

# Kazi Nazrul Islam

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For other uses, see [Kazi Nazrul Islam \(disambiguation\)](#).

## Kazi Nazrul Islam কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম



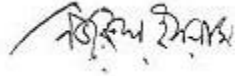
Kazi Nazrul Islam in 1926, [Chittagong](#)

<b>Born</b>	24 May 1899 <sup>[1]</sup> <a href="#">Churulia</a> , <a href="#">Bengal Presidency</a> , <a href="#">British Raj</a> (now in <a href="#">West Bengal</a> , India)
<b>Died</b>	29 August 1976 (aged 77) <a href="#">Dhaka</a> , <a href="#">Bangladesh</a>
<b>Occupation</b>	Poet, short-story writer, song composer, novelist, playwright and essayist.
<b>Language</b>	<a href="#">Bengali</a> <a href="#">Urdu</a> <a href="#">Persian</a> <a href="#">Hindi</a>
<b>Nationality</b>	<a href="#">Bangladeshi</a> <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<a href="#">Bengali</a>
<b>Notable work(s)</b>	<a href="#">Chal Chal Chal</a> , <i><a href="#">Bidrohi</a></i> , "Agniveena" "অগ্নিবীনা" ("Lyre of Fire"), <i>Dhumketu</i> ( <i>The Comet</i> ), <i>Bandhan Hara</i> ( <i>Free from Bonds</i> ), <i><a href="#">Nazrul Geeti</a></i>
<b>Notable award(s)</b>	<a href="#">Ekushey Padak</a> <a href="#">Padma Bhushan</a>

Spouse(s) Pramila Devi

---

Signature



Part of [a series](#) on the

## **Culture of Bengal**

[History\[show\]](#)

[People\[show\]](#)

[Languages\[show\]](#)

[Traditions\[show\]](#)

[Mythology and folklore\[show\]](#)

[Cuisine\[show\]](#)

[Festivals\[show\]](#)

[Art\[show\]](#)

[Literature\[show\]](#)

[Music and performing arts\[show\]](#)

[Media\[show\]](#)

[Sport\[show\]](#)

- [ক Bengal portal](#)

- [v](#)
- [t](#)

- [e](#)

Part of [a series](#) on the

## **Culture of Bangladesh**



[History](#)[show]

[People](#)[show]

[Languages](#)[show]

[Traditions](#)[show]

[Mythology and folklore](#)[show]

[Cuisine](#)[show]

[Festivals](#)[show]

**[Religion](#)**

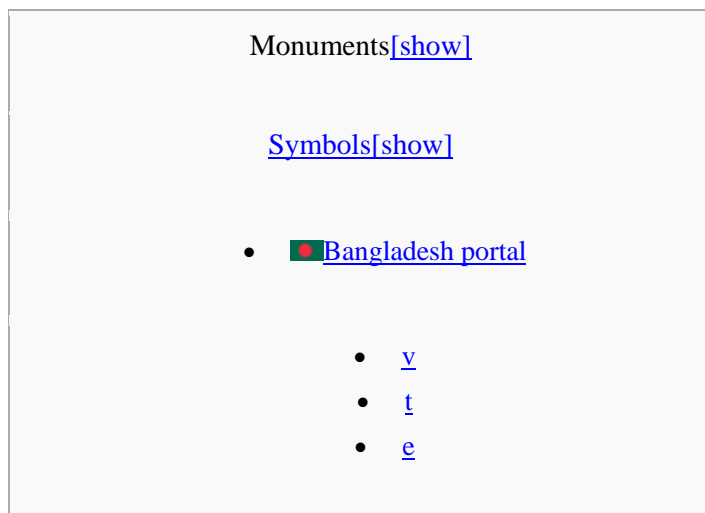
[Art](#)[show]

[Literature](#)[show]

[Music and performing arts](#)[show]

[Media](#)[show]

[Sport](#)[show]



**Kazi Nazrul Islam** ([Bengali](#): কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম *Kazī Nazrul Islām* (24 May 1899 – 29 August 1976),<sup>[1]</sup> **sobriquet** **Bidrohi Kobi (Rebel Poet)**, known popularly as **Nazrul**, was a [Bengali](#) poet, [musician](#) and [revolutionary](#) who pioneered poetic works espousing intense spiritual rebellion against [fascism](#) and oppression. His poetry and nationalist activism earned him the popular title of "বিদ্রোহী কবি" *Bidrohī Kobi (Rebel Poet)*. Accomplishing a [large body of acclaimed works](#) through his life, Nazrul is officially recognised as the [national poet](#) of [Bangladesh](#) and highly commemorated in India. He also composed the Bangladesh military [march](#) "[The Song of Youth](#)", now known as "Chal Chal Chal".<sup>[3]</sup>

