

# HARIJAN

Editor PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## NOTES

### Fifteenth of August

On the 15th of August, 1947, India will be a free country. It was on the 15th of August, 1942 that the tallest of Gandhiji's disciples, the late Shri Mahadev Desai passed away in detention at the Aga Khan's palace. He joined Gandhiji at the age of 25, and served him and through him the motherland with every breath of his life for twenty-five years. Before his arrest on the morning of the 9th of August Gandhiji had given the word — *Do or Die*. Within a week of that Mahadev Desai passed away in harness. Gandhiji called it one of the purest sacrifices on the altar of freedom. A friend writes: "Is it not significant that the day for the transfer of power to India should have been fixed for the 15th of August, the death anniversary of the great patriot Mahadev?" He calls upon Gandhiji to see that the nation does not forget Mahadevbhai on the day of the celebrations. Gandhiji has suggested fasting, prayer and spinning for the celebration. It should include an homage to those whose sacrifices have brought about the dawn of freedom. May God give us the strength to follow in their footsteps and enable us to preserve the hard-won freedom in all its glory. As a matter of fact the freedom today in the midst of communal disharmony, shortage of food and clothing is shorn of all its glory. To make it worthwhile all have to work hard. Construction is much more difficult than destruction.

Rawalpindi, 31-7-'47

### Good or Great ?

A young American pacifist came to see Gandhiji some days ago. He had brought a note of introduction from Miss Muriel Lester. He told Gandhiji how she had carried the message of peace to young Americans during the war and explained to them why they should stay out of the war. He asked Gandhiji how young American pacifists should behave today.

Gandhiji's reply was that they should behave as they would have, if the war was still going on. Even if they are a few individuals, they should not hesitate to do the right thing. The few would multiply into many.

The friend was eloquent about Miss Lester. He had great admiration for her. He thought she was one of the greatest women.

"She herself would contradict it," said Gandhiji. "There are many great women, but very few good

women. If you had said that she was a very good woman, you would have been right. A true pacifist's language must be correct and thought exact. If you want to play your part effectively in this movement against war, you have to model your life accordingly. The movement against war is intrinsically sound. No one can question the value of peace. Yet it has not made enough headway. The fault lies with the pacifists."

The friend turned back to what Gandhiji called inexact language on his part because he had described Miss Lester as the one of the greatest women. He said he had called her great because she was good. Gandhiji retorted that he never knew that goodness and greatness were synonymous terms. A man might be great, yet not good.

New Delhi, 27-7-'47

S. N.

## REALIZATION OF DIFFICULTY

( By M. K. Gandhi )

An English sister reading my recent speeches giving a glimpse of my grief over the happenings in India writes :

"Does not this deep agony, this descent into hell, this feeling of something near despair, mean that you ought to extend your life span even further than 125 years? How very much easier it would be to die! . . . Day and night one feels the harrow of hell . . ."

I know that she is not joking when she expects me to extend my life span even further than 125 years. She is a brave woman of great faith. With me there is no question of extending my life span even to one day longer than the allotted time. I am fatalist enough to believe that not a blade of grass moves but by His will. What I have done and still would wish to do is to aspire after a life of 125 years, provided that it is a life of uttermost service of humanity. But such a wish becomes quite empty if it is not accompanied by the requisite correctness of conduct. Answering the description of a steadfast man of the *Gita*, such are the lines according to Sir Edwin Arnold's rendering :

Arjuna :

What is his mark who hath steadfast heart,  
Confirmed in holy meditation ? How  
Know we his speech, Keshava ? Sits he, moves he  
Like other men ?

Krishna :

