

**SERMON**  
**ON THE SEA**

THE BEST PRESENTATION  
OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI'S  
LIFE STORY  
IN  
GANDHI THE APOSTLE

by  
HARIDAS T. MUZUMDAR

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UNIVERSAL PUBLISHING CO.

# SERMON ON THE SEA

BY

MAHATMA GANDHI

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION

BY

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

*Minister, Community Church, New York City*

EDITED BY

HARIDAS T. MUZUMDAR

*Author of "Gandhi The Apostle"*

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"This book is a severe condemnation of modern civilisation."—*Gandhi*.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi, of India, leader in that country of the now famous "Non-Cooperation" movement for national independence and self-development, if judged by the spiritual standards established by the prophetic souls of history, must be regarded as the greatest man living in the world today. He is properly to be classified at the moment, I suppose, with such nationalistic leaders as Wallace, Washington, Emmet, Kossuth and Mazzini; but by sheer power of personality, depth of insight, sweep of vision, purity of character, steadfast devotion to ideals, titanic heroism, and utter trust in the higher attributes of the spirit, he lifts himself to the exalted, if lonely, plane of such men as Jesus of Nazareth and his own sublime compatriot, the Buddha. No man now living is so certain of a universal immortality as he—yet few men are so generally misunderstood and indeed so little known outside the borders of their own land!

The reasons for our ignorance of Gandhi in this western world are not far to seek. In the first place, his fields of action, South Africa and India, are distant and therefore remote from our observation and acquaintanceship. Secondly, his fame, sprung primarily from his life-long battle against the British Empire, has been

given no wings by the authorities that control the contemporary machinery of information. The present "propaganda" attempts to slander this noble leader of an ancient race, and to belittle the significance and prophesy the passing of his movement, mark the breakdown of what has been hitherto a successful policy of silence. Lastly, Gandhi's life is lived in the light of that ideal of non-resistance which, despite its sacred association with the life and teaching of the Nazarene, still seems so quixotic to the average occidental mind as to be thought unworthy of attention, much less of veneration. Leo Tolstoi, alone of modern men, by the gigantic power of his intellect and the insistent drama of his personal life, forced this sublime practice of the soul upon the conscience of mankind.

It is pleasing to an American to know that Gandhi derived inspiration from our own Henry David Thoreau, two of whose books the Indian leader recommends for study. It is a lovely thing, also, to recall that Tolstoi, ere he died, recognized Gandhi as a kindred spirit and extended hand and heart to him across the continental reaches that held them apart. The letter of the great Russian stands as a word of blessing from the older to the younger man, and an enduring witness to Gandhi's true succession in the line of spiritual prophecy. It points as well to the world-wide significance of the Indian's work. For what with Tolstoi was a single life, has become with Gandhi a national movement. What was gloriously exemplified by the Russian as a rule of in-

dividual conduct, has been here marvellously transformed by the Indian into a method of social revolution. Gandhi attempts what has never been attempted in human history—the organization of a whole people for the use not of force but of love, not of arms but of the spirit, to the end first of the political emancipation of a nation, and secondly of the cultural deliverance of an entire civilization from bondage to true liberty. He would redeem society, as religion has from the beginning undertaken to redeem the single soul, by the transfiguring power of good-will toward men.

Whether Gandhi will succeed in his great venture is the most thrilling as it is the most momentous question before the world today. At the heart of the situation stands one man, feeble of body, confined in prison, but by the amazing power of a pure heart, utter self-abnegation, and divine love for humankind, the mightiest single personality in the world. Against this man are the force and cunning of British imperialism, the jealousies and antagonisms of the Indian people, the age-old tradition of violence, and the easy inertia of human nature. With him there moves the tidal sweep of the oriental genius, the magic mysticism of the Indian soul. At a time when the West is sinking into the chaos of its own mad making, is there any greater or better hope for humanity than this sublime endeavor of the East to find a new basis for political and social life? Is it too much to say that upon the success of Gandhi, in his divine adventure, there hangs the destiny not merely of India but of our race?

Those who would know the life of Gandhi may find it set down in the biography by the Editor of this volume, called *Gandhi the Apostle*.<sup>\*</sup> The writings which have come from Gandhi's pen in the form of newspaper editorials and articles, occasional essays, letters, addresses, etc., in the years of struggle from 1919 to 1922, together with the record of the famous trial, may be found in a book just published under the title, *Young India*.<sup>\*\*</sup> The present volume has unique value as the only book ever written as such by the Mahatma. It is a remarkable presentation, in the form of a kind of Socratic dialogue, of the program of political independence and social regeneration which he seeks to achieve through his method of non-cooperation or non-resistant coercion. Known and widely read in India under the title *Hind-Swaraj* ("Self-Determination"), it has hitherto been unavailable in this country. Its publication at this time is a notable event.

December 1, 1923.

*John Haynes Holmes*

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<sup>\*</sup> Universal Publishing Company, Chicago, 1923.

<sup>\*\*</sup> B. W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1923.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

"Mahatma Gandhi! What a richness of romance that name recalls: what tales of a young Passive Resister who dared to express himself against the menacing tyranny of imperialism—of the 'white man's burden'! an aristocrat, son of a Prime Minister, a Barrister-at-Law, who gave up everything<sup>6</sup> for his people, a Washington who is leading the masses to freedom by education, by self-discipline, instead of bayonets; watched, scrutinized, respected, arrested, imprisoned, treated like an ordinary felon in the dark cell of British prison-houses, brought back under the flaming banner of hope and success, honored and loved as no other man of modern times has been honored or loved, misunderstood and maligned, hoping for success in suffering and working to the end of self-discipline, the best loved and the most feared man in the world to-day; Gandhi's career of thirty years has been one of self-discipline, of organization of masses, a clean record of 'something attempted, something done'; a career lived in the abundance and fullness of life, Mahatma Gandhi, the Savior of his people—the prophetic voice of a New World!"\*

The prophetic voice of a New World!—indeed the Mahatma's actions have preceded his words and heralded the crown of glory that is to be found in the "Sermon on the Sea." This magnetic personality has had an

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\* Quoted from my book, "Gandhi The Apostle," pp. 101.  
H. T. M.

electrical effect on the world. Revolutionist or pacifist, individualist or collectivist, Christian or Non-Christian, mere man or superman, come he in war or come he in peace, be he lodged behind the prison bars or be he striding the continents, this man challenges our attention; we may ignore him or his message only to our own detriment. By the sheer force of his quiet, by the sheer compulsion of his non-violence, Gandhi has been able to monopolize the news columns of our metropolitan press. It is as yet too premature to judge the extent of Gandhi's achievement; suffice it to say that he deserves to be ranked with the immortals of the world, rather than with the transient passers-by. He is a maker of history, not a silent spectator of the human drama.

In the present turmoil and confusion, our war-weary world may with advantage turn to the "Sermon on the Sea." Here is expounded the way to eliminate warfare from this planet; here is an attempt made to systematize the ethics of the spirit: I mean the morality of the spirit as distinguished from social morality imposed upon the individual by social contingencies and group considerations. Social morality has its own place, but to make a fetish of submerging one's individuality in the hydra-headed stultified figure of the mob is bound to result in a general deterioration of the human race. Minorities have a right to their own beliefs the same as the majorities; it is the privilege of either to convert the other to its view-point. *Rapprochement* failing, the morality of the spirit requires that each base its relations toward the other on the principle of tolerance, goodwill and non-interference, if not active cooperation. The dominance of one group by another at the point of the

bayonet degrades both the domineering and the domineered: it is the last resort of cowardice.

All attempts at *rapprochement* between England's dominance and India's aspirations for freedom have failed; hence active cooperation with the agency of oppression, namely the British government, is out of the question. The stifled soul of the Indian people has expressed itself, in the words of Gandhi, for "Swaraj, equality, manliness." In their struggle for Swaraj (self-determination, literally self-rule), the people abide by the principles of tolerance and good-will. Gandhi is the highest embodiment of the morality of the spirit; a "self-ruler" in his own words, or better yet, a self-disciplinarian. The self-disciplinarian is the highest man of Hindu philosophy; now that Gandhi has popularized the idea, this concept of the self-disciplinarian being the archetype will be classed with the other concepts of the higher or supermen.