Born into a [Bengali Muslim Quazi \(Kazi\)](#) family, Nazrul received religious education and worked as a [muezzin](#) at a local [mosque](#). He learned of poetry, drama, and literature while working with theatrical groups. After serving in the [British Indian Army](#), Nazrul established himself as a journalist in [Calcutta](#). He assailed the [British Raj](#) in India and preached revolution through his poetic works, such as "[Bidrohi](#)" ("The Rebel") and "Bhangar Gaan" ("The Song of Destruction"), as well as his publication "Dhumketu" ("The Comet"). His impassioned activism in the [Indian independence movement](#) often led to his imprisonment by British authorities. While in prison, Nazrul wrote the "Rajbandir Jabanbandi" "রাজবন্দীর জবাববন্দী" ("Deposition of a Political Prisoner"). Exploring the life and conditions of the downtrodden masses of India, Nazrul worked for their emancipation.

Nazrul's writings explore themes such as love, freedom, and revolution; he opposed all bigotry, including religious and gender. Throughout his career, Nazrul wrote short stories, novels, and essays but is best known for his poems, in which he pioneered new forms such as Bengali [ghazals](#). Nazrul wrote and composed music for his nearly 4,000 songs (including gramophone records),<sup>[4]</sup> collectively known as [Nazrul geeti](#) (Nazrul songs), which are widely popular today. In 1942 at the age of 43 he began suffering from an unknown disease, losing his voice and memory. It is often said, the reason was slow poisoning by British Government but later a medical team in [Vienna](#) diagnosed the disease as [Morbus Pick](#),<sup>[5]</sup> a rare incurable [neurodegenerative disease](#). It caused Nazrul's health to decline steadily and forced him to live in isolation for many years. Invited by the [Government of Bangladesh](#), Nazrul and his family moved to [Dhaka](#) in 1972, where he died four years later.

## Contents

- [1 Early life](#)
- [2 Rebel Poet](#)
- [3 Revolutionary](#)
- [4 Mass music](#)
- [5 Exploring religion](#)
- [6 Later life and illness](#)
- [7 Criticism and legacy](#)
- [8 Renowned Nazrul Sangeet singers](#)
- [9 See also](#)
- [10 References](#)
- [11 Bibliography](#)
- [12 External links](#)

## Early life




Nazrul in the Army

Kazi Nazrul Islam was born in the village of [Churulija](#) near Asansol in the [Burdwan District](#) of [Bengal Presidency](#) (now in [West Bengal](#)).<sup>[6]</sup> He was born in a powerful [Muslim](#) Taluqdar family and was the second of three sons and a daughter, Nazrul's father Kazi Faqeer Ahmed was the [imam](#) and caretaker of the local mosque and mausoleum. Nazrul's mother was Zahida Khatun. Nazrul had two brothers, Kazi Saahibjaan and Kazi Ali Hussain, and a sister, Umme Kulsum. Nicknamed *Dukhu Miañ* (দুখু মিয়া literally "Mr Sad Man" *the One with Grief*), Nazrul began attending the [maktab](#) and [madrassa](#) run by the [mosque](#) & [dargah](#) where he studied the [Qur'an](#) and other scriptures, Islamic philosophy and theology. His family was devastated with the death of his father in 1908. At the young age of ten, Nazrul began working in his father's place as a caretaker to support his family, as well as assisting teachers in school. He later became the [muezzin](#) at the mosque.<sup>[1][7]</sup>

Attracted to folk theatre, Nazrul joined a *leto* (travelling theatrical group) run by his uncle Fazl e Karim, working and travelling with them, learning [acting](#), as well as writing songs and poems for the plays and musicals.<sup>[6]</sup> Through his work and experiences, Nazrul began learning Bengali and [Sanskrit literature](#), as well as Hindu scriptures such as the [Puranas](#). The young poet composed many folk plays for his group, which included *Chāshār Shōng* ("the drama of a peasant"), *Shokunībōdh* ("the Killing of *Shakuni*," a character from the epic [Mahabharata](#)), *Rājā Jodhisthirer Shōng* ("the drama of King *Yudhisthira*" again from the *Mahabharata*), *Dātā Kōrno* ("the philanthropic *Karna*" from the *Mahabharata*), *Ākbōr Bādshāh* ("Akbar the emperor"), *Kobi Kālidās* ("poet [Kalidas](#)"), *Bidyan Hutum* ("the learned owl"), and *Rājputrer Shōng* ("the drama of a prince"),<sup>[1]</sup>