When one, O Pritha's Son !  
Abandoning desires which shake the mind



Finds in his soul full comfort for his soul,  
 He hath attained the *Yoga*—that man is such !  
 In sorrows not dejected, and in joys  
 Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress  
 Of passion, fear, and anger; fixed in calms  
 Of lofty contemplation;— such an one  
 Is *Muni*, is the Sage, the true Recluse !  
 He who to none and nowhere overbound  
 By ties of flesh, takes evil things and good  
 Neither desponding nor exulting, such  
 Bears wisdom's plainest mark ! He who shall draw  
 As the wise tortoise draws its four feet safe  
 Under its shield, his five frail senses back  
 Under the spirit's buckler from the world  
 Which else assails them, such an one, my Prince !  
 Hath wisdom's mark ! Things that solicit sense  
 Hold off from the self-governed; nay, it comes,  
 The appetites of him who lives beyond  
 Depart,—aroused no more. Yet may it chance,  
 O Son of Kunti ! that a governed mind  
 Shall some time feel the sense-storms sweep, and wrest  
 Strong self-control by the roots. Let him regain  
 His kingdom ! let him conquer this, and sit  
 On Me intent. That man alone is wise  
 Who keeps the mastery of himself ! If one  
 Ponders on subjects of the sense, there springs  
 Attraction; from attraction grows desire,  
 Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds  
 Recklessness; then the memory— all betrayed—  
 Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,  
 Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.  
 But, if one deals with objects of the sense  
 Not loving and not hating, making them  
 Serve his free soul, which rests serenely lord,  
 Lo ! such a man comes to tranquillity;  
 And out of that tranquillity shall rise  
 The end and healing of his earthly pains,  
 Since the will governed sets the soul at peace.  
 The soul of the ungoverned is not his,  
 Nor hath he knowledge of himself; which lacked,  
 How grows serenity ? and, wanting that,  
 Whence shall he hope for happiness ?

The mind

That gives itself to follow shows of sense  
 Seeth its helm of wisdom rent away,  
 And, like a ship in waves of whirlwind, drives  
 To wreck and death. Only with him, great Prince !  
 Whose senses are not swayed by things of sense—  
 Only with him who holds his mastery,  
 Show wisdom perfect. What is midnight-gloom  
 To unenlightened souls shines wakeful day  
 To his clear gaze; what seems as wakeful day  
 Is known for night, thick night of ignorance,  
 To his true-seeing eyes. Such is the Saint !  
 And like the ocean, day by day receiving  
 Floods from all lands, which never overflows;  
 Its boundary-line not leaping, and not leaving,  
 Fed by the rivers, but unswelled by those;  
 So is the perfect one, to his soul's ocean  
 The world of sense pours streams of witchery,  
 They leave him as they find, without commotion,  
 Taking their tribute, but remaining sea.  
 Yea; whoso, shaking off the yoke of flesh

Lives lord, not servant, of his lusts; set free  
 From pride, from passion, from the sin of "Self",  
 Toucheth tranquillity! O Pritha's Son !  
 That is the state of Brahma ! There rests no dread  
 When that last step is reached ! Live where he will,  
 Die when he may, such passeth from all plaining,  
 To blest *Nirvana*, with the Gods, attaining.

I confess that in spite of my trying to reach  
 the state, I am far away from the condition of  
 equipoise. I realize how difficult it is in the face  
 of the storm raging round us.

She says in the same letter :

"The only comfort is that mankind, some of it,  
 has discovered its innate impotence apart from God."

Motto in her letter-head is :

"In hearts too young for enmity  
 There lies the way to make men free . . . ."

How true and yet how difficult !

New Delhi, 22-7-'47

### CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIALISM

William Morris was a socialist if ever there was  
 one. In all that he did, wrote and was, he was  
 every inch a socialist. His ideas and principles are,  
 therefore, capable of being a precious guide to all  
 those in India who would hasten the coming of  
 socialism.

In his recent article about the meaning of socialism  
 Gandhiji has stressed the fact that the deepest motive  
 of socialism is and ought to be ethical. Morris provides  
 a significant illustration of this truth. A rich man  
 used to refinement and luxury, he broke away from  
 ease and comfort to fellowship with the poor man.  
 He felt for those who were condemned to work  
 for fear of starvation and who did not know the  
 pleasure of working for work's own sake. He  
 regarded labour with the eye of a fellow-labourer.  
 He was a socialist not because he was animated by  
 scientific theories of economic betterment but  
 because he desired for every man and woman an  
 un-anxious life in which they might do all that  
 was best worth doing. He had no use for a material  
 paradise of comfort and leisure if the new world  
 did not give joy, peace and harmony for all. His one  
 hope about the new world was that it might end  
 de-humanizing labour. In reviewing an American  
 Utopia, Mr. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, he raised  
 his protest against the apotheosis of machinery and  
 the glorification of the life of large towns. A  
 beautiful thought is thus expanded in the article :

"It is necessary to point out that there are  
 some Socialists who do not think that the problem  
 of the organization of life and necessary labour can  
 be dealt with by a huge national centralization,  
 working by a kind of magic for which no one feels  
 himself responsible; that on the contrary it will be  
 necessary for the unit of administration to be small  
 enough for every citizen to feel himself responsible  
 for its details and be interested in them; that  
 individual men cannot shuffle off the business of  
 life on the shoulders of an abstraction called the  
 State, but must deal with it in conscious association



with each other; that variety of life is as much an aim of true Communism as equality of condition, and that nothing but an union of these two will bring about real freedom; that modern nationalities are mere artificial devices for the commercial war that we seek to put an end to, and will disappear with it; and finally, that art, using that word in its widest and due signification, is not a mere adjunct of life which free and happy men can do without, but the necessary expression and indispensable instrument of human happiness."

