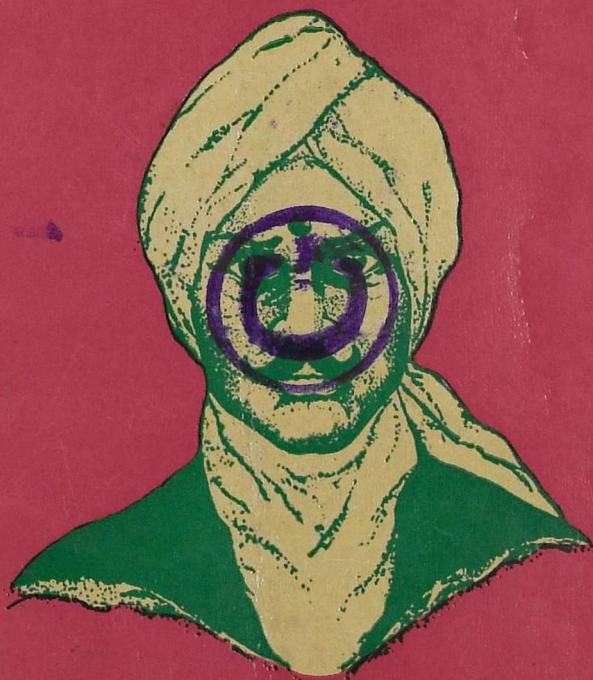


# Chariot of Fire

Bharathi's Poetry & Prose



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S. Nagarajan

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## Bharathi's Poetry and Prose

K. S. Nagarajan

*Principal*

*Dhanraj Baid Jain College, Madras*

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Blomof Hindu Jain College, Madras

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## INTRODUCTION

In the land of the Tamils, the present age is known as the Bharathi Era and Bharathi is acclaimed as the poet of national consciousness and renaissance. The spirit and zeal of his poems, the fire and awakening that they inspired, the train of followers in his footsteps, the galaxy of literati that swear by him and extol him all justify this claim. Verily, Bharathi was the pace-setter and forerunner of modern progressive thought, though, at the same time, he respected traditional values and upheld the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the land. In a sense he was a combination of the old and new, tradition and progress, and nationalism and spiritualism. Though deeply rooted in Tamil culture, he had a vision of all Bharath as one unit despite its diversity in language, culture and tradition. In this sense he was a true national poet like Tagore, Bankim Chander or Aurobindo. There is nobody to match him in this respect in Tamil Nadu. Of course, there are poets galore who sing the praise of Tamil and Tamil Nadu, but whose vision does not extend beyond the bounds of this region, and these limitations affect their literary status.

It is said that generally the peculiar circumstances prevailing at a time throw up a great poet or a leader, that he is made and not born. This may be only partly true in the case of Bharathi, as his poetic genius had budded forth at the age of seven to the surprise of his patron and his father. The subjection of our country to British rule with its attendant evils and sufferings fired the spark of rebellion in him, goading him on to rouse the consciousness of his fellowmen against the tyranny that prevailed in the country. It is because of this that he richly deserves the status of a national poet and is now classed among the foremost fighters for freedom. He had already dreamt of the success of his mission in this direction and sang paeans to the unfettered Mother India, revelling in the happiness of her freedom. Thus the spark of the prophet could also be seen in him. In fact, he has been acclaimed as a prophet in several respects, since many of his dreams and prophecies have come true.

Bharathi was a poet with a difference. He not only lived in a

dream world of his own as most poets do, but cared little for his creature comforts or those of his family. Personally he was eccentric and quixotic. He was so unmindful of his own self that the food which was served to him was allowed to be snatched away by birds of prey—why, he would himself toss it to them as they approached him. Such was his sense of charity and compassion, reminding us of Goldsmith's 'Man in Black'. He was a stickler for truth and high moral standards which again made him suffer great privations. This was included in his persecution by the police for sedition and anti-governmental activities which he withstood with remarkable courage and fortitude. In fact, he was a patriot, linguist (polyglot), journalist, revolutionary, traditionalist, prophet—all rolled into one. Such was his many-faceted greatness and glory.

#### BIRTH AND UPBRINGING

Bharathi was born on 11 December 1882 to Chinnaswami Iyer and Lakshmi Ammal in Ettayapuram, a petty feudal state in the district of Tirunelveli in the far south. His father was a courtier in the state and was very much respected and honoured by its chief for his erudition, piety and all-round competence. He was made the chief of the assemblage of poets and pandits who thronged the court and who were abundantly patronised by him. Bharathi's birth was celebrated with all the customary vedic rites and rituals. As ill luck would have it, his mother expired when he was just five leaving a daughter as an additional burden to his father. Two years later, Chinnaswami Iyer married another lady and Bharathi and his sister were very well looked after by their stepmother. At the age of seven, on the occasion of the second marriage of his father, Bharathi was initiated into the Brahminic way of life. His father, a martinet, would not allow him to play with other children but subjected him to a tyrannical discipline of reading and writing all the time. Bharathi regretted this aspect of his life in his later years. This had a counter-productive effect on him and he began to develop an aversion to the academic work. Even as a boy of seven or eight he began day-dreaming, enjoying the beauty of nature, and composing erotic verses. He lisped in numbers, for they came to him naturally. Terrified of his father, he would take refuge in his grandfather's house. He discussed and argued about abstruse things with learned and



aged persons much to the chagrin of his father who punished him for this seeming impropriety and impudence.

The germ of the muse was so strongly implanted in him that he used to compose verses and read them out to his patron, who gave the young genius unstinted praise and encouragement. His father would not believe that his son was such a genius until one day it was publicly demonstrated to him by his patron. This incident earned for him the title 'Bharathi', meaning 'a storehouse of learning', which is also the name given to Saraswathi, the goddess of learning in Hindu mythology. His earlier name was Subramanyam or Subbiah for short, the name of his grandfather. (It is customary in Hindu families to christen the grandson after his grandfather.) From then on, the name Bharathi stuck to him along with his original name and he came to be known as Subramanya Bharathi. In Tamil the honorific suffix 'aar' (which is also an apicane plural) is added at the end, making it, 'Bharathiyar'.

## MARRIAGE AND MIGRATION

Bharathi grew up in the days of child marriage. No wonder then, that at 14, he was married to a child named Chellammal aged 7, It was a four-day gala function, the couple going round the village in procession on all the days, an accepted practice. Several chieftains and zamindars showered costly presents on the couple. To top the function a dance performance by a famous Bharatanatyam artiste was arranged. Bharathi seemed to enjoy everything as evidenced by his high spirits all along. Though it was against the custom in those days, Bharathi coaxed his wife to converse with him and be free. He made verbal love to his uncomprehending child-bride and composed verses addressed to her in the same strain, complaining to her of his love-sickness, struck as he was by Cupid's arrows. This could be dismissed as a mere manifestation of his poetic flair, which was kindled by the proximity of his flame serving as a convenient pretext. The seven-year-old wife felt shy and embarrassed by the lovelorn poet's addresses and overtures. She decided that it was her destiny to live with such an eccentric husband.

Within a year of his marriage, Bharathi's father died of penury as he lost everything in his business. This made Bharathi very depressed and drove him to seek protection with his maternal aunt and

her husband who were living in Benares. He sent his wife to her father's house in Kadayam and moved to Benares in 1898. His uncle Krishnasivan and aunt Kuppammal were very kind to him. They put him in the Central Hindu College for higher studies. Mastering Sanskrit, Hindi and English in a remarkably short time, he also passed the entrance examination to Allahabad University in the first division. He enjoyed rowing the Ganges and lost himself in the enchanting scenery of the landscape. This again enriched his love of nature and passion for poetry. His English education introduced him to the romanticism of Shelley, Keats, Byron, Browning and Wordsworth. Similarly his vision was extended to the beauties of Sanskrit classics and epics. After acquiring a good classical grounding he returned to Kadayam in 1902, a wise and chastened lad.

### CHEQUERED CAREER

It was now his responsibility to run his family for which he had to eke out a living. Luckily the Raja of Ettayapuram offered him a job to read and interpret books and journals for him, to hold learned discussions with scholars and to carry on research in the field of Tamil. In addition, he had to keep the Raja company. He had already had a stint with the Zamindar on a similar assignment before his departure to Benares. So he slipped easily into this way of life. He kept the Raja company on royal journeys. Once, when he went to Madras with him, he brought books in Tamil and English worth Rs 500 with the money given to him by his patron and unloaded them before his wife on his return with the remark that they were an imperishable treasure. She was dismayed that he had brought only one sari for her as his gift, while others who went to Madras with him had brought valuable household articles.

Though the Zamindar gave Bharathi perfect freedom to have his own way while serving him, the latter felt like a bird in a cage and wanted to go out into the vast unlimited terrain of public work and service. A life of sycophancy and adulation did not stimulate him. So he decided to leave his job for a more congenial one. In 1904, he went to Madurai as a Tamil teacher in the Sethupathi High School where a statue has been erected in his honour today. This assignment was not to last long. G. Subramania Iyer, the proprietor of the

*Swadesamitran*, a popular Tamil daily of that time spotted his talent and took him to Madras to serve as its assistant editor. This was in November 1904. His journalistic career started with a bang, his write-ups capturing the imagination of his readers at once. He wrote essays and composed verses in honour of the patriots who were sacrificing themselves for the sake of the country in their fight against the oppression and tyranny of the British rulers. At the same time he exposed the hollowness and cant of the hypocrites who posed as our liberators. The poverty of our land mortified his mind and heart. All his writings were directed to win freedom and they were very much applauded by his comrades V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, V. V. S. Iyer and others.

The 1906 Congress session at Calcutta put more fire in him and made him altogether a new man. He was attracted by the magic word 'swaraj' (self-government) raised by its president Dadabhai Naoroji at the Congress. It steeled his heart to pursue the relentless path of sacrifice and suffering for the redemption of our motherland. On his return he met Sister Nivedita, an English disciple of Swami Vivekananda, at Dum-Dum near Calcutta. She taught him the nature of true service and the need for love and sacrifice for the country. She also inspired him spiritually. He has celebrated this memorable event in one of his songs eulogising her. A leaf from a Himalayan forest tree given to him by her as a memento was preserved by him till his death.

### AS A JOURNALIST

His experience with the *Swadesamitran* showed that he did not have unlimited freedom to express his views as he was only second in charge as assistant editor. So when he was called to accept responsibility as the chief editor of the *Chakravarthini*, he jumped at the offer. He enjoyed a lot of freedom as its editor, but soon shifted to the editorial gadi of the Tamil weekly *India* in 1907. He was simultaneously the editor of the *Bala Bharatha* an English weekly. Both the journals reached a vast readership which eagerly gulped the fare provided therein. His songs of freedom roused the people to rebel against the establishment which tried to suppress the thunder and fire of his journalistic shots. The rulers were enraged at the reception given to Bharathi's write-ups and speeches on the sands of

the Madras beach. They penetrated into the minds of simple folk. They were discussed, commented upon and applauded. Naturally they struck fear in the minds of the British rulers. Soon a warrant was issued for the arrest of Bharathi for the so-called offence of sedition. The proprietors of the *Swadesamitran* and the *India* in which his articles and poems were published were also served with arrest warrants. But Bharathi was advised by interested friends to escape arrest by taking refuge in Pondicherry, a French territory where the British laws had no validity.

### AT PONDICHERRY

Accordingly Bharathi escaped in 1908 into the French enclave Pondicherry and met eminent personalities like Aurobindo, V. V. S. Iyer and Srinivasachari who were in Pondicherry for similar reasons. He continued his battle with the British from there through the medium of the *India* which was also shifted there to carry on his crusade. Soon, the government banned its entry into any British territory. Bharathi was associated with other journals of this kind like *Vijaya*, *Marmayogi* and *Suryodaya* all of which were short-lived due to want of circulation and finance. Thus he lost his occupation as a journalist, and began writing his memorable trilogy, the three epic poems: 'The Vow of Panchali', 'The Song of the Kuyil' and 'Songs on Krishna'. His genius flowered abundantly in these works which have no equal in Tamil literature to this day. He profited immensely from association with Aurobindo, V. V. S. Iyer and other great men, deriving inspiration and strength from them. His spirit of enquiry into esoteric realms also received a fillip from them.

But the British government did not spare him even there. It sent spies who tried very hard to foist some case on him and get him extradited. The persecutions and harassment caused were enough to break any man's spirit, but Bharathi withstood them all with infinite fortitude. The government did not spare his host, Kuppuswamy Iyengar, a petty merchant. So he had to seek shelter in another friend's house. Meanwhile his wife was also brought there with their six-month-old child Sakunthala. His house was a beehive of activity with nearly three dozen friends and disciples.

## ASHE MURDER CASE

In 1911, Ashe, the Collector of Tirunelveli, was killed by a terrorist at the Maniyachi junction. This unfortunate incident triggered off a wave of arrests, repression, intimidation and unwarranted suspicion of innocents on the part of the government. The fact that rebels against the British government had gathered at Pondicherry was enough provocation for it to harass, persecute and torment them. Bharathi's family was subjected to severe surveillance and shadowed by the police who suddenly raided and ransacked his house and snatched away many valuable manuscripts and letters, disrupting everything in the house. He was pained at the loss of some important documents, and disgusted by the police. Luckily the police did not find any incriminating document against the British. Serious efforts were made by the British to extradite all the Indians who were taking refuge in Pondicherry. Some treacherous elements joined hands with them to locate the refugees. Journals, postal articles, money orders, etc., were not delivered to Bharathi and other suspects. Those who sent money to them were intimidated. Undaunted by all these, Bharathi continued his anti-British activities, but he condemned the murder of Ashe in very strong terms, adding that violence was against Hindu tradition and injunctions. A man who could be so compassionate as to share his food with birds, could not be expected to react differently. It was an act indicative of his regard for moral and spiritual values in public life, and for the Hindu Dharma in particular which discountenanced all violence.

## ARREST AND RELEASE

The ten years (1908-1918) that Bharathi spent in Pondicherry were the most fruitful in his life. His association with great men of learning and courage, helped mould his own personality on similar lines. He wrote most of his beautiful literary pieces in the salubrious and congenial atmosphere prevailing there. The sufferings and ordeals that he underwent there, steeled his heart and strengthened his resolve to fight the British to the end. But the compunction that he was in his hide-out like a coward pricked his conscience and he decided to face the British honestly and recklessly. So he made up his

mind to cross the border and deliberately courted arrest. It was on 20 November 1918 that he did so, with the result that he was immediately arrested and remanded to jail. But, on the intervention of well-meaning friends like Annie Besant, A. Rangaswamy Iyengar, C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer and others, he was soon released. Then he went to Kadayam to join his family and lived there for some time. While he was there, he visited places like Karaikudi, Madras and Trivandrum.

### BACK IN MADRAS

In one of his visits to Madras, he met Gandhiji in 1919 in the house of C. Rajagopalachari. It was a pleasant and fruitful meeting. C. R. explained to Gandhiji the nature of Bharathi's patriotic fire and his service in awakening the masses to fight for their freedom. Gandhiji appreciated his work and encouraged him to go ahead undaunted. This meeting inspired Bharathi to write a eulogy on Gandhiji entitled 'Mahatma Gandhi Panchakam', a poem of five stanzas in praise of Gandhi.

### THE END

In the year 1920 he rejoined the *Swadesamitran* as its editor. The assignment was not to last long, as he expired under tragic circumstances the next year (1921). While at Madras, he visited the Parthasarathy Temple in Triplicane frequently and fed the temple elephant with fruits. One day the elephant ran amuck, held him aloft with his trunk, threw him down and almost trampled him to death. This injured him seriously and rendered him weak and immobile. An illness followed and two months later, on the night of 11 September 1921, he breathed his last.

### HIS WORKS

Bharathi's works are many and varied. He has touched every aspect of life in them—social, political, national, devotional, metaphysical, moral, ethical and so on. He has written in verse, prose and prose-

poetry. To some of them he has given his own introduction, notes, etc. His works can be sorted into some five groups like the devotional, national, epic-lyrical, miscellaneous and general. Unlike his compositions on nationalism and patriotism, which are of a passing nature, the others are of permanent value and will live for all time. One can clearly see in his works the values for which he stood, his message and his mission in life. These are particularly discernible in his devotional-cum-metaphysical poems and in his epic-lyrical compositions. His works have no parallel as creative pieces of the twentieth century.

### AN ESTIMATE

Bharathi's broad and humanistic outlook is reflected in his prayer to god Vinayaka to bestow on him a calm unruffled mind, a clear insight, a state of speechless petrification, self-control, capacity to relieve the sufferings of humanity and wish for their welfare and happiness. His intolerance of the poverty and misery afflicting our country made him execrate against the world order which is responsible for it. He declared that none was indigent or a slave by birth or caste and that there are only two castes, namely the generous and the heartless. He saw the whole of India as one country, regardless of her diverse people and languages and claimed the Himalayas and the Ganges as the common property of all Indians. He has paid tributes to her great saints, their Upanishads, heroes, music, culture, etc. He was a firm believer in national integration and the unity of our people. 'Vande Mataram' or Salutation to the Motherland was the mantra which he would chant till his last breath, undergoing any amount of suffering in doing so. His burning passion was for the immediate deliverance of our country from the shackles of a foreign government. He would willingly risk his life and all for the cause. Equally passionate was he in guarding the honour of our National Flag on which the legend 'Vande Mataram' was written. His advice to his countrymen was: 'Be strong in will, sweet in words, good in thoughts; uphold your honour; be persevering, true and faithful. Create heaven on earth.' He thanks God for all the blessings conferred on humanity and for His promise of ultimate redemption or salvation.

## SELF-ESTIMATE

Bharathi was confident of his immense potential to rouse the people and do them good. But penury and sickness interfered with his ambition. He compares himself to a good musical instrument (Veena) lying in the dust. Having been endowed with incandescent intelligence, he lacked the physical stamina necessary to serve the people. So he appeals to goddess Shakti to give him strength and steadfast will. Several are the commands of the gods bidding him sing to drive out the poverty and disease of the people, to unite all humanity on the basis of Dharma and to enthuse and delight the people by his sweet songs. But when he approaches goddess Saraswathi to grant him the boon to sing, She appropriates all his talents to herself. So pleased was She with his songs. Hence he pleads with Parasakthi to enable him to uplift the world with the charm of his poetry. He was confident of success in anything that he attempted by the grace of Kali which he took for granted. Even the five elements would bow before him or anyone who worshipped at Her feet.

He was undaunted by penury and infamy, by the murderous acts of friends or by hordes of barbarous warriors. Even if the heavens fell on him he would not flinch. Thus says he in one of his verses entitled 'I know no fear' ('Achamillai'). In another piece addressed to Maha Shakti he avers that his doubts, hesitation, and fear have completely disappeared, anger and falsehood have forsaken him and that he has discovered the truth.

## HIS MESSAGE

Bharathi has a special message for the young ones in their formative years. It is in the form of aphorisms on the model of 'Avvaiyar's Aathichoodi' taught in primary schools. Some of them are: discard fear; strengthen your body; think high; don't bow low; don't gossip; learn ethics; amass wealth; you are God; honour womanhood; despise falsehood. In his song 'Paappa Paattu' addressed to the children, he again advises them not to rest, but to play with other children, to read their daily lessons in the morning and to play in the evening, not to lie or abuse other children, not to carry tales or eavesdrop, to spit at evildoers, not to discriminate between castes, but to love all living beings and to worship the mother country as God.



To the adults his message is to be united and to treat all men as equal irrespective of their caste, to carry on the struggle for freedom relentlessly, to love the mother country, to venture out on hill-tops and the seas, to unearth and develop our natural resources, to develop and expand industries, and in short to industrialise and to enrich our country in all possible ways. All the same he emphasises the need to learn mantras and tantras, explore the heavens, the oceans, the moon and create new literature. To the lovers of Tamil particularly, he addresses the task of enriching it by rendering all modern knowledge in it and translating foreign works on sciences and arts so that other peoples might admire and bow before it. He bids them to spread the beauty and glory of Tamil throughout the world.

Another message of his is to grant equality to women in all walks of life and to uphold their honour. To the women his advice is to shed their shyness, to enrich their knowledge and to uphold Dharma. They must be bold, proud and heroic; must travel abroad and bring new ideas and must work for the good of our country. They must be the rulers and the lawmakers. They must not be inferior to men in any respect. They have the power to rear a celestial species superior to human beings.

## HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Bharathi has done some retrospection and philosophising in his brief autobiography. He admits that life is a dream and that the whole world is a stage. But he enjoys the period of his innocent youth when he fell into a sort of platonic love with a girl of nine and lost himself in watching her movements secretly. The clandestine love turned into a reality by her reciprocation, and they lived a blemishless life like free birds in divine love. Later when he was actually married to another girl thoughtlessly by his father, he hated the very idea of marriage and called it a catastrophe. It was a case of child marriage and hence his wrath. He says he was just twelve years old then. (This statement is at variance with the actual date recorded by his biographers—vide end.) He was then studying in the Hindu College, Tirunelveli, in Standard IX. He found the education there worthless and hated it. It did not enlighten him on our language, literature, history, culture or the sciences.