 Nazrul in 1927


In 1910, Nazrul left the troupe and enrolled at the Searsole Raj High School in [Raniganj](#) (where he came under influence of teacher, revolutionary and [Jugantar](#) activist Nibaran Chandra Ghatak, and initiated lifelong friendship with fellow author Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay, who was his classmate), and later transferred to the Mathrun High English School, studying under the headmaster and poet [Kumudranjan Mallik](#). Unable to continue paying his school fees, Nazrul left the school and joined a group of [kaviyals](#). Later he took jobs as a cook and at the most famous bakery of the region [Wahid's/Abdul Wahid](#) and tea stall in the town of Asansol. In 1914, Nazrul studied in the Darirampur School (now [Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University](#)) in [Trishal, Mymensingh District](#). Amongst other subjects, Nazrul studied Bengali, Sanskrit, [Arabic](#), [Persian literature](#) and [Hindustani classical music](#) under teachers who were impressed by his dedication and skill.<sup>[1]</sup>

Studying up to Class X, Nazrul did not appear for the [matriculation](#) pre-test examination, enlisting instead in the Indian Army in 1917 at the age of eighteen. He joined the British army mainly for two reasons: first, his youthful romantic inclination to respond to the unknown and, secondly, the call of politics.<sup>[8]</sup> Attached to the 49th [Bengal Regiment](#), he was posted to the [cantonment](#) in [Karachi](#), where he wrote his first prose and poetry. Although he never saw active fighting, he rose in rank from corporal to *havildar*, and served as [quartermaster](#) for his [battalion](#).<sup>[1]</sup> During this period, Nazrul read extensively, and was deeply influenced by [Rabindranath Tagore](#) and [Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay](#), as well as the Persian poets [Hafez](#), [Rumi](#) and [Omar Khayyam](#). He learnt Persian poetry from the regiment's [Punjabi moulvi](#), practiced music and pursued his literary interests. His first prose work, "Baunduler Atmakahini" ("Life of a Vagabond") was published in May, 1919. His poem "Mukti"

"মুক্তি" ("Freedom") was published by the "Bangla Mussalman Sahitya Patrika" "বাংলা মুসলিম সাহিত্য পত্রিকা" ("Bengali Muslim Literary Journal") in July 1919.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Rebel Poet



 Young Nazrul

Nazrul left the army in 1920 and settled in [Calcutta](#), which was then the "cultural capital" of India (it had ceased to be the political capital in 1911).<sup>[9]</sup> He joined the staff of the "Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samiti" ("Bengali Muslim Literary Society") and roomed at 32 [College Street](#) with colleagues. He published his first novel "Bandhan-hara" "বাঁধনহার" ("Freedom from bondage") in 1920, which he kept working on over the next seven years.<sup>[1]</sup> His first collection of poems included "Bodhan", "Shat-il-Arab", "Kheya-parer Tarani" and "Badal Prater Sharab" and received critical acclaim.<sup>[1]</sup>

Working at the literary society, Nazrul grew close to other young Muslim writers including [Mohammad Mozammel Haq](#), Afzalul Haq, Kazi Abdul Wadud and [Muhammad Shahidullah](#). He was a regular at clubs for Calcutta's writers, poets and intellectuals like the Gajendar Adda and the Bharatiya Adda. Despite many differences, Nazrul looked to Rabindranath Tagore as a mentor and he and Muhammad Shahidullah remained in close association.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1921, Nazrul was engaged to be married to Nargis, the niece of a well-known Muslim publisher Ali Akbar Khan, in Daulatpur, [Comilla](#). But on 18 June 1921 —the day of the wedding— upon public insistence by Ali Akbar Khan that the term "*Nazrul must reside in Daulatpur after marriage*" be included in the marriage contract, Nazrul walked away from the ceremony.

Nazrul reached the peak of fame with the publication of "[Bidrohi](#)" in 1922, which remains his most famous work, winning admiration of India's literary classes by his description of the rebel whose impact is fierce and ruthless even as its spirit is deep.<sup>[10]</sup>

I am the unutterable grief,

I am the trembling first touch of the virgin,  
I am the throbbing tenderness of her first stolen kiss.  
I am the fleeting glance of the veiled beloved,  
I am her constant surreptitious gaze...

...

I am the burning volcano in the bosom of the earth,  
I am the wild fire of the woods,  
I am Hell's mad terrific sea of wrath!  
I ride on the wings of lightning with joy and profundity,  
I scatter misery and fear all around,  
I bring earth-quakes on this world! "(8th stanza)"

I am the rebel eternal,  
I raise my head beyond this world,

High, ever erect and alone! "(Last stanza)"<sup>[11]</sup> (English translation by Kabir Choudhary)

বিদ্রোহী

- কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম

বল বীর -

বল উন্নত মম শির!

শির নেহারি আমারি, নত-শির ওই শিখর হিমাদ্রীর!