The change that Morris desired was not in the machinery of life but in the very civilization that man has evolved. His socialism is deeper than politics and economics. It is full of the magnificent expression of the urge of life towards truth, beauty, peace, freedom and fellowship.

Morris was rigidly scrupulous with regard to the means adopted to achieve the end. He wrote, "I have a religious hatred to all war and violence." He says that he made it his duty "to sow the seed for the goodwill and justice that may make it possible for the next great revolution which will be a social one, to work itself out without violence being an essential part of it." Of this great change he has a great vision:

"When the change comes, it will embrace the whole of society, and there will be no discontented class left to form the elements of a fresh revolution. It is necessary that the movement should not be ignorant, but intelligent. What I should like to have now, far more than anything else, would be a body of able, high-minded, competent men who should act as instructors. I should look to those men to preach what Socialism really is—not a change for the sake of change, but a change involving the very noblest ideal of human life and duty; a life in which every human being should find unrestricted scope for his best powers and faculties."

He sees modern society as the product of a pact made between selfishness and selfishness but he was not sanguine of a speedy change by impatient agitation or hasty revolution. He held that the socialist's duty was to guard himself against "opportunism and intriguing, and the making of a party" in the eagerness to achieve results quickly. On the other hand, he held that Socialism can succeed only when the Socialists aim at founding a religion, the religion of love and fellowship. He wrote:

"The educational process therefore, the forming a rallying point for definite aims, is necessary to our success; but I must guard against misunderstanding. We must be no mere debating club, or philosophical society; we must take part in all really popular movements when we can make our own views on them unmistakably clear; that is a most important part of the education in organization.

"Education towards revolution seems to me to express in three words what our policy should be; towards that New Birth of Society which we

know must come, and which, therefore, we must strive to help forward so that it may come with as little confusion and suffering as may be."

Again he says:

"Our business, I repeat, is the making of Socialists, i.e. convincing people that Socialism is good for them and is possible. When we have enough people of that way of thinking, they will find out what action is necessary for putting their principles in practice. Therefore, I say, make Socialists. We Socialists can do nothing else that is useful."

Morris also teaches us that we should not delude ourselves with belief in the finality of any system. He wrote: "I do not believe in the world being saved by any system,—I only assert the necessity of attacking systems grown corrupt." He teaches us that we should look not to the label on the forehead or to the badge on the breast but to the purity of passion within. Morris also knows that at heart all good men and true have the same things though they may strive in different ways and in different circumstances. It is Morris who speaks when one of his heroes says:

"I pondered all these things and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat and when it comes about, it turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name."

The strength of Morris's Socialism is derived not from a hatred of the rich but a real feeling for the poor. He said: "The contrasts of rich and poor are un-endurable and ought not to be endured by either rich or poor." He deplored the fatal division of men into the cultivated classes and the degraded classes which competitive commerce has bred and fosters. "While the rich enslave the poor, they themselves are not happy, and are always trying to ruin each other. Socialism will end this war by abolishing classes: this change will get rid of bad housing, under-feeding, over-work and ignorance."

What lay at the root of his belief was that everybody can be above want, can enjoy the pleasure of useful and happy labour and above all, can share in the larger intellectual and spiritual life. This is also the belief of every socialist. His first duty is to get others to share this belief with him. He can do this only when he practises what he preaches, and above all only when he adds to his burning sincerity, love and consideration towards those whom he would convert to his belief.

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# HARIJAN

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## THOU TOO GUJARAT!

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Maganbhai Desai has sent me a copy of his correspondence with Shri Ratanlal Parikh. The latter writes:

"The newspapers report that the Congress Party has decided that Hindi written in the *Devanagari* script should be the lingua franca of the Indian Union. This has had a profound effect upon the public mind. They are excited and opposed to the *Urdu* script. It is as well that the move for the propagation of the *Urdu* script is not a living thing! Even staunch Congressmen have begun to oppose it. This means that the number of candidates for Hindustani examinations to be held in February is likely to be greatly reduced."

