

SELF GOVERNMENT
FOR INDIA

ANNIE BESANT



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Self-Government for India

By

ANNIE BESANT



How long are they to be kept?

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CHENNAI, MADRAS

Self-Government

LET US REASON TOGETHER

The present moment is peculiarly opportune for the discussion of Schemes of Self-Government. In the past, it was necessary to awaken public feeling by urging ideals, by appealing to the greatness of the past, as an inspiration for effort in the present, to create greatness in the future. Impassioned rhetoric was needed to awaken the sleeping, to arouse the indolent, to stimulate the slothful, to inspire with hope the lovers of India who despaired of her future. "India is not dead, she is only sleeping. None can slay her, save her own children: her own sons alone can drive the dagger into their Mother's heart. You alone can be her murderers. Will you kill her by your indifference?" Such were the words spoken by the present writer in 1893, soon after landing at Tuticorin, with the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society in the chair. Tears and cries answered the appeal, and proved the truth that India was not dead. All over the country a similar appeal was voiced, backed by passionate descriptions of the greatness of the past, to stir the sluggish minds of the Indians of the present, supine in easy-going carelessness, and drugged by a false conception of karma,

the most inspiring of all doctrines to encourage effort, when understood as Bhishma understood and taught it, he the master-teacher of Dharma. To the end of a National awakening were the old religions revived, as Sir Valentine Chirol acutely saw. For this were schools and colleges founded and fostered, and the students trained in civic ideals, and inspired with the longing to serve the Motherland. For this the lectures given in the Central Hindu College by the President of the Board of Trustees; and the love and respect for Hinduism, the greatest of living religions, were sedulously taught, and vivified the very atmosphere in which the students lived. For this was boy and girl parentage denounced, and married students excluded gradually from one class after another in the Collegiate school. For this were sub-castes slowly but steadily ignored, and the broad four castes respected—with the warning, however, that they too would have to go, unless they were again made a living power by the restoration of their respective dharmas. For this the Sanatana Dharma Text Books were written and sent all over the country. For this was Foreign Travel encouraged. For this was Swadeshi preached and practised. For this were Indians and Englishmen—the latter carefully selected and chosen, from among Theosophists, after experience with a couple of non-Theosophists, for their love of India—mixed together on equal terms in the C. H. C., mingling in Board, Managing Committee and Staff, in

class-room and playground, the colour difference vanishing in a common love and service. All, all, with one single aim—the awakening of India, the restoration of pride and self-respect, the vivifying of the National consciousness.

THE WORK IS DONE. THE NATION IS AWAKE

We enter the second great stage; it would have been a comparatively long one, the stage of constructive criticism and planning, had it not been that the High Gods sent the great War to shake to its foundations western civilisation, to shatter materialism, to prove the need of spiritual conceptions for the enduring of Nations, to establish the supremacy of Justice, Right and Honour over Tyranny, Might and Broken Faith, to show the East to the West through Japan and India, to prove to the British Empire and the world the value of Indian valour, Indian chivalry, Indian Imperial consciousness. For with the waking of her consciousness as a Nation has come also, inevitably, the waking of her consciousness as part of a Federated Empire, and the sense of her responsibility thereto.

The pause in controversy makes possible and necessary the work of constructive statesmanship. Alas! that for this our strongest voice and ablest brain have left us; but we fortunately know the general lines along which Mr. Gokhale had prepared his scheme for Self-Government. For this second stage we need neither emotion nor rhetoric, but clear

exposition, cogent argument, accurate outlining, full and free discussion, the weighing of each suggestion, the cold clear light of reason. This working out of a scheme of Self-Government, feasible at once but open to the future, is now imperative. Let us betake ourselves to the task.

IS THE PRESENT DEMOCRACY THE BEST?

The first thing to be done by those who desire to bring about Indian Self-Government within a measurable time, and to be ready to suggest a practical scheme for it at the end of the War, is to try to form into a party people who are agreed on certain main principles; to reach this agreement, full and free discussion is imperatively necessary and it is the aim of this paper to provoke such discussion. The discussion should clarify ideas, eliminate defects, introduce improvements, so that, finally, a sufficient number of sensible and thoughtful men may be prepared to join themselves together, in order to work for the embodiment of their scheme in legislation. Nothing less than this will meet the needs of the day.

