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The India of My Dreams

by

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I THINK I may say that I have lived long enough in India in this incarnation and in many preceding incarnations at least to dream of an India-to-be arising from the ashes of the India-that-was—those fortunately still glowing ashes which are the India-that-is.

If I am asked whether I feel I know India, I can answer without hesitation that only the Rishis know India. But out of the India I have read about, and out of the India I have to some small extent experienced, I feel I can fashion a vision of an India-to-be, fashion it as in a dream, which may, I hope, have some faint reflexion of the mighty Picture which embodies the will of India's true and inner rulers. And I can do so the more for the deep reverence and adoration that I bear for the land of my adoption. My home is in India, my life is largely in India too; my hopes and ideals are largely centred in India. To all of which I would add the wonderful inspiration and guidance I have received for many years from one whose love of India was not only flawless but wise with the wisdom of the Rishis Themselves—Dr. Annie Besant.

And where to dream aloud as is my present duty if not in Kashi where Dr. Besant began a mighty dedication of all her

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splendid powers to the rebirth of India for the happiness of her people and for the service of the world? •

Fragrant with Culture

Of what is the India of my dreams fundamentally composed? What is its basic substance? Its basic composition is that Eternal Truth of India shining forth in her many faiths and in her many cultures. To me India is essentially a land of Truth, a repository of Truth, a Well of Truth, and first and foremost I dream of India as a Truth-land, a land radiant with the White Light of Truth shining forth in rainbow hues of faiths and cultures. My dream is of an India in which religion and culture far from being dead are tremendously alive and vibrant throughout the land. The India of my dreams is a religious India and an India fragrant with culture. She is an India in which every great religion is as real as it may also rightly be formal and ceremonial, in which every great religion is in happy and appreciative peace with all its fellow-faiths, in which each great religion contributes its Truth to the truthfulness of every citizen, so that each citizen of India, aglow with the splendour of his own faith, is also the nobler for the faiths of others, in which each great religion, true to the life or to the lives of its Founder or Founders, causes Them to be living realities, living Elder Brethren, among Their children.

And from the religions come the cultures which form the characters of their followers—the great arts and crafts and noble simplicities of daily living which are the source of dignity and grace and brotherliness towards all in every kingdom of nature.

There are many faiths in India, gathered together within her frontiers for her nearer approach to God, and therefore there are many cultures. Each faith and each culture is a jewel in India's Crown of Righteousness, and together they form a veritable fire of glory for all the world to see.

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I dream of an India therefore broad-based on brotherhood of faiths and cultures, so that almost I see but one all-embracing faith, one all-embracing culture.

So my dream of India thus establishes itself in principle, and now begins to take hues and forms appropriate to its nature.

Truth Shining Forth in Education

Being a Truth-land, India infuses Truth in all departments of her being. First, in education, in the unfoldment of her young citizens to the measure of their highest statures, inspired by the soul of their Bharata Mata to make service the ideal of their lives, as enjoined by the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, the mighty Lawgiver of India and the world, to pursue every subject of their studies to the end of wise service, to live simply, to attain due control of body, emotions, mind, speech and action, and thus to become reverent, brotherly and compassionate.

How far away is our present system of education from these dignities of growth! How soul-less! How prostituted to self-seeking rather than to self-sacrifice! My dream is of a truly Indian education instinct with the spirit of India's faiths and India's cultures, and beautifully harmonizing the dharma of the individual citizen to himself with his dharma of reverent submission to his Motherland. Where would the Motherland be without her children? Where would the children be without their Mother?

How wonderfully exalted shall become the citizenship of the India of my dreams, because the very soul of India shall be afire in her educational system, because the mighty Indian citizens of India's Past, be they the Rishis Themselves living ideal lives for the example of their younger brethren, be they India's heroes, saintly men and women, geniuses, or simple men and women of the land, living as so many of them do today lives of worthy gentle men and gentle women, because

all these human blessings are alive in their spirit and in their lives in the education of those for whom they bore, and still bear, witness to the nobility of true living.

And the teachers shall be honoured by the Motherland as among her greatest servants. What marvellous traditions lie behind the Indian teacher, unequalled are these throughout the world! And India's need immediately is a new race of teachers, themselves afire with India's greatness and ardent to communicate that fire to their young pupils, counting money as little and the power to inspire as everything. In the India of my dreams such teachers shall be, with keen but free minds, with noble emotions, with devotion to their civic duties, and with individualities full of their own uniquenesses and thus capable of evoking uniqueness, originality, self-dependence, in those committed to their care.