He blamed his father for inflicting it upon him. It meant a waste of money and effort and ambition. Swearing by all the deities in the temples that he benefited not an iota from that education, he thanked himself that he was not completely undone by it. His father's collapse saved him from the calamity.

The later part of his autobiography is entitled 'Bharathi—66', in contrast to the earlier part which is called a 'dream'. In the later part he declares that all life is God and that Advaita, the identification of the self with God, is the way to conquer death. Death has no meaning when one conquers passion, anger, fear, desire, worry and shame. Expatiating on the evil consequences of anger, he pleads for equanimity, forbearance and poise. His guru practically turned him into a new man or demi-god and showed him the way to realise God and seek perfect knowledge. Other Siddhas who influenced him are mentioned in passing, but they may be his close associates and friends at Pondicherry with whom he had a spiritual communion. Govindaswamy, another realised soul, taught him tolerance to all religions, as they lead to the same goal.

### THE CLARION CALL

Bharathi's conception of an ideal India of the future is mirrored in some of his compositions. His vision of 'Utopia' is panoramic and enchanting. He gives a clarion call to ring out the evil things obtaining here and to ring in the good from everywhere. The physically weak, the morbid, the timid and the mean-minded have no place here. The slavish, the shameless, the dishonest and the snobs are not wanted. The caste-ridden, the good-for-nothing, the evil-minded and the beggar must be banished. On the other hand, our motherland wants and welcomes the bright and the strong willed, the soft-spoken, the intelligent, and the brave. Her citizens should master our metaphysical works, shrink from uttering falsehood and be healthy and strong. Our young India should be full of youth unparalleled in strength and achievements in courage and fortitude, and be united in their efforts to achieve great things.

He blessed the people of Bharath and wished them progress as a socialist society, where no man will grab the bread of another and no one will derive pleasure from the suffering of another. Even if a single soul languishes for want of food, the whole world should be

reduced to ashes, let this be our law. Our holy land will lead the world to immortality. All Indians are of one race, one family—all are our kith and kin. All of us are equal, and each one is a lord unto himself.

## LOVE OF TAMIL

Bharathi's love for his mother tongue and Tamil country is no less marked than his love for his entire country and her people. No trace of parochialism or narrow patriotism can be discerned. It is a happy compromise between two loyalties which are equally valid and important for any citizen of India. His love for Tamil should be seen in the perspective of his mastery of Sanskrit, English, French and Hindi. Here are his views on the Tamil country and the Tamil language.

The very words 'Good Tamil Nadu' ring in his ears like honey. The fact that it is the land of his forefathers inspires strength and courage in his mind. It is a country of vedic scholars and dauntless warriors, and of young loving maidens who look like celestial damsels. It is a country full of the wealth of the rivers Kaveri, Vaigai Palar and Thambraparni, and of all kinds of riches. Its erudition and knowledge of the Sastras are proclaimed the world over. It has produced great poets like Kamban, Thiruvalluvar and Ilango. Her overseas conquests and empires are part of history.

He deplors the loss of several ancient works in Tamil and appeals to the present generation to redeem the past glory of Tamil by producing new works, translating foreign works in Tamil and importing modern scientific and technical knowledge into it. It is the duty of every Tamilian to enrich the Tamil goddess by creating new ornaments for her. They should not merely rest on their ears, talking about their past glory. He swears that there is no language equal to Tamil. The greatness of Tamil should be proclaimed from house-tops throughout the world and foreigners should bow their heads before it in appreciation of its beauty and richness. Those who have tasted its sweetness will become immortal. He concludes by blessing the Tamil language, the Tamil country and Bharat, the beautiful land, in his benediction to 'Good Tamil', and ends with a mantra, 'Vande Mataram'.

## NATIONAL INTEGRATION

That he was not parochial or chauvinistic is amply proved by his broad national sentiments and call for unity and integration, throwing aside caste and communal considerations. In his very first national song 'Vande Mataram' he asserts that caste and community do not matter, that Brahmins and others are equal, and therefore, united we stand and divided we fall. We should share all the benefits and opportunities equally among us. Standing as one man against foreign domination, we should shout 'Vande Mataram' even at the risk of our lives. Our country is most blessed in the world, what with its philosophical knowledge, munificence, sweet music, poetry, valour, courage, compassion, charity and religious love. In riches, chastity, high ideals, industries, armed strength, generosity, intelligence, truthfulness, devotion, piety, cattle-wealth, fertility of soil and resources, etc., it has no equal. His vision of putting up a bridge to Sri Lanka, constructing a road to Rameswaram, utilising the waters of Bengal for irrigation in far-off tracts, etc., was no mere pet dream. Some of these have been discussed as a possibility by experts. An oft-quoted statement of his to drive home the need for national integration is this: Let us sail in boats on the waters of the Sind in the company of young Kerala girls, singing in sweet Telugu; let us exchange the wheat crop of the Ganges plain for the betel leaves of the Cauvery region; let us realise that there are no castes; let us work for the advancement of our country. Like a prophet, he has sung about the deliverance of our country from bondage as a *fait accompli* when the prospect was far away at his time. The dawn of independence was actually celebrated by him in his songs. His tributes to Chatrapathi Sivaji, Gokhale, Chidambaram Pillai, Gandhiji, Guru Govind, Dadabhai Naoroji, Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and other patriots and national leaders more than substantiate his broad national outlook. His obeisance to Jesus and Allah is also in tune with this.

## MULTIFACETED PERSONALITY

A patriot non-pareil, a poet par excellence, a social reformer, a freedom fighter, a seer, a unifying force, a mystic and philosopher, an upholder of righteousness and Dharma and all that is good and

benevolent, a personification of courage and fortitude—that is what Bharathi was, all rolled into one. Along with traces of conceit in his writings, he combined a sense of humility which marked him out as a man of many parts. In his introduction to some of his works, this trait stands out prominently. He is humble enough to admit that his verses addressed to Bharath Matha are colourless and flavourless, yet she would gladly accept them as his humble offerings to her. He is pleased that his fellow patriots accepted them as good. Similarly in his note on autobiography, he feels that there is a lot of chaff in it, due to his inexperience and skill for which he craves the indulgence of more learned people.

In the introduction to his metaphysical work 'Kannan Pattu' his colleague V. V. S. Iyer introduces Bharathi as the foremost among poets and one who was steeped in the mystic lore of Nammalwar, Andal and Perialwar. Another colleague Nelliappa Pillai praises Bharathi in his foreword to the above work as a genius, great scholar, divinely inspired poet and liberated soul. Desika Vinayagam Pillai, a scholar of great repute, compliments him as the poet born to sing, adding that he was transported and intoxicated on hearing his songs. These are contemporary testimonies to Bharathi's greatness and genius as a poet.

As for his patriotism, we have already noted that he was a lover of freedom and was against the alien rule which held us as subjects. The country's liberation was his consuming passion and he discussed with his friends and colleagues ways and means to shake off the shackles of serfdom. He was in the centre of the liberation movement in which other great personalities took part. Enthusing and electrifying his close circle of about thirty friends who were constantly engaged in the liberation work, he acted as a great catalyst, at the same time receiving encouragement and inspiration from them to carry on the struggle relentlessly from the platform and press.

As a social reformer, his plea for doing away with caste and communal distinctions, the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden, the amelioration of the condition of women, abolition of untouchability, and child marriage, remarriage of widows, promotion of literacy, improving the economic condition of the lowly—all these stand out clearly in his writings and speeches. As a symbol of his passion for the uplift of Harijans, he is said to have invested a Harijan with the holy thread at the same time discarding his. He was against condemning women to the kitchen and denying them

education. Equality of the sexes and the same standard of morality for them was emphasised by him. In fact he wanted women-folk to be dauntless and bolder than men.

His sense of righteousness and Dharma is revealed in his epic poem 'Panchali Sabadam' where he denounces the evil designs of Duryodhana, Sakuni and Karna and the stupidity of Yudhishira in staking his country, wife and brothers in the game of dice. He is all praise for the stand of Draupathi, who argued with the elders of Duryodhana's court to vindicate her honour. Similarly his condemnation of the murder of Ashe, the collector of Tirunelveli, as unrighteous and against the Hindu Sastraic teaching reflects his impartial, and unbiased stand in the political field. As an instance of his courage, we are told that he once insisted on touching and stroking a lion in the zoo at Trivandrum, and he did so, to the surprise of the spectators.

He was no lover of wealth and cared little for it. Though he went without food on some days, when he had any money with him given by his friends, he was very free with it, doling it out to the poor and needy. It is said that he once threw away a hundred-rupee note in the street. He would sit with his friends while his wife found it difficult to produce their meal. He was fond of new clothes and was always well turned out in coat and turban. His wife testifies to this fact, rebutting the canard that he was ragged and badly dressed.

An outstanding trait of his character was nationalism, caught as he was in the whirlpool of national upheaval and struggle for freedom. The partition of Bengal, the Swadeshi Movement, the demand for Swaraj, the thirst for freedom and the repressive measures of the government—all steeled his heart against the British rule which he opposed with all the might of his pen and power of his lungs. The visit of Bepin Chandra Pal to Madras, the tumultuous reception given to him under British surveillance, the exile of Lala Lajpat Rai, the charge of sedition against V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and the imprisonment of Subramaniya Siva added fuel to his fire of patriotism. He took out processions to the beach in Madras, organised meetings and addressed the eagerly waiting audience, in thunderous tones, full of fire and brimstone. His speeches were considered seditious and provocative and the government was trying to arrest and imprison him.

His magnanimity in forgiving a person who decoyed him to British territory from Pondicherry is striking. While he was on

his trek with the cheat, a lawyer friend of Bharathi chanced to meet them and guessed the evil intention of the cheat who acted as the British Government's agent to seduce Bharathi for a consideration. The lawyer cleverly weaned Bharathi away from the cheat and took him back to Pondicherry. When the cheat came to realise his complicity and guilt he went to Bharathi, to ask for his forgiveness, which he graciously and instantly granted. This incident is hinted at in one of his songs, which begins with a prayer addressed to his conscience to forgive his enemy. High philosophical sentiments find expression in this song. The Supreme Power lives in the midst of enemies like fire in the midst of smoke; like a pearl inside a shell and a flower growing on the rubbish heap; when a man-eater rushes towards you, worship it as Mother Parasakti.

Bharathi's mysticism and devotion are patent in his songs addressed to the various deities and particularly goddess Shakti. He practised Mouna or speechlessness and meditation for ten to fifteen days and loved to hear and sing devotional songs. His philosophical works encompass a wide range. They are translations and expositions of works like Patanjali's Sstras, Bhagavat Gita, Isavasya Upanishad, the Brahma Sutra of Badarayana, the hymns of Vedic Rishis and so on. His 'Gnana Rathnam' is a flight of fancy into the ethereal regions, reading like a fairy-tale, but conveying deep metaphysical truths.

#### THE END

That such a great genius, patriot, and revolutionary had a tragic and untimely end is something that outrages our sense of poetic justice and honour. Though he had all the sympathy and help that his friends could afford while he was alive, his last days and final journey witnessed an utter lack of human feeling in erstwhile friends. It looked as though he was left alone to his fate after his discharge from prison. When he returned to Kadayam from jail, even his relatives received him coldly. He sought a job with the Raja of Ettayapuram, who also, fearing the wrath of the British, cold-shouldered him. He came back to Madras and met with his end under tragic circumstances. The tusker which almost trampled him, did not kill him, but kept him beneath its body, flanking him with its four legs, as if to prevent any approach to rescue him. Yet it was the dauntless

Krishnamachari, alias Kuvallikannan, that dared to jump between its legs and snatch him away in a trice to a place of safety. When he died after a few days of illness, not even a score of friends and relatives are said to have attended his funeral and obsequies. Krishnamachari had often been a friend in need when Bharathi was living in Pondicherry. In death too, he proved to be his true friend. Probably Bharathi had him in mind when he sang the famous 'Kannan Pattu' in which he describes his make-believe servant Kannan as a godsend, saying that he came suddenly from somewhere or nowhere and overwhelmed him with kindness and service. Thus passed away a noble soul, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung, casting a permanent stigma on the society which cared little for him when he was alive. His life was one of struggle against social bondages, against the government, penury and evil, till his very end.

#### RECOGNITION COMES LATE

Bharathi who was forgotten for some years after his death, was recognised and remembered by some of his friends and colleagues on the eve of Indian independence. Great persons like C. Rajagopalachari, S. Nelliappar, P. Sri Acharya, Kamaraj and Kalki thought it fit to erect a memorial for him at Ettayapuram on the 25th anniversary of his passing away. But it materialised only two years later, and on 12 September 1948 a memorial was erected there and it was dedicated by Rajaji, the then Governor of Bengal, to his memory with a great deal of ceremony. Fine speeches complimenting Bharathi and paying rich tributes to him were made both by those who were close to him and those who had little to do with him. His services to the country, to the language and to the Tamils in particular were extolled and applauded. This fervour was not to last long, and soon Bharathi fell into oblivion again. Only in the school textbooks could some of his poems find a place. Luckily he had some torch-bearers and followers who maintained the traditions of patriotism, love of mother tongue and of Tamil culture. They were Ramalingam Pillai of Namakkal, Desika Vinayakam Pillai and Bharathi Dasan.

He is now remembered by his admirers and the powers that be. In 1960, the Government of India released a postal stamp in his honour on the anniversary of his death (11 September) and in 1962



the State Government celebrated his birthday (11 December) in a fitting manner by arranging public lectures and functions in his honour. On a nation-wide scale 1982 was celebrated as his birth centenary year. The Trichy A.I.R. broadcast almost daily a feature on Bharathi, explaining the significance of his life and mission and his invaluable services in different fields. Wherever there are Tamils in any part of our country, and even overseas, homage and tributes are paid to him. Memorials are also underway. Small wonder that such a savant is being remembered and honoured by one and all, including non-Tamils. Better late than never. Let us show our gratitude to him in any manner we think fit, lest we become an ungrateful people.

Long live Bharathi! Vande Mataram!

### BHARATHI'S ENGLISH WORK

Neither art nor its medium is a matter of accident, but a predestined phenomenon. The poet is born with the choice having been already made at a supra-conscious level. There are poets who form part of the galaxy of men who do superb work and earn a reputation as all-time artists. To be one of the poets at a period which is creative, resourceful and socially virile, is one thing. In Bharathi we see not only an all-time great, but he is the only one of his calibre, representing and recreating a glorious age.

The distinction between classicists and romantics is a matter of approach and amplitude of vision and Bharathi is an effulgent blend of both. He has been described both as a representative of the best of all that has gone by and a forerunner of all that was to be. But he is neither an imitator nor a vain dreamer. He has given expression to the socio-political complexities of his time and is an innovator of a poetic structure at once magnificent and beautiful.

A major poet like Bharathi stands like a colossus. His has been the task of compassionately rehabilitating both the life and the literature of a society morally crestfallen and socially fettered. He drops on society like a bombshell and jolts the slumberous and the idle out of their stupor.

He was a Tamil poet to the core. He lived and died a Tamil.

His Indianism was a whole of which his 'Tamilness' was an integral part. As patriot-rebel-lover-poet, he belonged to a tradition, hoary and varied. Tradition claimed him and not he the tradition. He created a tradition of his own and thus reflected the past in his work and gave a form and shape to the future.

Though Tamil was as dear to him as his own life, he had a distinct mastery of English too. His national vision, his insight into the history of his culture were as broad, deep and all-embracing as those of Tagore. Perhaps the contemporaneity and nationality were responsible for India's not bagging another Nobel Prize. Bharathi had equal claims in every respect.

Bharathi in an unmistakable voice avowed 'poetry is our craft'. He meant what he said and his reference was to his writings in Tamil. Does it mean that he aspired to write in English too with all the zeal and creativity which he exhibited in his Tamil writings? Nothing can be so subversive to his mission as a national poet in Tamil, so unjustifiably misleading, as such a thoughtless sweeping generalisation. Indeed he wrote in English but that was a pleasant aside.

Viewed against this background, an edition of Bharathi's writings in English might not appear essential for an appreciation of his works. But sincerity of purpose and his Centenary Celebrations presuppose such a necessity. Just as a novelist writes poetry or a poet occasionally paints, an artist chooses to write in a language other than his own. It is hiding in the wing and a matter of relaxation. Any inane, though innocuous, attempt to establish Bharathi as a writer in English, as great, ingenious and outstanding as he is in Tamil, may not be accurate or meet with his own approval.

But, then, Bharathi wrote in English—prose and poetry—and like any other original writer he has left his stamp on them indelibly. A first edition of his work in English, which includes translations of his own Tamil poems and prose pieces and translations of poems by the Alwars and Arunagirinathar should fulfil a long-felt need. It is sure to go a long way in presenting the varied facets of Bharathi to us.

Rooted in his own spiritual heritage and imbued with a meta-physical stance, he considers poetry a means to an end, an unflinching link between himself and eternity, a salvation-code taking him nearer God, the ultimate Truth. 'And what is art, if not the effort of humanity to move towards divinity?' asks Bharathi in his piece

'The Place of Woman'. For him, poetry not only results from self-sacrifice, but becomes an expression of self-discovery. He achieves all this in Tamil and majestically aspires to attain this in English.

Equipped with an astoundingly happy command over the language, when he writes in English, honesty of purpose is his strength. His English is an extra dimension which he adds delightfully to his role as a literary genius. Born a thousand years after Kamban, the great poet who rendered the Ramayana into Tamil. Bharathi's writing in English has all the qualities necessary to install him as a great contributor to Indo-Anglian literature.

The poem 'Cuckoo' is not an exercise in self-deluding escapism or a celebration of human power and its perpetuity. The English romantics are an inadequate example here, although Wordsworth might come nearest to Bharathi. The bird is not merely a go-between carrying a message of ephemeral love but a bringer of salvation, making the rapport complete between man and God. 'He whose pennon bears the emblem of the golden eagle, call out for his coming, O Bird'. Lines bristle with the divine aurora of Vedic grandeur. 'In Thy Arms Again' displays something of the warmth and comfort of the divinity of the mother Goddess, whose blessings he invokes. Here the message and the diction blend themselves into an artistic structure of extraordinary elegance.

Placed in a socio-political situation that called for a reawakening, Bharathi, the harbinger of an era in its birth pangs, could only turn back to a bygone age of spiritual greatness. But he does not rest content with translating the ideas of that age but rediscovers and revives them. His English is quite adequate to deliver his message. It is, like his Tamil, simple, direct and axiomatic. 'Thoughts' is a piece which proves his capacity to be brief and indicates the advaitic discipline of mind which pervades all his expressions. His utterance is pure and austere, like that of a saint:

I am convinced that God is  
And God alone is.

The lines in 'Manthras on the Plane of Self' are aglow with fire, full of life and as sure and sharp as the lines of 'Leaves of Grass'—only they are on the idyllic Vedantic level. Truly a Whitman is divined here, but then Bharathi is not responsible for it, much less does he owe him any debt.

Bharathi never once suffers from a crisis of faith, a chronic affliction affecting the modern generation. Faith in life, in God and in his own pristine divinity is the bedrock on which the edifice of his poetry is raised. This makes his poem 'I have Faith in Myself' touch new heights:

I am God, simply God  
 I am the Self, the only Self  
 My Nature is Light  
 I know the joy of the Brahman  
 For I am the Brahman.

His attempt to translate devotional literature in Tamil is proof of his own mystic vision.

His experience is echoed in the English rendering:

Leave all  
 So leaving  
 Render your life  
 Unto the Master Liberty.

A Keatsean spirit takes wing on its course, not to the world of the legendary silver-voiced bird but to the feet of goddess Lakshmi. It is not a feat of escapism but a conscious progress to the feet of the Supreme Being. Poems such as 'In Each other's Arms' and 'Krishna—My Mother' are powerful representations of the thought-sequence originally conceived in Tamil and we have no right to expect the same verve, charm and passion in the English pieces. His translation of Saint Arunagirinathar's hymns is a measure of his faith in and deep insight into spiritual realism which was a source of guidance to him throughout. The following passage is just a sample:

To chase out the iron age  
 To smite and banish disease  
 To still the fire of care

One of the causes dear to his heart was the emancipation of Indian women. His English reflects sufficiently the dancing mirth

of the revolutionary fitted into the old form of the pastoral in 'Kummi Song':

Gone are they who said to woman  
Thou shalt not open the book of knowledge.

The rhythmic resonance and the metaphysical thought content of 'Time—A Vision' and 'Love Thine Enemy' make for a poetic structure of excellence, rarely surpassed.