The title "SERMON ON THE SEA" has been inspired by the fact that the book was written on board the steamer in November, 1909, while Gandhi was returning from England to South Africa; he himself first called it "Indian Home Rule" and later on "Hind Swaraj." In the body of the book the term "Hind Swaraj" (India's Self-Determination) has been retained. It is vitally important, I feel, that the American people should know the causes and background that produced the book. Knowingly or unknowingly, seemingly or blindly, the American government has, of late, been treading the self-same path pursued by the South African government; first, naturalization was denied to the Mongolian races by the United States Supreme Court and now the Hindus, the East Indians, have come in for their share of a



denial of citizenship rights, even though the highest authorities in the land admit that the Hindus are of Aryan origin and are, therefore—to use an obnoxious term—members of the “white” race. Who knows another Gandhi may arise in this country and compel recalcitrant Anglo-American<sup>1</sup> judges to revise their decisions and conceptions—or rather misconceptions of justice!

The history of the book has been well told by the illustrious author himself in the two articles and extracts from an address which have been condensed and compiled into a sort of Foreword. The date of the aforementioned articles and address is Jan.-Feb., 1921; and since they endorse the contents of the book, we may take these statements as the mature judgment of the Mahatma. The appendices at the end, it is hoped, will add to the value of the book. The Socratic method of dialogue has been very effectively employed by Gandhi; the language is chaste, pure, simple; diction dignified

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<sup>1</sup> Justice Sutherland of the United States Supreme Court whose recent decision debars Hindus from becoming citizens of this land of democracy (!) is English-born. The law in this country seems to be putting on the masks of lawlessness. This particular decision is retroactive!—something unparalleled in judicial annals. Not only may future applications for naturalization be denied to the Hindus, but those who are already naturalized citizens are also to be deprived of their rights of citizenship. Is it any wonder Gandhi should denounce, in the strongest language possible, lawyers and their “first cousins,” the judges? Instances of the lawlessness of law courts in internal as well as international affairs are multiplying every day. Beware, my American friends, there is a real danger to democracy! And the complications that this unjust decision, denying citizenship rights to the Hindus, is bound to lead to, are more far-reaching than can be imagined to-day by the Anglo-American judges of the Supreme Court. Is that a sufficiently striking note of warning?—  
H. T. M.

and argument dexterously handled. A critical judgment, entirely devoid of prepossessions or emotions, may, however, find some of Gandhi's assumptions gratuitous, some of his reasoning faulty, some of his conclusions unwarranted. It is not my purpose to prepare the ground for any such criticism nor to defend Gandhi's position. Suffice it to say that the book is a thorough-going exposition of a man's sincerest convictions and is well able to take care of itself. Nothing but the highest good will come out of the fiery ordeal to which, I hope, the critics will put the book. Truth in the end will survive all the on-slaughts of malignant criticism—wherever that Truth is.

As I conclude this note, the frail figure of Mahatma Gandhi, scantily dressed in a loin-cloth, rises before me; the indomitable champion of India's freedom, silently spinning at the spinning wheel, his constant companion in freedom and in confinement; mighty in the very pathetic weakness of body, intellectually alert, serenely resigned to the martyr's crown; dedicated to the supreme purpose of overcoming evil by good, injustice by justice, hatred by love—the prophetic voice of a New World!

October 31, 1923.

*Haridas T Muzumdar*

## SERMON ON THE SEA

### AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

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### INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT\*

It is certainly my good fortune that this booklet of mine is receiving wide attention. The original is in Gujarāṭi. It had a chequered career. It was first published in the columns of the "Indian Opinion" of South Africa. It was written in 1908<sup>1</sup> during my return voyage from London to South Africa in answer to the Indian school of violence, and its prototype in South Africa. I came in contact with every known Indian anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I feel that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills, and that her civilisation required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection. The *Satyāgrah* of South Africa was still an infant two<sup>2</sup> years old. But it had developed sufficiently to permit me to write of it with some degree of confidence. It was so much appreciated that it was published as a booklet. It attracted some attention in India. The Bombay Government prohibited its circulation. I

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\*"Young India," Jan. 26th 1921.

<sup>1</sup>This is an error—perhaps due to lapse of memory. Gandhi went on a deputation to London in July 1909 and sailed for his return voyage to South Africa in November 1909—perhaps later, but not earlier—Editor.

<sup>2</sup>The *Satyāgrah* or Passive Resistance Movement was launched in South Africa in 1906; hence, according to the above correction, it would be "three," not "two" years old—Editor.

replied by publishing its translation. I thought it was due to my English friends that they should know its contents.

In my opinion it is a book which can be put into the hands of a child. It teaches the gospel of love in the place of that of hate. It replaces violence with self-sacrifice. It pits soul-force against brute-force. It has gone through several editions and I commend it to those who would care to read it. I withdraw nothing except one word of it, and that in deference to 'a lady friend.'<sup>3</sup>

The booklet is a severe condemnation of "modern civilisation." It was written in 1908<sup>4</sup> My conviction is deeper to-day than ever. I feel that if India would discard "modern civilisation," she can only gain by doing so.

But I would warn the reader against thinking that I am to-day aiming at the Swaraj described therein. I know that India is not ripe for it. It may seem an impertinence to say so. But such is my conviction. I am individually working for the self-rule pictured therein. But to-day my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India. I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilisation. At best they are a necessary evil. Neither adds one inch to the moral stature of a nation. Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts, much as I regard it as a "consummation devoutly to be wished for." Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to footnote 1, Chapter V.

<sup>4</sup> 1909.

and mills. It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are to-day prepared for.

The only part of the programme which is now being carried out in its entirety is that of non-violence. But I regret to have to confess that even that is not being carried out in the spirit of the book. If it were, India would establish Swaraj in a day. If India adopted the doctrine of love as an active part of her religion and introduced it in her politics, Swaraj would descend upon India from heaven. But I am painfully aware that that event is far off as yet.

I offer these comments because I observe that much is being quoted from the booklet to discredit the present movement. I have even seen writings suggesting that I am playing a deep game, that I am using the present turmoil to foist my fads on India, and am making religious experiments at India's expense. I can only answer that *Satyāgrah* is made of sterner stuff. There is nothing reserved and nothing secret in it. A portion of the whole theory of life described in "Hind Swaraj" is undoubtedly being carried into practice. There is no danger attendant upon the whole of it being practised. But it is not right to scare away people by reproducing from my writings passages that are irrelevant to the issue before the country.

### THE CONDITIONS OF SWARAJ\*

Swaraj is easy of attainment before October next if certain simple conditions can be fulfilled. I ventured to mention one year in September last because I knew that the conditions were incredibly simple and I felt that the

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\*"Young India" Feb. 23rd., 1921.

atmosphere in the country was responsive. The past five months' experience has confirmed me in the opinion. I am convinced that the country has never been so ready for establishing Swaraj as now.

But it is necessary for us as accurately as possible to know the conditions. One supreme indispensable condition is the continuance of non-violence. Rowdism, hooliganism, looting that we have recently witnessed are disturbing elements. They are danger-signals. We must be able to arrest their progress. The spirit of democracy cannot be established in a year in the midst of terrorism whether governmental or popular. In some respects popular terrorism is more antagonistic to the growth of the democratic spirit than the governmental. For the latter strengthens the spirit of democracy, whereas the former kills it. Dyerism has evoked a yearning for freedom as nothing else has. But internal Dyerism, representing as it will terrorism by a majority, will establish an oligarchy such as will stifle the spirit of all free discussion and conduct. Non-violence, therefore, as against the Government and as between ourselves is absolutely essential to speedy success. And we must be able to devise means of observing it on our part in spite of the gravest provocations.

The next condition is our ability to bring into being the Congress organisation in terms of the new constitution, which aims at establishing a Congress agency in every village with a proper electorate. It means both money and ability to give effect to Congress policies. What is really needed is not a large measure of sacrifice but ability to organise and to take simple concerted action. At the present moment we have not even succeeded in carrying the Congress message to every home

in the 7½ lacs<sup>5</sup> of villages of India. To do this work means at least 250 honest workers for as many districts who have influence in their respective districts and who believe in the Congress programme. No village, no circle need wait for instructions from head-quarters for founding its organisation.