That Democracy is the Spirit of the Age none will deny, for the signs of its coming are seen on every side. Some may be ready to admit, as is the writer, that the Spirit of the Age is a far-reaching divine thought, indicating the trend of Evolution, and that this trend is, in the widest sense, an expression of the Will of God, of that

Law which moves to Righteousness
Which none at last can turn aside or stay.

For all who think thus, it becomes a duty to seek for the steady current which, beneath all surface eddies and whirlpools, flows onward resistlessly, carrying with it the Human Race. It is our wisdom to seek to discover, to understand, and to co-operate with that forward-going stream, steering our vessel with it, not against it, and re-shaping, if necessary, our own ideas, so as to go with it intelligently and helpfully.

But it does not follow that the way in which Democracy is shaping itself in the West—the “one man one vote” and the counting of heads—is the only form in which the Spirit of Democracy may embody itself. In fact, as we study many of the workings of Democracy among western Nations, they appear to us as warnings rather than as examples, as ways showing us how not to do things, rather than as effective methods. A system which gives a vote of equal weight to a Gladstone and a clodhopper, which sends an empty-headed fop to Parliament rather than a man ripe in years, in knowledge, and in experience; which is influenced more by a glib tongue than by a weighty argument—such a system for making our Rulers surely cannot be the *ne plus ultra* of human genius, devising the perfection of Government?

Is it not possible to have a system in which every one shall have a voice, with a share of the power of

guidance over the things he understands, in which knowledge, experience and high character shall be the credentials for power, and in which the area over which that power extends shall be proportioned to the development of these characteristics in the one who seeks to wield it? May not electorates become smaller, the qualities earning the franchise more developed, as the area over which power is wielded becomes larger, the interests concerned vaster and more interdependent, the problems to be solved more complex and farther-reaching? A man may be able to choose very sensibly a representative competent to deal with the small and simple interests of his village, who would be utterly unable to weigh the merits of two opposing candidates who would have to adjudicate on the conflicting interests of China, Japan, Australia and America; he might not even know that the Pacific washes the shores of all of them; nor how the absence of women emigrants in a Chinese crowd affects the reaction of the Chinese labour on a western civilisation; nor how the struggle of capital and labour is handicapped by a large influx of indentured—i.e., slave—labour; nor how the climate of northern Australia limits the possibilities of its successful cultivation.

A scheme worked out and assented to by the Nation would not sin against the idea of Democracy, if it gave more power to knowledge than to ignorance—provided that education were within the reach of

all—and utilised all available capacities for the general good. It cannot be that the most complex and difficult of Sciences—excepting the Science of the Soul—the Science of Government, should be the only one in which the opinion of the ignorant should weigh as much as the opinion of the learned, that the labour of Government must always be unskilled, that the apprentice shall claim in this alone to do the work of the craftsman, that it shall be the only trade which can be followed equally well by the ignorant and reckless as by the wise and prudent, by the novice as by the experienced. If all around us there are poverty, disease, misery, crime—can ignorance discover their causes, and is selfishness likely to cure them? Surely in this, as in all else, Knowledge is Power.

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

Accepting the general principles laid down above, let us proceed to work them out into detail, applying them to a scheme of Self-Government for India.

We are to give to each a voice, a share of the power of guidance over the things he understands. We must then begin at the bottom, laying our foundation in Universal Suffrage, with the Village in the country and the Ward in the town as our units. In these—the dwelling-places of the masses of the people, of the at present inarticulate toilers, on whom rests the whole fabric of Society, who feed us, clothe us, house us, make our drains, our roads, our railways, with the

patient labour of their industrious hands, their willing muscles—in these, every adult of sound mind and free from crime must have his share of control, his voice in the management of affairs. We may fix the age of majority for the franchise at 21—the Indian age of majority, 18, is a little young. This is not a point of principle. There should, of course, be no distinction of sex, the good guidance of the village, and the comfort and prosperity of the whole, being quite as important to the women as to the men. Moreover, the attention of women to details, their inborn talent for administration, their keen sense of duty, render them particularly apt to play their part in the ruling of the village. Questions of sanitation, of scavengering, of food, of schooling, of village industries, are matters in which their knowledge and their opinions would be most valuable and helpful. Where many of them would fail would be in matters which invoke just dealing as between their men-folk and the men-folk of other families. That sense is, for the most part, as much in the West as in the East, found only among the women who have already mixed a good deal in public life, and are intellectually evolved beyond their fellows.