A Utopia, you say. Yes, for the old world. But of what avail this terrible war if it cannot in some measure break down those obstacles which prevent Utopias from coming true. Let our dreams lift us up into the mountains. So may we hope to attain at least the measure of the hills.

And these young citizens of my dream-land, someday to become a real-land, will be strong of body to defend the Motherland from attack and injury. So will the young men be, and the young women will strengthen them to suffer and, if need be, to die in their country's cause. There are not wanting examples of such patriotism in India's history both among the men and no less among the women. And when the true nature of Ahimsa is understood, as it is not understood today, then will Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis, Jains and Jews and Buddhists ever stand shoulder to shoulder to maintain the Law, be it by force of material weapons or of the weapons of the soul. Thus shall India not only be impregnable herself, but with other comrade-lands shall help to maintain the peace and integrity of every corner in the world.

A Utopia? Yes. But nothing is too good to be true, and only the good things are eternally true.

Might I not then say that Truth shining forth in education is all the dream I could really dream of the India-to-be? What more is there that I could dream? Indeed would it be almost enough if my dream as so far unfolded to you could be realized. Yet I think I can make my dream a little clearer still.

The Real Motherland of the World

Shall I not dream of Indian arts and crafts as both ennobling the people themselves and bringing renown to India throughout the world, as in the olden days they brought renown and glory?

Yes, I dream of a wonderful revival of India's arts and crafts rich in the spirit and in the forms of Indian beauty. And I dream of every village throughout the land as a sanctuary of the arts and crafts, and of every boy and girl, man and woman, educated to delight in the arts and crafts of his Motherland, seeking to honour them with the creative spirit of his hands, learning to appreciate them, cherish them, honour them, spend part of his life in living for them.

Of course, I dream of a national language not superseding India's many languages. Of course, I dream of an Indian music in addition to the many musics she already has. I dream of an Indian architecture in addition to her many architectures. I dream of an Ahimsa India wherein a citizenship of rights is happily accorded to all India's humbler citizens in the sub-human kingdoms of nature, no less citizens of the Motherland than denizens of the human kingdom.

I dream of an ordered India, a lawful India, a peaceful and a purposeful India.

I dream of an India largely self-contained, giving far, far more than she receives, blessing with her own beauty far more than she could ever be blessed with the beauty of other lands. For is not the India of my dreams the real Motherland

of the new world, the Mother for whom the new world is waiting in anguish and in horror here today? The Mother must above all give, even though she may receive.

A Great Call to Civic Service

And when I dream of an India self-contained, I dream of happiness and contentment everywhere, of Indian citizenship being an honoured treasure to every citizen—man, woman, child, and not as it is today worthless to millions because their lives are miserable and all but hopeless. I say that it is in the power of the youth of this very time, in the very midst of the darkness which encompasses us, to practise the greatest patriotism of all patriotisms, that of bringing the love of the Motherland into the humblest home in the smallest and most forlorn and desolate village.

This is the great opportunity of the youth of India today, not to be just the gramophone records of their elders, shouting much but doing little, if anything, but to bring a little happiness to those who know no happiness, a little comfort to those who know no comfort, a little hope to those who know no hope, and above all a little gift of brotherliness to those who do not know what Brotherhood is, who know for the most part but the indifference and the harshness of those who are round about them.

The great call to the youth of today is the call of civic service, for as the youth of today answer that call, so shall they in their maturity fashion India into a happy-land and thus help to make this dream of India come true. But they must learn to become truly Indian, Indian in spirit, Indian in thought and feeling and hope and aspiration, Indian in habits, in food, in dress, in home-life. And to this end their elders of body can help them tremendously. Their elders can give them right contact with India's mighty past, with her traditions, with her cultures, with all the fragrances of India's daily living in what were indeed the good old days.

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Their elders can give them real histories of the real India and not the foreign-produced and foreign-inspired histories which give no insight whatever into the true genius of the Motherland. Their elders can conjure up for them the glory that was India, and can show them how India's tremendous resources, coming from other lands and civilizations, as well as supremely inherent in herself, may be pooled, to become common to all without distinction of faith, or nationality or caste, so that India in the very midst of and because of her differences can become one in understanding and therefore pay reverent homage to them all. Their elders, the elders of youth, can make straight the constructive paths of youth, helping them to concentrate on their real work and guarding them from participation in the degradation into which modern politics in India have fallen.