There are certain things that are applicable to all. The most potent thing is Swadeshi. Every home must have the spinning wheel and every village can organise itself in less<sup>6</sup> than a month and become self-supporting for its cloth. Just imagine what this silent revolution means and there would be no difficulty in sharing my belief that Swadeshi means *Swaraj* and *Swadharma*<sup>7</sup>

Every man and woman can give some money—be it even a pice—to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. And we need have no anxiety about financing the movement. Every man and woman can deny himself or herself all luxury, all ornamentation, all intoxicants at least for one year; and we shall have money. Not only that, but we shall also have boycotted many foreign articles. Our civilisation, our culture, our Swaraj depend not upon multiplying our wants—self-indulgence, but upon restricting our wants—self-denial.

We can do nothing without Hindu-Maslim unity and without killing the snake of untouchability. Untouchability is a corroding poison that is eating into the vitals of Hindu society. *Varnashram*<sup>7</sup> is not a religion of superiority and inferiority. No man of God can con-

<sup>5</sup> 7½ lacs i.e. 750,000.

<sup>6</sup> *Swa* means "one's own," *Dharma* means "religion" *Swadeshi* means "belonging to one's own country;" *Swaraj* means "one's own rule."—Editor.

<sup>7</sup> Caste System.

sider another man as inferior to himself. He must consider every man as his blood-brother. It is the cardinal principle of every religion.

If this is a religious battle, no argument is necessary to convince the reader that self-denial must be its supreme test. Khilafat cannot be saved, the Punjab inhumanity cannot be redressed, without godliness. Godliness means change of heart,—in political language, changing the angle of vision. And such a change can come in a moment. My belief is that India is ripe for that change.

Let us then rivet our attention on:

- (1) Cultivating the spirit of non-violence.
- (2) Setting up Congress organisations in every village
- (3) Introducing the spinning wheel in every home and manufacturing all the cloth, required for our wants, through the village weaver.
- (4) Collecting as much money as possible.
- (5) Promoting Hindu-Muslim unity and
- (6) Ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying ourselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs.

Have we honest, earnest, industrious, patriotic workers for this very simple programme? If we have, Swaraj will be established in India before next October.

## MEDICINE

In order to avoid any misinterpretation of my views on medicine, I would have your indulgence for a few moments over a very brief exposition of them. I have expressed them in a booklet much criticised at the present moment. I believe that a multiplicity of hospitals is



no test of civilisation. It is rather a symptom of decay even as a multiplicity of *Pinjrapoles*<sup>8</sup> is a symptom of the indifference to the welfare of their cattle by the people in whose midst they are brought into being. I hope, therefore, that this college will be concerned chiefly with the prevention of diseases rather than with their cure. The science of sanitation is infinitely more ennobling, though more difficult of execution, than the science of healing. I regard the present system as black magic, because it tempts people to put an undue importance on the body and practically ignores the spirit within. I would urge the students and professors of the college to investigate the laws governing the health of the spirit and they will find that they will yield startling results even with reference to the cure of the body. The present science of medicine is divorced from religion. A man who attends to his daily "*namaz*"<sup>9</sup> or his "*gayatri*"<sup>10</sup> in the proper spirit need never fall ill. A clean spirit must build a clean body. I am convinced that the main rules of religious conduct conserve both the spirit and the body. Let me hope and pray that this college will witness a definite attempt on the part of the physicians to bring about a reunion between the body and the soul.

Modern medical science, having ignored the condition of the permanent element in the human system in diagnosing diseases, has ignored the limitations that should naturally exist regarding the field of its activity. In trying to cure a body of its disease, it has totally disregarded the claims of sub-human creation. Man, instead

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<sup>8</sup> Hospitals for cattle.

<sup>9-10</sup> "*Namaz*" and "*gayatri*" are Mohammedan and Hindu prayers respectively; both require certain postures and intense concentration of mind.—Editor.

of being lord, and therefore protector of the lower animal kingdom, has become its tyrant, and the science of medicine has been probably his chief instrument for tyranny. Vivisection in my opinion is the blackest of all the blackest crimes that man is at present committing against God and his fair creation. We should be able to refuse, to live if the price of living be the torture of sentient beings. It ill becomes us to invoke the blessings in our daily prayers of God the Compassionate, if we in turn will not practise elementary compassion towards our fellow-creatures. Would to God that the College founded by one of the best of Indian physicians may bear in mind the limitations that God, in my humble opinion, has set upon our activity.

#### NEED FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Having said this much, I would like to pay my humble tribute to the spirit of research that fires the modern scientist. My quarrel is not against that spirit. My complaint is against the direction that the spirit has taken. It has chiefly concerned itself with the exploration of laws and methods conducing to the merely material advancement of its clientele. But I have nothing but praise for the zeal, industry and sacrifice that have animated the modern scientists in the pursuit after truth. I regret to have to record my opinion based on considerable experience that our Hakims<sup>11</sup> and Vaid<sup>12</sup> do not exhibit that spirit in any mentionable degree. They follow formulas without question. They carry on little investigation. The condition of indigenous medicine is truly deplorable. Not having kept abreast of modern research,

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<sup>11-12</sup> Hakims and Vaid are respectively Mohammedan and Hindu physicians.—Editor.

their profession has fallen largely into disrepute. I am hoping that this college will try to remedy this grave defect and restore Ayurvedic<sup>13</sup> and Unani<sup>14</sup> medical science to its pristine glory. I am glad, therefore, that this institution has its Western wing. Is it too much to hope that a union of the three systems will result in a harmonious blending, and in purging each of its special defects? Lastly I shall hope that this college will set its face absolutely against all quackery, western or eastern, refuse to recognise any but sterling worth and that it will inculcate among the students the belief that the profession of medicine is not intended for earning fat fees, but for alleviating pain and suffering.

M. K. GANDHI.

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<sup>13,14</sup> Ayurvedic is Hindu medical science and Unāni Mohammedan medical science.—Editor.

## CHAPTER I

### THE CONGRESS AND ITS OFFICIALS\*

*Reader:* Just at present there is a Home Rule wave passing over India. All our countrymen appear to be pining for National Independence. A similar spirit pervades them even in South Africa. Indians seem to be eager to acquire rights. Will you explain your views in this matter?

*Editor:* You have put the question well, but the answer is not easy. One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and to give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects. The exercise of all these three functions is involved in answering your question. To a certain extent the people's will has to be expressed; certain sentiments will need to be fostered, and defects will have to be brought to light. But as you have asked the question, it is my duty to answer it.

*Reader:* Do you then consider that a desire for Home Rule has been created among us?

*Editor:* That desire gave rise to the National Congress. The choice of the word "National" implies it.

*Reader:* That, surely, is not the case. Young India seems to ignore the Congress. It is considered to be an instrument for perpetuating British Rule.

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\*For an account of the Indian National Congress, its present status and its part in the making of "Young India," refer to "GANDHI THE APOSTLE," pp. 75-94.—Editor.

*Editor:* That opinion is not justified. Had not the Grand Old Man<sup>1</sup> of India prepared the soil, our young men could never have spoken about Home Rule. How can we forget what Mr. Hume<sup>2</sup> has written, how he has lashed us into action, and with what effort he has awakened us, in order to achieve the objects of the Congress? Sir William Wedderburn has given his body, mind and money to the same cause. His writings are worthy of perusal to this day. Professor Gokhale, in order to prepare the Nation, embraced poverty and gave twenty years of his life. Even now, he is living in poverty. The late Justice Buddrudin Tyebji was also one of those who, through the Congress, sowed the seed of Home Rule. Similarly, in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and other places, there have been lovers of India and members of the Congress, both Indian and English.

*Reader:* Stay, stay, you are going too far, you are straying away from the question. I have asked you about Home or Self-Rule; you are discussing foreign rule; I do not desire to hear English names, and you are giving me such names. In these circumstances, I do not think we can ever meet. I shall be pleased if you will confine yourself to Home Rule. Any other talk will not satisfy me.

*Editor:* You are impatient. I cannot afford to be likewise. If you will bear with me for a while, I think you will find that you will obtain what you want. Remember the old proverb that the tree does not grow in one day. The fact that you have checked me, and that you do not want to hear about the well-wishers of India, shows that, for you at any rate, Home Rule is yet far

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<sup>1</sup> Dādābhāi Naoroji.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. A. O. Hume, a retired English Civil Servant of the eighties, helped organize the Congress—Editor.

away. If we had many like you, we would never make any advance. This thought is worthy of your attention.