The village electorate would then be one of Universal Suffrage, and would elect the Village Council.

The duties of the Village Panchayat are being already outlined by the powers assigned to Panchayats in different places. Dewas is experimenting, and

that very successfully, on large lines. Here, in Madras, we have Forest Panchayats and Co-operative Panchayats, and it is proposed to have Irrigation Panchayats. The principle is clear, though different parts of the work may be taken up in different areas, according to their several needs.

The principle is that whatever belongs to the village exclusively should be controlled by the Village Council, while where a village institution is a fragment of a larger whole, the whole should be planned by the Council in the area of whose authority the whole exists, and the village fragment be assigned to it by the higher Council, to whom the Village Council should be responsible for its management of its own fragment. Let us take a school as illustration, and suppose that the educational scheme for the Province should be planned out by the Education Department of the Provincial Government, and sanctioned by the Provincial Parliament; it would include Provincial University or Universities, Colleges, High Schools, Secondary Schools, Primary Schools, each with its manual training institute of similar grade attached to it, and these having divisions for general manual training, and the closer instruction of the workshops for those learning a trade as a means of livelihood. Every village would have its Elementary School, with the workshops needed in that particular village for the trades practised therein; probably there would be a Secondary School in every Firka; at least one High

School in every Taluq, and in most Taluqs more than one; a College, or more, in each District; one or more Universities for the Province. But the Village Panchayat would be responsible only for its own Elementary School, and for seeing that any promising boy or girl should be sent on to the Firka Secondary School. In this the School would be linked on to the larger life beyond the village, but its own control would be only over its own School, seeing that its share of the Provincial education was carried out.

The Panchayat would see to matters of sanitation and hygiene, to wells and irrigation, to roads, lighting and tree-planting, to boundaries and common land, to suits and arbitrations. It would represent the village in the hiring of agricultural machinery and of stud animals; the buying in large quantities and distribution, the collection of grain for storage, the establishment of a co-operative store where useful, of a co-operative credit bank, of a club with reading-room. All that can be done better by the community than by the individual would gradually pass into its hands.

Elections should be annual, and the qualifications for the Pancha should include, if possible—and it would soon be possible—education at least up to the limit of the primary.

Village needs would thus be made known, and if necessary they could be represented by the Panchayat to a higher authority. The village would become articulate through its Panchayat, and would no longer

be the dumb and often driven creature which it is to-day. And it would be brought into touch with the larger life. The Panchayat might invite lecturers, organise discussions, arrange amusements, games, etc. All village life would be lifted to a higher level, widened and enriched by such organisation, and each village, further, forming one of a group of villages, would realise its unity with others, and thus become an organ of the larger corporate life.

There is no reason why this organisation of villages should not at once be begun, preferably by legislation, by means of a comprehensive scheme brought into the Legislative Council. Preferably again, the scheme should be brought in by Government, but if not by Government, then by a non-official member. The creation of Self-Government in the villages is the pressing need, and it lies at the very beginning of all Self-Government for India. We do not want Self-Government by class-conflict, as in the West, but a Self-Government for social well-being by general consent and co-operation. It is the great privilege of Britain to be the Power chosen by Providence to establish Self-Government in India in a form suited to the genius of the Nation. For this, she must take counsel with Indians, and help them to formulate and to carry out the plans of the wisest and most far-seeing. She cannot for ever keep a great people in leading-strings, but she can have the glory of helping them to form a Self-Governing community in her

Federal Empire, the only form of Empire consistent with Democracy. And as she fulfils this high duty, so shall she be judged by God and by posterity.

