

**The unification is therefore to the interests of all, and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will**

things incompatible with self-preservation and the integrality of its outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

Another dream, the spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever-increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society. This is still a personal hope and an idea, an ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness the initiative can come from India and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far this hope will be justified depends upon the new and free India.



It gives me great pleasure to extend a special word of felicitation to the *kisans* who till our fields, to the *mazdoors* who toil in our factories and to our gallant *jawans*, airmen and sailors who maintain an unremitting vigil on our frontiers.

## From the Bhavan's President A Great Task Ahead

R. Venkataraman

On the occasion of the fifty-sixth anniversary of our Independence, I extend to all fellow citizens, residing in India and abroad, my fraternal greetings. It gives me great pleasure to extend a special word of felicitation to the *kisans* who till our fields, to the *mazdoors* who toil in our factories and to our gallant *jawans*, airmen and sailors who maintain an unremitting vigil on our frontiers.

I would like to extend my brotherly benediction to the women of India whose faith, fortitude and fine qualities have sustained our civilization through the ages.

Our thoughts turn on this occasion, with gratitude and reverence, to the cherished memory of our freedom fighters who sacrificed their all for the liberation of the motherland. It was 145 years ago, in the magical year of 1857, that the first salvo for freedom was fired. Different parts of India witnessed a succession of liberation movements, which sought to awaken our people from their stupor. Names of some of our outstanding stalwarts come to mind: Veerapandiya Kattabomman and Kittur Rani Chennamma of the South; Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad of the North; Madame Cama, Vasudev Phadke, Dadabhai Naoraji and the Tyabjis of the West; Maniram Datta,

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Gopabandhu Das and Aurobindo Ghose of the East. We remember today the great trio, Lal-Bal-Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, and heroes like the Ali brothers, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das.

We are also reminded on this occasion of the charismatic Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose whose battle cry of 'Dilli Chalo' and *Jai Hind* stirred the whole nation.

Above all, we recall today with affection, respect and infinite gratefulness, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation. It was he who converted the nation's aspirations for emancipation into an irresistible mass movement. It was he who turned thousands upon thousands of ordinary men and women into memorable *satyagrahis*.

But Gandhiji's aim was not the mere replacement of the Union Jack by the Indian Tricolour or the substitution of the white rulers by



Left to Right: Maulana Azad, Dr. Khan Saheb, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Frontier Gandhi), Mahatma Gandhi, Mahadev Desai, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Rajendra Prasad



Dr. Babasaheb  
Ambedkar



Kamaraj

the brown. It went deeper. Gandhiji said once: "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen... I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever."

Poverty, illiteracy, disease and other forms of backwardness such as untouchability and religious obscurantism were perceived by him as oppressive burdens. *Swaraj* with *swadeshi*, self-rule without self-reliance, had no meaning for Gandhiji.

Thanks to the far-sightedness of our beloved first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the vision of leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Maulana Azad and the pragmatism of several Chief Ministers such as Bidhan Roy in Bengal, Govind Ballabh Pant in Uttar Pradesh and Kamaraj in Tamil Nadu, the pre-1947 stagnation gave way to dynamic all round development.

Our greatest achievement lay in the transformation of Indian agriculture. From the position of being a country that had to import foodgrains in the fifties and sixties, we have now reached a position of self-sufficiency in foodgrains and maintain a sizeable buffer stock.

If Indian agriculture constitutes a success story, Indian industry and entrepreneurship have not lagged behind. We rank today among the first fifteen of the industrialized countries of the world. From abject dependence on imports in 1947, we have reached self-reliance not just in host of consumer durables, but in engineering items like heavy machine tools and equipment.

India missed the Industrial Revolution. But we are determined not to miss out on the advantages of the current technological revolution. With the

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third largest reservoir of technical and skilled manpower, India has made great strides in fields like computers, nuclear power plants, oceanography, genetic engineering, biotechnology and space research.

If we have soared the skies we have also climbed measuring scales of more direct human concern. Life expectancy in India has shot up from the pre-Independence figure of 33 years to 68 years. Along with health services, educational facilities have spread impressively. India is not only ahead of other developing countries, but also of countries with twice India's per capita income.

But to be honest to ourselves we must admit that when all our achievements have been listed and our progress applauded, we are still left with a deep sense of inadequacy in the material and moral development of our people as a whole.

