

INTRODUCING OUR FLAG

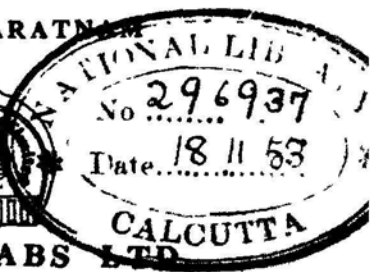
(FOR OUR BOYS AND GIRLS)



Translated from the Original in KANNADA

BY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This little book tells the story of Free India's National Flag. It tells how the concept of the Flag developed, what its tri-colour pattern stands for and what the Asoka Wheel of Dharma symbolises. It teaches our boys and girls the inspiring message of the Flag and describes the right way of honouring it.

The author wrote the original of this book in Kannada and then prepared this translation in English that it might reach a wider circle of readers.

This book also contains the original words of our national songs, *Vande Mātaram* and *Jana-Gaṇa-Mana*, and renderings of these songs in English.

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CHAPTER ONE

CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

We, in India, are familiar with the legend they tell in the Puranas of the Churning of the Ocean.

Long ages ago, the Gods and the Demons decided to churn the Ocean of Milk and obtain the Nectar of Immortality. They used the Mandara Mountain as the churning-rod and the serpent Vasuki as the rope with which to churn.

The first product of this churning was the Halahala poison. Siva swallowed it to save the three worlds from destruction. Next was born the moon; and Siva adorned his head with it. Then, in a stream, many good things came out of the Ocean. Airavata, the all-white elephant, and Uchchaisravas, the all-white horse, were appropriated by Indra, Lord of the Gods. The wondrous jewel Kaustubha and the glorious Goddess Lakshmi were offered to Lord Narayana. Other things too rose out of the milky waves, and at the end of it all, that which they longed for most manifested itself—the Nectar of Immortality.

Our struggle for Independence may be compared to this Churning of the Ocean. Bharata,

or our India, was the Ocean in this instance. Truth was the mountain and Sufferance the churning-rope that was employed by our Heroes who were strong in Non-violence. The object of this churning was to achieve the Nectar of Poorna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

As the Moon emerged from the Ocean of Milk in the age-old story, this, our struggle for Independence, yielded us our National Flag. The life-giving Nectar of Poorna Swaraj is yet to come.

The object of the present book is to acquaint our children with the history and the meaning of our National Flag, which reigns in the sky, bright as the moon.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS A FLAG?

A Flag is a sacred piece of cloth. It is rectangular in shape. Normally, its width is two-thirds of its length.

Every flag has a distinctive design, and one or more distinctive colours. As the flag flies in the air, only such colours are chosen as will clearly stand out against the blue background of the sky.

A flag not only has its own distinctive colours, but it also includes, in many instances, certain emblems. The Stars on the American Flag and the Hammer and Sickle on the Russian Flag are well known. Our Flag had the sign of the Charkha for a number of years in the past; but now it displays the Chakra or the Wheel, instead.

Each colour, each symbol, in a flag has its own significance. A Flag, besides being beautiful to look at, should also be full of meaning, if it is to inspire and lead a Nation to its cherished goal.

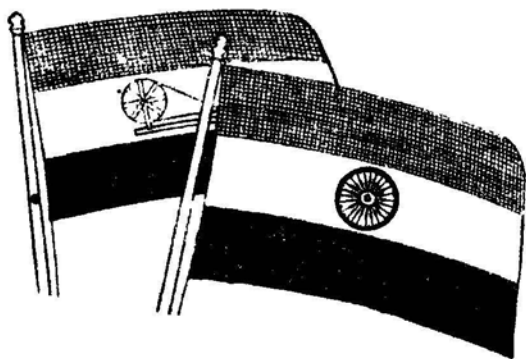
A Flag is a pictorial expression of the aims and aspirations of the people who adopt it as their banner. The flag seems to say: 'Such and such is the meaning of this colour. And

such and such is the idea conveyed by this symbol. Once you grasp this significance, you get at the heart of those who gather under me.'

In short, a Flag stands for the People, and for that reason, it is sacred.

CHAPTER THREE

NATIONAL FLAG, NATIONAL SONG



I

Every independent country has its 'National Flag', its 'National Song', and its 'National Language'. A people are recognized as belonging to such and such a country by the Flag they fly, and the Song they sing, and the Language they speak, for these three are the outstanding characteristics of a nation.

The people of England, for example, hoist their Union Jack, sing their *God Save The King* and converse in English.

Even we, till recently, while we were being governed by the British, hoisted *their* National Flag and sang *their* National Anthem. And

we still use *their* Language, in and out of season.

Our elders, who saw the absurdity of all this and knew the measure of slavery that was responsible for this unhappy state of things, determined, even as far back as fifty years ago, to end it. Anticipating the day when India would be rid of the foreign yoke, they set about devising a National Flag, a National Anthem and a National Language for Free India.

