Our Work in the Future

My countrymen, those who have minutely observed with open eyes the agitation started two years ago, must have been convinced that the wonderful force of this agitation, this revolution in ideas, and these extreme changes in behaviour must have the support of some unseen wonderful supernatural and divine force. This movement is not an ordinary one, its regulator and leader is certainly not a human being, and it has the support of the best force in the universe. All the revolutions in the world have been brought about by this wonderful force. Some extraordinary superhuman strength has suddenly become visible in the nation. Those people — a handful of madmen — who started this agitation were insignificant beings. This agitation was not started by very experienced leaders. Now those leaders have had to fall in with the current. Along this current of agitation started by obscure men many a great leader is now being carried. Within the last two years a public awakening which had not been created for centuries has been produced by this agitation. Those who took part in it were not necessarily learned men. They were ordinary men like others. They committed mistakes and blunders, but the wonderful thing is that the progress of the movement, instead of being retarded by these mistakes, went on increasing unimpeded. In short, the full vigour of this movement cannot be comprehended by us poor human creatures. Some ordinary people, by getting up on this wave of awakening, have attained an exalted position and become objects of adoration of the entire nation by means of their earnestness, burning patriotism, unparalleled self-sacrifice and devotion to duty.

The force of this movement was not diminished by the inflamed anger of the other party, by dissensions among ourselves,

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by the slanderings of back-biters, by the treachery of those who reveal the secrets of the house and who are guilty of incest with their Mother. This awakening is shoving away everything that comes in its way like the current of a river that sweeps away everything. Many wonderful religious revolutions have taken place in the different nations of this earth. This is also one of that sort. This revolution is taking place in the political atmosphere. This is the beginning of the political enhancement of a nation. The Indian community, by taking its seat on this current, is proving itself an instrument for the carrying out of God’s wishes and is fulfilling His command naturally. There is no doubt that this commotion in the interior of the community will surely bring about some divine work. This agitation is certainly not propelled by human will. We went to Surat with a particular motive. We went to the Congress in order to propagate our views and doctrines. But there something different happened. The other party assembled there with the same purpose, but they were also disappointed! How can we say that this sudden split has not been brought about by God’s design for the good of the nation? Impossible to fathom are the motives of God and inscrutable is His Lila. Unity is wanted, unity is essential. Is it God’s intention to regenerate the nation by means of this split? Perhaps so, who can say? That a compromise should be effected between the two parties is the desire of all. Who can say what is going to happen in the future?

The work which has to be performed by the Nationalist party hereafter is very formidable. The strength and vitality of our party will be tested today. The strength of our party will be tried now. We ought to ascertain today exactly the nature of the work we have undertaken, our destination, the obstacles and pitfalls in the way, the weaknesses we possess, and the course we should adopt. Our dissensions were merely intellectual discussions till now. We required them to infuse life into the body of the nation,—our strength was limited, and we expended it in our debates. Nobody estimated correctly what strength we, our nation, possessed. None attempted to concentrate this power. Many do not yet believe in the existence of this power
and are not convinced; many people are whisked about; for this reason the two factions have cropped up. May it not be God’s intention to get the work done through our party and through it alone? May it not be God’s desire to find out the extent of our powers? The present time is not for slow progress. It is one of great quickness, extreme briskness and progress. Everyone should rush forward at this moment. Courage is wanted. Daring is required. Boldness is necessary. A writer at the time of the French Revolution said, “There is nothing to be dreaded. Run forward with firm devotion, go on, rush on, push on!” In Germany and Japan there was such a rapid progress. Perhaps our attempts to bring about compromise may prove fruitless. We ought, therefore, to settle on what we have to gain or obtain.

The way of the Moderates, the former devotees of the Congress, was different. They did not intend to change entirely the present arrangement of Government. They did not want to progress. They wanted to make changes in the existing system of government. They did not require courage. But by their method the accomplishment of the object did not take place. It is impossible to obtain your rights. Simple good government cannot allay the thirst for Swarajya. If we were to throw our political responsibility, our political duty upon others, it would be nothing but political death to us. That would be the greatest calamity. Those who care for their safety and comfort ought not to place their feet on our path. We do not want those who spare themselves. How can you procure a kingdom in the possession of foreigners through their kindness? Your interests and theirs are entirely different. Why should those who have give by bits? Government will not give us the true rights of Swarajya even by degrees. It is afraid that if some rights are given, more will be demanded. To say that we shall compel Government to give us our rights is as dangerous as to cherish an ambition for absolute Swarajya. We must adopt whatever remedies other nations of the world adopted to attain Swarajya, having regard to the present conditions. A final goal such as the colonial form of Swarajya is both inconvenient and vague. The effect of the agitation is also partial and indistinct. If the final goal is very high, exalted and
inspiring, then only will the workers be filled with enthusiasm and activity. Hence we ought to have a high ideal before us. We have to travel towards this ideal of absolute Swarajya. We are often ridiculed that a desire for Swarajya is nothing but a dream, a castle in the air, because our community has become weak, sapless, deranged and rickety. Where in our community is that courage which is required for the performance of such a great work, that capacity, that self-sacrifice and those material or spiritual remedies? Some people advise that because the achievement of Swarajya is beyond human strength, we must wait for some centuries and work before we are able to speak of Swarajya; but no nation ever came into prominence by helping a foreign government. Lessons of independence must be learnt only in the school of liberty. If we wait for centuries the weakness of our nation will increase. We cannot afford to wait. If you want to acquire Swarajya, try for it now; otherwise give up the name Swarajya once for all.

