Hind Swaraj

Chapter I

* Rising demand for Home Rule, role of the press and public mood.
* Young India vs Indian National Congress.
* Role of seniors – Allan Octavian Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Badruddin Tyabji, Sir William Wedderburn.
* Impatient reader and patient Editor.
* Reader’s frustration with Gokhale’s admiration for the British.
* Editor’s personalized targets to make the reader realize the limitations of the views the latter holds.
* Equating senior political leaders as parents.
* However, they can be questioned and assessed.
* Differences of opinion between Extremists and Moderates.
* Need to balance feelings, sentiments and opinions by remaining flexible.
* Issue based admiration and respect for the British; complete and total hatred would be self-defeating.
* Role of the Congress in fostering the nascent feelings of nationalism, desire for Home Rule, contesting groups that Gandhi responds to.

Chapter II & III

* Real political awakening gradually emerged after partition of Bengal in 1905
* Sarcastic take on Curzon, initial negotiations of the people in Bengal failed since Curzon stuck to his gun.
* Curzon basically insulted the people.
* Partition of Bengal impacted the Empire significantly as there was a division therein.
* Demand for the abrogation of Partition tantamount to demand for Home Rule.
* Political and psychological impact of the partition on the Indians and British.
* The need for the Moderates and Extremists to get into a dialogue.
* Partition caused a restlessness in the country but yet the people are not decidedly oriented towards the specific goal – analogical comparisons.
* Discontent and unrest.

Chapter IV

* Reader and editor having different views on the idea & spirit of Swaraj
* All Indians want swaraj but unaware of what it means in actuality.
* Questions regarding why the British should be driven out.
* Differences with the revolutionaries and extremists with regard to the idea of swaraj.
* Scope of swaraj is the main issue here rather than specific spheres of applicability – political, administrative, disciplinary, etc.
* Discriminatory attitude of the British – counter question and answers.
* Reader’s desire for British system but without the British, importing the British institutions, and the editor’s objection.

Chapter V

* Undesirability of the British Government to be copied by Indians – Editor compares the British Parliament with a sterile woman and a prostitute; British Parliament on not doing anything worthwhile on its own accord; Without outside pressure it cannot do anything; furthermore, it is under different leaderships at different times; Criticism incurred due to the usage of harsh and insensitive words; the Reader’s opinion stating the need of public pressure under which the Parliament is supposed to work.
* Positive aspects of the Parliament: principle of public service and will; members being unpaid or non-salaried; educated electorates; system expected to function smoothly; in reality, the situation is opposite – fear and petty self-serving interests constitute the work principle; compromises, compulsions and moral losses – a true Christian not being able to become a member; non-involvement of members at times; tendency for speakers to go on talking; Carlyle calling it ‘the talking-shop of the world’; another says the Parliament to be a baby; editor’s frustration.
* The expected role and function of the prime Minister – welfare of the parliament; but in reality, the Party’s interests are more important.
* The ideas and principles, posts and designations are not to be held responsible but the people in power and positions of authority are to be blamed.
* Reader wants to know about the British people and the government – editor responds with the relative importance of newspapers; comments and remarks them to be mostly dishonest; different interpretations based on the editorial policy and the government in power; raises the question as to what might be the true nature of the people with such newspapers; quick change of views almost every seven years; views reportedly swing like a pendulum and aren’t steadfast; tendency to follow a leader with oratorial skills, throwing parties and receptions; people extremely sensitive to the country and nation – may pluck out eyes of those who cast evil eyes on their nation; conclusion: if India copies Britain, it would be ruined.
* No specific fault of the people but modern civilization has led to degradation and ruin of European countries on a regular basis.

Chapter VI

* Civilization – problematic of the nomenclature; societies & organizations emerging to address the afflictions of the industrial civilization’; criticisms of the times being unpopular and unavailable mostly.
* Justification & defence of the system more readily available than criticisms.
* Yardsticks of modern civilization – anthropological advancements, material comforts, technological progress, transport & communications; knowledge production, physical strenuous involvements reduced; changing habits – individual choices, social lives, irreligiosity and morality on the wane; conditions of working women.
* Satanic civilization as per Islam, Kaliyuga/ Kalyug/ as per Hinduism; Dark Age; it is bound to perish.
* Parliaments are ineffective against such problems and have themselves become emblems of slavery; British deserve sympathy; they are ‘shrewd’ as nation and therefore will remain resilient; heaps praises on the British for being hard working, industrious, enterprising and inherently immoral; civilization at a stage of passing through a crisis; it is like a disease that can be cured.