*Reader:* It seems to me that you simply want to put me off by talking round and round. Those whom you consider to be well-wishers of India are not such in my estimation. Why, then, should I listen to your discourse on such people? What has he whom you consider to be the father of the nation done for it? He says that the English Governors will do justice, and that we should co-operate with them

*Editor:* I must tell you, with all gentleness, that it must be a matter of shame for us that you should speak about that great man, in terms of disrespect. Just look at his work. He has dedicated his life to the service of India. We have learned what we know from him. It was the respected Dadabhai who taught us that the English had sucked our life-blood. What does it matter that, today, his trust is still in the English nation? Is Dadabhai less to be honoured because, in the extreme exuberance of youth, we are prepared to go a step further? Are we, on that account, wiser than he? It is a mark of wisdom not to kick against the very step from which we have risen higher. The removal of a step from a staircase brings down the whole of it. When, out of infancy we grow into youth, we do not despise infancy, but, on the contrary, we recall with affection the days of our childhood. If, after many years of study, a teacher were to teach me something, and if I were to build a little more on the foundation laid by that teacher, I would not, on that account, be considered wiser than the teacher. He would always command my respect. Such is the case with the Grand Old Man of India. We must admit that he is the author of Nationalism.

*Reader:* You have spoken well. I can now understand that we must look upon Mr. Dadabhai with respect. Without him and men like him, we would probably not have the spirit that fires us. How can the same be said of Professor Gokhale? He has constituted himself a great friend of the English; he says that we have to learn a great deal from them, that we have to learn their political wisdom, before we can talk of Home Rule. I am tired of reading his speeches.

*Editor:* If you are tired, it only betrays your impatience. We believe that those who are discontented with the slowness of their parents, and are angry because the parents would not run with the children, are considered disrespectful to their parents. Professor Gokhale occupies the place of a parent. What does it matter if he cannot run with us? A nation that is desirous of securing Home Rule cannot afford to despise its ancestors. We shall become useless, if we lack respect for our elders. Only men with mature thoughts are capable of ruling themselves—not the hasty-tempered. Moreover, how many Indians were there like Professor Gokhale, when he gave himself to Indian education? I verily believe that whatever Professor Gokhale does he does with pure motives and with a view to serving India. His devotion to the Motherland is so great, that he would give his life for it, if necessary. Whatever he says is said not to flatter anyone but because he believes it true. We are bound, therefore, to entertain the highest regard for him.

*Reader:* Are we, then, to follow him in every respect?

*Editor:* I never said any such thing. If we conscientiously differed from him the learned Professor himself would advise us to follow the dictates of our

conscience rather than him. Our chief purpose is not to cry down his work, but to believe that he is infinitely greater than we, and to feel assured that compared with his work for India, ours is infinitesimal. Several newspapers write disrespectfully of him. It is our duty to protest against such writings. We should consider men like Professor Gokhale to be the pillars of Home Rule. It is a bad habit to say that another man's thoughts are bad and only ours are good, and that those holding different views from ours are the enemies of the country.

*Reader:* I now begin to understand somewhat your meaning. I shall have to think the matter over, but what you say about Mr. Hume and Sir William Wedderburn is beyond comprehension.

*Editor:* The same rule holds good for the English as for the Indians. I can never subscribe to the statement that all Englishmen are bad. Many Englishmen desire Home Rule for India. That the English people are somewhat more selfish than others is true, but that does not prove that every Englishman is bad. We who seek justice will have to do justice to others. Sir William does not wish ill to India—that should be enough for us. As we proceed, you will see that if we act justly, India will be sooner free. You will see, too, that if we shun every Englishman as an enemy, Home Rule will be delayed. But if we are just to them, we shall receive their support in our progress towards the goal.

*Reader:* All this seems to me at present to be simply nonsensical. English support and the obtaining of Home Rule are two contradictory things. How can the English people tolerate Home Rule for us? But I do not want you to decide the question for me just yet. To spend time over it is useless. When you have shown how we can have Home Rule, perhaps I shall understand



your views. You have prejudiced me against you by discoursing on English help. I would therefore beseech you not to continue this subject.

*Editor:* I have no desire to do so. That you are prejudiced against me is not a matter for much anxiety. It is well that I should say unpleasant things at the commencement, it is my duty patiently to try to remove your prejudice.

*Reader:* I like that last statement. It emboldens me to say what I like. One thing still puzzles me. I do not understand how the Congress laid the foundation of Home Rule.

*Editor:* Let us see. The Congress brought together Indians from different parts of India, and enthused us with the idea of Nationality. The Government used to look upon it with disfavour. The Congress has always insisted that the nation should control revenue and expenditure. It has always desired self-government after the Canadian model. Whether we can get it or not, whether we desire it or not, and whether there is not something more desirable, are different questions. All I have to show is that the Congress gave us a foretaste of Home Rule. To deprive it of the honour is not proper, and for us to do so would not only be ungrateful, but retard the fulfilment of our object. To treat the Congress as an institution inimical to our growth as a nation would disable us from using that body.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

*Reader:* Considering the matter as you put it, it seems proper to say that the foundation of Home Rule was laid by the Congress. But you will admit that it cannot be considered a real awakening. When and how did the real awakening take place?

*Editor:* The seed is never seen. It works underneath the ground, is itself destroyed, and the tree which rises above the ground is alone seen. Such is the case with the Congress. Yet, what you call the real awakening took place after the Partition of Bengal. For this we have to be thankful to Lord Curzon. At the time of the Partition, the people of Bengal reasoned with Lord Curzon, but, in the pride of power, he disregarded all their prayers—he took it for granted that Indians could only prattle, that they could never take any effective steps. He used insulting language, and, in the teeth of all opposition, partitioned Bengal. That day may be considered to be the day of the partition of the British Empire. The shock the British power received through the Partition has never been equalled by any other act. This does not mean that the other injustices done to India are less glaring than that done by the Partition. The salt tax is not a small injustice.<sup>1</sup> We shall see many such things later on. But the people

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<sup>1</sup> The first Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings, "put the management of the manufacture and sale of both opium and salt on a sound financial basis."—"Oxford History of India" by V. A. Smith, reproduced from "GANDHI THE APOSTLE," pp 76.—Editor.

were ready to resist the Partition. At that time, the feeling ran high. Many leading Bengalis were ready to lose their all. They knew their power, hence the conflagration. It is now well-nigh unquenchable; it is **not necessary** to quench it either. Partition will go, Bengal will be re-united, but the rift in the English barque will remain: it must daily **widen**. India awakened is not likely to fall asleep. Demand for abrogation of Partition is tantamount to demand for Home Rule. Leaders in Bengal know this, British officials realise it. That is why Partition still remains.<sup>2</sup> As time passes, the Nation is being forged. Nations are not formed in a day; the formation requires years.

*Reader:* What, in your opinion, are the results of Partition?

*Editor:* Hitherto we have considered that for redress of grievances, we must approach the Throne, and, if we get no redress, we must sit still, except that we may yet petition. After the Partition, people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This new spirit must be considered to be the chief result of Partition. That spirit was seen in the outspoken writings in the press. That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and to be written publicly. The Swadeshi movement was inaugurated. People, young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face; it now no longer awed them. They did not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the best sons of India are at present in banishment. This is something different from mere petitioning. Thus are the people

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<sup>2</sup> The partitioned Bengal was remade whole in December, 1911, at the time of the King Emperor's coronation at Delhi.  
—Editor.

moved. The spirit generated in Bengal has spread in the North to the Punjab, and, in the south, to Cape Comorin.

*Reader:* Do you suggest any other striking results?

*Editor:* The Partition has not only made a rift in the English ship, but has made it in ours also. Great events always produce great results. Our leaders are divided into two parties: the Moderates and the Extremists. These may be considered as the slow party and the impatient party. Some call the Moderates the timid party, and the Extremists the bold party. All interpret the two words according to their preconceptions. This much is certain—that there has arisen an enmity between the two. The one distrusts the other, and imputes motives. At the time of the Surat Congress, there was almost a fight. I think that this division is not a good thing for the country, but I think also that such divisions will not last long. It all depends upon the leaders how long they will last.

## CHAPTER III

### DISCONTENT AND UNREST

*Reader:* Then you consider Partition to be a cause of the awakening? Do you welcome the unrest which has resulted from it?

*Editor:* When a man rises from sleep, he twists his limbs and is restless. It takes some time before he is entirely awakened. Similarly, although the Partition has caused an awakening, the sleepiness has not yet disappeared. We are still twisting our limbs and still restless, and just as the state between sleep and awakening must be considered to be necessary, so may the present unrest in India be considered a necessary and, therefore, a proper state. The knowledge that there is unrest will, it is highly probable, enable us to outgrow it. Rising from sleep, we do not continue in a comatose state, but, according to our ability, sooner or later, we are completely restored to our senses. So shall we be free from the present unrest which no one likes.