This determination and endeavour obtained for us our Tri-colour: horizontal stripes of Green, White and Saffron, and an imprint of the Charkha or the Spinning Wheel on the central white band. A simple flag; yet a potent one, as recent times have so amply shown.

The unforgettable struggle between Indians, determined to win back their lost freedom, and the British, bent on keeping them in bondage as long as ever they could, is a matter of recent history. During the course of this struggle, a good many of our people went to prison, bore lathi blows, suffered untold horrors; they even faced bullets and courted certain death. Their weapon and their armour, their entire arsenal in this unequal fight against their rulers, armed to the teeth, was Satyagraha, based on Ahimsa, as expounded by Gandhiji. In this unprecedented and unparalleled Non-violent War,

many suffered a complete physical breakdown, many lost their limbs, and many laid down their lives on the altar of the Motherland. Irrespective of age, sex, caste or creed, hundreds offered this supreme sacrifice to win freedom. It was in such a soil of sacrifice that the Indian Tri-colour took root and grew to its present status and glory.

And this Flag, the spontaneous outcome of the will of a united people, became the National Flag of India, not by the accepted mode of formal resolution, but by tacit common consent. Our newly-formed Constituent Assembly only ratified the will of the people at its sitting on 22nd July, 1947. With this difference, that a Wheel was adopted to represent the Charkha in the Flag used hitherto. And this Wheel was designated the Wheel of Asoka, for it had been copied from the abacus of the Lion Capital of Sarnath.

Though this change appears to be only a simplification of the old Charkha symbol (and has, in fact, been explained as such, in the resolution on the Flag), it is, in reality, a fuller development of the original significance of the Flag. The Wheel, called the Wheel of Asoka, has very greatly added to the meaning attached to the ordinary wheel of the Charkha.

It is the purpose of this book to explain this addition of meaning to our National Flag.

II.

Along with the emergence of the National Flag in the days of the Fight for Freedom, a National Song also came into being, on its own.

Even in those days, *Vande Mātaram* was the people's favourite. They remembered that a decade or two earlier, when the British carried out the partition of Bengal, *Vande Mātaram* had been the battle-cry of Bengalees who opposed the partition. This cry helped them to bend the British to their will. And it was but natural for Indians to fall back on the same cry when they launched the struggle to wrest freedom from their rulers.

Another song which has made almost as strong an appeal as *Vande Mātaram* is *Jana-gaṇa-mana*, which came into vogue much later. The author of *Vande Mātaram* was Babu Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and *Jana-gaṇa-mana* was composed by the world-famous poet Rabindra-nath Tagore. Both the compositions are pleasing to the ear and their word-music thrills us. Both have a richness of meaning that elevates the mind and the soul of the listener. Yet, some prefer *Vande Mātaram*, and others *Jana-gaṇa-mana*. That is only a matter of one's fancy,

however; it is wrong to think that anyone dislikes the one song or the other.

The country has not yet chosen any particular National Anthem for India. Today, some sing *Vande Mātaram*, some sing *Jana-gaṇa-mana*, and not a few sing both, one after the other.

Whatever the decision may be, even after the country has adopted its National Anthem for the sake of uniformity, it would be unwise to forget the words and meaning of either of these two great songs. The ideas contained in them are a permanent source of inspiration.

English renderings of these two songs, along with their original words, are given at the end of this book for the benefit of our readers.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF OUR FLAG

Our Flag is a Tri-colour, with green, white and saffron bands in the ascending order.

In the middle of the white band, we have a Wheel, which nearly fills the width of the band. This Wheel is printed in navy-blue.

In the third century B.C., Emperor Asoka caused a pillar to be erected at Sarnath. This pillar carried at the top a wondrous Lion Capital. The abacus or base of the Lion Capital was ornamented with four wheels. One of these four has been copied for our Flag, and has been called the Wheel of Asoka.

This Wheel has twenty-four Spokes.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE THREE COLOURS

Attempts to evolve a National Flag for India started, we are told, in 1906. But it was in 1921 that the idea took concrete shape and the parent of the present Tri-colour was born. Though the Flag has borne different meanings during different periods of its development, it has consistently kept its original tri-colour composition.

I

When the Tri-colour was born, the originators interpreted the three colours thus:

Green is the colour of the Flag of the Prophet Mahommed, the founder of Islam, and is therefore dear to the Muslims.

Saffron (originally red) is dear to the hearts of the Hindus, as representing the colour of the sanyasin's robe.

These two colours impress upon our minds the lesson that just as they stand side by side on one piece of cloth, even so should we live together in the same country in amity.

White is symbolic of harmonious integration. Just as the seven primary colours blend themselves and appear as pure white, the various

minorities such as the Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsees, Christians and Jews who dwell in our country should blend themselves into one homogeneous people.

Thus, the alignment of the three colours symbolized the dream of a United India, presenting a unity, while preserving its diversity.

That was the message of the three colours in 1921, in the days of the infancy of the Flag.

II

Ten years of sustained struggle under this Flag contributed a fresh meaning to the same colours.

