

**For 15Aug2023 Weekly Meet**  
**Summary of 08Aug2023 discussions**

I have tried to collect for everyone what I understood from all the points made by anyone, irrespective of which point was made when. Some of them are obviously made in response to what someone else said.

Girish

Sunil:

Gandhi's note makes a novel point: Swaraj is a law of nature. Gandhi should elaborate further on this, write more on it. Just as Schumacher talks of "Small", or physics of laws ... you cannot violate the law ... it is unviable to do so ... nothing is viable without Swaraj. Just as Marx talks of laws of society as on par with those of nature. This position on Swaraj is an ontological position ... not a question of knowledge. It is a compelling position, which requires all of us to come in afresh as the apparatus we already have may not be able to deal with it. Krish's position on conflict resolution that the communities in conflict have always been able to resolve them, they must be heard, and external interventions only perpetuate the problem is coming in at the same thing from another angle. Girish may come in from the angle of autonomy. Writing from GSR and Chitraji will add more ways of looking at the position. Suresh should join in too. We should all attempt to write around the idea that Swaraj is a law of Nature. It will be desirable if Avinash can join in this discussion with his paper.

Gandhi:

Swaraj is applicable to every phenomenon, not just human society. I understand Rajendra Singh's position (Jal-Swaraj) to imply this. We need water ... when we try to fulfil the need, we must realize that there is a Swaraj in water resources, which we cannot violate. This is even more obvious in the case of forests. So, I would say that Swaraj is a law of

nature. Traditional societies knew this ... capitalist society is governed by the thinking that everything is for human consumption. The universe can be imagined as many Swaraj-governed ecosystems existing in mutual harmony. We should discuss two other questions too. The question of how we regard time is important, I think. The concept of cyclic time is held by most traditional societies. Even modern cosmology has a place for it. We need to counter the modern view of human societies as a linear progression ... ending in a kind of pralaya. Another important concept we should address is that of Swadharma ... everything has it and only when it is unhindered do we have balance and lack of disruption.

Krish:

Religions have regarded creation as being for one eco-system – that of human society – in Gandhi's terms. Sant Parampara has always said: Respect all the ecosystems and their autonomy. Solutions suggested of conflicts and problems have all been in the Abrahamic tradition and lead back to the same problems and conflicts. Recently read a book by Carlo Rovelli speaking of epistemological and ontological problems mentioned by Nagarjuna in his Mūlamadhyamakakārikā ... I find something there that is very similar to what is being said just now. Also, we should not get stuck with the terminology ... ours may not be of common parlance ... even words we use like lokavidyā may have usable synonyms in languages spoken by communities ... it is important also because we need to bring in more and newer people into the conversation. We should have Avinash too joining in for this discussion with his paper.

GSRK:

This is a discussion which should be taken further. Several questions come to mind. In sociological conception of human societies, we talk of nature and culture ... from that standpoint Swaraj as a law of nature is a

problematic position. But that calls for discussion and I will try to put down my thoughts on that.

Girish:

I think Gandhi is speaking of Swaraj in nature in the sense of autonomy ... that everything in nature is autonomous. The mention of “autonomy of autonomies” in the write-up he sent seems to imply that the relation between samaj and water bodies, or forests is of the same genre as that between two samajs. The notion of naturalness may not itself be new ... it has been claimed about freedom, free competition, survival of the fittest etc. by thinkers in capitalist countries. The need is to focus on Swaraj ...

There was discussion also on how to go ahead concretely. Everybody agreed to write around the general idea of “Swaraj as a law of Nature”, providing a sort of point of inquiry, not as something necessarily acceptable, or rejectable, at this time, but something not said earlier probably by us, or probably by anybody and something, which may require more than the apparatus we command just now. The discussion around the write-ups is planned over the next 4-5 weeks beginning with Krish’s, or Girish’s notes, or Gandhi’s starting next Tuesday, 15 August 2023.