Chapter VII

* Reader’s query regarding: how British have conquered India and are able to maintain their hold over it in spite of the afflictions.
* Editor’s response: The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them.
* Interrogative tone of the editor: Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods?
* Affirmative tone: History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once, we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them.
* Further elaborates the infighting and divisive politics between the local rulers, communal discord, and blames the Indians for handing over the country to foreign powers.
* Commercial interests have kept the British in India from which both draw benefits.
* Once the benefits dry up, the British would leave.

Chapter VIII

* Dramatic, melodramatic and sentimental approach towards India’s situation.
* Becoming irreligious, turning away from God and Faith.
* The binary of hard-working British and the lazy Indians; acceptance of this binary structural perception and therefore imitation of the Western powers.
* Editor’s acceptance of humbug in official matters pertaining to religion, spiritualism, theology and theosophy.
* Problem of civilization much more serious than communalism.
* Opposition towards secularism; disregarding religion is not a solution.
* British imposition of peace and normalcy by disciplining Bhils, pindaris, thugs, Assamese – the last infused criticism to which Gandhi later apologized.

Chapter IX

* Reader’s loss of peace over conditions in India; so far these were surrounding religion and social life; focus shifts to economic conditions – dejected tone, inherent disappointment in the Reader and Editor.
* Assessment of poverty following the critiques of Naoroji and R. C. Dutt; Railways vs Irrigation; Editor vehemently opposed to modernity - Railways, lawyers and doctors have impoverished the country, so much so that, if we do not wake up in time, we shall be ruined; Disagreement between Editor and Reader ensues.
* According to the editor, Doctors promote consumption as a habit or way of life; Comparison of Civilization with Disease – modernity is a curable disease.
* Editor’s elaborations on how railways adversely affecting India – spreading of contagious diseases, plagues, locomotion and mobility among all sorts of people; Reader’s assessment of the argument to be one sided; Editor’s defense – comparison between travelling of good vis-à-vis evil.
* Reader’s understanding of Railways promoting and disseminating seeds of nationalism; Editor’s counter-argument; A different nationalism steeped in a certain way of life, habits, ethics, social and moral codes, religion and spirituality.
* Reader’s questions regarding religious differences and communal discord.

Chapter X

* Undoing of God’s will and wishes by engaging in travelling and locomotion.
* India as a nation has the assimilative powers to accommodate those who are coming from outside.
* Merging and immersive cultures of living.
* Privileging nationality over religion.
* One nation-one religion not synonymous in rest of the world.
* Enmity between members belonging to Islam and Hinduism: editor questions the validity of the relational word and argues that it is a result of the ploys devised by the common enemy, i.e. the British.
* Flourishing of members from both faiths under different regimes.
* Unity in blood, ancestral figures.
* Unity in Faith, Spiritualism; the only difference is in the paths to attain the ultimate.
* Knowledge acquisition would lead to realizations that there is no need to fight with members belonging to different religious groups.
* Cow protection: Reverence towards the cow as a symbol of the agriculture-based country that India is; does not elevate cow compared to human beings; too much of insistence on cow protection has resulted in cow killings; subsequent questions on ill-treatment of cows by Hindus.
* Ahimsa and duties.
* Selfish religious teachers and the British anthropological and cultural explorations.
* Mutual likeability and appealability of both Holy Quran and Bhagwad Gita.
* Discarding of interpreters in understanding core essence and teachings of religion by individuals and self-study.
* Unity among Hindus and Muslims and warding off the British.

Editor doesn’t suggest that the people will never fight among themselves but rather calls for a condition where they will sort out their matters on their own.

Chapter XI

* Editor opines on the modern professional classes – lawyers.
* Has a negative view on the lawyers – enslaved India, stoke communal tension and have

confirmed by acceding to British authority.

* Reader’s challenge to these views citing instances of legal activism, utility in the nationalist

struggle.

* Editor admits that there are exceptional individuals who engage in good acts but the

profession is marred by immoral tendencies.

* Greed for money, partiality and laziness characterize lawyers according to the editor.
* Argues for a ‘socialist’ principle governing law and legal adjudication.
* Opines that the modern legal apparatus and practice facilitated the colonial rulers.

Chapter XII

* Non-originality of thoughts, perceptions and opinions on the modern professional classes,
* especially, the lawyers and doctors.
* Western writers have also shared similar mindsets.
* Immorality and irreligiousness dominant in these professions.
* Medical profession utilized by the British to subjugate the Indians by gaining legitimacy from

the ruling elite class.