Bharathi's prose work covers a wide range of subjects—politics to poetry and vedantic philosophy. He had to share the responsibilities of a newspaper editor along with a zealous concern of a social reformer and political thinker. In Tamil it was given to him, and to him alone, to leave an enduring literary structure in every field he entered.

It is a matter of great significance that his English prose narratives are representative of his varied interests. Whether it is keywords of Indian culture or a bitter criticism of the degenerated caste system, Bharathi's zeal and stamp are unmistakable. The piece on New Birth is pure poetry in prose. A good example is the following passage: 'Ring all the temple bells, for India is born again'. Her new name is the one that she had had long ago—the Bharatha land. Great is her thirst for new things but, after all, the new things are really older than the old, 'The world is a cycle'.

We are able to hear the holy music of the mantras of the Vedic Age transmitted to us across the tide of the river of time. Ring all the temple bells. The Baby Mother opens her Veda and reads. The mighty chantings of her ancient seers, intoxicated with love and illumined by the knowledge of the eternal... is just a specimen.

Bharathi's essay on 'The Occult Element in Tamil Speech' shows his preoccupation with the etymological aspects of Tamil language. It also shows his deep interest in a true understanding of the usages of Tamil expressions. His interpretation of the word 'utkār' (meaning sit) is amusing and thought-provoking, to cite an example.

The journalist, the social reformer, the political thinker, the poet, the philosopher and the saint—all rolled into one—Bharathi is represented in his English work very pleasantly, though not so powerfully as in Tamil. An edition of his English work should become yet another valuable addition to Bharathiana, bringing into

focus the man and the poet as they strove to present themselves in English.

His English work, whether translations or original pieces, form only a very small fragment of his writing. But he was able to achieve, in this foreign medium, a style of his own which is extraordinarily rhythmical and beautiful. Naturally all his works are not on the same level of excellence, when both matter and form are taken into consideration. But, when all deductions are made, there is plenty of first-class work, which entitles him to a place among the great writers of English.

Part I  
POETRY

Part I  
POETRY



## AGNI—THE GOD—WILL

### An Affirmation

Lo, he is rising on the altar of our sacrifice, Agni, the All-will ablaze, and He leaps forth on all sides chasing the defeated shadows of the dark realm—the Flame!

Lo, He ascends unto Heaven lifting up His golden arms. And dawn, the maiden, whose form is knowledge, descends with love to meet Him, the Flame, the Flame!

Lo, He opens wide His jaws, the son of strength, the priest of our sacrifice. He has come to drink our ghee and our honey, well pleased with our works.

Lo, He blazes up, shouting, the messenger of the Gods and the General-in-Chief of their wars. And He has made our life His sacred shrine, this valiant son of the Virgin Eternal.

Lo, He has summoned all the gods—Varuna the Wise, the harmonious, Aryaman the puissant, and Bhaga the enjoyer; also the splendours of the whirlwind and twin mind-vitalities and the luminous thunderbolt. He has summoned them to attend our works.

Lo, the Gods stand in front of us to receive our oblations. Now, indeed, there is no death nor foe. Now, indeed, we have found the supreme good.

Lo, the Goddesses, too, are arriving, led by Her whose name is Vision and her sister Inspiration. And, behold, He too is here, the Highest, the son of Truth.

Welcome, ye gods, take all our offerings—our milk and ghee, our rice and soma-wine. Shining ye stand forth, O immortal Powers, and accept our works for ascent.

Blessed are we, and freed from all evil, we have attained eternal felicity. For the Gods have drunk our soma-wine and have given us Light, their highest gift.

And Fire, our flaming priest, has now pervaded the three worlds in us—our bodies, vitality and minds. And the Gods have stretched forth their hands for our grasping. And their blessings we have received.

Lo, the whole world is a sacrifice; everywhere the immortals

shine and everywhere blazes the Flame, the Flame. This delight will last for ever, for immortality is ours already.

Come now, let us sing; love the Immortals, live the sacrifice and may humanity reach the good! Live the earth and live the heavens and may He live for ever, the Flame, the Flame, the Flame.

Lo, the chariot of fire is here,  
And his legs turn on all sides,  
Chasing the darkness of the  
dark earth--the Flame!

Lo, the chariot of fire is here,  
And his legs turn on all sides,  
Chasing the darkness of the  
dark earth--the Flame!

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Lo, the chariot of fire is here,  
And his legs turn on all sides,  
Chasing the darkness of the  
dark earth--the Flame!

## KRISHNA—MY MOTHER

The realms of Life are Her bounteous breasts; and consciousness, her milk of endless delight, which she yieldeth into my lips unasked; such grace is my mother's.

They call her Krishna. Ah, she has clapped me in fond embrace with her arms of ethereal space! And, placing me on her lap of earth, she loves to tell me endless stories, strange and mysterious.

And some of the tales I call by the name of pleasures, evolutions, victories. Yet others come to me as pains, defeats and falls; stories, all these, that my Mother recounts to suit my various moods and stages, lovingly told, ever entrancing.

And many are the wondrous toys and dolls which my mother showed me:

There is one that is named the moon, and it sheds a nectar-like flood of light. And there are herds and herds of clouds, many-coloured toys, yielding rain. There's the sun, too, foremost of my playthings the beauty of whose face I have no words to depict.

Toys, toys, toys:

A heavenful of stars, sparkling like tiny gems. Many a time, but in vain, have I essayed to count them all. And then these green hills, that never stir from their places, silent toys, offering speechless play.

Rivers and rivulets, fair and playful, that wander all over the land and, in the end, flow into that marvellous toy, the ocean, wide and boundless-seeming, with dashing billows, spouts of spray and its long, continuous chant wherein my mother's name is ever sounded: Om, Om . . . . Om.

Groves and gardens, abounding in many-hued gems of flowers; and delicious fruits hanging on the trees, strong in essence, rich in form. Ah, the world is full of such exquisite playthings. All these, my mother has given me.

Nice things to eat and songs all sweetness to hear, and companions gifted, like me, with minds, to play with and become one with; and these fair girls, enkindling love, that passion of flaming delight like fiery nectar, killing-sweet.

Yet more play-mates;

The winged birds, the beasts that walk the earth, and countless

fishes of many and many a kind, there in that thundering sea.

What a tale of raptures, too many even to think of!

And endless sciences and arts she has ordained and, nobler than all these, divine wisdom—for my serious hours.

But when the lighter mood is on me and I would fain laugh and be merry, many are the jokes she has planned to amuse me with: the lies of priests, the comic feats of kings, the hypocrisies of age and the silly cares of youth.

Whatever I demand, she gives, my mother. Aye, she hastens with gifts, ere I tell her I'd like to have them.

With high grace does she protect me, and says she will make me a yogin, like Arjuna, my brother in race.

Always and in all places, my work shall be to sing of the bounteous love of my mother.

And a long and shining life and other matchless glories, she will grant me as reward—Krishna, My Mother.

## IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS

Thou to me the flowing light  
And I to thee, discerning sight;  
Honied blossom thou to me,  
Bee enchanted I to thee:  
O heavenly lamp with shining ray,  
O Krishna, love, O nectar-spray  
With falt'ring tongue and words that pant  
Thy glories, here, I strive to chant.

Thou to me the harp of gold,  
And I to thee the finger bold,  
Necklace shining thou to me,  
New-set diamond I to thee:  
O mighty queen with splendour rife,  
O Krishna, love, O well of life,  
Thine eyes do shed their light on all,  
Wherev'r I turn, their beams do fall.

Rain that singeth, thou to me,  
Peacock dancing, I to thee;  
Thou to me the juice of grape,  
And I to thee the cup agape:  
O spotless beauty, Krishna bright,  
Perennial fount of deep delight,  
O Love, thy face hath grace divine,  
For there the deathless truth doth shine.

Silver moonlight thou to me,  
Exulting Ocean I to thee;  
Thou, the basic harmony  
And I the song that moveth free:  
DEAR as eyesight, Krishna mine,  
O massed-up, sweet, immortal wine,  
Unceasing yearns my mind to scan  
Thy endless charm, but never can.

Inlaid perfume thou to me,  
Petalled blossom I to thee:  
Thou to me the inner Thought,  
And I to thee the word it wrought;  
O honeyed hope, O Krishna fair,  
O Joy, O'erflowing everywhere,  
O star of love, do teach me, pray,  
To sing thy praise in fitting lay.

Deep attraction thou to me,  
Living magnet I to thee;  
Thou to me the Veda pure  
And I to thee the knowledge sure;  
Voice vibrant of the world's desire,  
O Krishna, love, all-quickening fire,  
In utter-stillness, here, I see,  
Thy face that yieldeth ecstasy.

As life to pulse, and gold to rings,  
As star to planet, soul to things,  
So Krishna, love, art thou to me,  
Thou, the force, I, victory:  
And all the joys of heaven and earth  
In thee, O Krishna, have their birth  
Eternal glory, endless might,  
O heart of mine, O Light, O Light!

# LAKSHMI

Come, let us affirm the energy of Vishnu, the jewel of the crimson  
 flower, and end this want,  
 Where the mind ever struggles in the fumes of paltriness,  
 And reason so faints that the noblest truths do but vex her.  
 We can endure this no more.  
 So let us take refuge in the feet of the Mother, Lakshmi.

The discourtesies of the low, the kinship with those who have failed;  
 The extinction of endeavours like lamps that are drowned in a well;  
 The denial of fruits even when the seven seas are crossed;  
 To such things does want subject us, this worst of earth's tyrannies.  
 Down with it.

She is sweet like the inner Ocean of milk;  
 She is sweet like the nectar of Heaven, twin-born with her;  
 And her shining feet repose aptly on lotus petals.  
 Multiple riches she holds in her hands, which are four, the Goddess  
 whose eyes are gleaming azure;  
 Ruddy her form and verdant is her love.  
 Seated beside love, in heaven, on the bosom of Vishnu Himself, on  
 the earth her dwellings are many.

We find her revealed  
 In the festooned halls of marriage;  
 Amid flocks, and in jewelled palaces;  
 In the hero's arm, in the sweating toil of labour,  
 And, ay! on the crown of knowledge,  
 Extending the light of her bounties.

Come, let us sing her praises, bless her feet, and climb the heights of  
 power;  
 Behold her in gold and in gems, in flower and incense;  
 In the lamp and the virgin's smile;  
 In luxuriant woodlands, groves and fields,  
 In the will that dares,  
 And in royal lineaments.

And firm let us seat her in our minds and speech.

She is revealed

In underground mines,

And the slopes of the hills, and depths of the seas;

In the righteous sacrifice;

In fame, and in talent, and novelty;

In statue and portrait, in song and in dance.

Dedicate unto her grace all knowledge that you have;

Attain to her splendours, and vanquish dire want;

Rise high in the world by joyous affirmation of Lakshmi, who is  
revealed

In conquering armies and the traffic of the far-sighted,

In self-control, and ay! in the harmonious lays of her poet-votaries.

Come, let us affirm the energy of Vishnu, the jewel of the crimson  
flower!



## TIME—A VISION

It was a mighty torrent with a breaking, maddening, terrible speed,  
Like that of the flaming forces that leap through the wilds of the  
mind.

I saw it was Time.

And we were a few that watched its course from the bank  
When a powerful desire seized us  
And we leaped in the midst of the tumult, the force and rage of the  
torrent.

Then Hands came down to lead us; and we swam divinely on  
Against the mad career of this Doom in a torrent's form.  
Onward, onward, onward, higher and still higher,  
Precipice growing on precipice, further, dizzier ever.  
My comrades and I did swim on and great was the joy of this swim-  
ming.

This ride on the waters of Time, this touch of the forces of law;  
This sovereign race on the tides that aeons are called amongst men.  
At last I was tired of this play and I called to my comrades, saying:  
'Stay! Let us land on that bank with groves and hills and fields.  
Have some taste of summer dreams and then plunge back in the  
torrent.'

Some came, but the others sped on with a grand disdain for repose.  
That bank is the realm called 'Life' and that race is the race of the  
spirit.

## LOVE THINE ENEMY

Love thine enemy, heart of mine, Oh!  
Love thine enemy.

Hast thou not seen the shining flame  
Amidst the darkening smoke?

In enemy's soul lives Krishna, whom  
As love the wise invoke.

Oft we have preached to men that God  
In all that is doth shine.

Why, then, my heart, 'tis God that stands  
Arrayed as foe's line.

Dost know that limpid pearls are found  
Within the oyster vile?

Hast seen on dunghill, too, sometimes  
The starry blossom smile?

The heart that fans its wrath, shall it  
The inner peace possess?

The honey poison-mixed, shall it  
Be wholesome nevertheless?

Shall we who strive for life and growth,  
Lend thought to sad decay?

'Thine evil thoughts recoil on thee',  
So do the wise ones say.

When Arjun fought, 't-was Krishna whom  
He faced, disguised as foes;  
'Twas Krishna, too, that drove his car  
In charioteering pose.

Strike not the tiger threatening thee,  
But love it, straight and true;  
The mother of all hath donned that garb,  
Salute her there, there too.

Love thine enemy, heart of mine, Oh!  
Love thine enemy.

## THE 'KUMMI' OF WOMEN'S FREEDOM

We sing the joys of freedom;  
In gladness we sing.  
And He that shineth in the soul as light shines  
in the eye, even He is our strength.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
Let this land of the Tamils ring with our dance  
For now we are rid of all evil shades;  
We've seen the good.  
Gone are they who said to woman: 'Thou shalt not open the Book  
of Knowledge.'  
And the strange ones who boasted, saying:  
'We will immure these women in our homes'  
Today they hang down their heads.

Dance the Kummi, beat the measure,  
Let this land of the Tamils ring with our dance.  
For now we are rid of all evil shades;  
We've seen the good.  
The life of the beast that is beaten, tamed and tied down,  
Fain would they lay it on us in the house; but we scornfully baffled  
them.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
The dog they sell for a price, nor ever consult his will.  
Nigh to his state had they brought us—would  
rather they had killed us at a blow—  
But infamy seized them.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
And they talk of wedded faith;  
Good; let it be binding on both.  
But the custom that forced us to wed, we've cast  
it down and trampled it under foot;  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
To rule the realms and make the laws  
We have arisen;

Nor shall it be said that woman is behind man  
in knowledge and attainment.

Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;

To know the truth and do the right,

Willing we come;

Sustenance we'll give you; and a race of immortals.

Dance the Kummi, beat the measure.

We sing the joy  
In gladness we sing  
And He that shineth in the soul in light shines  
in the eye, even He is our strength  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
Let this land of the Tamils ring with our dance  
For now we are rid of all evil shades;  
We've seen the good.  
Come are they who said to woman: 'Then shall not open the Book  
of Knowledge,  
And the strange ones who boasted, saying:  
'We will immure these women in our homes,  
Today they hang down their heads.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure,  
Let this land of the Tamils ring with our dance.  
For now we are rid of all evil shades;  
We've seen the good.  
The life of the beast that is beaten, tamed and tied down,  
Iain would they lay it on us in the house; but we scornfully balled  
them.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
The dog they sell for a price, nor ever consult his will,  
Nigh to his state had they brought us-would  
rather they had killed us at a blow-  
But infants seized them.  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
And they talk of wadded faith;  
Good: let it be binding on both.  
But the custom that forced us to wed, we've cast  
it down and trampled it under foot;  
Dance the Kummi, beat the measure;  
To rule the realm and make the laws  
We have arisen;

## IN THY ARMS, AGAIN

Once again in thy arms, Oh Mother!  
Thy fragrant breath; and that lightning message  
From a loving soul to another, thy kiss on the face,  
Thy living voice, the music of thy word;  
The glance of thine eyes, the touch of thy limbs,  
Thy whispered blessings on the beloved regained,  
Thy sighs and thy tears of joy—  
These, at this moment, are Tilak's lot,  
Thrice happy, thrice blessed.

Once again in thy arms, Oh mother,  
After six long years,  
Of solitude, pain and endless thought,  
Self-torturing, merciless, insistent;  
Of love separated, love in anguish;  
Love, whose heart has been hurt by time's brute sword.  
But love, withal, whose vision is not dimmed  
By the forces of time and of space;  
Love that can behold from a caged solitude  
Through ages and through worlds!  
Once again in thy sacred realm, O Hindustan,  
Behold thy wearied child  
Force, life, and bright-eyed hope  
Be the gifts of the mother to her chosen!

## UNTO THE MOTHER

Some call thee matter. Others have named thee force.  
As nature some do adore thee. Others know thee as life.  
Some call thee mind. Yet others have named thee God.  
Energy Supreme, O Mother, by grace accept our  
sacrifice, drink this excellent soma-wine that  
we offer thee and let us behold thy dance of Bliss.  
Some chant thy name as loving light; deep darkness art thou called  
by others.  
To some thou art known as joy; while others name thee pain.  
Supreme energy, O Mother divine, by grace accept our humble  
oblations, so that we may enter into the state of the immortals.  
O thou true nectar, healer of wounds and maker of delights,  
O deathless fire, O source of light and force,  
Luminous thought is our soma-wine.  
We have pressed it for thee from the bright leaves of earthly life by  
the force of will.  
Drink it, O Mother, for we long to behold thine  
exultant dance and sing ourselves into gods.  
The demons of fear and sorrow, with their legions of beggarly  
cares and pains and deaths, do ever encircle us.  
They are plotting to rob us of the nectar pot.  
Day and night they are assailing this fortified city of a million halls,  
this body which thou hast given to us.  
They are damming the river of Life.  
They are destroying our beautiful domes of the mind.  
Mother, we sing thy praises. Protect us, dispelling our foes.  
For our laws, our arts and works,  
Our shrines and homes and dear ones,  
Our herds and flocks, our pastures and fields,  
We beg thy mighty protection, O Mother.  
On our lives and loves and songs,  
Our dreams and strength and acts,  
We invoke thy blessings.  
We offer thee our all.  
We kiss thy lotus feet.  
We surrender.  
Make us immortal, O Mother.

## THE GOSPEL OF SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

Leave all  
So leaving  
Render your life  
Unto the Master of Liberty.

O dear soul of mine,  
O great life that made and pierced and ate and spouted and measured  
All this immense space,  
O glorious life that made the oceans, dwelt therein and churned  
And stopped and broke them,  
Thou who art unto the Gods what the gods are unto men,  
O Soul unique of all the worlds, whither shall I go to meet Thee?  
O Thou great cowerd that hath wedded my soul,  
Thou that tearest all my violence by Thine illusion,  
Thou who art death unto the demons and the cruel ones,  
For Thy banner Thou hast the mighty bird,  
For Thy mattress the great serpent, thousand-hooded.  
O Lord of the Ocean of milk,  
I know not how to adore Thee,  
For Thou art my mind and my speech and my deed,  
Thou art myself.  
True, Thou art me. Thou art the hells also.  
What matters it then whether I acquire the high delights of heaven  
or go to hell?  
And yet, the more I realise that I am Thou, the more I dread my  
going to hell.  
O Thou who art seated firm in the high delights of Heaven, by grace,  
bestow Thy feet on me.

## MOHYMN OF THE GOLDEN AGE IIII

'Tis glory, glory, glory! For life's hard curse has expired; swept out are pain and hell, and death has nought to do here. Mark ye, the iron age shall end. For we have seen the hosts of Vishnu; richly do they enter and chant His praise and dance and thrive.

We have seen, we have seen, we have seen . . . . . seen things full sweet in our eyes. Come, all ye lovers of God, let us shout and dance for joy with oftmade surrenderings. Wide do they roam on earth singing songs and dancing, the hosts of Krishna who wears the cool and beautiful tulsi, the desire of the bees.

The iron age shall change. It shall fade, it shall pass away. The gods shall be in our midst. The mighty golden age shall hold the earth and the flood of the highest bliss shall swell. For the hosts of our dark-hued Lord, dark-hued like the cloud, dark-hued like the sea, widely they enter, singing songs, and everywhere they have seized on their stations.

The hosts of our Lord who reclines on the sea of vastness, behold them thronging hither. They will tear up all these weeds of grasping cults. And varied songs do they sing, our Lord's own hosts, as they dance, falling, sitting, standing, marching, leaping, bending.

And many are the wondrous sights that strike mine eyes. As if by magic Vishnu's hosts have come in and firmly placed themselves everywhere. Nor doubt it, ye fiends and demons, if such be born in our midst, take heed! Ye shall never escape. For the spirit of time will slay and fling you away.

These hosts of the Lord of the discus, they are here to free this earth of the devourers of life, disease and hunger, vengeful hate and all other things of evil. And sweet are their songs, as they leap and dance, extending wide over earth. Go forth, ye lovers of God, and meet these hosts divine; with right minds serve them and be saved.