Green signified Firmness and Faith.

White represented Truth, and Non-violence, and Purity.

Saffron denoted Courage, and Sacrifice, and Selflessness.

The various noble qualities displayed by the Non-violent Army were identified with the three colours.

That was in 1931.

III

The 15th of August, 1947, is a memorable day, for on that day India came into her own and the world witnessed the successful end of a bloodless Revolution.

As the old order has been rung out and the new rung in, it is but meet that the National Flag should now have a new significance to fulfil the needs of the new era.

This New India is in urgent need of greater Production all round, careful Conservation and wise Distribution. This three-fold constructive endeavour is visually represented by the three colours.

Green symbolizes Fertility. Lands should be cultivated and made to yield in abundance a variety of crops, each in its proper season.

White symbolizes Conservation. Whatever is grown should be carefully harvested and preserved, and nothing allowed to go to waste. As white is composed of a variety of colours in the proper proportions, so too should the Treasury of the Nation be stocked with useful things in their proper proportions.

Saffron is the colour of Renunciation. The National Treasury, built up first by production and secondly by preservation, should be utilized wisely and freely, according to the needs of the people of particular areas and at the right moments.

Thus we see that the three colours in our Flag stand for Production, Conservation and Utilization, the three processes implicit in true Progress. That these three processes should

be kept up in a perpetual stream is indelibly impressed on us by the sign of the Wheel in the centre of the Flag.

The Wheel is a circle; it ends where it begins, or begins where it ends.' In a circle the beginning cannot be distinguished from the end. Thus, when production, conservation, and utilization are so balanced that the country is never in want of the things essential to its happiness and prosperity, then we can say that the country has lived up to the symbol of the Wheel in the Tri-colour.

This is the interpretation of the three colours and the Wheel that go to make up our Flag.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WHEEL

The Wheel has contributed in a large measure to the march of Man towards a higher standard of living.

For example, in very ancient times, man had to walk from one place to another if he wanted to get about. But a distance that takes days to traverse on foot can easily be covered in a few hours in a cart on wheels. And the time thus saved can be profitably employed in other ways. Man's conquest of Time started with the discovery of the Wheel.

Primitive man, they say, roamed about naked. Gradually, he got into the habit of covering his nudity with the leaves and barks of trees. Then, in course of time, he stumbled on the art of weaving the fibres of trees into cloth. Ultimately—history does not record when Man discovered the art of spinning. Every one knows that the mechanics of spinning is dependent on the Wheel. The Wheel represents the Charkha in its essential form.

Again, for his daily needs primitive man would gather only as much food as he needed for a particular meal, and eat it raw. As his experience increased and his intelligence

developed, he learnt to store for the future and to cook things before he ate them. This made vessels necessary. Probably, primitive man scooped vessels out of stone or out of lumps of mud. And this led to the art of the Potter. The Potter's Wheel gave birth to pots of all sizes and shapes for man's daily use.

Thus the Wheel was, and has been, responsible for the growth of these three essential aspects of ordered life. The Wheel has contributed much to the development of human civilization.

The Wheel also brings many more associations in its train. Let us refer briefly to two of them which might interest children.

Observe the wheel of a cart or car running along the road. That part of the wheel which touches the ground at a particular moment faces upwards, to the heavens, in a moment or two; it has moved up, the part at the top moving down and touching the earth in its turn. It is thus that the wheel revolves and moves forward. In the same way, heat and cold, sun and shower, storm and calm, gain and loss, joy and sorrow—pairs of opposites—always go together in human experience, one following the other. The motion of the wheel emphasizes the lesson that conditions of human life are never the same, and this heartens us to

bear the joys and sorrows of life without being unduly disturbed by them. The wheel teaches us to face the ever-changing circumstances of life with equanimity.

Look at the Wheel, again. Every wheel consists of three parts: the hub, the spokes and the rim. The hub is the navel, and through this passes the axle which sets the wheel in motion. It is from this navel that the spokes spread out and join the rim. The hub, the spokes and the rim are inseparable, and together bear the burden of the carriage and drive it along. All three parts of the wheel must be strong and sound if it is to function properly. A wheel is of little avail if even one part is defective, if but one spoke is weak. So, we see that the wheel is a good illustration of perfect co-ordination and co-operation, two factors that are very necessary for the full development of our National Life.

Let us look at the Wheel from another angle. We often scribble the form of the wheel and call it a zero or cypher. A cypher is not such a useless symbol as some may imagine. By itself it may have no value, but in its proper place, as a symbol, it is truly invaluable. We all know that human articulation would be incomplete without the vowel *O*. And we know, too, that any numeral with the sign of

the cypher *after* it has its value enhanced ten-fold, a hundred-fold or a thousand-fold, according to the number of cyphers added. We thus see that the cypher, which resembles a wheel, is an aid to growth.

The sign of the Wheel carries with it these and many more associations. The connotation of the Wheel goes on widening according to the knowledge and experience of the observer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE COLOUR AND THE SPOKES OF THE WHEEL

I

According to regulations, the Wheel in Our Flag is printed in navy-blue.