*Reader:* What is the other form of unrest?

*Editor:* Unrest is, in reality, discontent. The latter is only now described as unrest. During the Congress-period it was labelled discontent; Mr. Hume always said that the spread of discontent in India was necessary. This discontent is a very useful thing. So

long as a man is contented with his present lot, so long is it difficult to persuade him to come out of it. Therefore, every reform must be preceded by discontent. We throw away things we have, only when we cease to like them. Such discontent has been produced among us after reading the great works of Indians and Englishmen. Discontent has led to unrest, and the latter has brought about many deaths, many imprisonments, many banishments. Such a state of things will still continue. It must be so. All these may be considered good signs, but they may also lead to bad results.



## CHAPTER IV

### WHAT IS SWARAJ?

*Reader:* I have now learnt what the Congress has done to make India one nation, how the Partition has caused an awakening, and how discontent and unrest have spread through the land. I would now like to know your views on Swaraj. I fear that our interpretation is not the same.

*Editor:* It is quite possible that we do not attach the same meaning to the term. You and I and all Indians are impatient to obtain Swaraj, but we are certainly not decided as to what it is. To drive the English out of India is a thought heard from many mouths, but it does not seem that many have properly considered why it should be so. I must ask you a question. Do you think that it is necessary to drive away the English, if we get all we want?

*Reader:* I should ask of them only one thing, that is: "Please leave our country." If after they have complied with this request, their withdrawal from India means that they are still in India, I should have no objection. Then we would understand that, in our language, the word "gone" is equivalent to "remained."

*Editor:* Well then, let us suppose that the English have retired. What will you do then?

*Reader:* That question cannot be answered at this stage. The state after withdrawal will depend largely upon the manner of it. If as you assume, they retire, it seems to me we shall still keep their constitution, and shall carry on the government. If they simply retire

for the asking, we should have an army, etc., ready at hand. We should, therefore, have no difficulty in carrying on the government.

*Editor:* You may think so: I do not. But I will not discuss the matter just now. I have to answer your question, and that I can do well by asking you several questions. Why do you want to drive away the English?

*Reader:* Because India has become impoverished by their Government. They take away our money from year to year. The most important posts are reserved for themselves. We are kept in a state of slavery. They behave insolently towards us, and disregard our feelings.

*Editor:* If they do not take our money away, become gentle, and give us responsible posts, would you still consider their presence to be harmful?

*Reader:* That question is useless. It is similar to the question whether there is any harm in associating with a tiger, if he changes his nature. Such a question is sheer waste of time. When a tiger changes his nature Englishmen will change theirs. This is not possible, and to believe it to be possible is contrary to human experience.

*Editor:* Supposing we get Self-Government similar to what the Canadians and the South Africans have, will it be good enough?

*Reader:* That question also is useless. We may get it when we have the same powers; we shall then hoist our own flag. As is Japan, so must India be. We must own our navy, our army, and we must have our own splendour, and then will India's voice ring through the world.

*Editor:* You have well drawn the picture. In effect it means this: that we want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India



English, and when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want.

*Reader:* I have placed before you my idea of Swaraj as I think it should be. If the Education we have received be of any use, if the words of Spencer, Mill and others be of any importance, and if the English Parliament be the mother of parliaments, I certainly think that we should copy the English people and this, to such an extent, that, just as they do not allow others to obtain a footing in their country, so we should not allow them nor others to obtain a footing in ours. What they have done in their own country has not been done in any other country. It is, therefore, proper for us to import their institutions. But now I want to know your views.

*Editor:* There is need for patience. My views will develop of themselves in the course of this discourse. It is as difficult for me to understand the true nature of Swaraj as it seems to you to be easy. I shall, therefore, for the time being, content myself with endeavouring to show that what you call Swaraj is not truly Swaraj.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND

*Reader:* Then from your statement, I deduce that the Government of England is not desirable and not worth copying by us.

*Editor:* Your deduction is justified. The condition of England at present is pitiable. I pray to God that India may never be in that plight. That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute.<sup>1</sup> Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. That Parliament has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing, hence I have compared it to a sterile woman. The natural condition of that Parliament is such that, without outside pressure, it can do nothing. It is like a prostitute because it is under the control of ministers who change from time to time. To-day it is under Mr. Asquith, to-morrow it may be under Mr. Balfour.

*Reader:* You have said this sarcastically. The term "sterile woman" is not applicable. The Parliament, being elected by the people, must work under public pressure. This is its quality.

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<sup>1</sup>"But if I had to revise it (the book)," wrote Gandhi on May 28th, 1919, "there is only one word I would alter in accordance with a promise made to an English friend. She took objection to my use of the word 'prostitute' in speaking of the Parliament. Her fine taste recoiled from the indelicacy of the expression. I remind the reader that the booklet purports to be a free translation of the original which is in Gujarati." The English lady he refers to is Mrs. Annie Besant. The word for "prostitute" in the Gujarati language does not carry the offense of its English equivalent.—Editor.

*Editor:* You are mistaken. Let us examine it a little more closely. The best men are supposed to be elected by the people. The members serve without pay,<sup>2</sup> and therefore, it must be assumed, only for the public weal. The electors are considered to be educated and, therefore, we should assume that they would not generally make mistakes in their choice. Such a Parliament should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effect would be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive. What is done to-day may be undone to-morrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicted for its work. When the greatest questions are debated, its members have been seen to stretch themselves and to dose. Sometimes the members talk away until the listeners are disgusted. Carlyle has called it the "talking shop of the world." Members vote for their party without a thought. Their so-called discipline binds them to it. If any member, by way of exception, gives an independent vote, he is considered a renegade. If the money and the time wasted by the Parliament were entrusted to a few good men, the English nation would be occupying to-day a much higher platform. The Parliament is simply a costly toy of the nation. These views are, by no means, peculiar to me. Some great English thinkers have expressed them. One of the members of that Parliament recently said that a true Christian could not become a

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<sup>2</sup>The Members of the British Parliament now receive a pay of £400 annually in accordance with the Resolution of August, 1911, introduced in the House of Commons.—Ed.

member of it. Another said that it was a baby. And, if it has remained a baby after an existence of seven hundred years, when will it outgrow its babyhood?

*Reader:* You have set me thinking; you do not expect me to accept at once all you say. You give me entirely novel views. I shall have to digest them. Will you now explain the epithet "prostitute"?

*Editor:* That you cannot accept my views at once is only right. If you will read the literature on this subject, you will have some idea of it. The Parliament is without a real master. Under the Prime Minister, its movement is not steady, but it is buffeted about like a prostitute. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of the Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party. His care is not always that the Parliament shall do right. Prime Ministers are known to have made the Parliament do things merely for party advantage. All this is worth thinking over.

*Reader:* Then you are really attacking the very men whom we have hitherto considered to be patriotic and honest?

*Editor:* Yes, that is true; I can have nothing against Prime Ministers, but what I have seen leads me to think that they cannot be considered really patriotic. If they are to be considered honest because they do not take what is generally known as bribery, let them be so considered, but they are open to subtler influences. In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours. I do not hesitate to say that they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience.

*Reader:* As you express these views about the Parliament, I would like to hear you on the English

people, so that I may have your view of their Government.

*Editor:* To the English voters their newspaper is their Bible. They take their cue from their newspapers, which are often dishonest. The same fact is differently interpreted by different newspapers, according to the party in whose interests they are edited. One newspaper would consider a great Englishman to be a paragon of honesty, another would consider him dishonest. What must be the condition of the people whose newspapers are of this type?

*Reader:* You shall describe it.

*Editor:* These people change their views frequently. It is said that they change them every seven years. These views swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast. The people would follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. As are the people, so is their Parliament. They have certainly one quality very strongly developed. They will never allow their country to be lost. If any person were to cast an evil eye on it, they would pluck out his eye. But that does not mean that the nation possesses every other virtue or that it should be imitated. If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined.

*Reader:* To what do you ascribe this state of England?

*Editor:* It is not due to any peculiar fault of the English people, but the condition is due to modern civilisation. It is a civilisation only in name. Under it the nations of Europe are becoming degraded and ruined day by day.