বল বীর -

বল মহাবিশ্বের মহাকাশ ফাড়ি'

চন্দ্র সূর্য্য গ্রহ তারা ছাড়ি'

ভুলোক দুলোক গোলক ভেদিয়া,

খোদার আসন "আরশ" ছেদিয়া

উঠিয়াছি চির-বিস্ময় আমি বিশ্ব-বিধাত্রীর!

মম ললাটে রুদ্র-ভগবান জ্বলে রাজ-রাজটীকা দীপ্ত জয়শ্রীর!

বল বীর -

আমি চির-উন্নত শির!

আমি চিরদুর্দম, দুর্বিনীত, নৃশংস,

মহা- প্রলয়ের আমি নটরাজ, আমি সাইক্লোন, আমি ধ্বংস,

আমি মহাভয়, আমি অভিশাপ পৃথ্বীর!

আমি দুর্ব্বার,

আমি ভেঙে করি সব চুরমার!

আমি অনিয়ম উচ্ছৃঙ্খল,




আমি দলে যাই যত বন্ধন, যত নিয়ম কানুন শৃংখল!  
আমি মানি নাকো কোনো আইন,  
আমি ভরা-তরী করি ভরা-ডুবি, আমি টর্পেডো, আমি ভীম,  
ভাসমান মাইন!  
আমি ধূজ্জটী, আমি এলোকেশে ঝড় অকাল-বৈশাখীর!  
আমি বিদ্রোহী আমি বিদ্রোহী-সূত বিশ্ব-বিধাত্রীর!  
বল বীর -  
চির উন্নত মম শির!

Published in the "Bijli" "বিজলি" (*Thunder*) magazine, the rebellious language and theme was popularly received, coinciding with the [Non-cooperation movement](#) — the first, mass nationalist campaign of [civil disobedience](#) against British rule.<sup>[1]</sup>

Nazrul explores a synthesis of different forces in a rebel, destroyer and preserver, expressing rage as well as beauty and sensitivity. Nazrul followed up by writing "Pralayollas" ("Destructive Euphoria"), and his first anthology of poems, the "Agniveena" "অগ্নিবীণা" ("Lyre of Fire") in 1922, which enjoyed astounding and far-reaching success. He also published his first volume of short stories, the "Byather Dan" "ব্যথার দান" ("Gift of Sorrow") and "Yugbani" "যুগবানী", an anthology of essays.

## Revolutionary



 Nazrul with his first son Bulbul; his wife Pramila seated right and his mother-in-law Giribala Devi seated left, behind whom stands Bulbul's nanny

Nazrul started a bi-weekly magazine, publishing the first "Dhumketu" "ধুমকেতু" (*Comet*) on 12 August 1922. Earning the moniker of the "rebel poet", Nazrul also aroused the suspicion of British authorities.<sup>[6]</sup> "Anondomoyeer Agomone" a political poem published in "Dhumketu" in September 1922 led to a police raid on the

magazine's office. Arrested, Nazrul entered a lengthy plea before the judge in the court.

I have been accused of sedition. That is why I am now confined in the prison. On the one side is the crown, on the other the flames of the comet. One is the king, sceptre in hand; the other Truth worth the mace of justice. To plead for me, the king of all kings, the judge of all judges, the eternal truth the living God... His laws emerged out of the realization of a universal truth about mankind. They are for and by a sovereign God. The king is supported by an infinitesimal creature; I by its eternal and indivisible Creator. I am a poet; I have been sent by God to express the unexpressed, to portray the unportrayed. It is God who is heard through the voice of the poet... My voice is but a medium for Truth, the message of God... 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>[12]</sup>

On 14 April 1923 he was transferred from the jail in [Alipore](#) to [Hooghly](#) in Kolkata. He began a 40-day fast to protest mistreatment by the British jail superintendent. Nazrul broke his fast more than a month later and was eventually released from prison in December 1923. Nazrul composed a large number of poems and songs during the period of imprisonment and many of his works were banned in the 1920s by the British authorities.<sup>[1]</sup>

Kazi Nazrul Islam became a critic of the [Khilafat struggle](#), condemning it as hollow, religious fundamentalism.<sup>[1]</sup> Nazrul's rebellious expression extended to rigid orthodoxy in the name of religion and politics.<sup>[13]</sup> Nazrul also criticised the [Indian National Congress](#) for not embracing outright political independence from the [British Empire](#). He became active in encouraging people to agitate against British rule, and joined the Bengal state unit of the Congress party.<sup>[1]</sup> Nazrul also helped organise the [Sramik Praja Swaraj Dal](#), along with [Muzaffar Ahmeda](#) socialist political party committed to national independence and the service of the peasant masses. On 16 December 1925 Nazrul began publishing the weekly "Langal" (Plough), and served as chief editor.<sup>[1]</sup>