The corresponding unit in the towns to the Village in the country is the Ward, and the Ward Council, like the Village, should be elected by Universal Suffrage, the electors being over 21 years of age; and these Ward Councils should take up the smaller town matters, now neglected, because the Municipality is too heavily burdened to attend to them properly. The Elementary School in each Ward should be its charge; scavenging and sanitation generally and care for the cleanliness of the streets and latrines; provision and superintendence of stands for hire-vehicles and resting carts, with water-troughs for horses and cattle; the inspection of food-stuffs and prevention of adulteration; arbitration in small disputes as in France—where so much litigation is prevented by the appointment of a small tradesman as a local judge—inspection of workshops, wells, etc. All these matters would naturally fall into the hands of the Ward Councils.

COUNCILS OF THE SECOND GRADE

The Taluq Boards in the country and Municipalities in towns below a certain population should give the second grade of our Local Councils, and the electors here would be the Village and Ward Councils respectively, and all men and women over 25

resident in the area, who had reached a certain standard of education, say matriculation, school-leaving, or equivalent. It would be worth while to consider whether in all elections in which suffrage is not universal, proportional representation should be adopted, so that minorities as well as majorities should be represented, and that in proportion to their strength. Suppose a Taluq Council is to consist of 30 members; it may be divided into 30 electoral areas, each area returning one member, and each elector having one vote; in such case, the 30 members may all represent one school of thought, though each in his own area has a bare majority, and all the 30 minorities remain unrepresented. In proportional representation, voting power is so distributed as to allow the minorities to club together, by grouping the electoral areas, or by allowing a man to vote in any area for any member within the whole electorate. Thus, in a Taluq with its 30 electoral areas, these might be grouped into six areas each returning five members, and each elector would have 5 votes which he may give to one member, or distribute among the five; the minority put up one candidate, or more, if strong enough, and plump for him or them, while the majority scatter their votes. Another way is to give each elector but one vote, allowing him to vote in any one of the 30 electoral areas, so that the minority all vote for a single member, in whatever part of the Taluq they may live. Such a plan is far better for the

representation of minorities than the forming of separate electorates for a favoured class, a method which invariably leads to jealousy and injustice, breeding discontent and unrest.

These Councils of the second grade would control Secondary and High Schools, and would have their model farms in the country and their technical institutes in towns; they would control lighting, water-supply, canals and roads, where this part of the administration may be assigned to them by the District Boards; where Co-operative Societies are not established, they should hold agricultural machinery for hiring to villagers, establish granaries for storage of grain, dairy-farms with stud bulls to be hired to villagers, breeding-stables for horses, and generally they should organise industry wherever individual capitalists or Co-operative Societies are not available. This side of their work, however, will be of late growth, as the people find it to their advantage to act collectively rather than individually.

COUNCILS OF THE THIRD GRADE

The third grade of Councils would be District Boards in the country and Municipalities in towns over a certain population, and here the electors would be the second grade Councils, and all men and women resident in the district or town over the age of 30, and educated up to the Intermediate or other equivalent standard. All the business which concerns the whole

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district or town would be under their control—roads, local railways, colleges—agricultural, industrial, arts, science, etc.—the assignment of the proportion of local taxation to be raised in the subdivisions of the district, and so on.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENTS

The provincial scheme would end in the Provincial Parliament, elected by the Councils of the third grade, and by all men and women over 35, resident in the Province, and educated to the graduate level. The Provincial Parliament would control the Universities within the Province, and all that affects the Province as a whole. The Provincial Government would be a Ministry, responsible to the Parliament, with a Governor appointed by the Crown, as a link with the Empire, for a term of years as now, and representing the Crown, receiving the resignation of a Ministry defeated in Parliament, calling on a leader to form a new Ministry, and so on.

THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

Above all these will be the National Parliament, with control over all National affairs—army, navy, railways, post, customs, etc., and sending representatives to the Imperial Parliament.

It is probable that representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Landlord Associations, Universities, and other large interests may be added to the various Councils, always by election by these bodies, but all

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these matters need to be worked out in discussion. The main point to establish is that whatever the Council, it must consist of elected members only, that all Governing Bodies must draw their authority from and be responsible to the Councils of which they are the Executives; thus only will Self-Government become a reality, and the destinies of India will be in the hands of her own people.

QUALIFICATIONS?

