



DR SHOBHA RAJU

“Pandra Augusta?”

Is it August 15?

It was in 1990 I think. We used to live in Nallakunta. There was a weird situation. May be a political one. At nights we used to hear people shouting out for help to save them from goons. Everyone was horrified during that time. Intimidating rumors were heard. One of those days, some rumors spread that there was a group of goons coming who were killing people whomever they catch. There was a great commotion. People were running hither & thither. I was in my student's house for dinner and I remember her husband commenting “Emitandi ee araachakamu?!” (What's this disorderliness?) My husband said, “Anta perugannam itcheyandi. Chaalu. Praanaalato il-lujerukunte....”. (Pls give us just a little curd rice. Enough. If we could reach home alive....).

As we were rushing back to our home via Shankar Mutt, we met our

maid, Lakshamma. She was also getting back to our home after buying veggies. Apparently she was confused. “Endamma gidi? Pandra Augusta?” (What's this Amma? Is it August 15?), she asked me referring to the commotion. I burst out into laughter even in such situation much to the annoyance of my husband.

“Pandra August” in our servant maid's understanding is a massive commotion.

My father narrated an incident of his childhood. As a child of six years he walked all the way to Madanapalle, twenty KMs from our village, to see Gandhiji, who were to address a public gathering. By the time my father reached, the meeting was over and people were dispersing. There was stampede it seems causing the dust to rise. Little my father thought that the stampede and rise of dust was called “Gandhi”.

O key. Lakshamma was

uneducated. My father then was a kid. Are educated adults any better? Yes, better to the extent of identifying “Pandra August” as a date concerned to flag hoisting and Gandhiji as a man who was a leader.

I asked one of our staff to sing National Anthem. “Jana mana badi bayaka jayge barata baja vitaata”, he sang. One of the funniest moments I had in my life. But the fun was mixed with a kind of concern. Concern because there are Indian adults who do not know National Anthem. Not knowing is absurd. But distorting the words with meaningless sounds? I don't find words to call it. What is the future of Bharat with youth not knowing National Anthem? What will unite them as Indian?!

We jealousy our neighbor because he has an Audi car. But our superficial mind tells us that we don't like him because he is egoistic. Our class mate getting rank in tenth standard creates

stink in our minds. Our mind tells us comfortably that we don't like her because she is a proud peacock. We don't like our parents saying they are bothering because they ask us to be orderly. We don't like our teacher because she imposes certain discipline. We are not in talking terms with our sister because she claimed her right of property. We don't like our colleague because he got promotion. We don't like our boss because he always questions my coming late to

the office. We hate our office assistant for he is not our community. We don't like our spouse because she/he is nagging. We dispense with anyone however much help they could have done for us, if it comes to the question of our selfishness.

We don't like anyone. We are not grateful to anyone. But we shout "Jai Hind". We don't love anyone. But shout "Govinda" loudly at Tirupati. What is a country? Is it not a people comprising the sort we have been

hating out of jealousy? Whom are we loving when we say "I love India"? Just the tiny map of India? Who is God? We worship Him in stone and hate in human? If it is so, our patriotism is called hysteria. Our devotion is called fanaticism. Like the people get a kind of hysteric pleasure supporting one's own group and grudging the opposite during cock fighting, we say "Jai Bharat" against China.

We don't think of the sacrifice... true sacrifice, our leaders of yester years made for bringing independence to us. Our gratitude confines to a handful of flowers offered mechanically at a leader's grave at the most.

Media has advanced very much. This advancement would have given us the privilege of knowing the truth in all its bareness. But unfortunately truth is twisted as bread dough. Everyone dresses up truth with one's own choices, preferences and conveniences holding one's selfishness as the priority.

To realize the hardship faced by our leaders for our independence, it requires to place ourselves in their times and be in their shoes. When we can feel their struggle, then only true gratitude flows. Let not Independence Day become dry, feeling it as yet another day for fancy dress, yet another occasion to lecture with big words, yet another opportunity to sing and dance and be in lime light.

Let's dust our hearts and bond with love. Let's all have true vision of Truth and do anything and everything to get that vision. When we salute the flag, at heart, let's all say "I love you all" to people, not just to the try color piece of cloth. Let's love... Let's live!

Happy Independence Day!

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