During his visit to [Comilla](#) in 1921, Nazrul met a young Hindu woman, Pramila Devi, with whom he fell in love and they married on 25 April 1924. Pramila belonged to the [Brahmo Samaj](#), which criticised her marriage to a Muslim. Nazrul in turn was condemned by Muslim religious leaders and continued to face criticism for his personal life and professional works, which attacked social and religious dogma and intolerance. Despite controversy, Nazrul's popularity and reputation as the "rebel poet" rose significantly.<sup>[1][14]</sup>

Weary of struggles, I, the great rebel,

Shall rest in quiet only when I find  
The sky and the air free of the piteous groans of the oppressed.  
Only when the battle fields are cleared of jingling bloody sabres  
Shall I, weary of struggles, rest in quiet,

I the great rebel.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Mass music



Nazrul on a hunting trip with friends in [Sundarpur](#), India

With his wife and young son Bulbul, Nazrul settled in [Krishnanagar](#) in 1926. His work began to transform as he wrote poetry and songs that articulated the aspirations of the downtrodden classes, a sphere of his work known as "mass music."<sup>[15]</sup> Nazrul assailed the socio-economic norms and political system that had brought misery. From his poem 'Daridro' [Bengali](#): দারিদ্র (poverty or pain):

O poverty, thou hast made me great.

Thou hast made me honoured like Christ  
With his crown of thorns. Thou hast given me  
Courage to reveal all. To thee I owe  
My insolent, naked eyes and sharp tongue.  
Thy curse has turned my violin to a sword...  
O proud saint, thy terrible fire  
Has rendered my heaven barren.  
O my child, my darling one  
I could not give thee even a drop of milk  
No right have I to rejoice.  
Poverty weeps within my doors forever  
As my spouse and my child.

Who will play the flute?

দারিদ্র্য

- কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম

হে দারিদ্র্য, তুমি মোরে করেছ মহান।  
তুমি মোরে দানিয়াছ শ্রীষ্টের সম্মান  
কন্টক-মুকুট শোভা। - দিয়াছ, তাপস,  
অসঙ্কোচ প্রকাশের দুরন্ত সাহস;

উদ্ধত উলঙ্গ দৃষ্টি, বাণী ফুরধার,  
বীণা মোর শাপে তব হ'ল তরবার!  
দুঃসহ দাহনে তব হে দর্পী তাপস,  
অপ্সান স্বর্ণেরে মোর করিলে বিরস,  
অকালে শুকালে মোর রূপ রস প্রাণ!  
শীর্ণ করপুট ভরি' সুন্দরের দান  
যতবার নিতে যাই-হে বুভুক্ষু তুমি  
অগ্রে আসি' কর পান! শূন্য মরুভূমি  
হেরি মম কল্পলোক। আমার নয়ন  
আমারি সুন্দরে করে অগ্নি বরিষণ!



Kazi Nazrul Islam at [Sitakunda, Chittagong](#) in 1929

In what his contemporaries regarded as one of his greatest flairs of creativity, Nazrul began composing the very first [ghazals](#) in Bengali, transforming a form of poetry written mainly in Persian and [Urdu](#).<sup>[17]</sup> Nazrul became the first person to introduce Islam into the larger mainstream tradition of Bengali music. The first record of Islamic songs by Nazrul Islam was a commercial success and many gramophone companies showed interest in producing these. A significant impact of Nazrul was that it drew made Muslims more comfortable in the Bengali Arts, which used to be dominated by Hindus. Nazrul also composed a number of notable *Shamasangeet*, [Bhajan](#) and [Kirtan](#), combining Hindu devotional music.<sup>[17]</sup> Arousing controversy and passions in his readers, Nazrul's ideas attained great popularity across India. In 1928, Nazrul began working as a lyricist, composer and music director for [His Master's Voice](#) Gramophone Company. The songs written and music composed by him were broadcast on radio stations across the country. He was also enlisted/attached with the Indian Broadcasting Company.<sup>[18]</sup>

Nazrul professed faith in the belief in the equality of women — a view his contemporaries considered revolutionary.<sup>[10]</sup> From his poem *Nari* (Woman):

I don't see any difference  
Between a man and woman  
Whatever great or benevolent achievements  
That are in this world  
Half of that was by woman,

The other half by man. (Translated by Sajed Kamal<sup>[19]</sup>)

His poetry retains long-standing notions of men and women in binary opposition to one another and does not affirm gender similarities and flexibility in the social structure:

Man has brought the burning, scorching heat of the sunny day;

Woman has brought peaceful night, soothing breeze and cloud.  
Man comes with desert-thirst; woman provides the drink of honey.  
Man ploughs the fertile land; woman sows crops in it turning it green.