When we consider the qualifications of members, we are, in one sense, on thorny ground, for we have to decide whether this should, or should not, be left wholly to the electorates; should they select their representatives with complete freedom of choice, or should they select them only from among a restricted number of "eligibles". It is easy to say roughly what should be the qualifications of members, but it is a very different thing to say that electors *must* choose men who possess these. We may say that a representative should be a man of high moral character, else he will be likely to use his power for personal objects instead of for the general weal; he should be a man possessing knowledge proportional to the grade of Council to which he seeks election; he should be a man of experience, shown by his work on some lower-grade Council, or other organisation, business or philanthropic, in which he has been before the public eye and has proved his capacity in

administration, his sound judgment, and his knowledge of men. All these are obviously qualifications which men who seek the suffrages of the electors *should* possess. We may also go so far as to say that a man convicted of crime may be deprived of the suffrage and of his right to become a candidate for any Council as a part of his sentence, either for a term after the expiration of the remainder of his sentence, or for life.

But where resides the authority to limit the choice of the electors, all authority being drawn from them? They *can* limit their own freedom of choice; can they do so wisely? Should they create panels, from which they *must* elect? There are certain obvious advantages in doing so, and the disadvantages are less obvious. The greater the necessity for considering them.

Suppose a limit be imposed on the choice of the electors, but that they elect a man outside it? Shall the Council to which he is elected exclude him? But that opens the door to conflicts between the Council and the electorate, and these end but in one way, as witness the attempts of the English House of Commons, the strongest elected Chamber in the world, to exclude John Wilkes and Charles Bradlaugh. In both cases, the House withdrew from its untenable position, and erased the excluding resolutions as destructive of the right of the electors. If there is to be a panel, it must be limited by conditions definable in a Law Court, and these would have to be of property, or of service in some lower-grade Council, or

the like; a Law Court might exclude for crime, it might bar a convict, but it could not lay down a standard of character. This, the most important of all qualifications, could only be defined by negatives—a candidate must *not* be; the real judge of character must be the electorate, in all which is vital in the qualification.

This whole matter is one which should be fully and carefully discussed. We are inclined to think that while there may be disqualifications enforceable by legal process, qualifications must be left to the judgment of the electorates.

COURTS OF JUSTICE

The welfare of a Nation largely depends on the purity and independence of its Courts of Justice. In the United States "justice" is notoriously corrupt, the appointment of Judges resting with the Executive. In Britain they are notoriously clean, being independent of Ministries, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor, and the Courts have stood firm alike against royal aggression and popular prejudice. All Judges in India should be independent of the Executive. The Judges of the High Court are nominally appointed by the Crown, but they are practically subject to the Local Governments. At one time the Local Government would even request the Chief Justice in writing to appoint such and such a Judge to try such and such a case. This was put stop to in Madras by Collins, C.J., who contemptuously flung down such a note in open Court. But

pressure can be put on through a Chief Justice verbally, and we have known of such cases in High Courts; we doubt if, save in Calcutta, a Judge would now be found strong enough to resist such pressure, illegitimate as it is. The result is, as the leader of the criminal bar at Lucknow said the other day in the U. P. Provincial Conference, the confidence of the Indian public in British Justice is beginning to be shaken. The choice of Judges lies practically in the hands of the Provincial Governments; they choose ductile Civilians for temporary appointments, and these men, accustomed to prosecute and convict, careless as to evidence by habit, and guided by their own prejudices and the wishes of the Local Government, of which they have been the servants throughout their official lives, lower the prestige of the High Courts, and undermine the confidence of the public. These men are, for the most part, in due course "confirmed," and thus the appointment of Judges is practically more with the Local Government than with the Crown, the temporary Judge knowing that his permanent appointment rests on the good word of the Local Government. Civilian methods are injurious in High Courts. In Self-Governing India, the independence of Judges must be safeguarded.

WHY INDIA NEEDS SELF-GOVERNMENT

✓ In order to induce people to undertake strenuous and long-continued work against powerful vested interests,

under the most difficult and discouraging conditions, some strong motive is necessary. Some of us may be moved by a love of Liberty, a sense of human dignity, a pride in the Motherland, a longing to see her hold up her head among the Nations of the world. But others of us demand what there is, outside these sentimental grounds, which should lead men to work with self-sacrifice and urgency, for India's Self-Government. How will she be really the better for it? Will she gain intellectually and materially if she wins Self-Government, so that it is really "worth while" to enter into so grave a struggle?

It might be answered that, man for man, the free man is worth more than the thrall. He is stronger, firmer, more self-reliant, more energetic, because he feels independent; as a fact, the inner sense of dignity and self-reliance makes him, in all material affairs, more effective; it is a real asset in a man's value. But quite apart from this increase of the worth of the individual, there are certain definite things which are absolutely necessary for India's welfare, and of these we may take four as examples of many: Education; Industry; Law; Police.

Now the difficulty of the struggle very largely lies in the fact that we have to destroy a mass of vested interests, which the present owners will naturally endeavour to defend at all costs. The Indian Government offer great prizes to highly placed and

able persons, distinguished in English politics. The Indian Civil Service is a huge field for the dignified and profitable employment of innumerable younger sons of the aristocracy, and of the clever examinees from the middle class and lower ranks of English life. The Indian Army offers commissions to ambitious youngsters eager to distinguish themselves, and to take part in a delightfully active life outside their army duties, savouring the coming joys of tiger-shooting, pig-sticking, and big deer-stalking. The Merchant Service, trade, commerce, planting, engineering, mining, etc., give rich openings, always with the advantage of a white skin weighting the scale, loading the dice in their favour. The Educational Service allows a fifth-rate Englishman to lord it over his elders, infinitely superior to himself. Would it be human to give up all this without a struggle, to submit to meet Indians everywhere on equal terms, to be reckoned only in terms of merit and not in terms of colour? All the official classes must be sannyasins in mufti, if they could look at the coming changes with anything but strong disapproval, and the determination to put them off to as distant a date as possible. And what more naturally human than to convince themselves that the reluctance to the giving up of the loaves and fishes is due entirely to the benevolent fear that they will disagree with the Indian stomach, accustomed to a plainer diet, and would thus give rise to National indigestion.

Education is a matter—apart from all questions of Educational Services, of unfair treatment of Indians throughout these, of unjust exaltation of inadequate Englishmen above them—that should be turned to the one end of developing high-minded, unselfish, useful, self-disciplined citizens for the State, ready to serve it in every function of National life. Such education can only be planned out by thoughtful and well-informed Indians, who have, as their sole aim, the training of the good citizen. India's prosperity, India's welfare, the development of her resources, the utilising of her natural treasures, her health, wealth, power, organisation—all these things should shape and guide a truly national education, devised by a Nation for its own ends. Education, as we now have it, is intended to make docile clerks and deferential small administrators, to check initiative and discourage originality, to make useful wheels in the official machinery, not virile citizens. It encourages the second-rate and suspects the first-rate. Moreover it only reaches the few, so that after 80 years of it, its authors sneer at the "insignificant minority" of educated men, and point to the masses who have been left by themselves to live and die in ignorance, as the justification for the continual tutelage of India. In forty years Japan has so educated her people that her average of literacy is better than that of the United States. The ignorance of the masses is one of the reasons of the need of India for Self-Government.

The goodwill of the British in Indian Education may be perfect, but they have failed dismally, tested by results.

Industries—what of them? Self-Government would mean State encouragement of infant industries, assistance in founding new ones and extending old. It would mean the working up of raw materials here, where they are produced, in order to enrich the country, instead of their export, to be returned as finished products to enrich the foreigner. Ground-nuts would be turned into oil, cotton into cloth, sugar would be produced, copra utilised, matches made, bangles turned out, paper and ink manufactured, to say nothing of the revival of the old exquisite hand-industries, ready to perish. Coal and metals would be mined for Indian profit, railways built for Indian enrichment. As manufactures have been fostered in the United States, in Germany and in Japan by their own Governments, so they would be fostered in India, if India had Self-Government.

In Law, Justice would be administered by Judges independent of the Local Government, drawn from the Bar not from the Civil Service, and the judicial and executive functions would be entirely separated. The Police would regard themselves as the servants of the public, not as a force which is the weapon of authority against the people. Thus regarding themselves, they would win trust and confidence, and willing and friendly co-operation would replace suspicion and distrust.