## CHAPTER VI

### CIVILISATION

*Reader:* Now you will have to explain what you mean by civilisation.

*Editor:* It is not a question of what I mean. Several English writers refuse to call that civilisation which passes under that name. Many books have been written upon that subject. Societies have been formed to cure the nation of the evils of civilisation. A great English writer has written a work called "*Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure.*" Therein he has called it a disease.

*Reader:* Why do we not know this generally?

*Editor:* The answer is very simple. We rarely find people arguing against themselves. Those who are intoxicated by modern civilisation are not likely to write against it. Their care will be to find out facts and arguments in support of it, and this they do unconsciously, believing themselves to be right. A man, whilst he is dreaming, believes in his dream; he is undeceived only when he is awakened from his sleep. A man, labouring under the bane of civilisation is like a dreaming man. What we usually read are the works of defenders of modern civilisation, which undoubtedly claims among its votaries very brilliant and even some very good men. Their writings hypnotise us. And so, one by one, we are drawn into the vortex.

*Reader:* This seems to be very plausible. Now will you tell me something of what you have read and thought of this civilisation?

*Editor:* Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word "civilisation." Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. We will take some examples. The people of Europe to-day live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilisation, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins, and used as their weapons spears. Now, they wear long trousers, and, for embellishing their bodies, they wear a variety of clothing and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilised out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam-engines, and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilisation. Formerly, the fewest men wrote books, that were most valuable. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men travelled in wagons; now they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilisation. It has been stated that, as men progress, they shall be able to travel in airships and reach any part of the world in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button, and they will have their clothing by their side. They will press another button, and they will have their newspaper. A third, and a motor car will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished up food. Everything will be done

by machinery. Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilisation. Formerly, men worked in the open air only so much as they liked. Now, thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion, now they are enslaved by the temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilisation. Formerly, special messengers were required and much expense was incurred in order to send letters; to-day, anyone can abuse his fellow by means of a letter for one penny. True, at the same cost, one can send one's thanks also. Formerly people had two or three meals consisting of home-made bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours, so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? All this you can ascertain from several authoritative books. These are all true tests of civilisation. And, if any one speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant. This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion. Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the cloak of religion, and prate about morality. But, after twenty years' experience, I have come to the conclu-



sion that immorality is often taught in the name of morality. Even a child can understand that in all I have described above there can be no inducement to morality. Civilisation seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even in doing so.

This civilisation is irreligion, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad. They lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or they slave away in factories. For the sake of a pittance, half a million women in England alone are labouring under trying circumstances in factories or similar institutions. This awful fact is one of the causes of the daily growing suffragette movement.

This civilisation is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. According to the teaching of Mohammed this would be considered a Satanic civilisation. Hinduism calls it the Black Age. I cannot give you an adequate conception of it. It is eating into the vitals of the English nation. It must be shunned. Parliaments are really emblems of slavery. If you will sufficiently think over this, you will entertain the same opinion, and cease to blame the English. They rather deserve our sympathy. They are a shrewd nation and I therefore believe that they will cast off the evil. They are enterprising and industrious, and their mode of thought is not inherently immoral. Neither are they bad at heart. I, therefore, respect them. Civilisation is not an incurable disease, but it should never be forgotten that the English people are at present afflicted by it.

## CHAPTER VII

### WHY WAS INDIA LOST?

*Reader:* You have said much about civilisation—enough to make me ponder over it. I do not now know what I should adopt and what I should avoid from the nations of Europe, but one question comes to my lips immediately. If civilisation is a disease, and if it has attacked England why has she been able to take India, and why is she able to retain it?

*Editor:* Your question is not very difficult to answer, and we shall presently be able to examine the true nature of Swaraj; for I am aware that I have still to answer that question. I will, however, take up your previous question. The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them. Let us now see whether these propositions can be sustained. They came to our country originally for purposes of trade. Recall the Company Bahadur. Who made it Bahadur?<sup>1</sup> They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once, we welcomed Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them. If I am in the habit of drink-

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<sup>1</sup> Bahadur is a title of honor and respect conferred upon the English East India Company by the people and princes of India; the term Bahadur means: heroic, chivalrous, noble, —Editor.

ing Bhang,<sup>2</sup> and a seller thereof sells it to me am I to blame him or myself? By blaming the seller shall I be able to avoid the habit? And, if a particular retailer is driven away, will not another take his place? A true servant of India will have to go to the root of the matter. If an excess of food has caused me indigestion, I will certainly not avoid it by blaming water. He is a true physician who probes the cause of disease, and, if you pose as a physician for the disease of India, you will have to find its true cause.

*Reader:* You are right. Now, I think you will not have to argue much with me to drive your conclusions home. I am impatient to know your further views. We are now on a most interesting topic. I shall, therefore, endeavour to follow your thought, and stop you when I am in doubt.

*Editor:* I am afraid that, in spite of your enthusiasm, as we proceed further we shall have differences of opinion. Nevertheless, I shall argue only when you stop me. We have already seen that the English merchants were able to get a footing in India because we encouraged them. When our princes fought among themselves, they sought the assistance of Company Bahadur. That corporation was versed alike in commerce and war. It was unhampered by questions of morality. Its object was to increase its commerce and make money. It accepted our assistance, and increased the number of its warehouses. To protect the latter it employed an army

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<sup>2</sup>Bhang usually refers to an indigenous intoxicating drink: "the dried leaves and capsules of the Indian hemp (*cannabis indica*), containing a narcotic resin and volatile oil, prepared for smoking or chewing, and as an infusion to be drunk; *hashish* used in Oriental countries as a hypnotic and intoxicant."—Editor.

which was utilised by us also. Is it not then useless to blame the English for what we did at that time? The Hindus and the Mohammedans were at daggers drawn. This, too, gave the Company its opportunity, and thus we created the circumstances that gave the company its control over India. Hence it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost.

*Reader:* Will you now tell me how they are able to retain India?

*Editor:* The causes that gave them India enable them to retain it. Some Englishmen state that they took, and now hold India by the sword. Both these statements are wrong. The sword is entirely useless for holding India. We alone keep them. Napoleon is said to have described the English as a nation of shopkeepers. It is a fitting description. They hold whatever dominions they have for the sake of their commerce. Their army and navy are intended to protect it. When the Transvaal offered no such attractions, the late Mr. Gladstone discovered that it was not right for the English to hold it. When it became a paying proposition, resistance led to war. Mr. Chamberlain soon discovered that England enjoyed a suzerainty over the Transvaal. It is related that someone asked the late President Kruger<sup>3</sup> whether there was gold in the moon. He replied that it was highly unlikely, because, if there were, England would have annexed it. Many problems can be solved by remembering that money is their God. Then it follows that we keep the English in India for our base self-interest. We like their commerce, they please us

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<sup>3</sup>Of the former Boer Republic of the Transvaal. As a result of the British-Boer War of 1899-1902, the Transvaal was annexed to the British Empire.—Editor.

by their subtle methods, and get what they want from us. To blame them for this is to perpetuate their power. We further strengthen their hold by quarrelling amongst ourselves. If you accept the above statements, it is proved that the English entered India for the purposes of trade. They remain in it for the same purpose, and we help them to do so. Their arms and ammunition are perfectly useless. In this connection, I may remind you that it is the British flag which is waving in Japan, and not the Japanese. The English have a treaty with Japan for the sake of their commerce, and you will see that, if they can manage it, their commerce will greatly expand in that country. They wish to convert the whole world into a vast market for their goods. That they cannot do so is true, but the blame will not be theirs. They will leave no stone unturned to reach the goal.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA

*Reader:* I now understand why the English hold India. I should like to know your views about the condition of our country.

*Editor:* It is a sad condition. In thinking of it, my eyes water and my throat gets parched. I have grave doubts whether I shall be able sufficiently to explain what is in my heart. It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down not under the English heel but under that of modern civilisation. It is groaning under the monster's terrible weight. There is yet time to escape it, but every day makes it more and more difficult. Religion is dear to me, and my first complaint is that India is becoming irreligious. Here I am not thinking of the Hindu and Mohammedan or the Zoroastrian religion, but of the religion which underlies all religions. We are turning away from God.

*Reader:* How so?

*Editor:* There is a charge laid against us that we are a lazy people, and that the Europeans are industrious and enterprising. We have accepted the charge and we, therefore, wish to change our condition. Hinduism, Islamism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and all other religions teach that we should remain passive about worldly pursuits and active about godly pursuits, that we should set a limit to our worldly ambition, and that our religious ambition should be illimitable. Our activity should be directed into the latter channel.