I hope that what Shri Ratanlal says is not true. The Gujaratis are not to act thus foolishly. I do not approve of the dislike of the writers for the *Urdu* script, though I would be prepared to account for it. But for the life of me I cannot understand this thoughtless dislike of the script. Does it not betray a bankruptcy of wisdom? The Gujaratis are reputed as businessmen. In doing business, they do not discriminate between friends and foes. They gladly make money from both. Will this same businesslikeness forsake them in politics or in the use of the script?

In Delhi I daily come in contact with Hindus and Muslims. The number of the Hindus is larger. Most of them speak a language which has very few Sanskrit words and not many more Persian or Arabic. They or the vast majority do not know the *Devanagari* script. They write to me in indifferent English and when I take them to task for writing in a foreign language, they write in the *Urdu* script. If the lingua franca is to be Hindi and the script only *Devanagari*, what will be the plight of these Hindus?

But I confess that my insistence on Hindustani is a proof of my partiality for the Muslim brethren, though not of Gujarat. The Muslims of Gujarat do not know *Urdu*. They learn it not without difficulty. Their mother tongue is Gujarati. But the language of the Muslims in North India is undoubtedly Hindustani i. e. simple *Urdu*. I do not mind their calling it *Urdu*. The millions of the villagers of India have nothing to do with books. They speak Hindustani, which the Muslims write in the *Urdu* script and the Hindus in the *Urdu* or in the *Nagari* script. Therefore, the duty of people like you and me is to learn both the scripts. The Gujaratis decided to perform this duty with gladness. They joyously accepted Hindustani as the lingua franca. They did not swallow it like a bitter pill. Why then have they developed a dislike for the *Urdu* script now? For me it has become all the sweeter in the midst of the deadly bitterness surrounding us. The non-

Pakistani Muslims are all the dearer to me. They are not to look to Pakistan for the safety of their honour, person and property. Such a thing would be a shame for us of the Union. *Sanatana Hindu Dharma* is not circumscribed like the proverbial frog in the well. It is as broad as the ocean. Thus interpreted, it is the property of all mankind, no matter by what name it is called. A Malayali commentator of the great epic the *Mahabharata* has, in my opinion, correctly called it the history of mankind. But be it as it may, the word Hindu is not derived from Sanskrit. The foreigners called the inhabitants on this side of the river Sindhu, Hindus. We have adopted the title. Manu is not the name of any one man. It is an equivalent of Adam, the first man. The Law of Manu is known as *Manava Dharma Shastra* (the Law for Mankind). It is given by the first man under inspiration. One can only guess as to how many of the *shlokas* are the original work of Manu and how many are interpolations. Dr. Bhagavandas has pointed out certain interpolations. The Arya Samaj looks upon certain others as such. There has been some difference of opinion even on the interpretations. In my opinion, whatever out of them appeals to the head and heart of the wise, is the law for mankind. There is, therefore, always room for addition or subtraction. The *shlokas* looked upon as interpolations are the result of the efforts, successful or unsuccessful, of the reformers in different ages. Such a law belongs to all mankind. It does not permit of discrimination on grounds of caste and class. It knows no distinctions between the Hindus, the Muslims and the others. "This is mine and that is some one else's, is the calculation of narrow minds," is one of the pearls of wisdom.

On the basis of this immortal *shloka* you and I cannot discriminate between Hindustan and Pakistan. What even if you and I happen to be the only ones having such a belief? If we are true, others are bound to follow us.

The Congress has always kept a broad vision. Today it is needed more than ever before. It is permissible to say that India has accepted partition at the point of the bayonet. This settled fact cannot be unsettled in the same way. The two can be one only when there is heart unity.

The omens today seem to point to the contrary. During the crisis the Congress must stand firm like a rock. It dare not give way on the question of the lingua franca of India. It cannot be persianized *Urdu* or sanskritized Hindi. It must be a beautiful blend of the two simple forms written in either script. How I wish Gujarat would remain unaffected by the gathering storm! Will those who have soared high, now crash at the first blow? If I could have my way, such a thing would not happen. There is a Gujarati hymn which says, "Will he who has been purified by the fire of love ever turn back?" Let us follow the poet. Let us not turn away from the *Urdu* script. One slip of the foot is likely to hurl us down. Thank God, the newspaper report was untrue. The consideration



of the question has been postponed by two or three months. Let us hope sanity will prevail.