India is a house divided against herself, but it is the splendid privilege of the youth of India to make their home one, to restore unity to India, by spreading happiness where there is unhappiness, and confidence where there is despair. Such is the opportunity of youth—to leave if necessary their elders to extricate themselves from the muddle in which they have allowed themselves to be submerged, and they, the youth, to concentrate on doing all in their power to make life worth living for their poorer fellow-citizens. If they can do this, the very muddle itself will soon disappear, for India will become strong, as alone she can become strong in the well-being of the majority of her sons and of her daughters.

I have dwelt on this aspect of my dream for the India-to-be, and shall dwell on it again, because I consider it so vital and so much in the plan for India's regeneration. It is tragic that Indian youth should have become, as indeed they have become, unserviceable to the Motherland because they have been so unwisely guided. A tremendous force, still I believe available to the service of the Motherland, is thus being

temporarily wasted, and it must cease to be wasted if India is to pass quickly from dream-land to real-land.

But I fear that I, and those who think like me, am a voice crying in the wilderness, for while I ask for service, our politicians are offering sensation and emotionalism, and our young men, I hope not so much our young women, only too readily respond—perhaps it is natural—to the highly spiced utterances of persons who ought to give bread to the incomparable youth of India instead of giving them stones.

India Must Be Free!

And this brings me to that part of my dream which concerns itself with what is called the political freedom of India. Though in very truth India's freedom cannot be divided into compartments. There is in my dream-India but one freedom—a freedom which is of her life far more than the forms through which that life may need to be expressed. Her people must be free not only to vote and choose their political masters, and so to be ground into the machinery of this or that political party, they must become free to live the Truths of India, the Truths of her cultures, the Truths of her faiths, the Truths of her education and industries and arts and crafts, the very Truths of her civilization. The Indian man must be free to become an Indian gentle man. The Indian woman must be free to become an Indian gentle woman, in the finest and most truly Indian sense of these words. Thank God that this gentleness still exists and only awaits the predestined moment to burst into flame. So must the youth of India be free no less.

Are we not putting the cart before the horse as we attend to forms more than we attend to life? I do not for a moment hesitate to say, out of I think a very wide experience and appreciation of my young Indian fellow-citizens, that on the whole, doubtless with fine exceptions, the youth of India is not only wasting its time in the existing educational

as witness the disgraceful outlook when the educational period is over and the constant denationalization which is taking place day by day in every Indian youth—girl or boy—who goes to school or college, not only is it thus wasting its time, but it is also wasting its time for such wonderful patriotism as is now open to it. The average Indian youth of today may be patriotic as to forms, but how rarely is he patriotic as to life, and the outlook for the India of the immediate future will be dark, and the dream-India will remain a dream—unless he is released from his servitude to forms and becomes free in his dedication to India's life.

You see I am constantly harping back to the young people. Perhaps I am even repeating myself. But the India of my dreams must so very largely be an India radiant with the youth spirit both among the old and among the young, both among the old as well as among the young, that I inevitably look to the young India which is young in body as well as virile in soul for India's redemption and thus for the coming true of my eager and impatient dream.

A Real Democracy

What about her political freedom in the dream-land of my conjuring? First a freedom which expresses the truest democracy the world has ever known, a democracy which India has known aforetime and which she must now reveal for her own rebirth and for the giving to the whole world of a real democracy at last. Fortunately, the forms are ready for the expression of this great freedom in the Commonwealth of India Bill formulated by Dr. Besant and a number of her colleagues and actually read a first time in the House of Commons in 1925. It is to be found in convenient form in the third volume of the series of booklets entitled "The Besant Spirit" published by The Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar. This Bill is in my judgment a masterpiece of forms for an effective democracy, for India

in the first place, since it is based on India's ancient democratic principles, and then in modified and adaptable form for the adjustment of democracies throughout the world to the true spirit of democracy which recognizes the place both of aristocracy and even of autocracy in the body politic.

It is upon such a framework that the politicians of today should be ardently working—Congressmen, Muslim League men, Hindu Mahasabha men, and all other men, *and women*, of the various extant political persuasions. Yes, let me say emphatically *and women*, for if my dream of India is to come true, it will largely be through the spirit of the Indian women, who, thanks to their comparative aloofness from western influences and domination, are able to enshrine the Indian soul in far greater purity than the average Indian man.

The Bill may need modification after the lapse of so many years. But its principles are those of my dream-land, and will make that dream-land a real-land if brought into effective operation. For thus will the Government of India be at every stage in the hands of those most fitted to rule at that stage, and everywhere there will be appropriate wisdom allied to appropriate experience. There will be a beautiful blending of democracy, aristocracy and autocracy—an aristocracy of worth and enlightened patriotism, and an autocracy of benevolent and selfless wisdom.