Man ploughs, woman waters; that earth and water mixed together, brings about a harvest of golden paddy.<sup>[19]</sup>

However, Nazrul's poems strongly emphasise the confluence of the roles of both sexes and their equal importance to life. He stunned society with his poem "Barangana" ("Prostitute"), in which he addresses a prostitute as "mother".<sup>[20]</sup> Nazrul accepts the prostitute as a human being, reasoning that this person was breast-fed by a noble woman and belonging to the race of "mothers and sisters"; he assails society's negative notions of prostitutes.<sup>[21]</sup>

Who calls you a prostitute, mother?  
Who spits at you?  
Perhaps you were suckled by someone  
as chaste as [Seeta](#).

...

And if the son of an unchaste mother is 'illegitimate',  
so is the son of an unchaste father.  
Translated by Sajed Kamal<sup>[22]</sup>)

Nazrul was an advocate of the emancipation of women; both traditional and non-traditional women were portrayed by him with utmost sincerity.<sup>[20]</sup> Nazrul's songs are collectively called as Nazrul Sangeet [Nazrul geeti](#).

## Exploring religion



Nazrul in the role of Narad in the stage drama *Dhruba*

Nazrul's mother died in 1928, and his second son Bulbul died of [smallpox](#) the following year. His first son, Krishna Mohammad had died prematurely. His wife gave birth to two more sons — Savyasachi in 1928 and Aniruddha in 1931 — but Nazrul remained shaken and aggrieved for a long time.

Come back my birdie! Come back again to my empty bosom! *Shunno e bookey paakhi mor aaye! Phirey aaye phirey aaye!*<sup>[23]</sup>

His works changed significantly from rebellious expositions of society to deeper examination of religious themes. His works in these years led Islamic devotional songs into the mainstream of [Bengali folk music](#), exploring the Islamic practices of [namaz](#) (prayer), [roza](#) (fasting), [hajj](#) (pilgrimage) and [zakat](#) (charity). This was regarded by his contemporaries as a significant achievement as [Bengali Muslims](#) had been strongly averse to devotional music.<sup>[24]</sup> Nazrul's creativity diversified as he explored Hindu devotional music by composing *Shama Sangeet*, [bhajans](#) and [kirtans](#), often merging Islamic and Hindu values. Nazrul's poetry and songs explored the philosophy of Islam and Hinduism.<sup>[25]</sup>

Let people of all countries and all times come together. At one great union of humanity. Let them listen to the flute music of one great unity. Should a single person be hurt, all hearts should feel it equally. If one person is insulted; it is a shame to all mankind, an insult to all! Today is the grand uprising of the agony of universal man.<sup>[26]</sup>

The *badnaa*, a water jug typical in usage by Bengali Muslims for ablutions (*wazu*) and bath (*ghusl*) and the *gaaru* a water pot typical in usage by Bengali Hindus, meet and embrace each other under the peace of the new pact (between the rioting Hindus and Muslims in Bengal during the British Raj on certain politico-religious differences and disputes that had preceded the said pact). There is no knife in the hand of the Muslim and also the Hindu does not wield the bamboo any more! *Bodna gaaru te kolakuli*

*korey! Nobo pact er aashnaai! Musholmaaner haatey naai chhuri! Hindur haatey baansh naai!*<sup>[27]</sup>

Nazrul's poetry imbibed the passion and creativity of [Shakti](#), which is identified as the [Brahman](#), the personification of primordial energy. He wrote and composed many *bhajans*, *shyamasangeet*, *agamanis* and *kirtans*. He also composed large number of songs on invocation to Lord [Shiva](#), Goddesses [Lakshmi](#) and [Saraswati](#) and on the theme of love of [Radha](#) and [Krishna](#).<sup>[7]</sup>

Nazrul assailed fanaticism in religion, denouncing it as evil and inherently irreligious. He devoted many works to expound upon the principle of human equality, exploring the *Qur'an* and the life of Islam's prophet [Muhammad](#). Nazrul has been compared to [William Butler Yeats](#) for being the first Muslim poet to create imagery and symbolism of Muslim historical figures such as Qasim, [Ali](#), [Umar](#), [Kamal Pasha](#), Anwar Pasha and [Muhammad](#).<sup>[12]</sup> His vigorous assault on extremism and mistreatment of women provoked condemnation from Muslim and Hindu fundamentalists.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

In 1920, Nazrul expressed his vision of religious harmony in an editorial in *Joog Bani*,

“Come brother [Hindu](#)! Come [Musalman](#)! Come [Buddhist](#)! Come [Christian](#)! Let us transcend all barriers, let us forsake forever all smallness, all lies, all selfishness and let us call brothers as brothers. We shall quarrel no more”.<sup>[28]</sup>

In another article entitled *Hindu Mussalman* published in *Ganabani* on 2 September 1922 he wrote -