On the train to Kashmir, 31-7-'47

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

### THE CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

An English friend who has adopted India as home, writes to Gandhiji:

"What joy is left in national work? Where and how can I work for your ideals? Of all moments in history this was the time for India fearlessly to throw her armies to the winds. And now instead of that we are to have two rival armies! India is being dragged down to inevitable destruction. It is so simple. Why cannot people see that armies are the death-trap of mankind? Huge sums are to be spent on developing this death-trap in India and what is left over, on industrialization with all its evils.

"Cannot those of us who believe in your ideals get away from this path of negation of all that we have lived for and have some outlet of our own?"

"Will not our Bapu come out of the blind whirlpool and call us together in some quiet place where we can open out our hearts to him and seek in his guidance some path of common action in direct service of Truth and Non-violence? In this shattering cataclysm, if the few of us who believe do not band together, our scattered strength may be lost in the storm."

Gandhiji would love to do that. But today he feels he must not. His one thought is to get to Bihar and Noakhali as early as possible. If the minorities in both the parts are as secure as the leaders of both the Congress and the League have stated in their recent statements, he will return refreshed. For the time being he wishes to go to Bihar and Noakhali as on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas. After that he would love to settle down to constructive work and thus bring nearer the dream of *Rama Rajya* with such of his co-workers as would be willing to stand by his ideals. He has always been essentially a social reformer. He was dragged into politics because he found from experience that social reform was impossible without political freedom. Now that political serfdom seems to have gone, his real work in life should command his time and attention. In the special train that carried Gandhiji and the leaders to prison on the fateful morning of the 9th of August, 1942, the late Shri Satyamurti told Gandhiji, "Bapu! your real work will start when India is free." India is at last on the threshold of freedom. Will the shock of division destroy all that Gandhiji has lived for and worked for? The eyes of the whole world are fixed on India. In the mythological churning of the ocean were discovered poison and nectar along with other valuable gifts. All the gifts were shared by the *Devas* and the *Asuras*. The Lord Shiva had to swallow the poison to save the world. The mighty struggle for India's independence might well be compared with the churning of the ocean. It has yielded the nectar of independence and the poison of partition. There are many who have had to swallow the poison. Let us hope like the figurative Lord Shiva they will emerge all the stronger for the deadly drink.

New Delhi, 27-7-'47

S. N.

### GANDHIJI'S SPEECHES

New Delhi, 25-7-'47

#### COW PROTECTION

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji said that Rajendra Babu had told him that he had received about 50,000 post cards, 30,000 letters and thousands of telegrams asking for prohibition of cow slaughter in the Union of India. A telegram was received today saying that a *pandit* had undertaken a fast in Cawnpore on that issue. Hindu religion prohibited cow slaughter for the Hindus, not for the world. Religious prohibition came from within. Any imposition from without meant compulsion. Such compulsion was repugnant to religion. India was the land not only of the Hindus but also of the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians, the Jews and all who claimed to be of India and were loyal to the Union. If they could prohibit cow slaughter in India on religious grounds, why could not the Pakistan Government prohibit, say, idol worship in Pakistan on similar grounds? He was not a temple-goer, but if he was prohibited from going to a temple in Pakistan he would make it a point to go there even at the risk of losing his head. Just as *Shariat* could not be imposed on the non-Muslims, Hindu law could not be imposed on the non-Hindus. He told the audience that many Hindus were guilty of cow slaughter by slow torture. It was the Hindus who exported cows outside India well knowing that they were to be slaughtered for beef extract which came to India and which the children of orthodox Hindus ate without compunction under medical advice. Were they not co-partners in cow slaughter?

#### TREE PLANTATION

Gandhiji next referred to the Tree Plantation Week in Delhi. Many big people had taken part in it including the Vicereine. He was told that none but she had thought of watering the trees after planting. The official who originated the idea of tree planting did not do it for fancy nor was it meant only for the monied men. It began with them so that the others would copy them and thus add to the wealth and rainfall of India. Deforestation led to diminished rainfall. Moreover, trees required little care except in the early stages. An acre of land used for growing fruit trees would give greater yield than a crop of wheat over the same area. They should also take to growing salad vegetables in pots on their open terraces. Love of growing edibles on open patches of ground or in pots provided healthy employment combined with innocent amusement.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