But of course India must become free from all foreign domination. Such domination is intolerable, I say, not only to India, but also to Britain, for Britain herself is dishonoured as she fails to do her duty to India, as she fails not to give India freedom, but to put not one single obstacle in the way of India herself assuming, as she must assume herself, the Crown of her Freedom.

India and Britain Together

But I do not merely envisage in my dream of the India to-be just a free India by herself. My dream is, I think, far

finer than that. It is a dream of India and Britain together in understanding comradeship and equal partnership for mutual enrichment and growth, perhaps with other nations forming a noble Commonwealth of the East and of the West. My dream for India cannot become real save as Britain is included in it. But it must be a Britain with far more imagination and understanding than she seems able to show at present. I believe in Britain as I believe in India. I dream of a splendid Britain as I dream of a splendid India. And my dream of Britain almost seems to impinge upon reality as I see her so wonderful in her heroic and epic fight for Good against evil. But, as I have said, she must discharge her duty to India, or there will be a dangerous offset against her present splendid achievements, upon which I am sure the blessing of our Elders rests.

India and Britain must go hand in hand down the centuries to come. This is the Will of the Rishis. For this our beloved President-Mother worked and fought till her passing. For this she still works in splendid and marvellous ardour. It was her dream, her inspiration. It is, may I humbly say so, my dream, too, and it will come true. But Britain must bestir herself. She must not wait until it is almost too late or she will be unworthy of her great past and her no less great present. The older bureaucrats in India must learn to change with the changing times, or they will indeed be traitors to their own land, Britain, and will reap the evil karma of obstructing the Motherland of the World as she steps towards the foot of her throne among the nations of the world. I have reason to believe that the younger bureaucrats are changing. The older among them must seize their opportunities, and the British people in Britain must rise to theirs. The British Government is unfortunately unimaginative, both towards India and even towards their own affairs at home, as many responsible newspapers in Britain have been recently pointing out. Let them read the writing on the wall: India

must be free without delay, and Britain must remove all obstacles.

An Indo-British Union

Mr. Churchill himself had the imagination to formulate a Franco-British Union, stillborn though circumstances forced it to be. Let him have the imagination today to formulate an Indo-British Union, and let the King-Emperor himself inaugurate it. How much more quickly would part of my dream come true if only such a Union could be brought about between a free India and a free Britain. But, I repeat, Britain must act, and India must become united in a comradeship of her constituent faiths and peoples with one patriotism and one purpose. To the hastening of Britain to her overdue duty the British people must exhort their leaders. To the hastening of India's duty of achieving without delay a great solidarity based upon an agreed Declaration of India's Rights and a Charter of her Liberties, the Indian people ceaselessly must exhort their leaders. So shall the war be quickened into victory, and the victory be quickened into a righteous Peace. So shall India regain her soul. So shall Britain enter upon the beginnings of her greater destiny.

I dream of Britain and India together. And I dream of both within a great Confederation of Nations, a United States of the World. So good is the dream that it must be true and therefore come true, for interdependence is indeed greater than independence, for which there is no precedent even in nature herself.

The Individual and the State

And now there is a part of my dream which is very vivid to me, and, as I think, of immense significance for the future relationship between the individual and the State. It consists in a far more real attachment of the individual to the State and of the State to the individual than exists anywhere

I believe, in the world today. We have yet to learn the truth that the pendulum of unfolding life swings between individuality and universality, and that each gains from an increasingly close association with the other. We have yet to learn of the immense importance of the State to the individual and of the individual to the State. In my dream-land of the India-to-be this importance will be stressed in the following way.

When a citizen is born into the State he will receive at an appropriate time, and at the hands of some distinguished citizen, a baptism into citizenship. There will be a ceremonial reception during the course of which his (or her) name will be entered on the Rolls of the Citizens of the State. The State will declare its obligations to him, and for him his obligations to the State will be declared by his parents and his guardians.

Then about seven years of age the little citizen will proceed a step further and will be inducted into the performance of such service to the State as may be suitable to his age and situation. In its turn the State will recognize the individuality of its little citizen by declaring his freedom, for the very sake of the State itself, to grow in terms of his own stature and individual uniqueness, and of affording him the necessary facilities to this end through an enlightened system of education; always bearing in mind that the spirit of Service must brood over citizen and State alike. This stage will be marked by another simple ceremonial suitable to the understanding of the little citizen.