“I can tolerate Hinduism and Muslims but I cannot tolerate the Tikism (Tiki is a tuft of never cut hair kept on the head by certain Hindus to maintain personal Holiness) and beardism. Tiki is not Hinduism. It may be the sign of the pundit. Similarly beard is not Islam, it may be the sign of the [mollah](#). All the hair-pulling have originated from those two tufts of hair. Today's fighting is also between the Pundit and the Mollah: It is not between the Hindus and the Muslims. No prophet has said, ‘I have come for Hindus I have come for Muslims I have come for Christians.’ They have said, ‘I have come for the humanity for everyone, like light’. But the devotees of Krishna says, ‘Krishna is for Hindus’. The followers of Muhammad (Sm) says, ‘Muhammad (Sm) is for the Muslims’. The Disciple of Christ is for Christian”. Krishna-Muhammad-Christian have become national property. This property is the root of all trouble. Men do not quarrel for light but they quarrel over cattle.”<sup>[29]</sup>

Nazrul was an exponent of [humanism](#).<sup>[29]</sup> Although a Muslim, he named his sons with both Hindu and Muslim names: Krishna Mohammad, Arindam Khaled(bulbul), Kazi Sabyasachi and Kazi Aniruddha.<sup>[30]</sup>

## Later life and illness

In 1933, Nazrul published a collection of essays titled "Modern World Literature", in which he analyses different styles and themes of literature. Between 1928 and 1935 he published 10 volumes containing 800 songs of which more than 600 were based on

classical [ragas](#). Almost 100 were folk tunes after [kirtans](#) and some 30 were patriotic songs. From the time of his return to Kolkata until he fell ill in 1941, Nazrul composed more than 2,600 songs, many of which have been lost.<sup>[7]</sup> His songs based on *baul*, *jhumur*, [Santhali](#) folksongs, jhanpan or the folk songs of [snake charmers](#), *bhatiali* and *bhaoaia* consist of tunes of folk-songs on the one hand and a refined lyric with poetic beauty on the other. Nazrul also wrote and published poems for children.<sup>[7]</sup>



 Nazrul at [Kolkata](#) in 1940

Nazrul's success soon brought him into Indian theatre and the then-nascent [film industry](#).<sup>[11]</sup> The film "Vidyapati" ("Master of Knowledge") was produced based on his recorded play in 1936, and Nazrul served as the music director for the film adaptation of Tagore's novel *Gora*. Nazrul wrote songs and directed music for [Sachin Sengupta](#)'s bioepic play "[Siraj-ud-Daula](#)". In 1939, Nazrul began working for Calcutta Radio, supervising the production and broadcasting of the station's musical programmes. He produced critical and analytic documentaries on music, such as "Haramoni" and "Navaraga-malika". Nazrul also wrote a large variety of songs inspired by the [raga Bhairav](#).<sup>[31]</sup> Nazrul sought to preserve his artistic integrity by condemning the adaptation of his songs to music composed by others and insisting on the use of tunes he composed himself.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Nazrul's wife Pramila Devi fell seriously ill in 1939 and was paralysed from waist down. To provide for his wife's medical treatment, he resorted to mortgaging the royalties of his gramophone records and literary works for 400 rupees.<sup>[32]</sup> He returned to journalism in 1940 by working as chief editor for the daily newspaper "Nabayug" ("New Age"), founded by the eminent Bengali politician [A. K. Fazlul Huq](#).<sup>[32]</sup>

Nazrul also was shaken by the death of [Rabindranath Tagore](#) on 8 August 1941. He spontaneously composed two poems in Tagore's memory, one of which, "Rabihara" (loss of Rabi or without Rabi) was broadcast on the [All India Radio](#). Within months, Nazrul himself fell seriously ill and gradually began losing his power of speech. His behaviour became erratic, and spending recklessly, he fell into financial difficulties. In spite of her own illness, his wife constantly cared for her husband. However, Nazrul's health seriously deteriorated and he grew increasingly depressed. He underwent medical treatment under [homeopathy](#) as well as [Ayurveda](#), but little progress was achieved before mental dysfunction intensified and he was admitted to a mental asylum in 1942. Spending four months there without making progress, Nazrul and his family began living a silent life in India. In 1952, he was transferred to a mental hospital in [Ranchi](#). With the efforts of a large group of admirers who called



themselves the "Nazrul Treatment Society" as well as prominent supporters such as the Indian politician [Syama Prasad Mookerjee](#), the treatment society sent Nazrul and Promila to [London](#), then to [Vienna](#) for treatment.<sup>[33]</sup> Examining doctors said he had received poor care, and Dr. Hans Hoff, a leading [neurosurgeon](#) in Vienna, diagnosed that Nazrul was suffering from [Pick's disease](#). His condition judged to be incurable, Nazrul returned to [Calcutta](#) on 15 December 1953.<sup>[33]</sup> On 30 June 1962 his wife Pramila died and Nazrul remained in intensive medical care.