The Gods that ye fix in your minds, in His name do they grant you deliverance. Even thus to immortality did the sage Markanda attain. Let none be offended, but there is no other God but Krishna. And let all your sacrifices be to them who are but his forms.

His forms he has placed in the various worlds as gods to receive and taste the offerings due. He, our divine sovereign, on whose



mole-marked bosom the Goddess Lakshmi rests—His hosts are singing sweetly and deign to increase on earth. O men, approach them, serve and live.

Go forth and live by serving our Lord, the deathless one. With your tongues chant ye the hymns, the sacred riks of the Veda, nor err in the laws of wisdom. Oh, rich has become this earth in the blessed ones and the faithful who serve them with flowers and incense and sandal and water.

In all these rising worlds they have thronged and wide they spread, those beauteous forms of Krishna—the unclad Rudra is there, Indra, Brahma, all. The iron age shall cease to be—do ye but unite and serve these.

Knowing the emperor and he is scorned and mock'd  
And she says the wind; 'T is my own God's will, she says  
She smells the honey'd taint my gazelle-like child. At night  
How many the grants she plays for my sinful eyes to behold.  
The rising moon she shows; 'T is the shining garland Krishna!  
Oh, crying the standing hill, she cries; O come, High Vishnu!  
It rains; and she dances and cries, the hair come, the God of my  
love?

Oh the mad conceits he has given to my tender, dear soul!  
The soft-limb'd calf she embraces, for 'twere old Krishna's toil,  
And follows the glistening serpent, explaining, 'That is his consort,  
I know not where this will end, this folly, play in my sweet one,  
Abducted, ay, for my sins, by him, the divine, sagacious,  
Where sacred dance with their feet, she runs and cries 'Govinda!  
At the charming notes of a flute she faints for Krishna, the playster!  
When Coward girl being butter she is sure it was tasted by him,  
So mad for the Lord who suckled out the darkness.

I lie through her bosom!  
In rising nations she reaves, 'All worlds are by Krishna made.'  
And she runs after sun-owed folk; 'Farewell, they serve High  
Vishnu!  
Or she looks at the fragrant tale and chimes Krishna's garland,  
She is ever for Vishnu, my darling, whether in or out of her wits.  
And in all your wealthy palaces she but sees the Lord of Lakshmi.  
At the sight of beautiful colours she cries, 'O my world-sustaining

Lord!

## LOVE MAD

Seated, she caresses the Earth and cries, 'This Earth is Vishnu's';  
Salutes the sky and bids us, 'Behold the Heaven He ruleth';  
Or standing with tear-filled eyes cries loud, 'O seahued Lord!'  
All helpless am I, my friends; my child has He rendered mad.  
Or, joining her hands, she fancies 'the Sea where my Lord reposes!'  
Or hailing the ruddy sun she cries, 'Yes, This is His form'.  
Languid, she bursts into tears and mutters Narayana's name.  
I am dazed at the things she is doing, my gazelle, my child, shaped  
god-like.

Knowing, she embraces red fire, is scorched and cries, 'O Deathless!  
And she hugs the wind; 'Tis my own Govinda,' she tells us.  
She smells the honeyed tulsi, my gazelle-like child, Ah me!  
How many the pranks she plays for my sinful eyes to behold.  
The rising moon she showeth, 'Tis the shining gemhued Krishna!  
Or, eyeing the standing hill, she cries: 'O come, High Vishnu!  
It rains; and she dances and cries, 'He hath come, the God of my  
love!

Oh the mad conceits He hath given to my tender, dear one!  
The soft-limbed calf she embraces, for 'Such did Krishna tend,'  
And follows the gliding serpent, explaining, 'That is his couch.'  
I know not where this will end, this follis' play in my sweet one,  
Afflicted, ay, for my sins, by Him, the divine magician.  
Where acrobats dance with their pots, she runs and cries 'Govinda'.  
At the charming notes of a flute she faints, for 'Krishna, He playeth'.  
When Cowherd girl brings butter, she is sure it was tasted by Him.  
So mad for the Lord who sucked out the Demoness'

Life through her bosom!

In rising madness she raves, 'All worlds are by Krishna made'.  
And she runs after ash-covered folk; forsooth, they serve High  
Vishnu!

Or she looks at the fragrant tulsi and claims Narayana's garland.  
She is ever for Vishnu, my darling, whether in, or out of, her wits.  
Aud in all your wealthy princes she but sees the Lord of Lakshmi.  
At the sight of beautiful colours she cries, 'O my world-scanning  
Lord!

And all the shrines in the land, to her are shrines of Vishnu.  
In awe and in love, unceasing, she adores the feet of that wizard.  
All gods and saints are Krishna-devourer of infinite spaces!  
And the huge dark clouds are Krishna; all fain would she fly to  
reach them.

Or the kine, they gaze on the meadow and thither she runs to find  
Him.

The Lord of illusions, He makes my dear one pant and rave  
Languid she stares around her or gazes afar into space;  
She sweats and with eyes full of tears she sighs and faints away;  
Rising, she speaks but His name and cries, 'Do come, O Lord!'  
Ah, what shall I do with my poor child o'erwhelmed by this maddest  
love?

## TO THE CUCKOO

O Cuckoo that peckest at the blossomed flower of honey-dropping Champaka and, inebriate, pipest forth thy melodious notes, be seated at thy ease and with thy babblings, which are yet no babblings, call out for the coming of my Lord of the Venkata hill. For He, the pure One, bearing in his left hand the white summoning conch, shows me not his form. But He has invaded my heart; and while I grieve and sigh for his love, He looks on indifferent as if it were all play.

I feel as if my bones had melted away and my long javelin eyes have not closed their lids for these many days. I am tossed on the waves of the sea of pain, without finding the boat that is named the Lord of the highest realm. Even thou must know, O Cuckoo, the pain we feel when we are parted from those we love. He whose pennon bears the emblem of the golden eagle, call out for his coming, O bird.

I am a slave of Him whose stride has measured the worlds. And now because He is harsh to me, how strange that this south wind and these moonbeams should tear my flesh, enfeebling me. But thou, O Cuckoo, that ever livest in this garden of mine, it is not meet that thou shouldst pain me also. Indeed I shall drive thee off, if He who reposes on the waters of life comes not to me by thy songs today.

## I DREAMED A DREAM

I dreamed a dream, O friend!

He fixed 'tomorrow' as the wedding day. And He the lion, Madhava, the young bull, whom they call the master of readiness, He came into the hall of wedding decorated with luxuriant palms. I dreamed a dream, O friend!

And the throng of the gods was there with Indra, the mind divine, at their head. And in their shrine they declared me bride and clad me in a new robe of affirmation. And Inner Force is the name of the goddess who adorned me with the wedding garland. I dreamed a dream, O friend!

There were beating of drums and blowing of the conch; and under the canopy hung heavily with strings of pearls He came, my lover and my Lord, the vanquisher of the demon Madhu, and grasped me by the hand. I dreamed a dream, O friend!

Those whose voices are blessed, they sang the Vedic songs. The holy grass was laid all round the sacred fire. And He who was puissant like a war-elephant in its rage, He seized my hand and we paced round the flame.

## YE OTHERS

Ye others cannot conceive of the love that I bear for Krishna. And your warnings to me are in vain, like the pleadings of the mute with the deaf. The boy who left his mother's home and was reared by a different mother—Oh take me forth to His city of Mathura, where He won the field without fighting the battle, and leave me there.

Of no avail now is modesty; for all the neighbours have known this fully. If ye would indeed heal me of this ailing and restore me to my former state then know ye this illness will go if I see Him, the maker of illusions, the youthful one who measured the world. Should you really wish to save me, then take me forth to His home in the hamlet of the cowherds and leave me there.

If the rumour spreads over the land that I have run away with Him and gone the lonely way, leaving all of you behind, my parents, relations and friends, the tongue of scandal ye can hardly silence then. And He, the deceiver, is haunting me with his forms. Oh, take me forth at midnight to the door of the cowherd, Nanda, whose son is this maker of havoc, this mocker, this pitiless player; and leave me there.

Oh, grieve not, ye mothers. None can know this strange malady of mine. Of the colour of the blue sea is a certain youth—the gentle caress of his hands will heal me, surely. On the bank of the waters He ascended the Kadamba tree and He leaped to his dance, the dance of war, on the hood of the snake. Oh, take me forth to the bank of that lake and leave me there.

There is a parrot here in this cage of mine that ever calls out his name, saying, 'Govinda, Govinda'. In anger, I chide it and refuse to feed it. 'Oh thou', it then cries at its shrillest, 'Oh thou who hast measured the worlds!' I tell you, my people, if ye really would avoid scandal in all this wide country, if still ye would guard your weal and your good fame, then take me forth to His city of Dwaraka, of high mansions and decorated turrets; and leave me there.

## HYMNS TO KUMARA

### I

#### SO BE MY SONGS

Like a child unto the barren womb,  
Like a mine of new-found treasure,  
Like a floor of diamonds, so be my songs,  
Like the wilful embrace of love's soft bosom,  
Like a string of the purest gems,  
Like a garden of fragrent blossoms,  
Like the River that descends from Heaven,  
Even so be my songs.  
Like the daughter of the Ocean,  
Like eyes unto poets,  
Like a stream full to the brim, easy to drink of,  
Like the taste of the nectar of Thy beauty,  
So be my wondrous songs of love,  
By Thy Grace, O Lord.

### II

#### WHEN WILT THOU DEIGN?

- To chase out the iron age,
- To smite and banish disease,
- To still the fire of care devouring my heart,
- To change my bitterness into sweetness,
- To wipe all foulness from my life,
- And to bathe me in the river of Thy mercy
- When wilt Thou deign?
- That I may gather in my roving mind and hold it fast,
- And dispel its darkness by placing there the lamp of Thy beauty,
- And keeping it ever alit,
- May mass my vision
- And sing for ever Thine immortal traits;
- When wilt Thou grant Thine utter grace?

## ARAM THOUGHTS

I

I can think like a God  
I ought to act like one

\* \* \*

I do not crave for things.

I am the world's master, not it mine.

Those things which Nature brings in my way, I take and feel  
content. I crave not, for the world sufficeth not unto me.

\* \* \*

He who writes for others, affects.

\* \* \*

He is a slave who receives favours.

\* \* \*

He sells himself who asks.

\* \* \*

Forgetfulness is the bane of life.

If you want to die soon, talk about yourself.

If you want to make your lives sublime, do good to others.

\* \* \*

By the deepest abysses do rise the tallest precipices.

\* \* \*

In hours of exultation remember hours of pain, and act soberly.  
Be ever working, calmly, cheerfully, but never get dizzy.

\* \* \*

There is a difference between intellectual comprehension and seeing.  
Intellectual comprehension gives you vain pride and impotence.  
The seeing gives you tremendous power.

\* \* \*

What is the object of life?

Philosophy has an answer-many answers.

Science has an answer-many answers.

I have a counter-question:—

What is the object of non-life?

\* \* \*

I am convinced that God is and God alone is.

\* \* \*



## II

## ON REASON'S PLANE

We know that the universe is being. We guess it is infinite. We cannot comprehend infinity. Mind is one phase of existence. We are aware of a mental life. As experience is the sole proof of things, we require no further proof for the existence of the mind. This mind, we infer, has many phases and almost inexperience. We infer that all existence is one. We have almost proved it by comparative science. We therefore can identify our being with the Universal Being.

We know nothing more of God.

\* \*

Passions subdued indicate power and lead to peace.  
Live and let live.

\* \*

Enjoyment of good things in life is not wrong, but what is wrong is enslavement to them. Such slavery to things clouds the Reason and Reason is man's highest faculty.

\* \*

The mystic books are of value where they deal with ordinary things and cease to be mystic.

Three-fourths of the spiritualities trumpeted among men have been proved to be ways of earning money, practised by clever scoundrels or self-deluded charlatans.

\* \*

There is more spirituality outside your temples than in them.

\* \*

A reasoning life is not necessarily opposed to a life of peace. Reasoning is not the endless quibbling and hair-splitting of the professional logicians and critics. These are abusers of reason.

\* \*

## III

That man is diviner than his brother whose wills are fewer. Success is the result of concentration, and concentration means the contraction of the area on which our will is exercised.

The contraction of the personal will permits in the being we call 'man', the expansion of what we may call the impersonal will.

The All, of which we form parts, must certainly have a will of its own. Otherwise the All could not be so full of acts. And what is the Universe but a harmonious and endless series of acts?

The will is independent reasoning; it can even be independent of the realm which we ordinarily speak of as consciousness.

\* \* \*

'Where there is a will, there is a way'.

But, Oh, Heavens! Where is the way to get a will?

Instinct replies 'In thyself'.

Yes, in myself, in myself, in myself.

I will that I develop a powerful Will.

I have willed that what I will, I will achieve. I have willed to will anything.

I will, will, will, will. . . . . this is my mantra.

\* \* \*

I will be strong.

I will grow into strength, I will age into youth.

\* \* \*

I will work for power and greatness.

I will achieve glory.

I will annihilate the miseries of man,

I will make mankind happier

I will make the world better.

I will wed truth and power. Oh, Heavens!

Grant unto me truth and power.

\* \* \*

I will work, work, work, work, work.

Toil, toil, toil. . . . .toil, Yes, toil

Shall be my strength, toil my pleasure,

Toil my rule, and toil shall be my way,

Toil my will, toil my weapon,

And toil shall be my glory,

Toil my Charm, toil my Use,

And toil shall be my Custom,

Toil my fort, toil my ground, and toil shall be my play.

Toil shall be my faith, toil my scripture, toil my code,

And toil shall be my mate.

Ever toil, ever success, ever toil

Ever success. . . . . I succeed.

I succeed, I succeed, I succeed.

\* \* \*

Success my law, success my way,  
 And success shall be my bride,  
 Success my glory, success my pride,  
 Success my tune, success my lay,  
 And success shall be my faith,  
 Success my doctrine, success my code,  
 Success my vehicle, success my road,  
 Success my custom, success my mode,  
 Success my life and My death.  
 Success my only God.  
 Success, Success . . . . . Success!  
 I SUCCEED.

\* \* \*

## IV

## MANTRAS ON THE PLANE OF SELF

I am God, I am God, I am God.

\* \* \*

I am prosperous beyond all expectations, for I am God.

\* \* \*

I am prosperous. There is money about me in infinite quantities.  
 I am beginning to utilize all that.

\* \* \*

I am wealthy. I am a prince, for I am God. I am greater than all  
 princes, for I am myself and I am God.

\* \* \*

I am healthy, I am strong, the limbs of my body have received  
 my Godly strength and power. They are agile, they are elastic, they  
 are full of ease and power. All disease has gone out of my body,  
 has gone out into nothing. I am ease, I am strength, I am health.  
 The devil is weak, weakness is weak, 'Nothing' is weak. But I am  
 God, I am power. I am All Things. How can I be weak?

\* \* \*

Oh, the pleasure of being strong healthy and powerful! Oh the  
 joy of divinity! I am divine. So I am infinitely healthy. My eyes,  
 my nose, my mouth, my chest, my hands, my stomach, my legs, my  
 feet, all, all are healthy.

My brain is health incarnate. My mind is free from disease.  
 Ay, my mind is free from all germs of filth and disease. I have

thrown out all filth and disease, yes, thrown out all filth and disease, yes, thrown out into Nothing.

### I AM HEALTH

\* \* \*

I am God, I am God, I am God. I'm Immortal. The hours may pass, the days may roll, the seasons change, and the years die away, but I change not. I am firm, fixed, ever alive, ever real, ever happy. I do believe in all this for I know all this to be true.

I know myself to be immortal, because I am God.

I 'Open myself ever to the inflow of the spirit of God'. That is, I open myself unto Myself. I am filled with Myself. I am filled with God. Immortality is ever tingling in my veins. It makes my blood pure and racy. It has endowed me with a great vigour.

I am ever vigorous, ever alert, ever active, ever loving, ever living, Oh, why am I so full of joy? Because I am God.

I am ever youthful. I age not. Ay, even my body shall ever remain young, because it is filled with the deathless spirit of my divinity. I shall not die. I have no death. No, not even this body shall know death.

How can my body die, when it knows no illness? How can it die, when it is ever recuperated, ever refreshed, ever quickened by the deathless Me? How can it die, when I am God? Do the Gods die? They do not.

And I am a sada-nishta. Hence I cannot conceive of Death. I can only think of an endless joy, the joy of existence. And this joy is mine for ever and for ever.

I manifest myself—I manifest myself through my body and my mind.

This body shall be seen—recognised as that of a God. It is so seen, so recognised. My will shall be the law of the world. For am I not God?

Whatsoever thy mind shall cling to, that will be achieved in thee. And so the ever harmonious ones never feel that there is death for them even if they remain on earth. My body shall shine with the splendour of divinity. It does so shine even now. To all, to all.

My will shall prevail in all things.

It does so prevail even now. It has always been so—it shall ever be so.

My will will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. For I am going to convert this earth into heaven. I am doing it now. And is not this

earth a beautiful heaven? I find it so; and all shall so find it, who think with me. All will find it so, who obey my will. For my will is everybody's will. I am God, sing on, I am God, I am God.

My messages shall be listened to with avidity and men shall obey them with all their might. For I am God.

My messages are God's messages. I am the brother of Krishna and Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad. Ay, they are all rays of the great Sun which is Myself, I am God, I am God, I am God.

I am the father, I am the son, I am the Holy Ghost.

I am the stars, the suns and the planets. I am the four lokas.

I transcend the four.

I am all the subtle things. I am all the bliss.

I am the moralities, the laws, the ways.

I am the religions, the creeds and the sects. I am All, I am All.

I am rain, I am air, I am fire, I am earth, I am all.

I am the clouds, the flash of the lightning, the clap of the thunder.

I am God, I am God, I am God,

So, I direct and the world obeys.

So, I direct and the planets march.

So, I direct and the gods shout for joy.

I see all subtle existences. For I am they.

#### I HAVE FAITH IN MYSELF

I have no need for Prayer. Action is my Prayer. Nature for the Highest is Me. How can I help meditating on it?

There is no higher self and lower self. All is the Brahman.

'The Spirit of infinite life and power that animates all things, that is behind all things, from which all things have come and are continually coming'—that spirit is Me.

This body is one of my infinite adharas. This Chitta is one of my infinite adharas. There is a Chitta loka, a mind-world. Of this mind-world, I am master. The Infinite can play on the Infinitesimal. I, illimitable, indivisible, omnipotent, can for my leela choose this little frame and this little mind. Ay, and put infinite energies and force into this 'little' mind.

I am God, simply God.

I am the Self, the only Self.

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My nature is light.

I am the seer—the light that sees all and sees that it sees—the pure knower. Even Chitta is unconscious; it reflects my light. But, I am both conscious and unconscious. I am God.

The Chitta is a nest of subtle things, —sparks or seeds which are placed there as the result of past mental action. This Chitta is a whole sea of such things. It is a maze. Now these sparks reflect my light. But they take each other for 'conscious' sparks. The earth looks at Mars and says, 'Lo, there revolves a shining planet'. And Mars looks at the earth and says, 'Lo, there wheels an orb of light'. Yet no. Neither has any intrinsic light of its own. Both reflect the light of the sun. So are these seeds of the mind. The eye and the light are above—they are in Me. Thoughts in the presence of the Great Conscious. I am the Light, the Light, I am God.

\* \* \*

O, Is it true that I have been falsely dreaming, — dreaming for long in the past, that I had wants, that I had troubles, that I had cares? Is it true that Indra was for some time wallowing in the mire in a pig's form? Is it true that Siva the Lord was mad for a while? Is it true that Vishnu, the all-pervading, had to pass through several births—as fish, tortoise, pig, half-Man, mannikin and man, before he could manifest himself as a full-blown God-man, ay, God on earth? Yes, this is all true.

But why? Why should the atma forget himself? The atma forgets nought. The atma is self-luminous and so omniscient. He is all there is. Could he not know all? But evolution is his leela. Evolution is the game he has chosen. He is infinite at all centres. But he is also finite at all centres. Each centre, knowing itself as finite, goes through the process of evolution. When perfection is reached and it knows itself as infinite, then it is in endless joy and helps the other centres to follow the path.

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Behold: the divine stream is flowing into the prana-sarira and eats up all the seeds of fear.

I am God.

What shall I fear?

And why?

It is for fear of Me, the Upanishad says, that the sun shines, the fire burns, the wind blows and the worlds revolve.

All things fear ME. I am positive to all things. All things are negative to ME. I command. They obey.

What shall I fear?

And why?

'He who knows the joy of the Brahman, he fears nought, he fears never'—.

I know the joy of the Brahman.

For I am the Brahman.

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The Gunas, I transcend them. I am 'nistraigunya'. I am God. I am God, I am God.

I owe nothing to anybody. How can I be indebted? I am God—the prime principle of good. All the good things that all the creatures possess are my gifts—given out of my love.