These are some of the reasons why India needs Self-Government.

INDIA A NATION

Here we come, at last, to the bedrock of our claim for Self-Government. India is a Nation, and in Nationhood is included the natural, inherent, inalienable right to Self-Government. No one civilised Nation can permanently keep another civilised Nation in bondage; Egypt is said to have tried it with Israel, but the results were not encouraging, even though the civilisation and the wisdom of Egypt were incomparably higher than those of the Hebrews. The claim of Great Britain to decide when and how far India will be "fit for Self-Government" is a piece of arrogance that would be intolerable, were it not so naïvely unconscious. Let England think what she would feel if, owing to internal dissensions, the Chinese had invaded her, and had conquered her with the help of a large part of her own population. If, thereafter, all the Government of the country were in Chinese hands; if they themselves were deprived of arms; shut out of the higher posts in their own army and navy; not allowed to volunteer in defence of their own coasts; the Prime Minister and all his Cabinet Chinese; the Lord Chancellor a Chinaman; all the higher officers filled by Chinese; all the Education shaped by Chinese; the money raised by taxation used to make strategic railways, while education was starved, and the masses left

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illiterate; examinations to fill posts in England held in China; the taxes on Christians used to pay Buddhist priests and to encourage Buddhist education and Buddhist propaganda; compelled to learn Chinese in order to hold the subordinate offices open to them; looked down upon by the Chinese as an inferior race, and treated as foreigners in their own country. Would *they* be contented? would *they* never aspire towards freedom? would there be no "unrest" in England under such conditions?

"Do Indians feel like that?" a Civilian Judge once asked me, quite surprised. "They feel just like that," I answered. "It never struck me in that way," he replied thoughtfully. And that is so. It never strikes them. They honestly feel that they are ruling India so much better than Indians could rule it. None the less does a Nation prefer being even badly ruled by itself to being well ruled by benevolent foreigners. Moreover, we have above pointed out some advantages of Self-Rule.

O English Nation! Great and free and proud. Cannot you see? Cannot you understand? Cannot you realise that your Indian brothers feel now as you would feel then? That to be a stranger in your own country, an alien in your own land, with no rights save those given by grace of a Government not your own, your inferiority taken for granted, your capacities weighed in alien scales, and measured by the wand of another Nation—you could not bear such a state, such

an outlook. India is patient, as you would not be. She does not want to break the link; she wants to remain part of the Empire; but an equal part, a Self-Governing Community, standing on a level with the Self-Governing Dominions. Is this passionate longing, sedition? Is this ineradicable hope, treason? You dare not say so, you who bred Hampden, and Sidney, and Milton, you whose glory is your Freedom; you who boast of your Empire as an Empire of the Free. Who dared to ask if you were fit for freedom? Charles I asked it. James II asked it. History records the answer that you gave.

Is India fit for Freedom? She claims it as her Right. You will not say her, Nay. She proves her equality in death on the battle-field. Will you refuse it when the peace she has made possible, broods over your homes? Would they have been as safe from the German, if Indian breasts had not formed part of your shield?

What does India want? She wants everything that any other Nation may claim for itself. To be free in India, as the Englishman is free in England. To be governed by her own men, freely elected by herself. To make and break Ministries at her will. To carry arms; to have her own army, her own navy, her own volunteers. To levy her own taxes; to make her own budgets; to educate her own people; to irrigate her own lands; to mine her own ores; to mint her own coin; to be a Sovereign Nation within her

own borders, owning the paramount power of the Imperial Crown, and sending her sons to the Imperial Council. There is nothing to which any man can aspire in his own land from which the Indian must be shut out here.

A large claim, you say. Does the Englishman ask less for himself in England? If yes, what is there strange that an Indian should ask the same for himself in India? What is the radical difference between them which should make an Indian content to be a thrall? It is not the "angle of vision" that needs changing. It is the eye, purified from pride and prejudice, that can see clearly, and the heart, purged from arrogance, that can beat with healthy strokes.

England and India hand-in-hand. Yes, that is our hope, for the world's sake. But that it may be so, Justice must replace inequality; for India can never be at rest, till she is free.