On 24 May 1972, the newly independent nation of [Bangladesh](#) brought Nazrul to live in Dhaka with consent of the Government of India. In January 1976, he was accorded the citizenship of Bangladesh.<sup>[11]</sup> Despite receiving treatment and attention, Nazrul's physical and mental health did not improve. In 1974, his youngest son, Kazi Aniruddha, an eminent guitarist died, and Nazrul soon succumbed to his long-standing ailments on 29 August 1976. In accordance with a wish he had expressed in one of his poems, he was buried beside a mosque on the campus of the [University of Dhaka](#). Tens of thousands of people attended his funeral; Bangladesh observed two days of national mourning and the [Indian Parliament](#) observed a minute of silence in his honour.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Criticism and legacy



 Kazi Nazrul's mazar (tomb) near the Central Mosque, [Dhaka University](#) campus.

Nazrul's poetry is characterised by an abundant use of rhetorical devices, which he employed to convey conviction and sensuousness. He often wrote without care for organisation or polish. His works have often been criticized for [egotism](#), but his admirers counter that they carry more a sense of self-confidence than ego. They cite his ability to defy God yet maintain an inner, humble devotion to Him.<sup>[12]</sup> Nazrul's poetry is regarded as rugged but unique in comparison to Tagore's sophisticated style. Nazrul's use of [Persian](#) vocabulary was controversial but it widened the scope of his work.<sup>[12]</sup> Nazrul's works for children have won acclaim for his use of rich language, imagination, enthusiasm and an ability to fascinate young readers.<sup>[12]</sup> British government banned the magazine of Nazrul named *Dhumketu* because of publishing a political poem "Anondomoyeer Agomone" on September 26, 1922.<sup>[35]</sup> Nazrul is regarded for his secularism.<sup>[36]</sup> He was the first person to cite of [Christians](#) of [Bengal](#) in his novel [Mrityukhudha](#). He was also the first user of folk terms in [Bengali literature](#). Nazrul pioneered new styles and expressed radical ideas and emotions in a large body of work. Scholars credit him for spearheading a cultural renaissance in Muslim-majority Bengal, "liberating" poetry and literature in Bengali from its

medieval mould. Nazrul was awarded the Jagattarini Gold Medal in 1945 — the highest honour for work in Bengali literature by the [University of Calcutta](#) — and awarded the [Padma Bhushan](#), one of India's highest civilian honours in 1960.<sup>[37]</sup> The Government of [Bangladesh](#) conferred upon him the status of being the "national poet". He was awarded the [Ekushey Padak](#) by the Government of [Bangladesh](#). He was awarded Honorary [D.Litt.](#) by the [University of Dhaka](#). Many centres of learning and culture in India and Bangladesh have been founded and dedicated to his memory. The [Nazrul Endowment](#) is one of several scholarly institutions established to preserve and expound upon his thoughts and philosophy, as well as the preservation and analysis of the large and diverse collection of his works. The [Bangladesh Nazrul Sena](#) is a large public organization working for the education of children throughout the country.<sup>[38]</sup> Nazrul Sanskriti Parishad is working with Nazrul 's life and works since 2000 in India.

## Renowned Nazrul Sangeet singers

Renowned Nazrul Sangeet/Geeti singers include [Firoza Begum](#), Suprava Sarkar, Angurbala, Indubala, Anjali Mukherjee, Jnanendra Prasad Goswami, [Nilufar Yasmin](#) (deceased), Manabendra Mukherjee (deceased), Kanika Majumder, Dipali Nag, Sukumar Mitra, Dharendra Chandra Mitra, Dhiren Basu, Purabi Dutta, Nashid Kamal, Ferdous Ara, Fatema-tuz Zohra, Shahin Samad, Ramanuj Dasgupta and Susmita Goswami.

Nazrul's direct students who recorded for HMV were [Juthika Roy](#), Girin Chakraborty, Binapani Devi, Dhiren Das, Suprava Sarkar, Harimoti, K. Mullick, Nitai Ghatak, Abbasuddin Ahmed, Angurbala, [[Kanan Devi] (deceased)], Dipali Nag, [S. D. Burman](#) (deceased), Mrinalkanti Ghosh, Geeta Basu, [Kamal Dasgupta](#), Dharendra Chandra Mitra, Jaganyay Mitra, Satya Chowdhury, Jnanendra Prasad Goswami, Kamala Jharia, Santosh Sengupta, Siddheswar Mukhopadhyay, Indubala, [Chittaranjan Das](#) and Shailo Devi.