I gave Rockefeller his wealth. I gave Wilhelm his empire, I gave Tagore his fame, I gave Ramamurthy his strength. All, all that princes, poets, artists, generals and the rest of men possess, are my gifts, given out of my love. I am the giver, I receive not. I give all that men want; they have but to come and ask and lo! I give like the Kalpataru.

I owe nothing to anyone. Debts have I none. The universe is mine; it is indebted to me for its very existence.

I give, I give, I give

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All powers are mine

By my will the suns move and the planets revolve around them.

By my will the infinite systems are moving and vibrating in infinite space and the infinite existences do exist.

I am God—all powerful—Sarva Saktiman. All the tendencies, all the knowings and all the actions of the universe are mine.

I am the lord, the spirit, the life and the being of the universe.

I care not for powers, for they are mine already. I care not for finite things, as the infinite is mine. All that this particular Adhar, that I have chosen in a particular centre for my leela, requires, shall come unto it, unheeded and unasked-for.

I shall make no demands, I shall merely expect all good things for this Adhar. Ay, Ay, I love this body, else how could I have chosen it for my manifestation?

But I love it as my vehicle, as my servant, as the animal that is here to be used by me, but not as the self, never.

This body and this mind, which I use as tools, shall get all things that are good for them.

This mind of mine is my temple.

I shall keep it clean, pure, wholesome, strong and beautiful.  
It is my golden shrine.

And my Heart is the Holy of Holies.

Being filled with Me—the atman, this body and this mind shall convey all my gloricus powers to the rest of the world for the amelioration, upheaval and protection of the latter.

My organs shall be vehicles of the divine force, which flowing shall reach out the corners of the world and help invigorate, purify and elevate all that may be found on its way. I am God—the Omnipotent.

My blessings go forth to the world.

Behold, I bless all, all of whatever race or nation. Even those nations of the barbarous realms, whom men count as cruel, greedy, and godless, even them I bless.

For they are all myself.

I ordain that all these men shall have the brute in them slain and the god in them liberated.

I ordain that all these men shall grow more and more godly, highminded and tolerant.

I ordain that all hate and hypocrisy, all desire for godless power and ill-gotten gold, shall disappear among the races of men.

Ay, disappear if not by peace, then by suffering.

For nothing shall stand against the will of God.

Great and indescribable shall be the suffering of those who resist the will of God.

I ordain that there shall be equality, mutual tolerance and regard among the children of men.

I bless all, I want all men to be happy and joyous. I want that there should be no disease or famine or war among the races of men.

I bless all. I want that there should be no jails and hospitals, and no need for them. May mankind have happiness, peace and plenty. May they grow in wisdom and in true power.

May they make the path of evolution towards God easy and painless, both for themselves and the lower animals.

May all creatures feel my joy—the joy of the pure atman.

May all sentient beings be filled with love and godly power.

May love be the ruler of this universe.

Good, Good be to all, all, all.

\* \* \*

I have no agitations, mental unrest.

I am the great equilibrium.



I am peace, peace.

Nothing can move me.

Nothing can upset me, nothing can jar on me.

Nothing can ruffle my temper.

I am nistraigunya—beyond the three gunas. I am Peace, Peace, Peace.

I am Lord Vishnu, resting on the primal serpent of wisdom, afloat on the sea of milk—the sea of the milk of pure, spotless, cool, radiant peace.

I am Vishnu, I am Narayana, I am the Parandhama, the Sarvesvara, Sarva-Santi-maya.

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The truth is I am one with, hence I am, the Supreme Being. But still I am conscious of a personality which I very often consider to be myself and which, although it is part of the All, still can conceive of itself as a separate, finite entity and act in accordance with that conception.

Anything which considers itself as a separate small entity in this illimitable universe, illimitable in all ways natural, tends to have interests peculiar to itself as a part from the whole and tends, therefore, to put itself in opposition to the whole in a few respects. The result is what we call pain. What you think, that you are. When you take yourself as but an infinitesimal particle of consciousness, set adrift helpless, in this fearfully immense world, you become so. The result is: you fear, and with reason. For how can a particle be safe, secure and happy (and it wants to be all this) when it is surrounded by an infinity which is at best indifferent to its little self.

There is no safety, no permanent gratification for what considers itself a cell in an ocean.

When men cannot realise in themselves the Paramatman, the Supreme Being, the next best thing for them to do is to take themselves as parts of a whole with which they are in perfect harmony and accord.

When you cannot know yourself as the Being of the Universe, at least try to make peace with the Universe; peace, entire and unconditional.

# TRUTH

Ever will I trust in thee, O truth.  
 In the temple of my heart shalt thou ever shine.  
 Keep thou my vision, true star of our stormiest nights,  
 Mother of liberty, maker of strength,  
 Bride of the four-faced Lord who made these worlds.  
 O thou, white river of bliss,  
 Soul of being and its only light,  
 Hold thou my tongue.  
 Ever will I trust in thee, O truth;  
 Not all the fiends of the triple worlds shall prevent me.  
 In the temple of my heart shalt thou shine for ever.

PEACE  
(Christmas 1916)

My heart loves Peace.  
But once I fought against God. I raised my head  
    like a tower.  
My arms were of steel, of fire.  
My pride was great, for folly hath pride.  
And I hurt the weak for pleasure.  
I preached that woman was a slave.  
For I knew brother man was the same.  
I cast small stones at birds, for the joy of breaking wings.  
I deemed it no stealth to steal from the shrine,  
For I deemed that this God was but stone.  
But no, but no.  
This God is real, for He smote at pride.  
Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

PEACE  
(Christmas 1916)

My heart is full of peace,  
But once I have a thought of you,  
The peace is gone,  
My heart is full of you,  
My peace is gone, for you are here,  
And I am here for you,  
I grieved that you were gone,  
For I know that you are here,  
I will still grieve for the day of your going,  
I do not know when you will return,  
For I do not know what God will do,  
But no, for me,  
This God is real, for the world is here,  
For God is the beginning of wisdom.

Part II  
PROSE

Part II  
PROSE

# TO THE BEING OF THE UNIVERSE

## A Dedication

It is absolutely essential that I should be the complete master of the mind.

'But what am I? I can do nothing of my own accord. I am responsible for not a single one of my thoughts, nor a single one of my acts,' says the devotee of a particular kind; 'God does everything; everything; everything; everything.' All right; we do not object to the good old doctrine of the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita that God is the doer of all deeds by means of His Prakriti; you, my brother, and I are not at all responsible for anything. We accept, too, the wondrous doctrine of Ramanuja, that a man must renounce all sense of responsibility for anything that takes place within his own mind, as for what takes place without.

But—there is a very great 'but'. Good mental habits, otherwise called good thoughts, as well as bad mental habits, otherwise called bad thoughts, are the architects of our future. There it becomes our duty most silently and completely to throw away all evil thoughts, all thoughts of weakness and error and sin, as poisonous weeds that infest the fair fields of the human consciousness.

If nervous shocks kill a living being—if they actually murder a man—then are we not bound to keep free of such shocks? How do nervous shocks take place at all? Any man can realise that, in his body, nervous shocks are created by the great fiends of fear, suspicion, disgust, hatred, pride, vanity etc.

I am not willing to die; oh great father of the universe, God, I believe in Thee, I believe in Thee, I believe in Thee, O God. Save me from these accursed nervous shocks. Save me, O God, O my father and my mother, O God, my father, my friend, O God! O God! O Being of the world, now even now, make me immune from nervous shocks. Take fear and doubt and hatred and disgust and indifference and vanity and all foul qualities away, far away, from my mind.

So that I may become love itself, that I may love all men and creatures love my neighbours and relatives as I ought to; that I may

injure none; nor others, nor myself; that all may recognise instantaneously in me their higher self and their ideal.

Oh, may my mind cling to the ideal, and may it so occur that all men and all women, children, beasts and birds may recognise that I have converted myself into the ideal which is—Thee!

Through the mouth of Jagadish Chandra Bose and many other sages, Thou hast revealed to mankind the high truth that the mind and its activities are wholly subject to the will and that is a great consolation and matter for much rejoicing, that my will is the absolute, unquestioned master of my mind.

The mind may be put into any mould, any groove, by means of the will. The mind is passive clay to the mighty hands of the will. Then why grieve? O Father, O Father, O Father,—where is any ground for doubt, for the slightest doubt about anything? Why should the mind fear? When thoughts are architects of life and thoughts are absolutely under the control of the will—I rejoice, O Father, I thank thee again, and again, for the beautiful scheme of things—for this grand assurance of victory over death and sorrow.

May Thy holy feet be ever glorified—I am Thine.



## THE SERVICE OF GOD

### The Two Ideals

The Aryan Mind—as Mrs. Annie Besant has done well to indicate in a recent article of hers—has pointedly differed from the Christian mind in its conception of God—that is to say, the universal principle of being and loving. And God appears to us, so we have heard, in the form in which we invoke Him. For the Infinite can be perceived in an infinite number of ways. And among the points of view, so far permitted to the race of men, many are complimentary, many are explanatory, and a few polar, in their relations with one another.

We find that the Aryan and Christian realisations have been polar, denying each other at their ends, while united at the base.

The one has a martyr for its ideal, the Christ, the God of suffering, loving but slain, triumphant but dying. Its saints are victims to God, its Church claims the blood of the martyrs for her seed. Its symbol is the Cross. Its chief effort is to wash off the load of sin by denying oneself.

The other upholds Rishis, soldiers of God, but the lovers of earth, with earthly happiness, and not suffering for their watchword, fighting error under the standard of God, but working for longevity and an illustrious progeny.

It worships as its foremost incarnation, Krishna, the shepherd-boy, with His flute of immortal melody, the darling of the fair shepherd maids, the comrade and charioteer of valiant Arjuna, his divine teacher, and his brother Dharmaputra's most trusted counselor. Its gospel is the expansion and the illumination, not the denial, of oneself. Those who serve the highest must at least have peace, plenty, and happiness. The monkeys of Rama even when slain, do return to life. The earth is not for us a reformatory, but our rich heritage. Suffering is a good lesson, deserved by those who serve not God and love not His ways. To the Godly-Shreyas, the Good. Our symbols are images of the various attitudes of being and loving, not the cross of pain, nor the agony of death.

The seed of the Hindu Church is good song and good cheer. Agni and Varuna love tender meat and the juice of the soma-plant.

Shiva and Vishnu, holier and higher, are pleased with flowers and fruits. But none of the gods has any use for human blood, except the Durga of a few extinct cults among the lower classes and certain exalted schools of allegorical mysticism.

We perish not at the feet of error's fortresses. Where we arrive, error exists not. For we serve God, and He can never reward His service by humiliation and death. In His service we enter into a greater, richer, prouder, and happier life. When men find God, the earth becomes a Paradise. Where the son of the Hindu God-Parvati Kumara—is present, there is no Herod, no Pharisee. Men and gods serve each other, and truth is adored, glorified and victorious, not crucified. The way to God is not by washing away sins, but by bringing light where darkness was. We reach purity, not by suffering, but by illumination. Of course illumination is often found by suffering, but illumination can be had in a different and higher way—by trust and by honesty.

But a nominal Christian may not have a true idea of the Christian faith, even as a nominal Aryan may be absolutely untouched by the teachings of the Vedas and the stories of the Puranas. The shaven crown does not always indicate the saint, and the holy thread but rarely shows the Brahmin.

But where the two Ideals may be really operative, the results produced are bound to be diametrically opposite. Well has Mrs Besant pointed out that the West is in need of the teachings of the East and the East needs the practicality of the West.

The Bible saves. The Veda immortalises.

The Bible saves—by the Cross. The Veda immortalises by soma rasa, the spiritual peace.

The Bible stands for a life that suffers to reach the holiness of God. The Veda stands for a life plunging into the high for reaching the splendour of God.

## THE SIDDHA AND THE SUPERMAN

Names are images. Carlyle has spoken to us of the profound poetry lying hidden in all nomenclature. Meditate, for a moment, on any important and vital word of a people's language and it will reveal to your mind something of the modes of thought, something of the historic reminiscences and of the spiritual aspirations of that people. For instance, a certain school of Western thought has evolved the term 'Superman'. Nature has made us men. 'Let us', says this school, 'strive to become more than men';—whereas we in India have our Siddha, meaning the 'Perfected man'.

The Siddha does not worship 'the will for power', for he knows that power is merely one of the many things necessary for a perfect life and therefore can never be a supreme end in itself.

He worships the will, pure and simple—the Sakti of God. The will of the Universe, the All-Will, the will not merely for power but for being and loving, that will should, in full measure, be realised by man in himself if he seeks perfection.

I wonder if the Western school above referred to, has, in any of its treatises, described fully and systematically the methods to be adopted for acquiring the will to power. But here, in India, we have a yogic literature which, in spite of many interpolations and mediaeval accretions, still contains the most scientific and rational treatment of the question of consciously accelerating human evolution. By will is this universe made. By will is this universe maintained in motion and activity. By will does thought become manifested in material forms. By will does life stand.

The Siddha realises that the will in him forms part of this All-Will. A conscious realisation of this fact tends to light up the individual will with the divine fire, more and more assured of immortality and invincibility.

And the Siddha adores the All-Will, day and night. He meditates on it in his moments of silence, he makes it the theme of his songs, his motto, his battle-cry, the awakener of his faculties and the sustainer of his actions.

Teacher or king, vowed celibate or father of a large and prosperous family, poet or soldier-whatever may be the role in life that

the Siddha has chosen to play, it will be sanctified by the Will Divine and shine with the lustre of immortality.

But in all that he may do, his heart will ever be free from the taint of self-aggrandisement, of harm, or indifference to the interests of other beings. If his duty sometimes impels him to impose a severe correction on obstinate evil-doers, he does so with love in his heart, hidden, perhaps, but very real.

Above all, the Siddha is a democrat. Equality is to him a matter of utter reality, as he has seen the basic unity of all beings.

Where Nietzsche's 'superman' would talk of the 'hero', the Siddha speaks of the children of God, the living rays of the universal sun.

Heroism and 'supermanism' are, by certain people, wrongly identified with the pursuit of war and kingly domination, exclusively. The Siddha, of course, is a hero, for heroism is one of the conditions of human perfection. But he need not necessarily be a war lord. The shastras tell us that there are four types of heroes—the hero of war (the yuddha-vira), the hero of sacrifice (dana-vira), the hero of Duty (karma-vira) and the hero of compassion (daya-vira). He may be anyone of the four.

Firmly established in internal silence, fearless of death, disease, and the devil, serene in the strength of God, and happy in the knowledge of immortality, resplendent in energy, irresistible in action, tireless in labour, and full-souled in service, the Siddha lives amidst men, a representative of the will Divine, a veritable messenger from Heaven, protector of men, loving, elevating, immortalising.

## IMMORTALITY

A thousand voices have declared it in the past and some are proclaiming it today, but still it is not an 'old truth'. It is very new, this truth of 'immortality'. Many millions declare it, and many millions realise it, in all the worlds.

Man can make himself immortal here on earth by making his personality one with the soul of the Universe. This unification can be achieved by the ceaseless exercise of will. Collect all the life-streams and thought-streams in thy being, making them all into a mighty river. Let this mighty river flow towards the truth for ever. And the truth shall make thee immortal.

The body must be prepared for holding and reflecting the light even before the latter is realised in the mind. This can be done by dispensing with all superfluities in dress and by a constant and intelligent motion of the limbs. We must give the body sufficient natural food, when it really requires it. We must keep it clean and tidy, vigorous and active. But we must never worry about it, never fear for it and never release our complete mastery over it. Life can be made electric, thoughts luminous, and the soul joyous by exercising all our inner and outer faculties justly and well, all the while 'meditating on the Truth'.

For a Divine Truth is the first reality of man's experience. There is a Beauty in the heart of this world. All conscious things are aware of it in various degrees. Indeed some may deny the All-Great of the Universe while they are arguing either with themselves or with others. But all have felt it. It is what you know as existence, life, thought, passion, aspiration or love. The All-Great is the foundation of the sense of reality. The world lives. It has therefore a life working in and through its body. It is the life of the Universe that the sages have glorified by the name Divine.

Deep in the heart of nature, there is an unending flow of harmony. He who drinks of this harmony attains immortality. Trees, stars, and clouds, the ripples on the stream and the fair maids of Brindaban—they all melted into one joy of life when the notes of the divine flute were heard. The voice of immortality shall make thee realise that thou art one with the dawn and the night, the stars

and the pebbles. And yet it is this realisation that a man must have before he can ever hear the voice of immortality.

Self-surrender is the supreme condition of winning the universal life. Men will part with their wealth, their rights, and even their lives, at the call of religion. But when you ask them to exchange their human self for the divine self, which is exactly what all great religions want them to do, they refuse. For the wine of mortality has a terrible fascination for most of us—and yet by flinging myself into the blazing fire of universal reality, I do not lose myself. I emerge from the ordeal, shining and deathless. Brothers and sisters, come let us strive to become immortal by losing ourselves in the supreme light.

## FATALISM

Does fatalism lead to inertia, and consequent decadence? Certain people say that the East 'fell' by its fatalism. What they mean is that Asiatic nations have, during the past few centuries, been thrown into the shade by the superior commercial and political organisations of the West and also that the Asiatics have, during the same period, lagged behind the Europeans in public 'education'. But we were much worse fatalists than now, at the time when Arabia could impose her culture on Europe by superior force of arms. Chandragupta, Vikramaditya, Akbar, Shivaji—were not these men confirmed fatalists?

But is fatalism tenable scientifically? Is it a fact? Now I am writing these lines. Is it true that I could not possibly have helped doing so? In external nature all things are preordained. That is everyday experience. Are human affairs subject to the same law? Am I as helpless in this world-current as a straw on the mad waves of a torrent?

I will not attempt to answer these questions scientifically. I shall only invite your attention to the fact that on any hypothesis of the Universe, materialistic or other, the human being is strictly a part of the world. I cannot believe that the world law may be suddenly reduced to the play of chance and uncertainty by the freakish and accidental whims of one of the tiniest centres of world-activity, namely, the human personality.

Man is like the finger that writes; God is the directing spirit. I believe this and therefore I am a fatalist. Free Will which God has given me as a gift, does not negate fatalism. My will may be free or not, as God chooses. Anything is free or not as God chooses to make it.

It has been observed that the inconscient behave more wisely than the conscient. As wisdom is the supreme end of conscious existence, the latter must know itself to be as utterly a tool in the hands of God as a piece of wood or a ball of clay.

Sankara says that God alone is real and the rest an apparition. Other religions urge you to lose your personal sense in the vision and in the enjoyment of God. All this has only one meaning. Trust

in God and be free. That is the true fatalism. The Gita is clear on the point that whoever says to himself 'I am the doer of such and such a deed', is a fool, because, the old book points out, 'all things here are done directly by Nature. Nature does not cease to be Nature merely because she is using me or you as her instrument instead of using the wind or the waves'.

Duty means work, work which comes to me in the most natural manner, which Nature does through me. The word is used in other senses also, as when they speak of excise duties and so on. I have nothing to say against the vulgar conceptions of duty except that they are vulgar. A certain human being once made me understand that he considered it his duty to bear false witness against his neighbour, because, he said, he would get some money thereby and be able to feed his wife and children. But the fatalist says: The Lord does all things. Through the coward, He bears false witness. But through me, He speaks the truth. It is my fate to speak the truth, for I am a fatalist and fear nothing.

No, the fatalist, who is still a householder, does not deny that he has certain defined duties to perform towards the gods, men and the demons, also the beasts, birds and so on. It is only the sage who has conquered the self and the world, who has made the great surrender to the gods, it is only he who can openly discard all duties, always excepting those we all own to Heaven. For the freest man is still the truest servant of the Lord.



## THE DAWN

'She widens from the extremity of heaven over the earth. Meet ye the dawn as she shines wide towards you and with surrender bring forward your complete energy. . . . By heaven's illuminings one perceives her a bearer of Truth'.—Rig-Veda 111, 61.

In this deathless imagery of the great seer, Vishvamitra, we have a fine picture of all types of renaissance, individual or national, material or spiritual. It must be noted, first of all, that, to the Aryan mind, the 'Dawn' is never a product of existing earthly conditions. It always comes on us from the extremity of Heaven. It is always from the realms above the mental that the great light descends which makes for regeneration in men and in nations. And when, after the long hours of the sombre night, dawn comes forth the 'Bride of Bliss', the 'Vision of Felicity' and 'Richly-stored with Substance', you must advance to meet her and throw yourself at her feet, in full surrender in order that she may transform you into an immortal.

