

# THE REAL AWAKENER



## THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO – 7

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## **Sanatana Dharma is Nationalism**

*“I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism.” (8: 12)*

*– Sri Aurobindo*

# I. Selections from Karmayogin, CWSA Vol. 8

## 1. Uttara Speech\*

“WHEN I was asked to speak to you at the annual meeting of your *sabha*, it was my intention to say a few words about the subject chosen for today, – the subject of the Hindu religion. I do not know now whether I shall fulfil that intention; for as I sat here, there came into my mind a word that I have to speak to you, a word that I have to speak to the whole of the Indian Nation. It was spoken first to myself in jail and I have come out of jail to speak it to my people.

It was more than a year ago that I came here last. When I came I was not alone; one of the mightiest prophets of Nationalism sat by my side. It was he who then came out of the seclusion to which God had sent him, so that in the silence and solitude of his cell he might hear the word that He had to say. It was he that you came in your hundreds to welcome. Now he is far away, separated from us by thousands of miles. Others whom I was accustomed to find working beside me are absent. The storm that swept over the country has scattered them far and wide. It is I this time who have spent one year in seclusion, and now that I come

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Delivered at Uttarpara, Bengal, on 30 May 1909. Text published in the *Bengalee*, an English-language newspaper of Calcutta, on 1 June; thoroughly revised by Sri Aurobindo and republished in the *Karmayogin* on 19 and 26 June.

\* The titles marked with an \* are from the original. All the unmarked titles in the text are from the editor.

out I find all changed. One who always sat by my side and was associated in my work is a prisoner in Burma; another is in the north rotting in detention. I looked round when I came out, I looked round for those to whom I had been accustomed to look for counsel and inspiration. I did not find them. There was more than that. When I went to jail, the whole country was alive with the cry of *Bande Mataram*, alive with the hope of a nation, the hope of millions of men who had newly risen out of degradation. When I came out of jail I listened for that cry, but there was instead a silence. A hush had fallen on the country and men seemed bewildered; for instead of God's bright heaven full of the vision of the future that had been before us, there seemed to be overhead a leaden sky from which human thunders and lightnings rained. No man seemed to know which way to move, and from all sides came the question, "What shall we do next? What is there that we can do?" I too did not know which way to move, I too did not know what was next to be done. But one thing I knew, that as it was the Almighty Power of God which had raised that cry, that hope, so it was the same power which had sent down that silence. He who was in the shouting and the movement was also in the pause and the hush. He has sent it upon us, so that the nation might draw back for a moment and look into itself and know His will. I have not been disheartened by that silence, because I had been made familiar with silence in my prison and because I knew it was in the pause and the hush that I had myself learned this lesson through the long year of my detention. When Bipin Chandra Pal came out of jail, he came with a message, and it was an inspired message. I remember the speech he made here. It was a speech not so

much political as religious in its bearing and intention. He spoke of his realisation in jail, of God within us all, of the Lord within the nation, and in his subsequent speeches also he spoke of a greater than ordinary force in the movement and a greater than ordinary purpose before it. Now I also meet you again, I also come out of jail, and again it is you of Uttarpara who are the first to welcome me, not at a political meeting but at a meeting of a society for the protection of our religion. That message which Bipin Chandra Pal received in Buxar jail, God gave to me in Alipore. That knowledge He gave to me day after day during my twelve months of imprisonment and it is that which He has commanded me to speak to you now that I have come out.

I knew I would come out. The year of detention was meant only for a year of seclusion and of training. How could anyone hold me in jail longer than was necessary for God's purpose? **He had given me a word to speak and a work to do, and until that word was spoken I knew that no human power could hush me, until that work was done no human power could stop God's instrument, however weak that instrument might be or however small. Now that I have come out, even in these few minutes, a word has been suggested to me which I had no wish to speak. The thing I had in my mind He has thrown from it and what I speak is under an impulse and a compulsion.**

When I was arrested and hurried to the Lal Bazar hajat I was shaken in faith for a while, for I could not look into

