sentiment. The first stanza of the song reads. "It is our trick to be put into chains/ a trick indeed / To make loose your fetters/ by wearing these chains" The year 1921 was tumultuous in point of political agitations under the impact of 'Khailafat Andolan' (Non co-operation Movement). That time the political unrest touched the peak and became stronger day by day. The then British Government took stern measures to quell the agitations, issuing arrest warrant against a large number of political leaders. It was that political situations which Kazi Nazrul Islam had to face after returning to Calcutta from Comilla. On December 10,1921, Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das was arrested and put into jail, and his wife Basanti Debi sent a request to Nazrul to contribute to the weekly 'Banglar Katha' (the voice of Bengal) run by Basanti Devi herself. Nazrul himself was an admirer of Deshbandhu and that's why he accepted the request, and Instantly, after having the message, he composed a historical songs for the weekly titled 'Bangar Gan' (the song of destruction). It made him more Sizzling and determined to the British demolish mission. He sang fierce-

“Break down the iron gate prison  
 And break down into pieces  
 The blood-bathed  
 Stone-alter of the goddess of fetters.  
 O! Young God of Destruction  
 Play on your doomsday drum  
 Let the flag of destruction  
 Flutter on the wall of the East.”

In “Kandari Hushiyar” (Boatman Beware), One of The most remarkable Bangla song of patriotic sentiment. Nazrul has made a fervent call to the captain who was here Symbolically referred to mean the national leaders who would steer the ship against all odds in the age of turmoil. He referred to the Battle of Plassey (1757) and reminded everyone how the British occupation of India began and urged the leaders to move along the right track of political sojourn and strictly live up to the matter of communal amity.<sup>22</sup> To Nazrul, beating the British evil force in his homeland, the country-men had to show strong unity and sacrifice their blood. In ‘Boatman Beware’ (Kandari Hushiyar), the poet expected Indian sun rising that set once in Plassey wilderness-

“There where the sword of Clive became red  
 With the blood of Bengalis!  
 In the near-by Ganges was set, alas!  
 The sun of India.  
 That sun shall rise again, red with our blood.  
 Those who sang of the victory of life on the scaffold  
 Are present here in spirit to witness  
 The sacrifice we offer.  
 This is the Great Ordeal, for the restoration  
 Of the nation;  
 The boat trembles, the ocean rolls,  
 Boatman, beware!” (Huda,354)

#### **Objective-4, TO the outcome of Nazrul’s opposition to British rule.**

The British government realized that Nazrul’s writings contained elements of revolt of the people against them. They therefore deemed the majority of his writing to be perilous and treacherous and forbade its publication. ‘Jugbani’ (The Message of the Age), ‘Rudra Mangal’ (The Violent God), Pralaya Shikha (Doomsday Flame), ‘Bhangar Gaan’ (The Bursting Song), ‘Durdiner Jatri’ (The Traveler through Rough Time), and ‘Chandrabindu’ were among the works that were prohibited from publication. His novel, ‘Agniveena’, managed to avoid government accusations. Despite being forbidden, many still brought and read those books in private. His flaming poems gave the underground revolutionaries such inspiration that they were prepared to fight for the emancipation of their country even if it meant risking their lives. Nazrul’s revolution aimed to awaken truth in every Indian soul as well as overthrow the British monarchy.<sup>23</sup>

Nazrul proclaims himself as a destroyer as well as creator. He also treats himself as a messenger of revolt. He says, “I m the messenger of revolt/ across the earth and the sky.” (150-151) . “The Rebel” after which he is known as the Rebel Poet, was the product of his poetic response to the call of the age, the most outstanding poetic creation of his life. The superb brilliance of the poem “The Rebel” has always been acknowledged by all. It not only reflected the spirit of the age, but also, as the critics think, showed the golden way of Nazrul’s self-expression.<sup>24</sup> Obtaining the title of the “Rebel Poet”, Nazrul roused the suspicion of