Blue is the colour of the sea and the sky. There is nothing on earth as high as the sky, nothing as deep as the sea. And the sky and the sea are symbols of unlimited expanse.

Hence the Wheel in blue exhorts us to carry out the Message of the Wheel to its highest, widest and deepest extent. By accepting the Wheel in blue, we pledge ourselves to a conduct of immeasurable dimensions.

II

Again, according to regulations, the number of spokes in the Wheel of Our Flag is twenty-four. And what does the number twenty-four signify?

Twenty-four reminds us of the twenty-four hours of the day. But this division of the day into twenty-four periods, one may argue, is man-made. There is, however, a God-made division of time into twenty-four periods, not subject to changing human moods. These

twenty-four periods are controlled by the moon. When the waxing and the waning of the moon have taken place twenty-four times, age-old tradition has unanimously called it a year. And the year is the normal unit for the measurement of time, and is sub-divided into the seasons, months, fortnights, weeks, days, hours, and so on.

From this association, we infer that the Wheel with twenty-four spokes represents the twenty-four phases of the moon during the year. And this inference should inspire us to carry on the Message of the Wheel, year in and year out, through all the twenty-four phases of the moon—as long as life lasts in this mortal body.

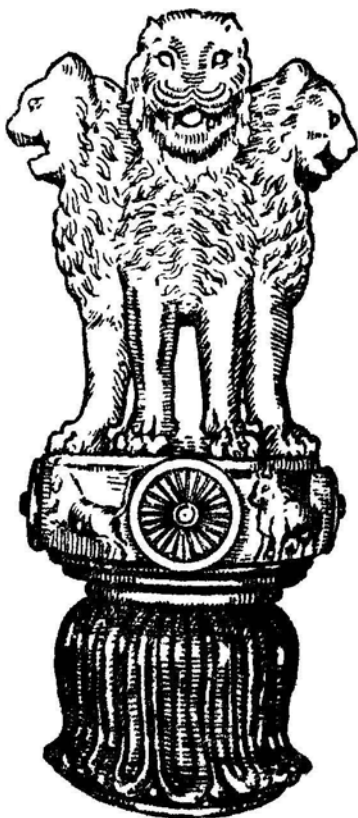
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ASOKA-WHEEL

I

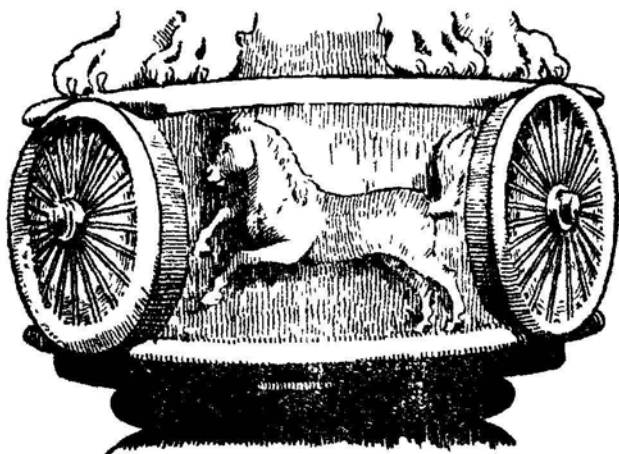
The Wheel in our National Flag is not the common wheel. It is a Wheel on the pattern of the one you see on the abacus of the Lion Capital at the top of the pillar erected by Emperor Asoka at Sarnath, in the third century B.C. As the Wheel is part of this Asokan sculpture, this Wheel is designated the Asoka-Wheel.

On the right side of this page, we have a line-drawing of the Sarnath Lion Capital. Observe that this work of sculpture may be divided into three parts, from top to bottom.



We see three lions at the top. But actually there are four lions in the original sculpture. The fourth lion, which is not visible in this drawing, is on the opposite side of the lion facing us, with its back to it; these two are placed one to the other exactly like the two lions at the sides. The four lions at the top of this sculpture are standing back to back, facing the four quarters. All the four lions have their front legs firmly planted on the pedestal, and their mouths are wide open as if they were roaring.

Underneath this lion-group is the circular abacus, or base. Under the paws of each of



the lions, there is on this abacus a twenty-four-spoked Wheel. Thus, the total number of

wheels on the abacus is four. Between every two wheels there is the figure of an animal in relief. The four animals that we observe on the abacus are, going clockwise, an Elephant, a Bull, a Horse and a Lion. Of the four, the Horse is represented as racing along, while the other three are shown standing in a dignified posture.

It is one of these four wheels that has provided the model for the Wheel in our Flag. And it is this Wheel we have in mind when we talk of the Asoka-Wheel.

If the wheel preceding the elephant were cut vertically in the middle and the broad rim of the abacus opened out into a strip, it would have the appearance of the illustration printed on the cover of this book.