* Gandhi himself used to be an admirer of the profession once and thought of becoming a

doctor.

* Intervention of doctors is interpreted as a reason for continuity of ill-health.
* Hospitals propagate sin institutionally – experiments, vivisection, collateral damage,

exclusion of spiritual and mental health from the discourse on health, usage of some

religious unsanctioned materials in the experimental substances, profession clouded by

material concerns and objectives, loss of self-control and powerlessness.

* Significant criticism – Gandhi stuck to his opinion and was ready only to make changes in the

language.

* Doctors show off their knowledge and cheat patients by charging exorbitantly high fees;

people allow themselves to be cheated.

* Ends with a question: aren’t quacks therefore better than qualified professionals?

Chapter XIII

* Editor’s denouncement of railways, lawyers, doctors – reader’s frustration laden question.
* India’s strong civilizational foundation – entrenchment of artha, kama within dharma.
* Keeping social rituals, habits, customs intact.
* Non-aspirational life where one can avoid unnecessary competition.
* Suitability of village life over urbane life conditions.
* Ethical way of life predominant at the face of sovereign power.
* Peace in areas that are untouched by modernity.
* Need to eradicate social evils which cannot continue in practice in the name of civilization.

Chapter XIV

* Editor calls for the removal of India’s slavery in order to become free.
* Gradual settlement of the editor’s thoughts and opinions.
* Analogy to the pathological conditions.
* India’s slavery is not universally present across the country – the ill-effects of modern civilization have to be recognized and freed from the daily lives.
* These have grasped the western countries as well.
* However, India is resilient as a civilization and possibly it will be able to tide over the crisis.
* The concept of Swaraj has to be internalized at personal-individual realms of life.
* If the British gets Indianized then India can accommodate them, otherwise not.
* Analogy of keeping one’s own house intact – those who can fit shall stay while others will leave.
* Immateriality of any such precedence in historical terms.
* Physical removal or driving away of the British seems the only option to the reader at this point and provides example of Italian political development.

Chapter XV

* Discussions start with the role of Mazzini and Garibaldi.
* History of Italy and Austria – Italian unification and coming out of Austria’s control.
* The form of politics is crucial – Mazzini (self-regeneration) while Garibaldi (armed resistance).
* Change of rule/governance at the top/leadership is not the same as change within given geo-political space – a distinction on the basis of the ruler/government vis-à-vis the people/citizen.
* Editor attempts to impress on the reader the necessity to address the concerns of people rather than the elite leadership.
* Model for mass-based politics.
* Condition of people under Indian local rulers, princes and kings.
* Desire to avoid similar political structural conditions where people are trampled over by Indian rulers after the British subjugation ends.
* Inadequate militarization and lack of arms-ammunition among Indians.
* Europeanization of Indians – moral degradation.
* Reader’s intention of armed guerrilla warfare that will need sacrifice.
* Editor’s reference to Dhingra’s act – patriot but blind love.
* Need to conquer fear in the long run as the concessions made by the British out of fear would be unsustainable in the long run.

Chapter XVI

* 'The Proclamation of 1857': Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858 – “We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations, by the blessings of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil . . . And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge”.
* Gandhi’s interpretation of the Proclamation as enunciating a principle of political equality between Indians and Britons, an interpretation that colonial administrators in later decades did not accept - to Gandhi's great disillusionment. The second point is Gandhi's appreciation of Queen Victoria's personal involvement in the drafting of the Proclamation. He had reported in Indian Opinion that the Queen was not satisfied with the first draft submitted to her, considering it to be 'too tame, and not in keeping with the events that had taken place in India in connection with the Mutiny', and that she had asked Lord Derby, the prime minister, to redraft it, 'laying stress upon the fact that it was a female Sovereign speaking9 (CW 3: 432, emphasis added). She had insisted that the document should 'breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious toleration, and point to the privileges which the Indian will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown ...' {CW 5: 326).
* Perception of Permanence by reader – declared policies and programs understood as provided, irredeemable; challenged by the editor – analogy of cessation of stealing and recommencing it once fear vanishes.
* Reader’s different opinions are articulated along with challenging questions before the editor – achieving the end/goal is primary; the means do not matter to the reader.
* Use of brute force by the British to achieve changes in the electoral system (Reform Act of 1832) – reader agrees with the principle but editor disagrees with that.
* Analogies given by the Editor – crossing the sea using bullock cart, worshipping God and Satan, acquisition of watch.
* Editor brings forth the notion of ‘right’ and ‘duty’ in this discussion – questions whether the British could cultivate their sense of duty as a result of the reforms in the electoral system as demanded by them perceiving them as a matter of right? Gandhi’s idea of right is in contrast to that of modern conception of right; his idea of right is strongly based in the framework of duty – real rights should be based on Satya and dharma.
* Editor’s view of means illustrated by the question of behaviour towards a thief – different behaviour is exhibited depending on the thief’s identity.
* Tackling of the thief – one mean: desperation for revenge leading to an overall crisis; analogy of the myth of Scylla and Charybdis; second mean: destroy the motivation behind stealing.
* A number of possible outcomes: non-violence and perseverance might be able to generate more positive results where the thief gives up the profession and settles into some other ‘honourable’ occupation.
* Editor on the significance of petitions and petitioning: educative; warning sign for the individual/body questioned; sign of courtesy, slavery; language determiner: aggression and passive resistance – “We will hurt you if you do not give this” and “If you do not concede our demand, we will be no longer your petitioners. You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed; we shall no longer have any dealings with you.”
* Passive Resistance: pratyupaya (counter-measure), kashtadhin prativartan (resistance through submission to hardship), dridha pratipaksha (firmness in resistance), sadagraha (firmness in a good cause).
* Analogy: child stepping into fire; what is the fire? Who is the child? – practical questions raised by the editor.