At fourteen years of age the young citizen will begin the first stage of the assumption of definite duty towards the State and will himself take a suitable promise which the State will accept and help him to fulfil. Here again there will be a short ceremonial during the course of which the attention of the new initiate into the universality to which he belongs by reason of his birth will be called to the greatness of his

Motherland and to those who have been and are its shining lights. From fourteen years of age onwards he will begin to live a definitely dedicated life, but a life full of the spirit of his awakening freedom that he himself may grow into an increasing fullness of individual stature, learning to fulfil himself as the God within him designs, and that he may learn to incline his awakening freedom to the service of his fellow-men.

Then will come the more elaborate ceremonial of his investiture with the full powers of citizenship as he attains his legal majority. As in the olden days the Athenian citizen on attaining his majority took an oath to be worthy of his citizenship and to leave the State the better for his citizenship, so will the Indian citizen of my dream-land offer himself to the State, to India, for her service, and the State will accept his offering and help him in all possible ways to fulfil it happily and efficiently. You will notice that in my dream-land this ceremony comes after the attainment of majority.

Next the civic ceremony of marriage, supplementary to the religious sacrament itself. The State will bless the marriage, and do all in its power to further the helpfulness and happiness and healthiness of the young people, who in due course will doubtless offer a young citizen for inscription upon the Rolls of the State.

So will the young citizens lead their lives individually and civically, until, if karma favours them, they may be privileged to partake of yet another ceremony—the Ceremony of Honour, conferred upon all who have either rendered some outstanding service to the State or who have a long record of honourable faithfulness.

And finally, the Ceremony of Farewell, as the citizen ends his (or her) service to the State on Yama's call.

In my dream-land these links between the individual and India are of the highest significance, and I would that even now a village or town or city could inaugurate within its own

area a series of these ceremonials in order to bind more closely together the individual and his Motherland. But the educational system must be adapted to co-operate with and further the purposes which such ceremonials are designed to achieve.

A Theosophical Conception

Let me conclude this very inadequate disclosure of the India of my dreams by saying how truly Theosophical I regard every part of the dreaming. When I dream as I have been dreaming aloud this morning, I am dreaming of that Brotherhood the recognition of which is the very first purpose of The Theosophical Society and the very essence of the Science of Theosophy. I am dreaming of The Society's second purpose as I conceive of a deep understanding between the members of the great faiths and of the great communities, as I dream of a veritable Fellowship of Faiths, of Truth, in the India-that-is-to-be. I am dreaming of The Society's third purpose as I dream of the India-to-be as a Truth-land, for The Society's third Object is the search for and discovery of Truth, as its motto so rightly indicates—There is no religion higher than Truth.

Thus all the time I am dreaming of India as a Theosophical-land, as a Brahmaidya-land, be the Vidya that of Hinduism, or of Islam, or of Buddhism, or of Christianity, or of any other faith, or philosophy, or science. How well equipped I feel myself to dream of the India-to-be, being a Theosophist and a member of The Theosophical Society. But I feel equipped not only to dream, but to work for the realization of my dream, for Theosophists may be dreamers and visionaries, but they are also for the most part practical dreamers and practical visionaries. They know that the wisdom vouchsafed to them must be consummated in action. They know that their Yoga is the Yoga of Action in this great period of action. They know that they do not really know unless they fulfil

their knowledge in that service-action on which, as I said, the beginning of this talk, the great Lawgiver of India, the Lord Vaivasvata Manu, lays primary stress.

If I dream I must act, or my dream can never come true. If I desire Liberation, Moksha, Heaven for myself, I must spread abroad among my fellow-men such practical benediction in the shape of more freedom and less enslavement in this outer world, more Heaven such as I can fashion for them or help them to fashion for themselves, and less hell. If I desire to know Theosophy, I must spread Theosophy. If I desire to know Truth, I must spread the truth I have. If I desire to have, I must give.

Thus must the India of my dreams become the active purpose of my life.

First of all and foremost, I am a Theosophist, a lover of Brahmagvidya in so far as I am able to understand the sacred Science. But it is because I am a Theosophist that I am able so ardently, might I say so passionately, to dream of the India-to-be and of the practical ways whereby I may help the dream to become true, not true, perhaps, as I have dreamed, for I hardly yet know how to dream, but true, I pray, according to the wisdom of the Saints and the Rishis and the Saviours of India, who ever hold this mighty and sacred land in Their wondrous keeping, and who will lead her to Their destiny for her with the help of those who are wise and helpful, and despite the ignorance of those who dream of a lesser India than the India that shall be.

May the Star of India shine even more and more upon her until she saves herself and thus helps to save the world.