*Reader:* You seem to be encouraging religious charlatanism. Many a cheat, by talking in a similar strain, has led the people astray.

*Editor:* You are bringing an awful charge against

religion. Humbug there undoubtedly is about all religions. Where there is light, there is also shadow. I am prepared to maintain that humbuds in worldly matters are far worse than the humbuds in religion. The humbug of civilisation that I endeavour to show to you is not to be found in religion.

*Reader:* How can you say that? In the name of religion Hindus and Mohammedans fought against one another. For the same cause Christians fought Christians. Thousands of innocent men have been murdered, thousands have been burned and tortured in its name. Surely, this is much worse than any civilisation.

*Editor:* On the contrary, I submit that the above hardships are far more bearable than those of civilisation. Everybody understands that the cruelties you have named are not part of religion, although they have been practised in its name; therefore there is no aftermath to these cruelties. They will always happen so long as there are to be found ignorant and credulous people. But there is no end to the victims destroyed in the fire of civilisation. Its deadly effect is that people came under its scorching flames believing it to be all good. They become utterly irreligious and, in reality, derive little advantage from the world. Civilisation is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us. When its full effect is realised, we will see that religious superstition is harmless compared to that of modern civilisation—I am not pleading for a continuance of religious superstitions. We will certainly fight them tooth and nail, but we can never do so by disregarding religion. We can only do so by appreciating and conserving the latter.

*Reader:* Then you will contend that the Pax Britannica is a useless encumbrance?

*Editor:* You may see peace if you like; I see none.

*Reader:* You make light of the terror that the Thugs,<sup>1</sup> the Pindaris,<sup>2</sup> the Bhils<sup>3</sup> were to the country.

*Editor:* If you will give the matter some thought, you will see that the terror was by no means such a mighty thing. If it had been a very substantial thing, the other people would have died away before the English advent. Moreover, the present peace is only nominal, for by it we have become emasculated and cowardly. We are not to assume that the English have changed the nature of the Pindaris and the Bhils. It is, therefore, better to suffer the Pindari peril than that someone else should protect us from it, and thus render us effeminate. I should prefer to be killed by the arrow of a Bhil than to seek unmanly protection. India without such protection was an India full of valour. Macaulay betrayed gross ignorance when he libelled Indians as being practically cowards. They never merited the charge. Cowards living in a country inhabited by hardy mountaineers, infested by wolves and tigers must surely find an early grave. Have you ever visited our fields? I assure you that our agriculturists sleep fearlessly on their farms even today, and the English as well as you and I would hesitate to sleep where they sleep. Strength lies in the absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies. Moreover, I must remind you who desire Home Rule that, after all, the Bhils, the Pindaris, the Assamese and the Thugs are our own countrymen. To conquer them is your and my work. So long as we fear our own brethren, we are unfit to reach the goal.

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<sup>1,2,3</sup> The Thugs, the Pindaris and the Bhils are the names of organized bands of robbers that used to infest the country in the 18th century.—Editor.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED)

#### *Railways*

*Reader:* You have deprived me of the consolation I used to have regarding peace in India.

*Editor:* I have merely given you my opinion on the religious aspect, but, when I give you my views as to the poverty of India you will perhaps begin to dislike me, because what you and I have hitherto considered beneficial for India no longer appears to me to be so.

*Reader:* What may that be?

*Editor:* Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country, so much so that, if we do not wake up in time we shall be ruined.

*Reader:* I do now, indeed, fear that we are not likely to agree at all. You are attacking the very institutions which we have hitherto considered to be good.

*Editor:* It is necessary to exercise patience. The true inwardness of the evils of civilisation you will understand with difficulty. Doctors assure us that a consumptive clings to life even when he is about to die. Consumption does not produce apparent hurt—it even produces a seductive colour about a patient's face, so as to induce the belief that all is well. Civilisation is such a disease, and we have to be very wary.

*Reader:* Very well, then, I shall hear you on the railways.

*Editor:* It must be manifest to you that, but for the railways, the English could not have such a hold

on India as they have. The railways, too, have spread the bubonic plague. Without them, masses could not move from place to place. They are the carriers of plague germs. Formerly we had natural segregation. Railways have also increased the frequency of famines, because, owing to facility of means of locomotion, people sell out their grain and it is sent to the dearest markets. People become careless, and so the pressure of famine increases. They accentuate the evil nature of man. Bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. The holy places of India have become unholy. Formerly, people went to these places with very great difficulty. Generally, therefore, only the real devotees visited such places. Now-a-days, rogues visit them in order to practise their roguery.

*Reader:* You have given a one-sided account. Good men can visit these places as well as bad men. Why do they not take the fullest advantage of the railways?

*Editor:* Good travels at a snail's pace—it can therefore, have little to do with the railways. Those who want to do good are not selfish, they are not in a hurry, they know that to impregnate people with good requires a long time. But evil has wings. To build a house takes time. Its destruction takes none. So the railways can become a distributing agency for the evil one only. It may be a debatable matter whether railways spread famines, but it is beyond dispute that they propagate evil.

*Reader:* Be that as it may, all the disadvantages of railways are more than counterbalanced by the fact that it is due to them that we see in India the new spirit of nationalism.

*Editor:* I hold this to be a mistake. The English have taught us that we were not one nation before, and

that it will require centuries before we become one nation. This is without foundation. We were one nation before they came to India. One thought inspired us. Our mode of life was the same. It was because we were one nation that they were able to establish one kingdom. Subsequently they divided us.

*Reader:* This requires an explanation.

*Editor:* I do not wish to suggest that because we were one nation we had no differences, but it is submitted that our leading men travelled throughout India either on foot or in bullock-carts. They learned one another's languages and there was no aloofness between them. What do you think could have been the intention of those far-seeing ancestors of ours who established Shwethindu Rameshwar in the South, Juggernaut in the South-East and Hardwar in the North as places of pilgrimage? You will admit they were no fools. They knew that worship of God could have been performed just as well at home. They taught us that those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness had the Ganges in their own homes. But they saw that India was one undivided land so made by nature. They, therefore, argued that it must be one nation. Arguing thus, they established holy places in various parts of India, and fired the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world. Any two Indians are one as no two Englishmen are. Only you and I and others who consider ourselves civilised and superior persons imagine that we are many nations. It was after the advent of railways that we began to believe in distinctions, and you are at liberty now to say that it is through the railways that we are beginning to abolish those distinctions. An

opium-eater may argue the advantage of opium-eating from the fact that he began to understand the evil of the opium habit after having eaten it. I would ask you to consider well what I have said on the railways.

*Reader:* I will gladly do so, but one question occurs to me even now. You have described to me the India of the pre-Mohammedan period, but now we have Mohammedans, Parsees and Christians. How can they be one nation? Hindus and Mohammedans are old enemies. Our very proverbs prove it. Mohammedans turn to the West for worship, whilst Hindus turn to the East. The former look down on the Hindus as idolators. The Hindus worship the cow, the Mohammedans kill her. The Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing, the Mohammedans do not. We thus meet with differences at every step. How can you say that India is one nation?

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED)

#### *The Hindus and the Mohammedans*

*Editor:* Your last question is a serious one, and yet, on careful consideration, it will be found to be easy of solution. The question arises because of the presence of the railways, of the lawyers and of the doctors. We shall presently examine the last two. We have already considered the railways. I should, however, like to add that man is so made by nature as to require him to restrict his movements as far as his hands and feet will take him. If we did not rush about from place to place by means of railways and such other maddening conveniences, much of the confusion that arises would be obviated. Our difficulties are of our own creation. God set a limit to man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man immediately proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit. God gifted man with intellect that he might know his Maker. Man abused it, so that he might forget his Maker. I am so constructed that I can only serve my immediate neighbours, but, in my conceit, I pretend to have discovered that I must with my body serve every individual in the Universe. In thus attempting the impossible, man comes in contact with different natures, different religions, and is utterly confounded. According to this reasoning, it must be apparent to you that railways are

a most dangerous institution. There man has gone further away from his Maker.

*Reader:* But I am impatient to hear your answer to my question. Has the introduction of Mohammedanism not unmade the nation?

*Editor:* India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals, but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mohammedans, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms: nor has it ever been so in India.