Underneath this abacus, there is a bell-shaped lotus in full bloom, with its sixteen petals opened out and pressed down.

II

Let us look again at the abacus and the Wheel on it. What is the meaning of the symbol of the four animals and the Wheel?

In conversation, we ordinarily employ similes and comparisons to explain and illustrate our meaning. For example, such expressions as 'this orange is as round as a ball', 'this juice is as sweet as honey', 'he runs like a deer', 'his

face is like the moon', are very common. At other times we say: 'He has the eyes of a cat', 'he is a bear', or 'he is as proud as a peacock'. In these and other similar expressions, we employ the image of well-known objects, animals and birds to portray certain qualities of the person we are speaking about.

A well-measured and stately tread is described as the 'gait of an elephant' (*gaja-gamana*). An elephant can lead a lone life, and it can live in a herd as well. Even though it lives on leaves and greens, its physical strength is enormous. It can do the work of a large number of men. It is said that for an eye so small as the elephant's its sight is very sharp. The footprint of the elephant is the biggest of all animal footprints. The elephant has been the favourite mount of kings when they travel in state, and in olden days elephants in armour were used in battering down the gates of enemy forts.

Indra, the Lord of Gods, is described as riding on the elephant Airavata; God Ganesha, the first to be worshipped among the Gods, has an elephant's head.

The bull is the accepted leader of a herd of cows. Its thews and sinews are as strong as steel. The horns of the bull are as sharp as spear-heads. The gait of the bull, like that of the elephant, is a model of dignity. The bull

on the run is a streak of lightning; its bellow is like the rumbling of thunder. The bull is a specimen of solid, unconquerable strength.

God Siva rides on the sacred Bull.

The horse, the world over, is a model of speed. The mettle of a thoroughbred is proverbial. It needs neither whip nor lash. The slightest flick of the reins is enough to convey to it the master's wish. A very high degree of sensitiveness is the distinguishing mark of a spirited horse.

Uchaisravas, the all-white horse, is the second mount for Indra, Lord of the Gods.

The lion is rightly called the King of beasts. It was not *chosen* as such, but *became* King by right of strength and valour. The gait and the roar of the lion are as dignified as those of the elephant and the bull, while in the matter of prowess the lion reigns supreme.

The lion is, in India, the mount for Parvati, consort of Siva. She is called *Simha-Vāhane* — she who rides the lion.

Thus we see that the four animals, the elephant, the bull, the horse and the lion, are examples of certain great and conspicuous qualities. And in this country, in particular, these animals are invested with sacred associations.

Indian languages are full of terms like *Puruṣa-simha* (a lion among men), *Puruṣa-shabha*

(a bull among men), *Purusha-ājāneya* (a thoroughbred among men), *Mahā-nāga* (the great elephant), *gaja-gamanā* (she whose gait is as dignified as an elephant's), *Simha-madhyā* (she whose waist is as slender as that of a lion), *Vṛsha-skandha* (the bull-necked one) and so on. Indian literatures have familiarized us with the outstanding features of certain animals which are worthy of being copied by human beings.

It is clear, therefore, that the four animals on the abacus of the Lion Capital represent superior types of creation, strong and noble in their bearing and virtues.

III

These superior beings are not born superior. They are, at birth, just like everyone else; but they carefully cultivate this superiority by conscious personal effort.

Children grow strong in body when they attend the gymnasium daily, or participate in outdoor games. Similarly, the mind is cultivated and strengthened by continuous seeking and study. And by avoiding evil and performing good deeds one helps the growth of one's Soul. He is the Superior Man who cultivates this three-fold strength of body, mind and soul.

The right pattern of conduct that will promote this full growth of the human being is

called Dharma, in India. Since Dharma is an absolute necessity for progress, the need for the continued practice of Dharma is portrayed by the appropriate symbol of the moving wheel. Thus the Wheel stands for the Wheel of Dharma.

The Dharma that is responsible for the growth of the mind is higher than the Dharma that helps the growth of the body. And again, that Dharma which contributes to the growth of the Soul is superior to that which improves the mind. Hence, it is said that the Superior being is one who has devoted himself to the development of the Soul. Such beings are called Mahātmās or Great Souls.

The animals on the abacus are a symbolic representation of such Great Souls.

Let us look at the abacus, again. We find that each of the four animals is preceded by a Wheel and followed by another. That means that a Great Soul is one who has pursued the right path (Dharma) in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

Now, look at the group of lions at the top of the Capital. Each one of the lions has its front feet firmly planted on the Wheel of Dharma. The lions face the four quarters of the heavens, and their open-mouthed roar reaches the ends of the earth in every direction. And with unity

of purpose, they have achieved a sameness of attitude, standing back to back. That makes them unassailable.

This is the message of the Lion Capital of Asoka: Great Men are born of Dharma, and they thrive on Dharma; Great Men are, by nature, unremitting in their labours for the uplift of mankind.

Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Gandhi and others of our land, as well as Zoroaster, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed and others of other lands, were living examples of the abstract ideals pictured by the Lion Capital of Asoka

IV

When we have carefully read and understood a great book, often a phrase or a sentence occurring in it helps to bring the book in its entirety before our mind's eye. In the same way, after a proper understanding and appreciation of the Lion Capital, the mere symbol of the Wheel on the abacus should be sufficient for one to recapitulate the composition and the message of the Asoka Capital with all its rich and sacred associations.

This, in short, was the object of our leaders when they adopted the Wheel on the abacus of Asoka's Lion Capital at Sarnath for our National Flag.

CHAPTER NINE

HONOUR THE FLAG

We have first to learn how to prepare the Flag and to take care of it. That is the initial step in paying honour to it.

Secondly, we must rightly understand its significance and learn how and when to hoist it; we must acquaint ourselves, too, with every solemn observance connected with the Flag.

The best way of showing our respect for the flag is to understand its full significance and to try to carry out its message in our own person.

I

Flags should be prepared out of durable material. Whether the material be Khadi, mill cloth, or silk, durability is a very important factor. The cloth out of which the Flag is made should be able to hold out against wind and rain.

Fast colours should be used in preparing the Flag. Colours that easily fade in the sun or dissolve in a shower should never be employed.

The symbol on our Flag is the Wheel, with its twenty-four spokes. The number of spokes is as important as the sign of the Wheel itself,

and this detail should never be overlooked in the preparation of the Flag.

The Flag so prepared should be carefully preserved when it is not in use. It should be stored in a place where moths and other insects cannot get at it.

A moth-eaten flag, a flag in tatters, a discoloured flag, or a flag with an imperfect reproduction of the prescribed design should never be used.

The Flag should be clean, fresh and bright, for it must always be beautiful and inspiring.

II

There are many ways of using the Flag. Certain conventions are observed throughout the world regarding the use of the Flag.

Flags in general, and the National Flag in particular, should be flown only between the hours of sunrise and sunset. The National Flag should be flown only on days and occasions of national importance.

The Flag should be flown only from a post planted for that purpose in a particular place. The Flag should be raised with dignity and speed; and it should be lowered with solemnity and slowness, as if the Flag were reluctant to come down.

The Flag should fly at the top of the flag-post, and care should be taken to see that the saffron band of the Flag is at the top.

These are the general conventions to be observed in the use of the Flag on days of rejoicing as well as on ordinary days. On days of national mourning, the Flag should be flown at half-mast, that is, half-way up the flag-pole. Even on such days, when the Flag is hoisted, it should fly at top-mast just for a moment, and then brought down to half-mast. In lowering the flag, again, it should be first raised to top-mast for a moment. Even on days of mourning, when it is flown at half-mast, it should be at half-mast only from sunrise to noon; and from noon to sunset, it should be flown at full-mast. The Flag, being a symbol of the Nation, should not indicate mourning throughout the day.

When the National Flag flies in the company of other denominational flags, precedence must ever be given to the National Flag. When flags are raised, that should be the first to go up; and when they are lowered, that should be the last to come down. Where there are many flags flying, the National Flag should be at the top. And while flags are on the march, it should always be at the front of all others. When different flags are hung in a line, all other flags should be to the left of the National Flag.

When the Flag is vertically suspended on the wall, the saffron band should be at the top and the green at the bottom.

Flags should always be carried on the *right* shoulder of the bearer. And the National Flag should never be lowered in the presence of other flags.

When the Flag is used inside a hall, on ceremonial occasions, it should be at the back of the President, at a higher level.

Whenever the Flag is raised or lowered, the people present should stand at attention and pay homage to it. Certain appropriate songs, too, are sung on these occasions.

These are positive ways of respecting the Flag. And there are negative ways also.

The Flag should never be indifferently used, and should never be handled carelessly.

The Flag should not be used as an article of clothing or for personal adornment. It should not be used indiscriminately on ordinary vehicles, nor should it be used as a cover for any article. Using the design of the Flag on handbags, for saree-borders, or for advertisement shows lack of true reverence for the Flag. The Flag should not be employed either as a tablecloth or as a bed-spread. Neither should it be used as a uniform, nor should it be painted on trunks.

The Flag should never be dishonoured by any superfluous writing or mark on it.

No posters or hand-bills should be pasted on the flag-pole.

Care should be taken to see that the Flag never gets soiled or torn, through negligence.

When a Flag is worn out owing to long use, it should immediately be replaced by a fresh one. The old one should never be used for other ordinary household purposes, but should be consigned to the flames or destroyed in some suitable manner, in private, with reverence.

It is in these and other similar ways that the Flag should be cherished.

III

As has been observed at the beginning of this chapter, the best method of showing our veneration for the Flag is to understand its significance and carry out its Message in our person.

A study of the previous chapters tells us that the Flag, through its colour-scheme and the emblem of the Wheel, calls upon us to be united. It exhorts us to work for the production of the things necessary to satisfy the needs of the country, and teaches us that this production is possible only through co-ordination and mutual goodwill. It also tells us that this

mutual co-operation, which is so important, is achieved to the extent that every one of us strives for his or her physical, mental and moral growth. The importance of this all-round growth of the individual, which ultimately produces the all-round growth of the Nation, is proclaimed by our Flag, literally from the house-tops.