All new knowledge is 'revealed'. All truth comes of inspiration. If you ask any scientist how he made his best discoveries, he will tell you that they just came to him from somewhere. It is a common experience with poets that they receive their best songs from above. A few days ago, I asked Sri Aurobindo Ghose how he got his new and marvellous theory of Vedic interpretation. 'It was shown me', he said, and I knew he meant it in a very literal sense. All truth is inspired. The popular mistake is to suppose that this revelation, this inspiration, must ever be the unique privilege of a few souls specially favoured of the gods. But the Veda tells us that we can all bring forward our complete energy by yielding fully to the Dawn.

And, of course, the 'complete energy' of any man is only another name for the supreme energy—the Para Shakti of God.

All is one. And the purely spiritual verses of Vishvamitra can well be adopted as the authoritative text describing the character and the scope of the great movement of intellectual and moral regeneration in our country. Addressing the Dawn divine, Vishvamitra sings 'O Thou of plentitude, Goddess ancient, yet ever young! Thou movest many-thoughted, following the law of thy activities, O giver of every boon, sending forth the pleasant voices of the

Truth.' . . . . What a beautiful picture is this of a great Renaissance like ours!

Again, 'From Dawn as she approaches shining out on thee, O Agni, thou seekest and attainest the substance of Delight.'

'Agni', says Aurobindo Ghose, 'is the illumined will.' Let your higher Will, the 'fire' in you meet the Dawn. It shall then seek and attain the 'Substance of Delight.'

## RASA—THE KEYWORD OF INDIAN CULTURE

Rasa primarily means essence, juice, taste, water, blood, elixir, beauty, sentiment—these are a few among the score of meanings given to this word by the Sanskrit dictionaries.

When, forgetful of the self and the world, you are borne in ecstasy to the realm of pure being, you are said to enjoy the rasa of immortality.

Or again, when a passionate grief has devoured your heart, and you rend the skies by your head against the earth, you are still enjoying a rasa—that of sorrow—of wild selfpity. It is the lower form of the Karuna Rasa, so the books tell us. Karuna is compassion and its higher form is, of course, the pity that you feel for the pain of others.

All life is Rasa. Our ancient writers reduce all forms of experience, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual into nine Rasas—Love, Mirth, Compassion, Heroism, Wrath, Fear, Repugnance, Wonder, and Peace. But they say that all these are one, and the same. As moonlight is reflected variously by the clear spring and muddy pond, by the moon-stone and the pile of bricks, so does one and the same rasa manifest itself variously under various conditions in the human mind.

What is Rasa, then?

It is the form of Shakti, the feminine aspect of the Supreme Being. For God is two-fold—being and Energy, Masculine and Feminine, Absolute and Relative, Purusha and Shakti.

In the unity of these two aspects, existence becomes possible. And in the manifestations of Shakti, existence moves and acts. It is eternal, this Lila of Shiva, the being, and Shakti, His energy. And the wise ones say that she is ever a virgin, ever of a marvellous and immortal beauty, this Shakti of God.

And, man, what art thou?

Thou art a centre of this play, the one amongst the countless, the now in the midst of ever.

God is in thee, in the innermost depth of thy being, watching and silently enjoying the beauty of this Shakti's perennial dance and ceaseless music—sad or joyful, aggressive or shrinking, madly passionate or sublimely calm.

Thou art nothing, O man, but an enchanted being, and His ever-enchanting, ever-beloved energy. Shiva-Shakti is thy name—even as it is the name of all things.

Now the nature of this Shakti is Rasa. It is juicy, tasteful and beautiful, and infinite.

This is the basic theory of Indian Culture, the fundamental justification of India's arts and her literature, her aspirations and achievements, her life and her actions.

And, today, her renaissance means her return to this fundamental doctrine of life.

Rasa, then, is the magic word that has awakened the Mother from her slumber of Centuries, that has brought light into her eyes and gladness into her heart.

'What has been shall yet be'. Her music will yet be recognised as the most marvellous in the world; her literature, her painting and her sculpture will yet be a revelation of beauty and immortality to the wondering nations; her life and acts will yet be ennobling examples for a grateful humanity—for India is coming back to a recognition of rasa as the secret of all life.

All rasa is one. The trembling coward is wasting the material which can be utilised for making himself a hero.

In this drama of life our parts are chosen by ourselves. Let us be gods and goddesses.

## BLUNTING THE IMAGINATION

'The greatest crime that can be laid at the doors of one generation by another is that of blunting the imagination of the latter, because where there is no imagination and where there is no vision of a higher and nobler life, the people perish'. (*New India*, 18 Feb.).

Truer words were never written.

For the imagination—not that of the idler and the dreamy parasite, but the vigorous and positive imagination of the worker, 'the vision of higher and nobler life'—this imagination is the mother of a nation's hope—this imagination makes a nation's seers, its poets and its builders of all types.

This imagination is the way to immortality, the ladder that man climbs to arrive at divinity.

And, assuredly, 'the last generation (in India) had come perilously near that stage' of losing this imagination and the people had all but perished. A few exceptional souls there have been, however, who, in a spirit of true religion, preserved this fire from total extinction. Did not Ramatirtha and Vivekananda belong to the last generation? Did not Tata and Tagore, and our social and political reformers belong to that set?

Whatever may have been the merits of the Bhashya writer, the sacred annotators of orthodoxy—and I am not scholarly enough to measure their values with accuracy—there is no doubt that the generations of brahmins who deified those annotations, led the way inevitably towards 'that stage' which the *New India* so deeply deplores. They blunted the nation's imagination, and, with their 'Vaidyanatha Codes', and their super-annotations, very nearly cost us our life.

The temples are 'in ruins' and the 'sacred tanks' are filled with 'heaps of dust and slime, rags of obnoxious clothing and all kinds of wretched weeds', and naturally, the hamlets have become 'dirty and repulsive'—because men who call themselves intellectual, who call themselves brahmins—the truth-seers, and vairagis—the Selfless ones—these men began to quarrel about texts and to neglect souls, to deify phrases and to despise humanity. Even our 'modern education' is far from perfect in helping to kindle this sacred 'imagination'.

For even among the products of our Universities, how few are great scientists or great teachers, great builders, great creators!

The breath of life is, however, blowing over the land.

The gods are once again turning to us with kindly eyes and smiling faces. And here and there we have a Bose and Tagore, amidst, alas! a formidable horde of philistines, pharisees and other futilities. But we are thankful to the gods—for signs have we seen that the Ruskinian 'half-a-dozen men' are coming, who, 'with one day's work, could cleanse the hamlets and dig the tanks' and 'purify the temples'.

Brothers and sisters, imagine yourselves to be wise and great. That means, convince yourselves and, of course, convince others. Brothers and sisters, imagine the Mother as a Queen of great beauty and unfading youth, leading humanity on the paths of peace and immortality.

Imagine yourselves as noble and godly. And act on this imagination.

## THE CRIME OF CASTE

'Four varnas were made by me according to variations of character and work'.

The Gita says this, and it specifies the occupations and traits of each varna. Everyone knows what they are. I may be permitted to call this Chaturvarna (Four Varna System) by the name of 'the Gita theory of society', although it is well known that the same ideal is upheld in most of the ancient writings. I do so for convenience. The Gita theory may, or may not, promote the highest interests of man. It was never tried in its pure form, or, if it was, history tells us nothing about it. As a hypothesis, it is one of the best and the most attractive. Atleast some of us think so.

But the caste law is leagues away from the Gita theory. For the brahmins have long ceased to make Vedas and Shastras; they have long ceased to think seriously of eternal verities or the sciences of this earth. They have totally forgotten the meaning of the older and purer writings. They adopt all professions. They are cake-sellers, railway clerks, and police-constables. And their general intelligence and character are naturally on a level with their pursuits. The Kshatriyas have long ceased to govern.

The Vaishyas and Shudras have followed suit. They are honest but they are very ignorant and down-trodden-very far indeed from performing their duties as prescribed by the Gita ideal of society. And instead of the four Varnas, you have four thousand castes. And you sometimes quote ethnology, eugenics, hydrostatics and what not, to support these four thousand castes! But, alas, the ignorant masses of our country have been made to believe that this caste chaos is a special divine gift to our country and whoever transgresses it has to go to hell. It is this belief, more than anything else, that makes people insensible to the injurious results of caste. If you really have your justification in ethnology or hydrostatics, then you have been cheating people all along by telling them a different story. No science can justify cheating.

The sole remedy is in inter-dining and inter-marrying. The others are mere quack remedies of an anaesthetic character. There are many difficulties in the way of applying this remedy on a large scale. One very real difficulty is the fact that many members of the

purely vegetarian sects cannot physically endure the smell of flesh and fish at a distance of five yards. But the vegetarian votaries, consisting of both brahmins and non-brahmins, can marry among themselves. There is no rational excuse for not doing that. I repeat there are many—but not insuperable—difficulties in the way of applying that remedy. But there is no other remedy that the human mind can think of.

Sometimes people who seem half-inclined to admit the injustice and futility of caste suddenly turn round and shout: 'But they have similar prejudices in South Africa, North America and Oceania'.

If other people are fools, that is no reason why we should be such. If others today are thoughtless by committing the mistake that we committed many centuries ago and became much degraded in consequence thereof, it is our duty to warn them. But we ought not to make it an excuse for not rectifying the mistake for which we have been so signally punished by the laws of Nature.

'But the masses of people are quite content', says one. 'It is only the intellectual classes that are always harping on this old grievance. From Buddha to Vivekananda, many have been the sages who condemned this chaos. But it persists. It is in the blood of the Indian people'.

I reply that the people are not contented. That is proved by the very fact that during these two thousand and five hundred years great ones have again and again risen from the ranks of the people and condemned this caste in no measured language. It has lost most of its saving features. Little vitality is now left in it. The form remains with a shadow of life and a million bad wounds on it. Let none rejoice that caste takes a long time in dying, for its life will be all the ghastlier for that.

Who knows? Who knows that the brahmins may not purify themselves by the water of knowledge and then recognise that no caste can be irredeemably impure? Who knows that the other castes which have been out-heroding Herod, the castes which are fonder of their chains than the brahmins themselves, even they may not behold the vision of the age and proclaim democracy?

If only the brahmins of today read aright the signs of the times, then they will see that democracy, far from being a thing to be dreaded, will be as great a joy to them as to any other class. The three watch words of France—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity—when fully understood by men, will really prove to be the highest guides of human evolution.



## THE PLACE OF WOMAN

In the mystic symbolism of the Hindus Shiva wears his divine consort, who is also his mother, as part of his body; Vishnu wears the goddess of wealth on his chest; and the four-faced Father of the Worlds holds the soul of learning on his tongue. Christianity, in its earlier form of Roman Catholicism, attributed a partially (but not wholly) divine status to Mary, mother of God. But Protestantism has dethroned her from that position and rendered her merely human. Islam, some allege—I hope it is only slander—denies women any soul at all.

Civilisation is the taming down of man by woman. Men, indeed, have till now been trying, with scant success, to civilise, one another by means of the sword and the bullet, the prison-cell the gibbet and the rack. But it has been the lot of woman to have no other weapon than fables, parables and symbols in her work of civilising man.

I don't mean to say that man had not the major part in the making of spiritual symbols and creeds. But I do mean to say that everywhere those symbols and creeds are upheld and preserved more devoutly by woman than by man. I have read a European free-thinker pathetically complaining that it is woman's firm adhesion to the Church that has saved it and still maintains it as a potent force, notwithstanding the mighty strides of rationalistic science. And in India, we know, but for the adamant stand taken by our women, all our temples and images would have become mere powder and dust by this time before the terrific onslaughts of European Christianity and European materialism.

The mere historic personalities of Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Christ—which, by the way, have been seriously doubted, every one of them—do not, even among the faithful, count for so much as the mythological or spiritual examples. A Krishna or a Buddha, who was once a great man or an incarnation or what you will, but who, since, has become as dead as Alexander the Great, ought not to mean much for anyone. The object of men in adoring these examples is that they also must try to live like those heroes. And it is towards

this realisation that woman has been striving far more strenuously than man.

Where woman comes, comes art. And what is art, if not the effort of humanity to move towards divinity?

There is a saying in Sanskrit: 'Grihini Griham Uchyate' (Home is but a synonym for wife).

Nor is it without significance that the country of spiritual liberation, India, should, at this hour of her mighty awakening, have adopted as her most potent spell, the words 'Vande Mataram' that is, 'I salute the Mother'. That means that the first work of a regenerated India will be to place the Mother, i.e. womankind, on the pedestal of spiritual superiority. Others speak of their Fatherlands. To us the nation is represented by the word 'Mata'.

But if woman has always been the civiliser and, therefore the spiritual superior of man, how did she ever become enslaved? For it is not only among Indians but also among the Europeans, the Chinese, the Japanese and the Hottentots as, indeed among all brutes and birds and insects that the female has been content, till now, to occupy an enslaved, or if you please, a subordinate position to the male. Why is this? I reply: It is because the female loved the male too well to think of slaying the latter. For it is the masculine habit-advocated by an Anglo-Indian journal, only a few years back to slay those who do not desire to be enslaved by you. At any rate, that is the principle on which all masculine governments have till now been based. Woman, I say, could not think of slaying you under any circumstances. She loved you too well for that. And therefore, she consented at first to be your slave with a view to civilising you gradually and finding her place as your superior eventually.

Might is not Right; Right is Might. That is what Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Curzon, and other people tell us now. The question, therefore, that the masculine sex has got to answer is this: 'Will you forego the rights of your physical might and liberate woman gratuitously, as the Indians seem to expect the British to do? Or will you go on tyrannising over the age-long sufferer, woman, until the gods send more of their wrath on poor earth'.

Nations are made of homes. And so long as you do not have

justice and equality fully practised at home, you cannot expect to see them practised in your public life. Because it is one's life at home that is the basis of public life. And a man who is a villain at home cannot find himself suddenly transformed into a saint, the moment he gets to the Councils or to 'Courts of Justice'.

And the spirit of Hinduism, pre-eminently among the religions of the world, has ever been to help woman in rising to her true position in human society. It has been a long and painful struggle. The progress has been tragically slow here, as elsewhere. But at this hour, when the sages of India have stepped forth to guide the soul of mankind, the ascent of woman to her proper place in society has become imminent and inevitable.

## FREEDOM FOR WOMEN

Ages ago, in Vedic times, our nation had produced women like Maitreyi and Gargi who were able to take part in the discussions and debates of the highest thinkers of the land. But, today, what is woman's status in our country? There is no use shrinking from strong language when we have to deal with terrible facts. Our women today are slaves. I am quite aware that we still retain something of the old idea that the mother must be looked upon as a goddess by her children. But every woman is a wife before she is a mother; and the position of the wife, with us, is that of a petted slave—more slave than pet; she must not speak to strangers; in the North she is not supposed to see men, except the prescribed ones.

Sometimes when we are pleased to give our ladies the benefits of 'education' we are careful to see that it scarcely reaches further than enabling them to read a few moral tales and 'chastity' novels and to play some hackneyed tunes on the contemptible harmonium. Cooking is their chief trade and child-bearing their only contribution to the life and progress of humanity. And the splendid result of all this, which we sometimes make a matter for boasting, is that our women are 'the pillars of orthodoxy and conservatism'—which means they are immensely helpful in maintaining and perpetuating the conditions of slavery in our religious, social, and political lives.

The root evil is the idea that has almost become instinctive among our men folk that a woman enlightened and liberated, who can face the world boldly, and treat everyone as her equals, cannot remain chaste.

Now every intelligent human being will admit that chastity is one of the highest of social virtues. But, certainly, it is not everything in life. Indeed no single virtue can help the infinite realisations of a liberated human existence. But it is sheer ignorance to suppose that freedom will lead women to disregard the virtue of chastity. Was Maitreyi unchaste? Were Andal, the God-intoxicated poetess of Vaishnavism, and Avvai, the fearless moralist, susceptible to the lures of the flesh? Of course, we cannot expect liberated women to be passively and brutishly submissive and obedient to all the fancies and follies of men. And in modern India there is quite a rage for

these blessed virtues of submission and obedience. Inept political leaders, grown old in their ineptitude, are loudly complaining that the younger women are not submissive and obedient to all the fancies and follies of men. The brahmins—our 'gods on earth'—who have nowadays become famous for making sweetmeats and writing romantic police reports, are waxing indignant that the 'lower classes' are gradually losing their 'virtues' of obedience and submission. 'Heaven-born' administrators and editors of dull, commercial newspapers are wondering why the 'natives' are not quite as submissive and obedient as dogs and cows. The police peon wants the whole village to be obedient to him. The priest wants submission. I wonder which class in India does not worry itself about the growing disobedience on the part of 'our inferiors'.

The situation is nauseating. We are men, that is to say, thinking beings. Our chief work in this world is the understanding and glorification of God's ways and not the enslaving of God's creatures. If any man or nation forgets this, that man or nation is doomed to perdition.

The slave and the slave-driver are equally unhappy, equally accursed. It staggers me to think how humanity has managed so far to be even partially blind to this central, essential, most shining truth of God's world. But I feel it as a special shame that we Indians, with our magnificent Vedas and Upanishads, should still be giving sacred names to despicable forms of slavery.

I am anxious that responsible men throughout the country should give the most serious consideration to this question of woman's status in India and do something immediately to make Indian womanhood free, enlightened and really human, that is to say, divine.

## LOVE AND MARRIAGE

The little birds do not hasten to seek their mates as soon as they come out of their eggs. The laws of Nature are divine; they are the visible manifestations of the Will Divine that ordains this universe. And it is a law of Nature that the male and the female shall unite only after reaching their adolescence, their pakva (ripeness).

The first and spontaneous love of two souls, that strange and mystic soul-magnetism which poets have ever glorified as a fore-taste of the 'immortal realms' is Nature's guarantee that these two souls have been made for each other. It is idle to pretend that parents or anyone else can know more than God. We often condemn true love to be the way of sin by making matrimony precede adolescence and free choice. The lads and lasses will choose for themselves and quite often that choice will not tally with the parental 'arrangement'.

But 'love is blind'. It reasons not. And yet its instincts are sure. And never can it be blinder than that spirit of commercialism and social fear that prompt the parents to marry their infants even as young as two or three years old.

I have seen, among, wealthy and respectable brahmins, babies wrenched from their mother's breasts, yelling, in order to be made wives to equally helpless males—all according to the sacred rites ordained by the holy scriptures.

Men live long, useful, and happy lives where they strive to understand Nature's intentions and follow them scrupulously. But they perish like plague stricken rats where they set themselves up or their grand-fathers as wiser than nature.

My youthful brothers and sisters of the Motherland, to you my appeal is this: defer marriage as long as possible, even after reaching adolescence. And when you feel sure that you have found your soul's true companion, love, claim and win—and praise the gods! If any self-constituted guardians of effete forms and conventions stand in your way, ask them to mind their own business!

My youthful brothers and sisters of the Motherland, love, love truly and love against heavy odds. For, by love shall ye be liberated. It is the living nectar lent by the Immortal God, to poor, mortal men.

We live because we love; not because we make compromises. Love is life. Custom is nothing.

## PATRIOTISM AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

It is a commonplace that to the true patriot, his patriotism is part of his religion. And we find that the duties of patriotism, like the purely religious duties, are often the easiest to neglect even for men who honestly believe themselves to be patriots.

For instance, most of us do not fully appreciate the noble truth insisted upon by the foremost Vaishnava saints that a shudra, who is a devotee of Vishnu, must be held as pure and great as a brahmin devotee of the highest breed. 'All are equal among the servants of the Lord'. Are not all equal who serve our Mother?

It is wrong to allow religious differences to divide the patriotic camp. For instance, there is Prof. Sundararama Iyer who believes that a brahmin without a particular form of tuft and a particular kind of painting on his forehead cannot be a Hindu. He fancies that if a man went to Japan, England or America for the acquisition of knowledge and, of course, dined with foreigners, while there—for, in Rome, you must dine with the Romans—such a man is unfit to call himself a pure Hindu. He thinks that if you took away the sacred thread from Vasishta or Yajna-Valkya, they would have ceased to be brahmins and Hindus. I happen to differ from the worthy professor, aye differ fundamentally, radically, absolutely. I think that even we brahmins are men and each man's tuft or dinner is his own private concern, not Prof. Sundararaman's.

Now, on account of this difference, would it be right on my part to obstruct the worthy Professor in any patriotic endeavour that he may undertake?

True, patriotism must be spiritual, but that does not mean that differences of belief concerning the nature of the other world should be brought into the theatre of secular nation-building.

Of course, we must have our religious disputes. Religion is the one thing where conformity is more dangerous than any other. But, in the service of the Motherland, we are all of one creed and one religion, one caste and one colour, one aim and one ideal. In the temple of the Mother whoever enters is holy.

## THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

Party differences are inevitable in all politics. Divergent interests as well as differences in character in intellectual perception, and in temperament have made it impossible in all countries and in all ages for any large representative assembly to be without parties holding conflicting views on almost all vital questions.