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\* *Bold letters in the text, used here for emphasis, are from the editor and are not there in the original.*



the heart of His intention. Therefore I faltered for a moment and cried out in my heart to Him, “What is this that has happened to me? I believed that I had a mission to work for the people of my country and until that work was done, I should have Thy protection. Why then am I here and on such a charge?” A day passed and a second day and a third, when a voice came to me from within, “Wait and see.” Then I grew calm and waited. I was taken from Lal Bazar to Alipore and was placed for one month in a solitary cell apart from men. There I waited day and night for the voice of God within me, to know what He had to say to me, to learn what I had to do. In this seclusion the earliest realisation, the first lesson came to me. I remembered then that a month or more before my arrest, a call had come to me to put aside all activity, to go into seclusion and to look into myself, so that I might enter into closer communion with Him. I was weak and could not accept the call. **My work was very dear to me and in the pride of my heart I thought that unless I was there, it would suffer or even fail and cease; therefore I would not leave it.** It seemed to me that He spoke to me again and said, “The bonds you had not strength to break, I have broken for you, because it is not my will nor was it ever my intention that that should continue. I have another thing for you to do and it is for that I have brought you here, to teach you what you could not learn for yourself and to train you for my work.” **Then He placed the Gita in my hands. His strength entered into me and I was able to do the *sadhan* of the Gita. I was not only to understand intellectually but to realise what Srikrishna demanded of Arjuna and what He demands of those who aspire to do His work, to be free from repulsion**

and desire, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in His hands, to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success and failure, yet not to do His work negligently. I realised what the Hindu religion meant. We speak often of the Hindu religion, of the Sanatana Dharma, but few of us really know what that religion is. Other religions are preponderatingly religions of faith and profession, but the Sanatana Dharma is life itself; it is a thing that has not so much to be believed as lived. This is the *dharma* that for the salvation of humanity was cherished in the seclusion of this peninsula from of old. It is to give this religion that India is rising. She does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.

Therefore this was the next thing He pointed out to me, – He made me realise the central truth of the Hindu religion. He turned the hearts of my jailers to me and they spoke to the Englishman in charge of the jail, “He is suffering in his confinement; let him at least walk outside his cell for half an hour in the morning and in the evening.” So it was arranged, and it was while I was walking that His strength again entered into me. I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell, but it was not the tree, I knew it was

Vasudeva, it was Srikrishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me His shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Srikrishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies. Amongst these thieves and dacoits there were many who put me to shame by their sympathy, their kindness, the humanity triumphant over such adverse circumstances. One I saw among them especially who seemed to me a saint, a peasant of my nation who did not know how to read and write, an alleged dacoit sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment, one of those whom we look down upon in our Pharisaical pride of class as *chhotalok*. Once more He spoke to me and said, **“Behold the people among whom I have sent you to do a little of my work. This is the nature of the nation I am raising up and the reason why I raise them.”**

When the case opened in the lower court and we were brought before the Magistrate I was followed by the same insight. He said to me, “When you were cast into jail, did not your heart fail and did you not cry out to me, where is Thy protection? Look now at the Magistrate, look now at the Prosecuting Counsel.” I looked and it was not the Magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the Prosecuting Counsel and it was not the Counsel for the

prosecution that I saw; it was Srikrishna who sat there, it was my Lover and Friend who sat there and smiled. “Now do you fear?” He said, “I am in all men and I overrule their actions and their words. **My protection is still with you and you shall not fear. This case which is brought against you, leave it in my hands. It is not for you. It was not for the trial that I brought you here but for something else. The case itself is only a means for my work and nothing more.**” Afterwards when the trial opened in the Sessions Court, I began to write many instructions for my Counsel as to what was false in the evidence against me and on what points the witnesses might be cross-examined. Then something happened which I had not expected. The arrangements which had been made for my defence were suddenly changed and another Counsel stood there to defend me. He came unexpectedly, – a friend of mine, but I did not know he was coming. You have all heard the name of the man who put away from him all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice, who sat up half the night day after day for months and broke his health to save me, – Srijut Chittaranjan Das. When I saw him, I was satisfied, but I still thought it necessary to write instructions. Then all that was put from me and I had the message from within, **“This is the man who will save you from the snares put around your feet. Put aside those papers. It is not you who will instruct him. I will instruct him.”** From that time I did not of myself speak a word to my Counsel about the case or give a single instruction and if ever I was asked a question, I always found that my answer did not help the case. I had left it to him and he took it entirely into his hands, with what result you know.