The question he had no time to answer yesterday, Gandhiji answered today. How were they to behave towards the Muslims in the Union in view of the atrocities committed by them in many places? It had become difficult to trust the Muslims they met—and how were they to ensure the protection of the non-Muslims in Pakistan? He had, he hoped, answered the question more than once. Yet evidently the answer



bore repetition. India was equally the home of the Hindus and the non-Hindus. All religions were on their trial. He had already confessed his own mistake. He had imagined that the weak could be non-violent. It was not so. If they could shed their cowardice the Muslims would recognize their bravery and would cease to worry them. In the Union they were, therefore, bound to treat all with equal regard. In the absence of that bravery which non-violence alone gave, they had the law of revenge—division of army might well mean a graphic lesson in that law. The division rendered the army weak, if not useless, as an effective defence against foreign aggression. He had shown how, if they did not take care, India might even have to pass through military dictatorship. Was it to be the fate of India to win freedom with one hand and lose it with the other? The Dutch seemed to be trying to deprive Indonesia of her freedom. Whatever their previous faults the British were leaving India of their own accord. A fratricidal war was bound to result in the loss of that freedom. If they acted correctly in the Indian Union, no one would dare touch the non-Muslims in Pakistan, however small their number might be. It was, therefore, a good sign that the leaders of both the communities had made a statement that they would accept the decision of the Boundary Commission whatever it was. They had also said that the minorities and even erstwhile political opponents would be quite safe in either part of India. Correct conduct required that they should believe what they had said till proved otherwise.

*New Delhi, 26-7-'47*

#### STRIKES

Speaking after prayers Gandhiji said that from what he had heard and read in the newspapers it seemed that strikes were becoming a nuisance in India. At Calcutta there was a 'Pens Down' strike in the Accountant General's Office. Services-like this were public utility services. Dislocation of these would dislocate public life. He was not the one to tell the clerks and the others in these departments to slave away under any conditions. But there were other and unobjectionable ways of getting redress. The Pay Commission had recommended a large increase in the salaries of the lower staff. But they wanted still more. That seemed to be the cause of the strike. Why should the Director get, say, Rs. 2000 a month and the *chaprasi* Rs. 20 a month? It certainly sounded odd. He for one believed that under ideal conditions the barrister and the *bhangi* should both get the same payment. But he knew, as everybody else did, that society all the world over was far from the ideal. It was not possible to pay everyone Rs. 100 per day. He knew too that the barrister did not deserve what he got. But clients gladly paid fabulous fees. Coming lower down, people would gladly pay four rupees a day to a tailor, but not more than eight annas per day to a sweeper. Society needed patient and sustained education to bring it to the same level in earning. It required much advanced training to

reach that state of equality. Meanwhile every effort must be made to bridge the gulf between the payments of the higher and the lower ranks. The Commission had done that. If it was not a satisfactory rise, the causes must be examined. Among these must be the capacity of the country to bear the additional burden. There was no such thing as an abrupt ascent in life. Let them not kill the goose that laid the golden egg. That process would spell insolvency of the land.

In Bombay, he had learnt, the Government had already put into practice the recommendations of the Pay Commission. But there was an agitation for a still higher increase. There was now a threat of a token strike of a day. He hoped that there was no truth in the statement. If there was, he hoped that the matter would not be allowed to go beyond a threat. If it was meant seriously, he would ask the leaders of the movement to think twice before embarking on what appeared to him to be a meaningless adventure, unless it was an attempt to test the strength or the influence of the leaders behind the movement. If such was the case, he could only regard it as a dangerous move harmful to the country. Let all who had influence in life remember that any manoeuvring for party gains might endanger the freedom they were about to gain from foreign domination.

*New Delhi, 27-7-'47*

#### PRINCES AND PARAMOUNTCY

Gandhiji drew the people's attention to the conference of the Princes called the day before yesterday by the Viceroy. It was right that the latter should now explain to the rulers what their position was going to be. Gandhiji expressed the opinion that what the Viceroy had said in the main appeared to be correct. It was well-known that up till now the Princes had lived secure under the shelter of British guns. Britain was the paramount power and had concluded treaties with some of the Princes. The latter had to do the bidding of the paramount power and they could not even appoint their own *Diwans*. But paramountcy was now going and while the Viceroy said that legally and technically the States were independent because that paramountcy was not devolving on either of the dominions, he advised the rulers to join one or other dominion rather than be in isolation. It was ridiculous for them to remain aloof and to maintain their independent existence. The British could not compel them to join one or the other dominion. The days of British compulsion were gone for ever. But, as the Viceroy said, it would be wisdom for the Princes to make their choice and enter one or the other dominion, having due regard to their geographical situation and the compulsion of that position.