The present agitation in India sprang up suddenly in Bengal. It has entirely changed the whole face of Bengal. There is an inspiration created in the heart of everyone by divine prompting. It must be a divine arrangement; otherwise how could such a superhuman work be achieved within two years by the agitation carried on by a few obscure men? Perhaps you may not have examined carefully the agitation in Bengal. It was started by a few people first. People used to regard these originators as madmen. But these very madmen spread Swadeshism, preached boycott and established gymnasiums. This spread the conflagration of the agitation everywhere. The young generation assisted the movement; the whole of Bengal became alive and pricked up its ears. The leaders had no faith in boycott, yet they could not hold their own against the current of public opinion. They joined the boycott movement. Government officers were terrified. They began their repressive policy in order to break the bones of agitation.

Students were the first to bear the brunt of the oppression and it was they who strenuously pushed on the sale of Swadeshi goods. Fines were imposed upon them for this. They were
punished and even were rusticated; but since they did not want to give up their Swadeshi vows, they left the schools. National schools had to be started. They were opened at Rangpur, Dacca and other places. The National Council of Education of Bengal was established. As soon as the necessity was felt, the schools were started without much help or materials. Though there are no funds, no school buildings, no furniture, yet, through the help of the Bengali nation, all these institutions are in a flourishing condition.

People are suffering immense troubles, undergoing imprisonments and whipping. Till now the people regarded the Bengali nation as impotent. The opinion of a certain English gentleman is that the Bengalis are well-versed in education and every individual among them is intellectual and dutiful, but from the political standpoint they are lifeless; they cannot do anything. But since the Swadeshi movement began this condition has changed. The difference between speaking and actually doing has disappeared. All the patriots are, as it were, one person and are moved by the same thoughts. Our younger generation seems to have lost regard for their lives. The example of Maulavi Liakat Hussain is not the only one. There are many such examples. Maulavi Liakat Hussain does not even know Bengali properly. But the endeavours and self-sacrifice made by this brave and noble-minded person are indescribable! There are three prosecutions pending against him at present. He not only accepted with a smile three years’ imprisonment recently inflicted on him, but expressed his obligation to the Magistrate for having afforded him an opportunity to serve his country! He has gone to jail perhaps never to return again. The story of the *Yugantar* newspaper is very wonderful. No sooner was one editor sentenced to one year’s imprisonment than another took his place. The moment the second man was prosecuted and sentenced, a third one came forward and willingly accepted the responsibility of editorship, in spite of the warning of the Magistrate! He was followed by a fourth person and thus the paper was continued. Whenever any editor was punished, his great concern was for the future issue of the paper; he did not think of his wife and children first. In
this way the Yugantar still continues. And so the Bengalis are sacrificing their self-interest and their all in accordance with the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita: “Thy business is with the action only, never with its fruits.”

The Nationalist party in Bengal did not shrink at all. Italy was merely a name before in the geography of the world. It became a mighty nation in the course of twenty years. The same thing is going on in Bengal. The divine splendour of Bengali youths is clearly shining forth. The divine element has manifested itself. As soon as Government removes one, one hundred others take his place. Every Bengali patriot feels inclined to sacrifice his own self for the good of thirty crores of people. This idea ought to spread throughout the country. The misery of the Indian nation must be looked upon as the misery of everyone, and the pleasure of the nation must be regarded by him as his own. One ought to feel pride in bearing pain and anguish. To suffer such pangs is to repay one’s debt to the nation.

Nations do not prosper without self-sacrifice. None should turn back like a woman from repaying his debt to the nation. We do not want laziness, legerdemain or acting. Matured circumspection, limited and carefully adopted remedies will not do; one should rush forth. The self-respect of the nation is our religion, self-sacrifice is our only action or duty. We ought to give proper scope for the divine qualities in us to shine forth. Trifling emotions ought to be given up. Do not be afraid even if you are required to die. Do not retreat; bear pain for the sake of the nation. God is your support. If you do this, the Indian nation will, in an instant, get back its former splendour and glory. It will take its place at the side of the independent nations of the world; it will educate other nations; it will shed the lustre of true knowledge, and it will inculcate the principles of Vedanta. Our nation will come forward to benefit the human race and the whole world. Before it the whole world will tremble! But when? Only when we all are prepared to repay our debt to the nation.