Chapter XVII

* The chapter starts in the context of truth-force and soul-force – ideas already laid down by Gandhi / Editor in the previous chapter.
* We see the Reader asking the Editor if historically any country has been able to motivate itself and rise in response to a colonial government.
* What we see here is the question on effective functionality of both truth-force and soul-force.
* The Reader proceeds to put forward a reply as well to the question – “No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evildoers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment” – the main issue, that of engaging and negotiating with colonial power quickly meanders towards a disciplinary and punitive focus.
* The Editor begins his response by invoking the absolute necessity (imperative)for pity and mercy (Daya) in religious discourse while egotism (conceit and vanity) constitutes the fundamental basis for bodily or physical existence - refer to the footnotes here; one finds interpolation in the thoughts and words of Gandhi.
* Editor/Gandhi opines that since daya or pity and mercy is a scientific truth, it should not be sacrificed during one’s lifetime; operative force in the universe – textual usage of real-life vernacular expressions in English; editor feels historical evidence requires an understanding of ‘history’ or ‘what is history’.
* Editor/Gandhi lays out the core essence of ‘history’ in Gujarati – ‘it so happened’; thus the perception of ‘history’ is somewhat based on any event or occurrence; it is different from the Western understanding of ‘history’ which hinges on stories or narratives of the ruling class and hence the focus on history constituting the stories of battles and wars; usage of English proverb (a nation that hasn’t witnessed any war, therefore a nation without a history, is a happy nation) finds relevance here. It is contested by the Editor.
* It is not the war that constitutes history but that the elements of peace, love and harmony go into the making of history. The editor gives the example of Australia where he argues the absence of soul-force ensured defeat of the original inhabitants of Australia in the hands of the colonizers.
* The universality of soul-force in individuals, familial institution, societies and nations as the core component of our civilization.
* The disagreements sometimes leading to conflicts and wars thus make up aberration rather than a normative discourse.
* Thus, according to the editor, history does not comprise macro events but rather the usual order provided by peace and love. It is an essentialist argument.

What is Passive Resistance

* “Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms”. The concept and practise of soul-force is attached to passive resistance; it involves elements of self-sacrifice.
* If someone feels or thinks that a certain act/event/practice is incorrect/wrong, then that person has to oppose it, disobey that and as a corollary face the consequences for the convictions and stands.
* Selective suffering as majority who do not identify or are not able to relate to a cause remains unaffected.
* Reader’s question regarding passive resistance taking few steps more than the revolutionary agents belonging to extremist group in the Congress; articulates the belief that if a law is passed by a government or establishment which is not liked by the people, then they should strive towards driving that government or establishment out; this argument is sustainable in a colonial situation; the notion of India being a law-abiding nation.
* Editor’s response: “The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters. When we do not like certain laws, we do not break the heads of law-givers, but we suffer and do not submit to the laws”; opposes the reader’s claim regarding India’s law-abiding nature, connects manhood (masculinity) and dharma to disobedience and opines that undesirable obedience amounts to slavery; the conquering and transcending of fear; abolition of fear and slavery essential conditions in order to become a passive resister – an agent of passive resistance; effective social transformation through reforms achieved only by sustained struggle of a passive resister; unnecessary obedience is a superstition that only a passive resister can unshackle; using brute-force counter-productive; psychologically analyses usage of force and finally concludes that passive resistance IS the only way to demand Home Rule.
* Reader’s question whether the mechanism and usage of passive resistance has a class angle to it to which Editor responds in a somewhat aggrieved tone; aggressive tonal behaviour and strongly criticizes the extremists; the written prose reflect elements of orality and passionate speech against the reader’s criticisms and queries; dramatic articulations – “… man is free like the king of the forest, and his very glance withers the enemy”, primary requirements for passive resistance – control over mind, fearlessness and manhood; however, physical strength and gender are not barriers to practising passive resistance; martial prowess is not necessary to engage in passive resistance.
* Reader’s query or a challenge regarding the historical usage of canons in India: Editor shifts the course of discussion on a different issue – ownership of these arms and ammunition, questions the constitutive idea of India that the reader harbours and accounts his own idea of the element that constitutes India, i.e. the masses, discusses their political spirit and philosophy; analogy of means and forms of political demonstration (dharna and others); apparently, Gandhi was against the form of sit-in / dharna as that inconvenienced others.
* Discussion shifts towards utility of physical exercises and training.
* Reader’s query as to how one can become a passive resister; Editor responds that “After a great deal of experience, it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for the service of the country have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness”.
* Elaboration of the above-mentioned qualities or attributes.

Chapter XVIII

* Focus on education – Hitherto absent through the course of verbal exchange between the Reader and Editor; the absence and reader’s preliminary impression of the editor as having very different views on education and pedagogy leads the former to comment “Is all… no use?”; Reader here enquires of the Editor whether the latter supports the trend of making primary education compulsory across the states and provinces of India; that needs the Editor to talk at length and express the views on education.
* Assumption of Indian civilization to be the highest; extols the efforts but is sceptical of the results; a slight deviation from the principle of not bothering about results/outcomes; the outcome of modern-western-institutional education system is different from the earlier practices.
* Knowledge of letters has done more harm than good as per editor’s argument; education/knowledge breeds discontent – harped upon by editor; concludes that the western education started without adequate measuring of the pros and cons.
* Introspects on his education (specific case study) and provides Huxley’s definition of education.
* Opines that elementary education or higher education is not required for “the main thing”; it does not make of us men – seems like what he means is human beings; it does not enable us to do our duty – doesn’t provide them with moral sense regarding duties and responsibilities.
* Pertinent question put by the reader; whether lack of modern western institutional education could result in the editor’s present occupation; editor’s clarification; ethical and moral education primary base upon which institutional education rests; primary education consists of character and moral development not learning of languages, arithmetic, etc.
* Question on the need of English education and training for the demand of Home Rule; Editor’s suggestive argument regarding the role and relevance of vernaculars in India; issue belonging to the domain of education is cleverly transported or translated into the domain of language-politics here; language and cultural preservation; ultimate aim is to learn and differentiate & strategize on what’s to be used and how, and what is to be ignored.
* Envisages significant efforts at translation; seeds of language policy – fostering national spirit of unity – linguistic reorganization of states and provinces.
* Views on religious and ethical education: Calls for a democratization of the religious scriptures and their interpretations; religious education, i.e. knowledge and learning from religious texts also have to be freed from the control of certain individuals and collectives; supremacy and primacy of ethical-moral education on which modern western institutional education is firmly entrenched.
* Ultimate aim: to drive out modern western civilization – especially the adversities born of it.

Chapter XIX – Machinery

* A melodramatic beginning of the chapter
* Recurrent motifs of crying, bleeding, sickening feelings.
* Evokes and alludes to the argument made by the “Drain of Wealth” theory.
* Industrialization going to adversely affect India in every aspect of everyday life.
* Revelation of his understanding that some sections of Indians are attached to the establishment started by the British; their interests are entwined with the system.
* Pleads not to build new looms, harps on going back to earlier form of living and usage of material goods.
* Modern day transport should be done away with.
* Invokes the ‘poison destroys poison’ concept when asked about print machinery and technology.

Chapter XX – Conclusion

* Establishes Gandhi’s position – autonomous, neither moderate nor extremist.
* Rules out a third party / perspective, considers everyone to be united with a common goal, and accepts the prevailing differences in thoughts and ideas among every major personality.
* Sees himself more as a person who is providing a service rather than engaging in real political activism; post 1947 Gandhi’s absence in crucial political decisions; doesn’t assume any authoritative post.
* Messages to the two groups within the INC.
* Message for the British.
* The nation and its constituents along with their roles and responsibilities.