An ardent and sincere attempt to improve the individual is the surest and the best way of showing our affection and respect for our Flag.

CHAPTER TEN

OUR NATIONAL SONGS

The following pages contain the texts of *Vande Mātaram* and *Jana-gaṇa-mana*, with renderings of these two songs in English. At certain places, the rendering is more of a paraphrase than a literal translation, which is as it should be.

The originals of both these songs are in Bengalee, the language of Bengal.

Some people argue that the *Vande Mātaram* is a song of idol-worship. That is not true. The song is in praise of Mother India. It consists of six stanzas describing the different manifestations of the Mother.

A country stands not only for its physical features, but also for its people, and their various qualities and talents, as well as their faiths and beliefs. The sum-total is the *Land*.

The first two stanzas of this poem tell of the abundant natural blessings enjoyed by this country.

The third, *Sapta koṭi*, describes the unity, enthusiasm and prowess of India's millions.

The next stanza, *Tumi vidyā*, deals with the many qualities that go to make a strong Nation. The qualities inherent in the people are the qualities of the country they inhabit.

In the last line of this stanza, *mandira* does not stand for a material temple, neither does *pratimā* mean a material image. The poet, here, wants to instil in our minds the idea that the different qualities and activities of the people are only different manifestations of the One Mother, who is our Land. Here, *mandira* signifies the individual heart.

It is the next stanza, *Tvam hi Durgā*, that has been responsible for the misconception about idol-worship. The object of this stanza is to tell us that this same Mother, who has hitherto been praised as nature, as the people and their different characteristics, is looked upon by others again as Goddess Durgā, as Kamalā or as Vāṇī, according to the their inclinations.

The underlying meaning of the poem is that what appears as the Many is, in reality, One.

Such is the faultless (*amalām*) and incomparable (*atulām*) image of the Mother that is invoked in this poem. This song is a stirring exposition of the ever-present Unity in the manifold diversity of everyday life in India.

Vande Mātaram is not an apology for idol-worship.

Against the second song, *Ĵana-gaṇa-mana* none of these objections can be pressed. And it comes so much easier for mass-singing than *Vande Mātaram*. While the essential teaching

of *Vande Mātaram* centres on the one theme of Unity, *Jana-gana-mana* dwells not only on Unity, but also on Hope, Faith, Courage and Progress. From all points of view, therefore, it is a more satisfying song.

There is, it is true, a minor objection to the first words of the second stanza of this poem. Some people contend that, after the partition of this country, the reference to Punjab and Sind has become meaningless. That, however, is not a grave objection; it may be easily overcome.

The greatest argument in favour of *Jana-gana-mana* as our National Song, as against *Vande Mātaram*, is not so much its easier and simpler rhythmic movement, but its tolerant consideration towards the genuine objector. It is this consideration that has prompted us to abridge *Vande Mātaram* to its first two stanzas when it is sung in public.

But let us, nonetheless, study and understand the full texts of these two great compositions just as the poets wrote them. An assimilation of the spirit of these poems is conducive to our growth as individuals and as a Nation as well.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
VANDE MĀTARAM

Vande Mātaram!

I salute you, Mother!

*Sujatām, suphalām, malayaja śitalām,
Saśyaśyāmalām, Mātaram!*

I salute you, Mother, full of flowing streams
of sweet water, full of sweet fruits, cooled by
sandal-scented mountain breezes and pleasantly
dark with green, ripening crops.

*Subhra jyotsnā pulakita yāminīm,
Phulla kusumita drumadala śobhinīm,
Suhāsinīm, sumadhura bhāshiṇīm,
Sukhadām, varadām, Mātaram!*

I salute you, Mother, whose nights are glad-
dened by the white moonlight; who is adorned
with trees laden with flowers in full bloom;
who is full of bright smiles and whose speech is
sweet and agreeable; who is the giver of happi-
ness and who grants us all our desires!

*Sapta koṭi kaṇṭha kalakala nināda karālē,
Dvisaptakoṭi bhujairdhyta khara karavālē,
Ke bolē, mā, tumi abalē!
Bahubala dhāriṇīm, namāmi tāriṇīm,
Ripudalavāriṇīm, Mātaram!*

I salute you, Mother, who is terrible with the tumult of seven crores of throats; who has sharp swords raised in twice-seven crores of arms. O Mother, who calls you weak! You possess the invincible strength of countless arms. You help us to cross over to our goal; and you vanquish the forces of the enemy. I salute you, O Mother!

*Tumi vidyā, tumi dharma,
Tumi hṛdi, tumi marma,
Tvam hi prāṇāḥ śarīré!
Bāhuté tumi mā śakti,
Hṛdayé tumi mā bhakti,
Tomārayī pratimā gaḍi mandiré mandiré!*

You are Knowledge and you are Dharma. You are the Heart and the Secret therein. You are, surely, the Life-force in the body. You are the Strength in the arms. You are the Devotion in the heart. O Mother, in every abode, there is an image of you.