*Reader:* But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Mohammedans?

*Editor:* That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy. When the Hindus and Mohammedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this, too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns, and Moslems under the Hindu. Each party

recognised that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent the quarrels re-commenced.

The proverbs you have quoted were coined when both were fighting; to quote them now is obviously harmful. Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mohammedans own the same ancestors, and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mohammedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarrelling?

Moreover, there are deadly proverbs as between the followers of Shiva and those of Vishnu, yet nobody suggests that these two do not belong to the same nation. It is said that the Vedic religion is different from Jainism, but the followers of the respective faiths are not different nations. The fact is that we have become enslaved, and, therefore, quarrel and like to have our quarrels decided by a third party. There are Hindu iconoclasts as there are Mohammedan. The more we advance in true knowledge, the better we shall understand that we need not be at war with those whose religion we may not follow.

*Reader:* Now I would like to know your views about cow protection.

*Editor:* I myself respect the cow, that is. I look upon her with affectionate reverence. The cow is the protector of India, because, being an agricultural country, it is dependent on the cow's progeny. She is a

most useful animal in hundreds of ways. Our Mohammedan brethren will admit this.

But, just as I respect the cow so do I respect my fellow-men. A man is just as useful as a cow, no matter whether he be a Mohammedan or a Hindu. Am I, then, to fight with or kill a Mohammedan in order to save a cow? In doing so, I would become an enemy as well of the cow as of the Mohammedan. Therefore, the only method I know of protecting the cow is that I should approach my Mohammedan brother and urge him for the sake of the country to join me in protecting her. If he would not listen to me, I should let the cow go for the simple reason that the matter is beyond my ability. If I were overfull of pity for the cow, I should sacrifice my life to save her, but not take my brother's. This, I hold, is the law of our religion.

When men become obstinate, it is a difficult thing. If I pull one way my Moslem brother will pull another. If I put on a superior air, he will return the compliment. If I bow to him gently, he will do it much more so, and, if he does not, I shall not be considered to have done wrong in having bowed. When the Hindus became insistent, the killing of cows increased. In my opinion, cow protection societies may be considered cow-killing societies. It is a disgrace to us that we should need such societies. When we forgot how to protect cows, I suppose we needed such societies.

What am I to do when a blood-brother is on the point of killing a cow? Am I to kill him, or to fall down at his feet and implore him? If you admit that I should adopt the latter course, I must do the same to my Moslem brother.

Who protects the cow from destruction by Hindus when they cruelly ill-treat her? Whoever reasons with



the Hindus when they mercilessly belabour the progeny of the cow with their sticks? But this has not prevented us from remaining one nation.

Lastly, if it be true that the Hindus believe in the doctrine of non-killing and the Mohammedans do not, what, I pray, is the duty of the former? It is not written that a follower of the religion of Ahimsa (non-killing) may kill a fellow-man. For him the way is straight. In order to save one being, he may not kill another. He can only plead—therein lies his sole duty.

But does every Hindu believe in Ahimsa? Going to the root of the matter, not one man really practises such a religion, because we do destroy life. We are said to follow that religion because we want to obtain freedom from liability to kill any kind of life. Generally speaking, we may observe that many Hindus partake of meat and are not, therefore, followers of Ahimsa. It is, therefore, preposterous to suggest that the two cannot live together amicably because the Hindus believe in Ahimsa and the Mohammedans do not.

These thoughts are put into our minds by selfish and false religious teachers. The English put the finishing touch. They have a habit of writing history; they pretend to study the manners and customs of all peoples. God has given us a limited mental capacity, but they usurp the function of the God-head and indulge in novel experiments. They write about their own researches in most laudatory terms and hypnotise us into believing them. We in our ignorance, then fall at their feet.

Those who do not wish to misunderstand things may read up the Koran, and will find therein hundreds of passages acceptable to the Hindus; and the Bhagavad Gita contains passages to which not a Mohammedan can take exception. Am I to dislike a Mohammedan because

there are passages in the Koran I do not understand or like? It takes two to make a quarrel. If I do not want to quarrel with a Mohammedan, the latter will be powerless to foist a quarrel on me, and similarly, I should be powerless if a Mohammedan refuses his assistance to quarrel with me. An arm striking the air will become disjointed. If everyone will try to understand the core of his own religion and adhere to it, and will not allow false teachers to dictate to him, there will be no room left for quarrelling.

*Reader:* But will the English ever allow the two bodies to join hands?

*Editor:* This question arises out of your timidity. It betrays our shallowness. If two brothers want to live in peace, is it possible for a third party to separate them? If they were to listen to evil counsels, we would consider them to be foolish. Similarly, we Hindus and Mohammedans would have to blame our folly rather than the English, if we allowed them to put us asunder. A claypot would break through impact; if not with one stone, then with another. The way to save the pot is not to keep it away from the danger-point, but to bake it so that no stone would break it. We have then to make our hearts of perfectly baked clay. Then we shall be steeled against all danger. This can be easily done by the Hindus. They are superior in numbers, they pretend that they are more educated, they are, therefore, better able to shield themselves from attack on their amicable relations with the Mohammedans.

There is mutual distrust between the two communities. The Mohammedans, therefore, ask for certain concessions from Lord Morley. Why should the Hindus oppose this? If the Hindus desisted, the English would notice it, the Mohammedans would gradually begin to

trust the Hindus, and brotherliness would be the outcome. We should be ashamed to take our quarrels to the English. Everyone can find out for himself that the Hindus can lose nothing by desisting. That man who has inspired confidence in another has never lost anything in this world.

I do not suggest that the Hindus and the Mohammedans will never fight. Two brothers living together often do so. We shall sometimes have our heads broken. Such a thing, ought not to be necessary, but all men are not equi-minded. When people are in a rage, they do many foolish things. These we have to put up with. But, when we do quarrel, we certainly do not want to *engage counsel and to resort to English or any law-courts*. Two men fight, both have their heads broken, or one only. How shall a third party distribute Justice between them? Those who fight may expect to be injured.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CONDITION OF INDIA (CONTINUED)

#### *Lawyers*

*Reader:* You tell me that, when two men quarrel, they should not go to a law-court. This is astonishing.

*Editor:* Whether you call it astonishing or not, it is the truth. And your question introduces us to the lawyers and the doctors. My firm opinion is that the lawyers have enslaved India, and they have accentuated the Hindu-Mohammedan dissensions, and have confirmed English authority.

*Reader:* It is easy enough to bring these charges, but it will be difficult for you to prove them. But for the lawyers, who would have shown us the road to independence? Who would have protected the poor? Who would have secured justice? For instance, the late Mr. Manomohan Ghose defended many a poor man free of charge. The Congress, which you have praised so much, is dependent for its existence and activity upon the work of the lawyers. To denounce such an estimable class of men is to spell justice as injustice, and you are abusing the liberty of the press by decrying lawyers.

*Editor:* At one time I used to think exactly like you. I have no desire to convince you that they have never done a single good thing. I honour Mr Ghose's memory. It is quite true that he helped the poor. That the Congress owes the lawyers something is believable. Lawyers are also men, and there is something good in every man. Whenever instances of lawyers having done

good can be brought forward, it will be found that the good is due to them as men rather than as lawyers. All I am concerned with is to show you that the profession teaches immorality; it is exposed to temptations from which few are saved.

The Hindus and the Mohammedans have quarrelled. An ordinary man will ask them to forget all about it, he will tell them that both must be more or less at fault, and will advise them no longer to quarrel. They go to lawyers. The latter's duty is to side with their clients, and to find out ways and arguments in favour of the clients to which they (the clients) are often strangers. If they do not do so, they will be considered to have degraded their profession. The lawyers, therefore, will, as a rule, advance quarrels, instead of repressing them. Moreover, men take up that profession, not in order to help others out of their miseries, but to enrich themselves. It is one of the avenues of becoming wealthy and their interest exists in multiplying disputes. It is within my knowledge that they are glad when men have disputes. Petty pleaders actually manufacture them. Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people. Lawyers are men who have little to do. Lazy people, in order to indulge in luxuries, take up such professions. This is a true statement. Any other argument is a mere pretension. It is the lawyers who have discovered that theirs is an honourable profession. They frame laws as they frame their own praises. They decide what fees they will charge, and they put so much aside that the poor people consider them to be almost heaven-born.

Why do they want more fees than common labourers? Why are their requirements greater? In what way are they more profitable to the country than