There was one lacuna in the Viceroy's speech which perhaps was inevitable but which Gandhiji said, he had a right to refer to. He was from a small Kathiawad State himself. He knew what the position meant. There was no mention of the people of the States. The British had occasionally



hauled a Prince over the coals for misgovernance. But, by and large, the Princes had lived lives of ease and luxury and exploited their subjects. Now that the Imperial Power was going, the Princes would naturally welcome its departure in the sense that the weight of paramountcy was to be withdrawn. In another sense they might foolishly resent the paramountcy of the ryots. He suggested to them that they should regard the people's paramountcy as a privilege to be prized. It would add to their moral weight and redound to their credit. But this meant that they should become truly the first servants of the people. They had to show the spirit of service in action, they should act on the advice of the *prajamandals* or real leaders of the people. That would be wisdom and in that way alone could the people feel with the rest of India the glow of freedom.

The *prajamandals* had no experience of administration and of running the government. But the same was true of the leaders who were running the Central Government. They were lions outside. In office they had become lambs. They were slaving away night and day in order to serve the people. Therefore, the *prajamandals* were to be approached with trust.

The Princes were on their trial. The taxes they received should be spent for the welfare of the ryots, so that they received ten-fold return for what they paid. The States' people comprised probably one fourth of the whole of India. Would the ten crores of the States' subjects be able to rejoice on the 15th of August?

A simple Muslim girl had written to Gandhiji: "Freedom has come. But shall I call it freedom or ruination?" There was force in what the girl had said. The British could have said that paramountcy would devolve on the dominions and they could have adjudicated as to which dominion each State was to join. Unfortunately they did not choose to do so. Nevertheless, the Princes' road was clear. He hoped that they would choose the right course forthwith and assist in making the whole of India, though in two parts, a true democracy. There should be no mental reservations. All parties must lay all their cards on the table. It was now easy to understand why they could have no demonstrative celebration. He recommended, therefore, the celebration of the event with fasting, prayer and deep heart searching.

New Delhi, 28-7-'47

Gandhiji said that that evening he proposed to answer some of the questions that were found in his correspondence file.

#### CONGRESS AFTER AUGUST 15TH

Q. After the 15th of August will there be two Congresses or only one for both the parts of India, if there is to be any need for the Congress at all?

A. In my opinion the need for such an organization will be greater than it has been upto now. No doubt the function will be different. Unless Congressmen foolishly subscribe to the theory of two nations based on two religions, there can be

only one Congress for one India. Division of India does not, ought not to, divide the All India body. India does not become two nations because it has been cut up into two sovereign States. Supposing one or more States remain outside the two dominions, will the Congress exclude them and their people from the National Congress? Will they not rather demand special care and attention from the Congress? Problems more intricate than before, will certainly arise. Some of them may defy solution. That will be no reason for cutting the Congress in twain. It will evoke greater statesmanship, deeper thinking and cooler judgment than hitherto. Let us not anticipate paralysing difficulties. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

#### CONGRESS AND COMMUNALISM

The second question is:

Q. Will the Congress become a communal body now? There is an insistent demand for it. Now that the Muslims regard themselves as aliens, why should we not call the Union, Hindu India with an indelible stamp of Hindudom on it?

A. This question betrays gross ignorance. The Congress can never become a Hindu body. Those who will make it so are enemies of India and Hinduism. We are a nation of millions. Their voice no one has heard. Insistence, if there is any, is confined to the busybodies of our cities. Let us not mistake their voice for the voice of the millions of India's villages. Thirdly, the Muslims of the Union have not declared themselves as aliens. Lastly, in spite of the many shortcomings of the Hindus, it can be safely claimed that Hinduism has never been known to be exclusive. Many persons claiming different faiths make us one and an indivisible nation. All these have an equal claim to be the nationals of India. The so-called majority community has no right to impose itself on the others. Might of numbers or of the sword shall not be right. Right is the only true might, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

#### NON-MUSLIMS AND THE PAKISTAN FLAG

The third question is:

Q. What should be the attitude of the non-Muslims towards the Pakistan flag?

A. That flag has not yet come into being. Probably it will be the same as the Muslim League flag. If it is identified with Islam, it must have a flag which is common to all Muslims of the world and it should command the universal respect of all who are not inimical to Islam. I know of no such flag either for Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or any other faith. Not being a student of history, I am subject to correction. If the Pakistan flag, whatever its design, represents all its inhabitants equally, irrespective of religion, it will command my salute as it should yours. In other words, the dominions must not be enemies one of the other. Dominions of the Commonwealth cannot be enemies of one another. I am watching with painful interest how the South Africa Dominion behaves towards the Dominions of India. Can they afford to be



anti-Indian? May the Europeans of that dominion refuse even to travel in the same compartment with the Indians because they are Indians?