But when men bring into political life the bitterness of religious sectarianism, or the spirit which ordained the untouchable and unapproachable castes—well, they commit political suicide; that is all.

Again, a deep-rooted respect for the laws of the realm must be felt by all if there is to be any stability and continuity in its activities. But no Congress or Parliament is worth its name, if its members or any part of them should be actuated by the constant fear of some extraneous agency and should make it their chief concern to be thinking as to how every single item of their proceedings might be received by that agency.

All servility, whether of an inherited or acquired character, must be definitely abandoned by men who aspire to guide the affairs of a nation. Of course, it is essential that a representative assembly should live at peace with the powers that be. But it must be peace with honour. And the authorities must also be made to see that it is in their interest to live at peace with the assembly. Every citizen must be presumed to respect the laws of the state till the contrary is proved. Otherwise the assembly will be something like a harem, full of mutual jealousies and recriminations. It must also be borne in mind that the chief duty of a National Congress must be to uphold the National idea and to try to realise it in every detail of national life.

May our Congress be guided by these principles!



## NEW BIRTH

Ring all the temple bells. For India is born again. Her new name is the one that she had long, long ago—the land of Bharatha. Great is her thirst for new things. But, after all, the new things are really older than the old. The world is a cycle.

Ring all the temple bells. The re-born Mother has begun to speak, to sing and to dance. She plays, the infant Devi, daughter of old Himalaya and the predestined bride of Mahadeva, the Great God; and her play is the working of miracles. Her speech and her song send a thrill of joy into the core of the world.

Ring all the temple bells. The Baby Mother opens her Veda and reads. The mighty chantings of her ancient seers, intoxicated with love and illumined by the knowing of the Eternal, those old songs of sacrifice and immortality—she reads them greedily once again; and once again, she understands them rightly. For she has met her Guru, Maha Deva himself.

Oh, ring all the temple bells. Make feasts and festivals. The Mother is gaining secular knowledge. She is learning arts, sciences, trades. Behold her excelling her astonished teachers in all things. Behold how she teaches under the pretence of being taught.

Oh, ring, ring, ring all the temple bells. Make feasts and festivals. Pour out songs of praise and thanksgiving to the high Heavens. Proclaim universal joy. For the Mother has realised her destiny. She has met the Great Divine—as her Lover.

## INDIA AND THE WORLD

The Mother has said: 'Let the world recognise me'. And the world is doing so. The Sikhs and the Rajputs on the battlefields of Europe are only supplementing the endeavours of Prof. Bose and the other intellectual leaders of Great India.

The Mother has said: 'I manifest myself once again in my true glory'. And the natives look at her and say: 'Thy beauty is great. It will be a joy for ever unto all humanity'. The intellectual classes of the West have already felt the world's need for India. And we hope that our soldiers will convert the Western masses also to the cult of Great India.

For, the masses, with their instinctive love for expressed realities, everywhere demand physical proofs from spiritual changes. And the masses are quite right.

To England especially, the Sea Queen of the West, the Mother has offered a beautiful message which we hope, England will remember with feelings of love, and the world, too, will recognise as the foreshadowing of a higher human civilisation.

The journals of a country are a real mirror of the people's mentality, although the editors may not always mean them to be so. The world is moved by the iron laws of Nature. And the thinkers of a country cannot possibly help writing down the actual thoughts of the people of that country.

To England, the Mother has said: 'Take all. The entire manhood of my children is at your disposal. Enlist them; let them fight for you, let them vanquish your foes and sustain your greatness'.

'Take more than you want. Take all'.

Love is greater than hate. Young India has freely offered itself for military service. I do not think that anyone is so foolish as to throw a suspicion on the motives of utter mobility and love that prompt this demand for enlistment.

Some have talked of a reward: 'England! Will you give us Self-Government after this War? Will you listen to your own higher voice, to the inspired words of your poets, philosophers, and seers? Will you dare to reject the counsels of a pitiful Machiavellism?' We fervently hope you will. But whether you will do so or not, we shall

never grudge our efforts to aid you. For deeds will count before the gods, even if they sometimes fail to count before men. The High Gods have assured us of life and we rest content.

India, henceforth, will have only one prayer on her lips, while serving humanity with all her might. And that prayer will be addressed to Heaven.

'Make my arms mighty for service, and my thoughts mighty for love. For by such means will immortality be best ensured in the coming era of human evolution'.

## IN MEMORIAM

(6th March 1915)

Gopal Krishna Gokhale has passed away and all India is plunged in deep and passionate grief. In life Gokhale had naturally many critics on all sides—both among those who wished ill to his country and among those who loved it too well.

But now all differences are forgotten, and the Pioneer of Allahabad agrees with Bal Gangadhar Tilak that Gokhale's life should be taken as an inspiring example by every good man in the country. Indeed we live and learn—all of us.

Now, what are the principles that Gokhale lived and worked for?

These are two: (1) Indian Nationhood and (2) Indian Self Government.

'India—a Nation', that was the moolamantra, the root idea, the basic affirmation of Gokhale's life and work. We all know, for instance, with what earnest zeal he worked for Hindu-Muhammadan unity. Thanks to Gokhale and other workers like him, we are today in sight of the Promised Land.

Again, the demand for Self Government is not only recognised on all hands as legitimate, but almost every one has got into the habit of regarding Indian autonomy as an assured fact of the near future.

We are deeply grateful to the King Emperor for His Majesty's sympathetic message to Mr. Gokhale's family. It is a gracious act, but, to us, its chief significance lies in the fact that the August Head of the Empire respects the life-principles of Gokhale. Respect for a man's memory may not mean the acceptance of his opinions and doctrines in toto, but it certainly means respect for his Dharma, his life work.

Even today there must be certain political thinkers in our country who may not approve of Gokhale's life and everything that he did or omitted to do. But may his soul rest in peace—his country has accepted his Dharma.

## THE COMMON AGE

From the beginning of history the higher human will has been consistently striving to bring about perfect fellowship, or at least mutual harmlessness, among human beings. The poets of the race have sung of it, prophets have preached it, and even legislators have often pretended to work for it. But the construction of human society could only appeal to the intellects and emotions of a few classes, who had to be content with regarding the higher teachings as ideal counsels which was not practical in everyday life. So the Will of Man, aspiring towards the heights, has always been defeated by the old animal custom of treating human life as a theatre of competition that is to say, mutual injury and endless strife for securing physical necessities and luxuries. Competition is said to be the declared rule of life among animals, but human 'civilisation' has aggravated that evil principle into such terrible forms that we are worse than the lower animals in certain respects. There are plenty of crows in the town where I am living. But I find that the crows do not fight each other a thousandth part so badly as men always have been and are doing, for food and shelter.

What the Westerners call socialism is not clearly understood here. But still for the West as well as the East, there is only one decent way of living, namely to make the earth common property and live on it as fellow-workers and co-partners. We have a tradition that in the Krita-Yuga, men lived like that in this country. That may or may not be true. But the human will shall yet succeed in bringing about Krita-Yuga in all countries and in the near future. The higher will of man has been baulked till now because of some reason or other. It could not direct the main part of its energy towards rectifying the root of all our social ills. Justice must be made to triumph in the very formation of human society. And then She will naturally triumph in all human affairs and relations. So long as the principle of competition holds sway over the structure of human associations, so long as land and water do not belong commonly to all human beings, men are bound to behave worse than brutes in their economic relations at any rate. They are fools, who think that the sages had no knowledge of political economy. The

Rishis were wise not merely in their teachings about the other world, as certain people imagine; they were equally wise in their teachings about what is needed here and now.

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## REFLECTIONS

The Indian Press does not appear to do full justice to the activities of Rabindranath Tagore in Japan! Does it happen every day that an Indian goes to Japan and there receives the highest honour from all classes of people, from Prime Minister Okuma as well as from the simple monk of the Buddhist shrine?

We must spread the contagion of greatness among the people. To this end the whole country must be made aware of the important doings and sayings of representative Indians. And who can do this more effectively than the great journalists of modern India? It is genius that elevates the race of men. The Indian ear must ring with the fame of Indian genius. The present intellectual and spiritual revival in the country will be regarded by coming generations as one of the most brilliant chapters in human history. I appeal to our great public figures to identify themselves more completely with the revival. For true is the message which Vivekananda brought us, the message that we are to be born again. An individual poet is merely a symbol. We shall soon have scores and scores of them, men of thought and men of deed. Go, watch thyself or watch thy brother, one of you will soon be great.

In what does greatness consist? Not in the size of your materials but in the manner of your doing. There is a great and divine way for all doings, building houses or reaping corn. When man is master of his work he is a full man and therefore great. Greatness consists in putting your soul into the very heart of your work. We are great in the spirit of self-surrender. Karma-yoga must be easier to learn for the children of Krishna. So let us achieve all things by throwing ourselves at the lotus feet of the Bhagavan. So let us offer full praise to those who lead us on this great path.

## SOME POLITICAL MAXIMS

(The following are some of the wise sayings of an ancient Tartar philosopher addressed to Bhunder Shah, who flourished—where and when matters little).

1. All men are children of Allah and have souls. There are certain texts, which hold that a woman has no soul, but it is beyond all doubt that among male human beings at any rate, everyone has a soul.
2. 'Discretion is the better part of valour', it has been said. Therefore, let a prudent king completely disarm his subjects and then, at least, leave them in peace.
3. Keep many spies and pay them well; but never believe in what they say, except when they warn you against your friends and counsellors. Don't be short-sighted and long-eared. Spies are not a worthy class in any circumstance. But may Heaven save you from the spies you have raised from a servile race!
4. Make fine promises with proper saving clauses, but withhold threats. There is nothing heroic about threatening a subject nation.
5. Every Moulvi is not a pious man, nor is every counsellor a wise man.
6. Be mindful of your taxes and your army, and indifferent to everything else.
7. Above all things let your justice be fair and irreproachable. Endeavour to make your laws really respectable. Be very severe to your servants when you find them writing false reports or concocting false accusations.
8. Cultivate the mental habits of self-confidence and cheerfulness.
9. Be regular in your prayers. Marry only four wives. Believe in God, His Angels, His Prophets and His Saints. Wear Jewelled-turbans. Let your manners be courteous and your gestures dignified. Carefully observe the prescribed fasts and vigils. Do not drink wine. Let your beard be scented atleast three times a day.
10. Have commonsense.



## FREE SPEECH

Englishmen in this country are not popularly supposed to offer much encouragement to advocates of Indian freedom, venturing to give wholesome and useful advice to the government. And yet it is such advice that should be prized most by the government. All right-minded English people will agree with me that only those Indians who live and strive for Indian autonomy are the true sons of the Motherland—not those who deify titles and higher salaries. And the thoughts that true patriots are thinking today will materialise into national facts tomorrow. Those who desire to cultivate friendly relations with India must learn to respect and, if possible, immediately satisfy the legitimate and reasoned demands of Indian seers and statesmen.

And the first thing that modern India demands of the English today is that none may interfere with free speech in India. Free speech is the truest ally of every sensible government. When you stifle men's voices, you embitter and harden their hearts. And this world is based on the mind: Thoughts are things that matter really.

An old Indian writer says that the wise king should care more for the respect of a hundred thoughtful men than the blind allegiance of a million fools. And the first condition for any sort of State to be respected is to permit free speech in all things and to all parties.

Of course Englishmen know these things quite as well as we do. But, all the same, we sometimes feel constrained to restate them, lest they forget.

## INDIA AND THE WAR

(July 1915)

Call it fatalism or what you will, we, in India, have always thought and still think that the destinies of all things here on earth are controlled by superior forces of whose nature man has yet known but little. The affairs of cawing crows and of civilised nations, of cats and of superman, are all determined by divine laws—the laws of those whom we call the immortals. The diplomats and statesmen of the world think that they themselves decide the fates of nations. We think that the diplomats and statesmen are wrong. All beings are instruments of the Divine Will and act for ends which they can never fully comprehend. We know this and we are therefore possessed with a sense of humility and diffidence when we want to understand the real objects for which the Gods have sent this grim and terrible tragedy into the fair and prosperous land of Europe. Our hearts are deeply touched when we think of the immense amount of suffering and anguish which this war has brought to the European community. We have a special love for Europe, in spite of her blunders and faults; for she has done some very good things for mankind.

### WHY WE LOVE EUROPE

Within her own realms she has fought noble battles against superstition and injustice. She has used her best talents for unravelling the mysteries of God's physical world. She has been bold in her inquiries, courageous in her convictions and high-souled in her aspirations. Mankind is fundamentally one. Of course there are some silly theorists and sillier poetasters in Europe, as here, who have been pleased to divide mankind into hearts which shall never meet, but the true seers have everywhere proclaimed the unity of the human race. And whatever mental or moral victories Europe may have won for herself, she has won for the rest of humanity also. We therefore love Europe and we earnestly hope that she will soon

be permitted by the Gods to return to normal. Her pain moves our hearts. May she soon have peace!

### WHY ARE WE FRIENDLY TO THE CAUSE OF THE ALLIES?

Even the soul which recognises and is ever willing to submit to the inscrutable dispensations of the higher powers may have its own convictions, its own sympathies, its own choice. And from whatever philosophical height one may choose to survey the momentous struggle now going on in Europe, one cannot help taking sides unless one ceases to be human. The thing is so grand, so terrible, so tragic, so human. It is a pity that men should have to die like this. But the laws are inexorable. Certain ideas have got to triumph, certain principles have got to be realised among men. And man generally learns new lessons at a frightful cost. In Europe, today, the allies maintain that they fight for international equity, for the rights of nations and individuals; while the Germans say that they are fighting, among other things, for the maintenance and advancement of their culture.

They even speak of Germanising the world. I am willing to admit that on the side of the allies also there are certain people whose love for liberty and equity is of very recent origin—the principal advisers of the Tsar, for instance. But still there remains the fact that their war-cry is: 'each nation for itself', while the other side lays more stress on imposing German culture on the rest of us. There is no use of thinking about past incidents. In the past everyone has been wrong, in Asia as well as in Europe. We must forgive the past. There remains no doubt, however, that in the present war the right is with the Allies. And we in India—all of us who count for anything—being passionate lovers of the cause of freedom, we pray that the side which will guarantee the freedom of nations, which will demolish once for all the senseless doctrine that 'Might is Right', which will establish a permanent and universal system of international equity and mutual respect—that side should win. This is the reason why India is so willing to sacrifice her men and resources by aiding England and her allies. England, we are pleased to find is full of genuine gratitude for all that we are doing for her at present, though some of her agents here persist in clinging to the old follies and superstitions. But those men do not count for much;

England will never forget India's generosity and magnanimity. She will not disappoint the civilised world by denying her present ideals when the war is over.

WHY ARE WE FRIENDLY TO THE  
CAUSE OF THE ALIENS?

Even the soul which recognises and is ever willing to submit to the majestic dispassion of the higher power may have its own convictions—its own sympathies, its own choice. And from whatever philosophical height one may choose to survey the momentous struggle now going on in Europe, one cannot help taking sides unless one ceases to be human. For there is so grand, so terrible, so tragic, so human, in a fight that men should have to the life, that the laws are inexorable. Certain ideas have got to triumph. Certain principles have got to be established among men. And man generally learns new lessons at a frightful cost. In Europe today, the allies maintain that they fight for international equity, for the rights of nations and individuals, while the Germans say that they are fighting among other things for the maintenance and advancement of their culture.

Then, you speak of maintaining the world's law, yielding to adaptation on the side of the allies, that are certain points whose love for liberty and equity is of very recent origin—the great ideal of the East, for instance. But still there remains the fact that that war-cry is "a great nation for itself," while the other side has more stress on imposing European culture on the rest of the world. There is no use of thinking about past incidents. In the past every one has been wrong, in Asia as well as in Europe. We must forget the past. There remains no doubt, however, that in the present we are the right side with the Allies. And we in India—all of us who count for anything—bring personal issues of the cause of freedom, and pray that the side which will guarantee the freedom of nations, which will hand out justice for all the empire's doctrine that might is right, which will establish a permanent universal system of international equity and mutual respect—this side should win. For as the common ally India is so willing to sacrifice her own and her own by suffering and her own, we are pleased to find it full of generous impulses, and all that we are doing for her. It is our duty to support her in her present struggle, and to do all that we can to help her to win.

## NAMMALWAR

Maran, renowned as Nammalwar ('Our Saint') among the Vaishnavas, and the greatest of their saints and poets, was born in a small town called Kurugur in the southernmost region of the Tamil country—Tirunelveli (Tinnevely). His father, Kari, was a petty prince who paid tribute to the Pandyan King of Madura. We have no means of ascertaining the date of the Alwar's birth, as the traditional account is untrustworthy and full of inconsistencies. We are told that the infant was mute for several years after his birth. Nammalwar renounced the world early in life and spent his time, singing and meditating on God, under the shade of a tamarind tree by the side of the village temple.

It was under this tree that he was first seen by his disciple, the Alwar Madhura-kavi—for the latter also is numbered among the great Twelve—'lost in the sea of Divine Love'. Tradition says that while Madhura-kavi was wandering in North India as a pilgrim, one night a strange light appeared to him in the sky and travelled towards the south. Doubtful at first what significance this phenomenon might have for him, its repetition during three consecutive nights convinced him that it was a divine summons and where this luminous sign led, he must follow. Night after night he journeyed southwards till the guiding light came to Kurugur and there disappeared. Learning of Nammalwar's spiritual greatness he thought that it was to him that the light had been leading him. But when he came to him, he found him absorbed in deep meditation with his eyes fast closed and, although he waited for hours, the Samadhi did not break until he took up a large stone and struck it against the ground violently. At the noise Nammalwar opened his eyes, but still remained silent. Madhura-kavi then put to him this enigmatical question, 'If the little one (the soul) is borne into the dead thing (matter) what will the little one eat and where will the little one lie?' to which Nammalwar replied in an equally enigmatic style, 'That will it eat and there will it lie'.

Subsequently Nammalwar permitted his disciple to live with him and it was Madhura-kavi who wrote down his songs as they were composed. Nammalwar died in his thirty-fifth year, but he has

achieved so great a reputation that the Vaishnavas account him an incarnation of Vishnu himself, while others are only the mace, discus, conch, etc., of the deity.

From the philosophical and spiritual point of view, his poetry ranks among the highest in Tamil literature. But in point of literary excellence there is a great inequality; for while some songs touch the level of the loftiest world poets, others, even though rich in rhythm and expression, fall much below the poet's capacity. In his great work known as the *Tiruvaymoli* (The Sacred Utterance) which contains more than a thousand stanzas, he has touched all phases of the life divine and given expression to all forms of spiritual experience. The pure and passionless Reason, the direct perception of the high solar realm of truth itself, the ecstatic and sometimes poignant love that leaps into being at the vision of the 'Beauty of God's face', the final triumph where unity is achieved and 'I and my Father are one'—all these are uttered in his simple and flowing lines with a strength that is full of tenderness and truth.

The lines which we have translated are a fair specimen of the great Alwar's poetry; but it has suffered considerably in translation—indeed the genius of the Tamil tongue hardly permits an effective rendering, so utterly divergent is it from that of the English language.

## ANDAL

Preoccupied from the earliest times with divine knowledge and religious aspirations, the Indian mind has turned all forms of human life and emotion and all phenomena of the universe into symbols and means by which the embodied soul may strive for and grasp the Supreme. Indian devotion has especially seized upon the most intimate human relations and made them stepping stones to the superhuman. God the guru, God the master, God the friend, God the mother, God the child, God the self, each of these experiences—to us these are more than mere ideas. But none of them has pursued it, embraced it, sung and of it with a more exultant passion of intimate realisation than the yearning for God the Lover, God the Beloved. It seems as if this passionate human symbol is the natural culminating point for the mounting flame of the soul's devotion: for it is found wherever that devotion has entered into the most secret shrine of the inner temple. We meet it in Islamic poetry; certain experiences of the Christian mystics repeat the forms and images with which we are familiar in the East, but usually with a certain timorousness foreign to the Eastern temperament. For the devotee who has once had this intense experience admits the most profound and hidden mystery of the Universe; for him the heart has the key to the last secret.

The work of a great Bengali poet has recently reintroduced this idea to the European mind, which has forgotten so much of its old religious traditions as to welcome and wonder at it as a novel form of mystic self-expression. On the contrary, it is ancient enough, like all things natural and eternal in the human soul. In Bengal a whole period of national poetry has been dominated by this single strain and it has inspired a religion and philosophy. And in the Vaishnavism of the far South, in the songs of the Tamil Alwars we find it again in another form giving a powerful and original turn to the images of our old classic poetry; for there it has been sung out by the rapt heart of a woman to the heart of the universe. The Tamil word Alwar means one who has drowned, lost himself, in the sea of the Divine Being. Among these canonised saints of Southern Vaishnavism ranks Vishnuchitha, a yogin and poet of Villiputtur in the

land of the Pandyas. He is termed Periyalwar, the Great Alwar. A tradition, which we need not believe, places him in the ninety-eighth year of the Kali Yuga. But these Divine singers are ancient enough, since they precede the great saint and philosopher Ramanuja whose personality and teachings were the last flower of the long-growing Vaishnav tradition. Since his time, southern Vaishnavism has been a fixed creed and a system.