*Tvam hi Durgā daśapraharāṇa dhāriṇī,
Kamalā, kamala dala vihāriṇī,
Vāṇī, vidyādāyini, namāmi tvām!*

Surely, you are Durgā, bearing ten weapons; you are Kamalā, who sports on the petals of the lotus; you are Vāṇī, the goddess who bestows learning. I salute you!

*Namāmi Kamalām, amalām, atulām,
 Sujalām, suphalām, Mātaram,
 Syāmalām, saralām, susmitām, bhūshitām,
 Dharaṇīm, bharaṇīm, Mātaram!
 Vande Mātaram!*

I salute you, Mother, who is Kamalā, Goddess of Wealth; who is without blemish; who is incomparable; who is full of flowing streams and sweet fruits; who is pleasantly dark; who is innocent; who smiles pleasantly; who is well adorned; who bears us and protects us!

I salute you, Mother!

CHAPTER TWELVE

JANA-GAṆA-MANA

This is the Morning Song of India.

*Jana-gaṇa-mana adhināyaka jaya hé,
Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā.*

*Punjāba, Sindhu, Gujarāta, Marāṭhā,
Drāviḍa, Utkala, Vangā;
Vindhya, Himācala, Jamunā, Gangā,
Uccala jaladhi tarangā.*

*Tava śubha nāmé jāgé,
Tava śubha āśisha māgé,
Gāhé tava yaśa gāthā.*

*Janagaṇa mangala dāyaka jaya hé,
Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā;
Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya jaya jaya
jaya hé.*

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people,
dispenser of India's destiny.

Thy name rouses the hearts of the Punjab,
Sind, Gujerat and Maratha, of the Dravid and
Orissa and Bengal; it echoes in the hills of the
Vindhyas and Himalayas, mingles in the
music of the Ganges and Jamuna and is chant-
ed by the waves of the Indian Sea. They pray
for thy blessings and sing thy praise.

The saving of all people waits in thy hand,
thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee!

*Aharaha tava āhvāna pracārīta,
Sunī tava udāra vānī,
Hindu, Bauddha, Sikha, Jaina, Pārasika,
Musalmāna, Kristānī,
Pūrava pascima āśē
Tava simhāsana pāsē,
Premāhāra hoy gāthā,
Janagaṇa aikya vidhāyaka jaya hé
Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā;
Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya jaya jaya
jaya hé.*

Day and night thy voice goes out from land
to land, calling the Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs
and Jains round thy throne and the Parsees,
Musalmans and Christians. The East and the
West join hands in their prayer to thee, and
the garland of love is woven. Thou bringest
the hearts of all people into the harmony of
one life, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee!

*Patana abhyudaya bandhura panthā
Yuga yuga dhāvita yatrī;
Tumī cira sārathi tava ratha cakrē
Mukharita patha dina rātrī,
Dāruṇa viplava mājhe,*

*Tava Sankha dhvani bāje,
 Samkaṣa dukkha trātā.
 Janagaṇa patha paricāyaka jaya hé
 Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā;
 Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya jaya jaya
 jaya hé.*

The procession of pilgrims passes over the endless road rugged with the rise and fall of nations; and it resounds with the thunder of thy wheels, Eternal Charioteer. Through the dire days of doom thy trumpet sounds and men are led by thee across death. Thy finger points the path to all people,

Oh dispenser of India's destiny!
 Victory, victory, victory to thee!

*Ghora timira ghana nibiḍa niśithé
 Piḍita mūrchita déśé,
 Jāgrata chila tumi avicala mangala
 Natanayané animéshé.
 Duhsvapné ātanké
 Rakshā karilé amké;
 Snehamayi tumi Mātā.
 Janagaṇa dukkha trāyaka jaya hé,
 Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā;
 Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya jaya jaya
 jaya hé.*

The darkness was dense and deep was the night. My country lay in a deathlike silence

of swoon. But thy mother-arms were round her and thine eyes gazed upon her troubled face in sleepless love through her hours of ghastly dreams.

Thou art the companion and the saviour of the people in their sorrows, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee!

Rātri prabhātilo udilo ravicchavi

Pūrva udayagiri bhālē:

Gāhe vihamgama punya samīraṇa

Nava jīvana rasa dhālē.

Tava karuṇārūṇa rāgē

Nidrita Bhārata jāgē,

Tava caranē nata māthā.

Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya rajéśwara,

Bhārata bhāgya vidhātā.

*Jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya hé, jaya jaya jaya
jaya hé.*

The night fades; the light breaks over the peaks of the Eastern hills; the birds begin to sing and the morning breeze carries the breath of new life.

The rays of thy mercy have touched the waking land with their blessings.

Victory to thee King of Kings, Victory to thee, dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee!