

OPINION

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THE REAL RESPONSIBILITY

SHORTLY after the last general election results, on the 15th January 1980, *Opinion* wrote:

"What, fellow-citizens, is Indira Gandhi ?

Since no one—not even the expert who toyed after the election with the idea of installing her as Empress—has suggested that there has been any change in her, she remains what she was.

And so she is primarily :

An arrant, inveterate liar ;
A most unscrupulous person ;
An inordinate lover of power ;
An inordinate lover of her son Sanjay ;
A complete acceptor in regard to herself
of the Satanist principle "Do what You will
is the Whole Law" ;
A most plausible manoeuvrer.

This is the personage you have chosen, fellow-citizens, to be Prime Minister for the next five years, and you have given her so large an obsequious and pliant majority that she can quite easily alter the Constitution as she likes, giving the Executive (herself) supreme power, reducing the Legislature and the Judiciary to the position of bond servitors.

The head of a government with the character described above cannot really function except through a collection of unsavoury myrmidons, ready to take on tasks which generally could not face the light of day. These individuals increase many times over the normal intrigue, back-biting, tale-carrying that appertain to any court. They have in addition their clients to attend to, their own special patrons to serve, so that their influence in the working of government begins to be felt more and more, and almost always for the worse. Corruption, nepotism, favouritism, endemic with such head, widen in high quarters to epidemic breadth, and attract a good deal of attention after a time. You may of course learn to live with this condition, even in fact, depending on your moral make-up, to benefit from it. In which case, you will probably make yourself believe 'Oh, she knows nothing of all this, she is of course far, far above it', giving yourself a spotless idol to worship at least from afar."

It is not therefore very surprising that in the furore that has rightly been aroused over the Antulay trusts, the principal person responsible has been allowed to remain in the background. Who is this person? Why clearly the Prime Minister. Antulay or any other Chief Minister of Congress (I) majority states is just her creature. A word of hers makes them and a word unmakes them. It is therefore hardly probable that any of them would take any important action without her approval, explicit or implicit. Her responsibility is thus central. By all means, let the vials of your wrath be broken on Antulay's head, but keep some of the largest and most powerful ones for hers. She was the principal, he the agent. Realise that it is Satan who is responsible for evil, though Belial, Beelzebub and Mammon do a good deal of his dirty work, and are rightly abused for it. Why sometimes, it is said, his worshippers and disciples even complain to him against these minor malpresences and pray for redress, when in their heart of hearts they know the truth that the real guilt is his.

The same phenomenon seems to occur amongst ordinary citizens and even courageous writers. They feel embarrassed about attacking the highest outrightly, openly. Somehow it just seems not altogether civilised. So they go for the agent whole-heartedly and make side references to the principal, whereas in reality if things are to improve, it is he or she who must be removed from the central position or indeed any position of power. Formidable misgovernment and maladministration in India today is quite understandable. How can there be anything else with the individual characterised in the first paragraph in supreme, almost absolute, charge? Her choice cannot be for the right or the good. It has always to be for that which for her purpose, maintaining and increasing her power, is most suitable. People of India, remember that. Away with Indira is the first step to decent, orderly, democratic government. Having taken that, the attainment of such government will still depend on your wisdom and commonsense and your regard for integrity. The grace of Providence be with you!

* * *

"Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea,
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind,
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship run on her side so low
That she drinks water and her keel ploughs air.
There is no danger to a man that knows
What life and death is; there's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law."

* * *

"When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
Let us, said He, pour on him all we can;
Let the world's riches which dispersed lie
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should, said He,
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gift instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

* * * *

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