British authorities. In 1922, he published “Anondomoyeer Agomone” (On the Arrival of the Goddess of Delight) where he urged the devotees to fulfill Puja’s real spirit by sacrificing blood in an armed struggle for freedom. As the poem was political in spirit, it instigated the British authorities to conduct a raid on the office of ‘Dhumketu’. Consequently, Nazrul was arrested and charged with sedition. He tried and sentenced to one year’s rigorous imprisonment. This was in January, 1923. Nazrul’s defense on the occasion, remarkable for its solemnity and dignity, was published in a booklet called ‘Rajbandir Jabanbandi’ (the Deposition of a State Prisoner). where he says, I’ he charge against me: I’ m a rebel against the Crown. Therefore, I’m now a prisoner, convicted by a royal court. On one side is the Royal Crown, on the other, the flame of the Comet. One is a king, with a scepter in his hand; the other is the Truth, with the scepter of Justice. On the side of the King are state-paid government employees. On my side is the King of all Kings, the Judge of all judges, the eternal Truth- the awakened God.”

While Nazrul was serving his term in Alipore Central Jail, Rabindranath dedicated to him his musical play ‘Basanta’ (22 January, 1923). Nazrul celebrated the news by composing his poem about the ecstasy of poetic creation: ‘Aj Sristi Sukher Ullase’ (In the ecstasy of creation). On 14 April in 1923, Nazrul was moved to Hooghly Jail. The same day he began a hunger strike in protest against the ill treatment of political prisoners. Rabindranath sent Nazrul a telegram saying: ‘Give up hunger-strike, our literature claims you’. The telegram was not delivered. Meanwhile, under the pressure of public opinion, the civilian jail inspector, Dr. Abdullah Suhrawardy, visited the jail on 22 May in 1923 and at his persuasion Nazrul broke his 40-day hunger strike. On 18 June, Nazrul was transferred to Behrampur Jail. He was released on December 15, after suffering imprisonment for a year and three weeks. While in Hooghly Jail Nazrul wrote his famous song, ‘Ei shikal-para chhal moder e shikal-para chhal’ (Chains cannot bind us) and in Behrampur Jail he wrote another famous song ‘Jater name bajjati sab jat-jaliyat khelchhe juya’ ( The communal cheats are gambling in the name of communities). Nazrul wrote numerous poems and songs. In 1924, he published ‘Bisher Banshi’ banned by the British Raj. The book ignited rebellion in India against the British rule. He composed songs extensively criticizing the cruel conducts of jailers and inciting other convicts . Some of these songs are ‘Natuner Gan’ or ‘Chol Chol Chol’ (The Song of Youth or March March), etc. His famous collections of songs are Bulbul (1928). ‘Ganermala’ (1934), ‘Zufikar’ (1932). etc. His songs largely consolidated the Hindu-Muslim unity against the Divide and Rule policy of British bigotry and took ahead the freedom struggle.

## Conclusion

Being a man of revolution, Nazrul had the intense hatred towards the establishment of British Raj in India. Through his poetic works like ‘Bidrohi’ (The Rebel), ‘Bhangar Gaan’ (The song of Destruction) and his famous publication ‘Dhumketu’ (The Comet), he showed the tireless endeavor to attack the British government in India. His aim was to free his country from the grip of British colonialism. To accomplish his goal, he had to set up his mind towards the deeds of revolution and patriotism, therefore he had to face the hurdles which led him imprisoned many times by the British authorities. After staying in prison he kept the continuation of his fierce writings. He wrote ‘Rajbandir Jabanbandi’ (Disposition of a Political Prisoner). All of his revolutionary writing pieces made him not only a freedom fighter but also a man of truth, who did work to free the subaltern group and down trodden people from the illusion of British rule. His fierce resistance towards all forms of oppression. injustice has been expressed enormously by his poems, short stories, songs and essays. His poetry ignited the fire flame of rebellion. Through, almost of all the poems and the songs in ‘Bisher Bansi’, Nazrul urged the subjugated Indians to struggle and fight for freedom. His protest writing exposed the naked form of British rule. He called for the over throw of British rule in India through his writings. As a result, the people of India became strongly anti-British and they jumped into the anti-British movement . In a word, Kazi Nazrul Islam’s voice of protest (through his writings) led to a public awakening for the Indian freedom struggle against the British rule.

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