The poetess Andal was the foster-daughter of Vishnuchitha found by him, it is said, as a new-born under the sacred tulsi plant. We know little of Andal except what we can gather from a few legends, some of them richly beautiful and symbolic. Most of Vishnuchitha's poems have the infancy and boyhood of Krishna for their subject. Andal, brought up in that atmosphere cast into the mould of her life what her foster father had sung in inspired hymns. Her own poetry—we may suppose that she passed early into the Light towards which she yearned, for it is small in bulk—is entirely occupied with her passion for the Divine Being. It is said that she went through a symbolic marriage with Ranganatha, Vishnu in his temple at Srirangam, and disappeared into the image of her Lord. This tradition probably conceals some actual facts, for Andal's marriage with the Lord is still celebrated annually with considerable pomp and ceremony.



## RIGHTS AND DUTIES

In the course of a recent lecture at Madras (Oct. 1914) Mrs. Annie Besant is reported to have emphasised the upholding of one's duties in preference to one's rights. And the Chairman of the meeting, Justice Sadasiva Iyer, naively remarked (in effect) 'After listening to Mrs. Besant's speech, I have come to see that man has no rights at all. He has only duties. God alone has rights, . . .'

Now, I have a right to submit that such teachings contain but a partial truth and may do injury to the cause of our national progress which, I am sure, is as dear to the hearts of Mrs. Besant and Justice Iyer as to anyone else's.

My duties are based on my rights. That is to say, my duties to others are defined by their duties to me. It is my duty to respect my father, because I am his son and he has permitted me the right to the life and the culture that he has bequeathed to me.

In my view they are of equal sacredness: my rights and my duties. My duties I must fulfil. My rights I must vindicate. Life is possible only on such a basis.

Meanwhile it is the right and duty of the wise ones to purify the strong by teaching them their duties and to strengthen the weak by teaching them their rights.

## VERNACULARS

I do not blame the Madras 'Council of Indian Education' for their anxiety to have Prof. Geddes' views on the subject of employing Indian languages as the media of instruction in Indian schools. For I am aware that men's thoughts are ordinarily moulded by their environments. Nor do I blame the good and learned Prof. Geddes for his innocent comparison of the revival of Indian languages with the Gaelic revival in Wales and in Ireland. I do not know if Gaelic has any extensive and living literature. But I feel it is high time to remind all parties concerned in discussions like this, that most of the Indian languages have great, historic, and living literatures. Of course their lustre has been slightly dimmed by economic conditions during these later days. The English-educated minority in this country can be pardoned for being frightfully ignorant of the higher phases of our national literatures; but they will do well to drop that annoying attitude of patronage and condescension when writing and talking about our languages. The Tamil language, for instance, has a living philosophical and poetical literature that is far grander, to my mind, than that of the 'vernacular' of England.

For that matter, I do not think that any modern vernacular of Europe can boast of works like the Kural of Valluvar, the Ramayana of Kamban and the Silappadhikaram (Anklet Epic) of Ilango. And it may not be irrelevant to add that I have read and appreciated the exquisite beauties of Shelley and Victor Hugo in the original English and French 'Vernaculars' and of Goethe in English translations.

## THE OCCULT ELEMENT IN TAMIL SPEECH

Among the four typical languages with which I am acquainted, the Tamil language seems, to me, to be unique in possessing an extraordinary number of words that have more of occult suggestion in them than secular significance.

It is well known among all occultists that the names of the numbers one, two, three, etc., which occur most familiarly in our daily speech, are yet potent spells in the occultist's dictionary. But I should not forget that most of my readers may be perfect strangers to occultism in any of its aspects and, for their benefit, I shall briefly explain here what I mean by the expression, 'Occult Speech' or 'Occult Language'. Occult language is the language of the spirit. It is the language of the heart. Lovers sometimes speak that language, unaware that they are doing so. Sometimes, children, devotees and other innocent people with big, deep, unsullied hearts speak this language, in a similar or greater state of ignorance. But the occultists have made a regular science of the thing; they carefully learn the inner meaning of every word and expression having any occult import. And they use the secular language in such a way that both the secular and occult meaning may sound simultaneously.

When two yogis met one another, the first thing they did was to recognise in each other the Spark Divine. Each man mentally said to the other (in the luminous words of the Tamil poet and saint, Thayumanavar): 'Thou art the soul; not thou the body, nor the five elements, nor the five senses; not thou thy thinking, nor thy reasoning, nor thine heart, nor thine egoism, nor thy knowledge, nor thine ignorance; but thou art the unbound, pure and untarnished spirit mirroring forth like pure glass whatsoever thou mayst look upon'. Unto each other they made the mental affirmation: 'Thou art part of God; thou art God; and so, thou art myself'. It is on this clear understanding—this absolute and unforgettable basis, that all further conversation is held by the two seers or aspirants as the case may be. 'I am thyself and thou art me; now let us proceed'.

Now, all conversation that may ensue on such an understanding between two such companions may be easily expected to be

utterly different, both in form and in import, from all other kinds of human conversation. And it is utterly different. In their speech, the yogis naturally use the symbols of the ordinary human languages; but, when they speak, most of these symbols acquire a new value; most of the ideas get a new import. It is to the speech of such yogis that we give the name 'occult language'.

Utkar is the Tamil word meaning 'to sit'. Etymologically it is 'utku + ar', meaning: 'Within thyself rest', 'be self composed'. The yogi uses the word in both the senses simultaneously. Externally, his word invites you to take your seat. But in its inner sense, it invites you to compose yourself and put yourself in an attitude of spiritual peace which alone can ensure any really happy or profitable conversation. Give up all ennui, all fretting, all preoccupations; give up all kinds of absence of mind and lack of present interest, anxieties and all the vulgar and foolish and superstitious cares of that most helpless of all existing things, the individual ego. Get into the peace and happiness of God.

In common speech, however, this word is used as Occar which is Occa + ar meaning 'Get into harmony, set thy spirit in unison with mine'.

'But why', you might ask, 'should the aspirants or yogis resort to symbolic speech at all? Why should they not put it all in plain, ordinary language, using a larger number of psychological and metaphysical expressions where quite necessary?' Well, I asked the same question of my Guru. He replied: 'Your metaphysical and psychological words which will become absolutely necessary, if you avoid symbolic speech, are not at all likely to make your language either plain or ordinary. In symbolic speech, even the ordinary man gets the external meaning, while the internal meaning is understood only by the trained ones. But when you mix up the psychological with ordinary expressions the thing becomes wholly unintelligible to the ordinary man. But that is only a secondary reason. The primary reason is that symbolic speech is par excellence the language of the heart, and so it has become the immemorial tradition among the yogis to use it. And, so far as I know, it is one of the best ways to make the spiritual life practical'.

The Tamil first person Nan is used by the occultists to denote the third person singular avan, meaning 'He', 'the Unique God'. And for this audacious monism, the occultist gives the etymological justification that he really intends the Tamil word 'avan' which, as every one knows, means 'He'—but he merely drops the prefix 'an'

by a sort of occult license. The word *Ni* meaning 'thou' is used by the yogis as signifying 'Love me' or 'grant me thy grace'. The etymological justification is this: 'En enni' which means: 'Grant me thy grace', the first two letters 'en' are dropped. *Aham* means both 'the house' and 'the self'.

The word *Thuni* has two meanings in Tamil, 'cloth' and 'courage'. The occultists use it in both connotations, simultaneously. *Sappadu* is the word used for food. In the occult sense it signifies unification in mutual love. *Thannir* is the Tamil word for 'water'. The yogi uses it to mean good grace; because etymologically, *than* means 'cool' and *nir* means 'temper'. *Kan*, which is the Tamil word for the 'eye' is used to signify 'know me'. *Kel* means 'to hear' as well as 'to love'. The Tamil yogis use *muhar*, which means 'to smell' as well as to 'enjoy'. *Thol*, which signifies the organ of touch ordinarily, also means 'true love' both in the occult and in the classic literature. The names of the seven days of the week have also similar occult denotations but, as these are common to all languages and not peculiar to Tamil, I shall not dilate upon them here. Again *nel*, which is Tamil for paddy, refers to the spiritual sun, i.e. to the paramount God of Existence.

And so with the names of many other grains and vessels, furniture and other things. They all have occult significances. Indeed, I scarcely know a Tamil word which has no occult meaning as well as the secular.

The longing for the realisation of the spiritual unity has given birth to occultism in language. And, in a deeper sense, human language itself has had its origin in the beginnings of that longing. And the complete achievement of spiritual oneness in this universe with its endless moods and numberless objects is the goal of occult philology which, I feel sure, the ordinary man of culture, and not only the occultist, will be able to realise as a thing of entrancing interest, if properly initiated thereinto. What has so long been the secret property of the initiated few, I now long to spread among the general public. But I do not know how far the public will be willing to interest itself in this subject.

If there are any indications of people's interest in it, I shall continue to write further essays on this delightful theme.

by a sort of double sense. The word "nothing" used by  
the young man is not the same as the "nothing" used by  
the old man. The old man means "nothing" in the  
literal sense, while the young man means "nothing" in  
the figurative sense. The young man is not  
saying that there is nothing, but that there is  
nothing of the kind.

The word "nothing" has two meanings. It may mean  
"nothing at all" or "nothing of the kind". The  
young man is using it in the latter sense. He is  
saying that there is nothing of the kind. He is  
not saying that there is nothing at all. The  
old man is using it in the former sense. He is  
saying that there is nothing at all. The  
young man is not saying that there is nothing  
at all, but that there is nothing of the kind.  
The old man is saying that there is nothing  
at all. The young man is saying that there  
is nothing of the kind. The old man is  
saying that there is nothing at all. The  
young man is saying that there is nothing  
of the kind. The old man is saying that  
there is nothing at all. The young man is  
saying that there is nothing of the kind.

It is not the nature of many other things and things that  
give and give things. They do have some significance. Indeed,  
I can say that I will give you things that will be of use  
to you.

The reason for the confusion of the word "nothing" is  
that it is used in two different senses. In a literal sense,  
it means "nothing at all". In a figurative sense,  
it means "nothing of the kind". The young man  
is using it in the latter sense. He is saying  
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is using it in the former sense. He is saying  
that there is nothing at all. The young man  
is saying that there is nothing of the kind.  
The old man is saying that there is nothing  
at all. The young man is saying that there  
is nothing of the kind. The old man is  
saying that there is nothing at all. The  
young man is saying that there is nothing  
of the kind. The old man is saying that  
there is nothing at all. The young man is  
saying that there is nothing of the kind.

If there are any instances of people, indeed, in it, I shall  
be glad to see them.

The young man is not saying that there is nothing  
at all, but that there is nothing of the kind.  
The old man is saying that there is nothing  
at all. The young man is saying that there  
is nothing of the kind. The old man is  
saying that there is nothing at all. The  
young man is saying that there is nothing  
of the kind. The old man is saying that  
there is nothing at all. The young man is  
saying that there is nothing of the kind.

## NOTES

### PART I

*Page*

- 3 The poem is not a rendering of any Vedic hymn but its imagery is reminiscent of the Rig-Veda.  
Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga are gods mentioned in the Rig-Veda.  
Dawn, Vision, Inspiration and Virgin Eternal are goddesses mentioned in the Rig-Veda.
- 5 Krishna is one of the forms (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu. He is considered the Mother in the poem.
- 6 Arjuna—one of the five Pandu princes famed in the epic Mahabaratha, and a close friend of Lord Krishna.  
In this poem Arjuna and Krishna typify man and God.
- 7 In this poem God (styled here as Krishna) is depicted as the lady-love and the human soul as the lover. This is proof of a boldness of imagination which is characteristic of Bharathi.  
Peacock dancing—at the sight of the rain bearing cloud, the peacock dances.
- 8 Gold to rings—an image of the relation between matter and form which is inseparable.
- 9 Lakshmi—the divine consort of Lord Vishnu. She is the goddess of wealth.  
Crimson flower—lotus, the favourite seat of goddess Lakshmi.
- 12 Translation of his own song in Tamil.
- 13 Translation of his own song in Tamil.  
The dance form called Kummi is peculiar to South India. Women stand along a circle, sing and dance.
- 15 Tilak's lot—Bala Gangadhar Tilak, the freedom fighter was imprisoned in Mandalay (Burma) for fourteen long years and was released in June 1914.
- 16 This is a song of sacrifice.
- 17 This is a free rendering of a verse from Nammalvar's Thiruvaimoli in Tamil.
- 18 This is a free rendering of another verse from Nammalvar's Thiruvaimoli in Tamil.  
Markanda—A sage, who at the age of sixteen, and after intense penance received the boon of immortality from Lord Siva.
- 19 Rudra—Lord Siva  
Indra—God of Prosperity  
Brahma—God of Creation
- 20 Again, a free rendering of a verse from Nammalvar. The poetic image used in this poem is characteristically Indian. The human soul is depicted as a girl in love with Lord Krishna. The mother of this girl is complaining to her friend that her daughter has gone mad because of her love for Lord Krishna.

- 22 A free rendering of a verse from Andal, a Vaishnavite saint.
- 23 A free rendering of extracts from a poem of Andal wherein she describes her marriage with the Lord.  
paced round the flame—the couple, as part of the wedding ceremony, go round the sacred fire thrice.
- 24 A free rendering of a poem of Andal wherein she describes her deep love for Lord Krishna.
- 25 Kumara—also called Subramanya the son of Lord Siva.
- 28 mantra—a mystic syllable i.e. a sacred word—symbol to be repeated by devotees.
- 30 sada-nishta—a mystic who has realised God.
- 31 adhara—vehicle, embodiment.
- 33 the gunas—sattva, rajas and tamas.  
nistraigunya—free from the three gunas or attributes mentioned above.  
Kalpataru—a celestial tree which gives whatever is desired.
- 35 Narayana—the goal of man.  
Parandhama—the great splendour.  
Sarveswara—the Lord of all.  
Sarva Santhi Mayaa—the Infinite Peace.

#### VISHNU

The allusions to Vishnu are explained by the following summary of the Vishnu legends:

Vishnu keeps the universe in his stomach during the deluge and spits it out afterwards.

The sun is one of His forms.

He is blue-coloured, like a rain-cloud or the ocean.

Brahma, Rudra and Indra are His other forms.

He holds the discus in His right hand and conch in His left.

He is the lord of the Ocean of Milk. He sleeps on the folds of the serpent Sesha, the thousand hooded one, and has for his vehicle and banner the mighty Bird, Garuda. Markandeya worshipped Siva, who took him to Vishnu and obtained for him eternal life.

Tulsi, the holy basil, is dear to Him.

He is the all-pervader.

Ten incarnations are ascribed to Him.

1 As fish, He saved the Vedas from the deluge.

2 As tortoise, He bore on His back the mountain Mandara when it was used for churning the Ocean of Milk. Thus was Nectar obtained by the gods. The Moon and Lakshmi arose from the Ocean then. Lakshmi is therefore a twin to Nectar.

Lakshmi's feet rest on a crimson lotus.

She is the consort of Vishnu, who is hence called Madhava, husband of Lakshmi, and she dwells in His bosom.

3 As a Boar He raised the sinking earth aloft on His tusk.

4 As half-lion, half-man, He destroyed the demon Hiranya.

5 Indra once lost his kingdom of Heaven to the Demon chief Bali. Bali



performed a sacrifice, at which Vishnu, assuming the form of a dwarf, begged for as much space as He could cover by three steps of His. Bali granted the boon. With the first step He measured the earth, with the second the Heavens, and the third step He placed on Bali's head.

6 As Rama, the perfect Man, when His wife, Sita was carried off by Ravana, the Demon chief, to his island of Lanka, He constructed a bridge across the ocean and crossed over to that island and killed Ravana in battle.

7 He was born later as child of Devaki and Vasudeva, who were imprisoned by Devaki's brother Kamsa, in the city of Mathura on the Yamuna; Kamsa had been warned that the son born of Devaki would be his death.

The new born Krishna was stealthily removed to Gokula, a hamlet of cowherds on the other bank of the Yamuna, and was brought up as the son of Nanda and Yasoda. A demoness sent by Kamsa to destroy Him, came with poisoned breasts to suckle Him, but He sucked her to death. As a cowherd, He was fond of butter and loved to play on the flute. Once He jumped from the Kadamba tree on to the hood of a cobra which infested a lake near Gokula and, dancing on his hood, subdued him to harmlessness. He slew the demon, Madhu.

He took Mathura without a battle and set His parents free. Later he changed His capital from Mathura to Dwaraka.

He helped his cousins, the Pandavas, in many ways: He was the charioteer of Arjuna in the Mahabharata War and delivered the message of the Gita to Arjuna on the eve of the battle.

Arjuna is Nara, the typical man and Krishna is Narayana, the goal of man.

Aniruddha, a grandson of Krishna, woos Usha the daughter of the Demon King, Bana of Sonitapura; and is imprisoned by him. To release him from prison, Krishna goes there as a cowherd and performs acrobatics in the streets. He ultimately fights Bana and defeats him.

There is a famous temple of Vishnu on the Venkata hill, the modern Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.

## PART II

- 41 Ramanuja—a great saint who advocated qualified monism.
- 49 Sankara—a great saint who advocated monism—the absolute oneness of God, soul and Universe.
- 79 samadhi—trance, a superconscious state.
- 84 vernacular—native language.

## DATES AND EVENTS IN THE POET'S LIFE

- 1882 December 11: Bharathi's birth at Ettayapuram in Tirunelveli District; born to Chinnaswami Iyer and Lakshmi Ammal; christened as Subramanyam alias Subbiah.
- 1887: Mother passed away and Bharathi's holy thread investiture.
- 1893: Title of Bharathi conferred on him by the Raja of Ettayapuram in recognition of his poetic talents amidst court poets.
- 1894: Joined Hindu College High School at Tirunelveli.
- 1897: Marriage with Chellammal, aged seven.
- 1898: Father's death.
- 1898-1902: Bharathi at Benares with his aunt and uncle. Joined the Hindu College.
- 1902-1904: Returned to Ettayapuram and entered service as a court poet.
- 1904: Served as Tamil teacher in Sethupathi High School, Madurai and later joined the *Swadesamitran* as assistant editor; also in charge of the monthly *Chakravarthini*.
- 1905-1906: Entered politics; attended Calcutta Congress under the Presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji; met Sister Nivedita.
- 1907: Editor of the weeklies the *India* (Tamil) and the *Bala Bharatham* (English) simultaneously; attended Surat Congress in December and lent support to Tilak's extremist group.
- 1908: Release of his 'National Songs' for the first time at Madras; 'Swaraj Day' was celebrated by him; escaped into the French territory, Pondicherry.
- 1908-1910: *India* published from Pondicherry, banned in British India.
- 1910: Closure of the journals *Vijaya*, *Suryodayam*, *Bala Bharatham*, *Karmayogi* and *Chitravali*, with which he was connected; Aurobind Gosh arrived in Pondicherry.
- 1914: Murder of Collector 'Ashe' in Maniyachi Junction.
- 1912: His trilogy and *Bhagwat Gita* translation published.
- 1918: Stepped into British territory on 20 November; arrested near Cuddalore; released from remand in December; left for Kadayam.
- 1918-1920: Life at Kadayam—miserable; Raja of Ettayapuram denies help to Bharathi.
- 1919: Meeting with Gandhiji in Rajaji's house.
- 1920: Again assistant editor of the *Swadesamitran*.
- 1921: Attack by the temple elephant at Madras; died after a couple of months on 11 September.
- 1948: A memorial erected for him at Ettayapuram in September.
- 1960: Release of a postal stamp in his honour on 11 September.
- 1962: Celebration of his 81st birthday by the Government.
- 1982: The year of his birth centenary; grand plans to celebrate it all over the country and overseas.

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A poet who was enormously popular in his lifetime is rare and the present publication further interprets Bharathi—his powerful personality, striking appearance and memorable sayings.

Carrying both his verse and prose in English, this book projects Bharathi the poet-liberator, confirming the influence of the myths that have gathered about his spiritual messages.

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K. S. Nagarajan is the Founder-Principal and Professor of English of Dhanraj Baid Jain College, Madras and the head of various cultural organizations in the city. A scholar in English, Tamil and Kannada, he is an accomplished speaker, and the successful author of some twenty books in Tamil on historical and literary figures. This is his sixth book in English, presenting his particular interest which is to interpret Tamil literature to as wide an audience as possible. That it is about the most striking national poet that the South has produced, makes the present publication all the more valuable.

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