One third of the population of India still lives at the subsistence level. The contrast between the rich and the poor, urbanite and villager, educated and illiterate, remains wide. The child in India, the urban street-child and the girl-child in particular, suffers from painful disabilities. The vast mass of our people have remained outside the periphery of our progress.

We must correct this situation urgently. The challenge is of daunting proportions. But it must be met if *Swaraj* is to mean anything to the masses. And it must be met not just by the mechanisms of government but by each one of us doing our duty, whatever be our field, conscientiously and diligently. Of our talents there is no doubt. But do we, as a people, still take that pride in our work which our ancestors-the builders of the Taj Mahal and the Dilwara Temple-did?

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The need of the hour is a reorientation of attitudes to work and to develop a work ethos every one, be he or she an administrator, doctor, nurse, agricultural or industrial worker, trader and so on, takes pride in work and decides to do nothing short of the honest best, our society will be transformed rapidly into a prosperous one. A nation's greatness is not measured by a few exceptional scientists, artists and poets but by the quality of life of its people reflected by parameters like personal safety, clean and wholesome environment, efficient services and amenities of life. These can be provided only when each one discharges his duties, honestly, efficiently and in the spirit of dedication.

Dramatic changes have overtaken the global economy. Controlled economies are fast changing over to competitive regimes and are striving hard to find a foothold in the new dispensation. Developing countries with their backward technologies, poor quality and high cost production are particularly vulnerable to the changing pattern of trade. Unless India gears itself to meet the challenge by improving efficiency and reducing costs, it is sure to be left behind in the competitive world. It may also be necessary to adjust its economic and trade policies in tune with the new pattern of global trade.

In this great task the entrepreneur, laborers, technologists and commercial organisations must pull their weight together in order to carve a place for ourselves in the world trade. I have every confidence that our great nation will rise to the occasion and leave behind for our progeny a legacy of which it shall be proud.

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survival as a civilization, confronts us. *Swaraj* or self-rule must also mean tolerance and self-restraint. If we examine our social condition today, we will find that the air is thick with bitter animosities. Individual and group ego is inflamed beyond recognition and seems set to either give or take offence on any triviality. Majority juxtaposed in confrontation with minorities, migrants with residents, farmers with city-dwellers, tribals with plainspersons, are a negation of nationhood. Unfortunately, people seem to take pride in emphasising the differences and not the commonality amongst them.

Centuries ago Sant Kabir, working at his loom, realized that tolerance was the way of wisdom. He sang: "Hari is in the East Allah is in the West. Look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram; All the men and women of the world are His living forms. Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram."

In our times, Mahatma Gandhi, reminded us: *Isvar Allah Tere Naam* and added the prayer: *Sabko Sanmati De Bhagvan*, 'Grant wisdom and good sense to all, my Lord.'

Let us remind ourselves of the great sacrifices that the freedom fighters made for the liberation of the country. They plunged into the freedom struggle without any hope or expectation of reward. Unfortunately, after Independence the very concept of sacrifice for the sake of the country has disappeared from our lexicon.

The phenomenon of terrorism, which has vitiated life in so many parts of India, continues to escalate. Acting with diabolical sophistication, it hits out at innocent men, women and children who have offended no one. Attacks on public servants are particularly



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reprehensible since these acts of violence hurt those who are only performing their duties. Apart from hurting and killing, the barbaric practice of kidnapping persons has been resorted to by extremists. Let us all resolve to regard these instances, be they in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam or elsewhere, as aberrations from human decency. Our society seems to be degenerating to barbarism and unless the State, with public support, is able to curb all forms of terrorism, we, as a nation will soon forfeit our claim to be the representatives of an ancient culture and civilization.

In this context, I would like to reiterate the suggestion I made earlier that global action to eliminate the scourge of terrorism is urgently called for. An international convention not to give asylum to terrorists and to hand over terrorists to countries where the offence had been committed irrespective of any bilateral extradition treaties between them will go a long way to help curbing terrorism.

The sheet anchor of India's foreign policy is peace and friendship with all nations and particularly its neighbours. We want peace and stability in our region. We rejoice that in different parts of the world dialogue is replacing distrust and consensus is removing confrontation. We hope that these encouraging trends will lead to a world rid of war, desolation and destruction.

Our tricolour flag is the emblem of the nation. Its saffron colour represents the age-old spirit of renunciation, the white a dynamic purity and the green the prosperity of the people. The earlier generation had sacrificed its all in order that this flag of freedom may flutter over our heads. It is the bounden duty of this generation to uphold the honour and dignity of the flag and pass it on to the succeeding generation.