New Delhi, 29-7-47

At the beginning of his post-prayer speech Gandhiji introduced Shri Prabhakarji of Sevagram who had conducted the prayers the day before and sung at the prayers that day. He was a Harijan. He had been rendering valuable service to the poor villagers by working at the Ashram hospital, now known as the Kasturba Hospital and conducted the prayers at the Ashram.

#### IN FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE

He informed the audience that he was leaving for Kashmir on Wednesday, the 30th inst. The talk of his going to Kashmir had been going on for a long time. He was not very keen to go, although everyone should wish to visit that beautiful place. He was going as a matter of duty to fulfil a promise made to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

After his return to India from South Africa in 1915, he met the late Maharaja of Kashmir at the *Kumbha mela* at Haradwar. The Maharaja invited him to Kashmir. But he had no time then. In 1938 he was the guest of Khan Saheb Abdul Ghaffar Khan at Abbottabad. Sir N. Gopalaswamy Iyengar was then the Prime Minister of Kashmir. He invited Gandhiji to go to Kashmir. It was almost decided that he would go. But he could not. In 1945 there was the Simla Conference. Important negotiations were going on at Delhi in which Pandit Jawaharlal was the chief participant. He went on what was to be a day's visit to Kashmir. But being a born fighter he got caught in a fight with the State authorities and could not return. Maulana Saheb was the President of the Congress. He was upset and so was Lord Wavell that Panditji was held up. Gandhiji told Maulana Saheb to send a telegram to him to return immediately. His honour was the honour of the Congress and his commitment would be taken up by the Congress and that, if need be, Gandhiji would go instead. As a disciplined soldier that he was, Pandit Jawaharlal returned. When, therefore, over a month ago when Panditji felt that he should pay Kashmir a flying visit, Gandhiji offered to go in his place, provided the Viceroy had no objection to it. The Viceroy advised him to postpone his visit. After the protracted delay it became a question as to who should go now. It was felt that Pandit Nehru's visit would be more open to misinterpretation than his (Gandhiji's). As a matter of fact neither had any intention of influencing the decision as to joining one dominion or the other. So far as he was concerned, he knew what he wanted to go for. He did not want to let the workers in Kashmir feel that they were neglected. Pandit Nehru belonged to Kashmir. The speaker was connected with Kashmir as President of the A. I. S. A. He was not going to Kashmir to secure the

release of Sheikh Abdulla. He was certainly going to see Begum Abdulla. He had no wish to see the Kashmir functionaries, though he was courteous enough not to object to any such proposal. He would certainly like to see common men and women of Kashmir whether Muslim or non-Muslim. So far as the accession to the dominions was concerned, he was firmly of opinion that it was the ryots who should decide, not the rulers. The British Government were a paramountcy imposed. The real paramountcy is inherently vested in the ryots. His visit to Kashmir was thus in fulfilment of the promise referred to by him. He had no wish to address public meetings.

He appealed to the public to let him have a quiet and peaceful journey. He was not fit to stand the noise and din of the crowds.

#### CELEBRATIONS ON AUGUST 15TH

He was taken to task for advising the people to fast and pray and spin on the 15th of August. Was it not a sign of mourning? It was not so. There was cause for sorrow in as much as the country had been cut in twain. But there was cause too for rejoicing in that the British power was quitting India. There was more than enough to chasten them. Even when there was cause for unmixed joy as on the 6th of April, 1919, when there was country-wide awakening and the Hindus, the Muslims and the others freely mixed with one another, he had advised the celebration by prayer, fasting and spinning. The reason for humbling themselves before God was now infinitely greater when brother was fighting brother, when there was shortage of food and clothing, and when the country's leaders were called upon to shoulder a burden under which, without God's grace, the strongest back might well break.

Some people were even thinking of having black flag demonstrations. He could not approve of such. There was no cause for mourning.

He had heard that people were not willing to buy the old flags, which were in stock and asked for those with the new design. The leaders had told them that the meaning of the two flags was the same. The new one was also to be on pure *khadi*. The Khadi Bhandars should refuse to sell new flags till the old stock was exhausted and if the people understood the spirit behind the flag, they would deem it an honour to buy the old flags till the Bhandars which were the poor man's property had any of them to sell.

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