I knew all along what He meant for me, for I heard it again and again, always I listened to the voice within: “I am guiding, therefore fear not. Turn to your own work for which I have brought you to jail and when you come out, remember never to fear, never to hesitate. Remember that it is I who am doing this, not you nor any other. Therefore whatever clouds may come, whatever dangers and sufferings, whatever difficulties, whatever impossibilities, there is nothing impossible, nothing difficult. **I am in the nation and its uprising and I am Vasudeva, I am Narayana, and what I will, shall be, not what others will. What I choose to bring about, no human power can stay.**”

Meanwhile He had brought me out of solitude and placed me among those who had been accused along with me. You have spoken much today of my self-sacrifice and devotion to my country. I have heard that kind of speech ever since I came out of jail, but I hear it with embarrassment, with something of pain. For I know my weakness, I am a prey to my own faults and backslidings. I was not blind to them before and when they all rose up against me in seclusion, I felt them utterly. I knew then that I the man was a mass of weakness, a faulty and imperfect instrument, strong only when a higher strength entered into me. Then I found myself among these young men and in many of them I discovered a mighty courage, a power of self-effacement in comparison with which I was simply nothing. I saw one or two who were not only superior to me in force and character, – very many were that, – but in the promise of that intellectual ability on which I prided myself. He said to me, “This is the young generation, the new and mighty nation that is arising at my command. They

are greater than yourself. What have you to fear? If you stood aside or slept, the work would still be done. If you were cast aside tomorrow, here are the young men who will take up your work and do it more mightily than you have ever done. You have only got some strength from me to speak a word to this nation which will help to raise it.” This was the next thing He told me.

Then a thing happened suddenly and in a moment I was hurried away to the seclusion of a solitary cell. What happened to me during that period I am not impelled to say, but only this that day after day, **He showed me His wonders and made me realise the utter truth of the Hindu religion. I had had many doubts before. I was brought up in England amongst foreign ideas and an atmosphere entirely foreign. About many things in Hinduism I had once been inclined to believe that it was all imagination; that there was much of dream in it, much that was delusion and *maya*. But now day after day I realised in the mind, I realised in the heart, I realised in the body the truths of the Hindu religion. They became living experiences to me, and things were opened to me which no material science could explain.** When I first approached Him, it was not entirely in the spirit of the Bhakta, it was not entirely in the spirit of the Jnani. I came to Him long ago in Baroda some years before the Swadeshi began and I was drawn into the public field.

When I approached God at that time, I hardly had a living faith in Him. The agnostic was in me, the atheist was in me, the sceptic was in me and I was not absolutely sure that there was a God at all. I did not feel His presence. Yet something drew me to the truth of the Vedas, the truth of

the Gita, the truth of the Hindu religion. I felt there must be a mighty truth somewhere in this Yoga, a mighty truth in this religion based on the Vedanta. So when I turned to the Yoga and resolved to practise it and find out if my idea was right, I did it in this spirit and with this prayer to Him, "If Thou art, then Thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest that I do not ask for Mukti, I do not ask for anything which others ask for. I ask only for strength to uplift this nation, I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life." I strove long for the realisation of Yoga and at last to some extent I had it, but in what I most desired, I was not satisfied. Then in the seclusion of the jail, of the solitary cell I asked for it again. I said, "Give me Thy *adesh*. I do not know what work to do or how to do it. Give me a message." In the communion of Yoga two messages came. **The first message said, "I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation. Before long the time will come when you will have to go out of jail; for it is not my will that this time either you should be convicted or that you should pass the time as others have to do, in suffering for their country. I have called you to work, and that is the *adesh* for which you have asked. I give you the *adesh* to go forth and do my work."** The second message came and it said, "Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am

**raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you.** The agnostic and the sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the *dharmā* and by the *dharmā* that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country. I have shown you that I am everywhere and in all men and in all things, that I am in this movement and I am not only working in those who are striving for the country but I am working also in those who oppose them and stand in their path. I am working in everybody and whatever men may think or do they can do nothing but help on my purpose. They also are doing my work; they are not my enemies but my instruments. In all your actions you are moving forward without knowing which way you move. You mean to do one thing and you do another. You aim at a result and your efforts subserve one that is different or contrary. It is Shakti that has gone forth and entered into the people. Since long ago I have been preparing this uprising and now the time has come and it is I who will lead it to its fulfilment.”



This then is what I have to say to you. The name of your society is “Society for the Protection of Religion”. Well, the protection of the religion, the protection and upraising before the world of the Hindu religion, that is the work before us. **But what is the Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatana, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages.** But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly and for ever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge, that He is in all men and all things and that in Him we move and have our being. It is the one religion which enables us not only to understand and believe this truth but to realise it with every part of our being. It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the *lila* of Vasudeva. It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that *lila*, its subtlest laws and its noblest

rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.

This is the word that has been put into my mouth to speak to you today. What I intended to speak has been put away from me, and beyond what is given to me I have nothing to say. It is only the word that is put into me that I can speak to you. That word is now finished. I spoke once before with this force in me and I said then that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. **This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism.** This is the message that I have to speak to you.” (3-12)

## **2. The Sun of India's Destiny – Beadon Square Speech of 13-6-1909**

“...the Indians were a nation apart; they were not dependent on these methods. They had a wonderful power of managing things without definite means. Long before the Press came into existence or telegraph wires, the nation had a means of spreading news from one end of the country to

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*\*The numbers at the end of the quotations are the page numbers of the original reference.*

another with electrical rapidity – a Press too impalpable to be touched. They had the power of enforcing the public will without any fixed organisation, of associating without an association – without even the European refuge of a secret association. The spirit was what mattered, if the spirit were there, the movement would find out its own channels; for after all it was the power of God manifested in the movement which would command its own means and create its own channels. They must have the firm faith that India must rise and be great and that everything that happened, every difficulty, every reverse must help and further their end. The trend was upward and the time of decline was over. The morning was at hand and once the light had shown itself, it could never be night again. The dawn would soon be complete and the sun rise over the horizon. **The sun of India's destiny would rise and fill all India with its light and overflow India and overflow Asia and overflow the world. Every hour, every moment could only bring them nearer to the brightness of the day that God had decreed.**” (16-17)

### **3. Ourselves\***

“THE *KARMAYOGIN* comes into the field to fulfil a function which an increasing tendency in the country demands. The life of the nation which once flowed in a broad and single stream has long been severed into a number of separate meagre and shallow channels. The two main floods have followed the paths of religion and politics, but they have flowed separately. Our political activity has crept in a channel cut for it by European or Europeanised minds; it tended always to a superficial wideness, but was deficient in depth and volume. The national genius, originality,

individuality poured itself into religion while our politics were imitative and unreal. Yet without a living political activity national life cannot, under modern circumstances, survive. So also there has been a stream of social life, more and more muddled and disturbed, seeking to get clearness, depth, largeness, freedom, but always failing and increasing in weakness or distraction. There was a stream too of industrial life, faint and thin, the poor survival of the old vigorous Indian artistic and industrial capacity murdered by unjust laws and an unscrupulous trade policy. All these ran in disconnected channels, sluggish, scattered and ineffectual. The tendency is now for these streams to unite again into one mighty invincible and grandiose flood. To assist that tendency, to give voice and definiteness to the deeper aspirations now forming obscurely within the national consciousness is the chosen work of the *Karmayogin*.

**There is no national life perfect or sound without the *chaturvarnya*. The life of the nation must contain within itself the life of the Brahmin, – spirituality, knowledge, learning, high and pure ethical aspiration and endeavour; the life of the Kshatriya, – manhood and strength moral and physical, the love of battle, the thirst for glory, the sense of honour, chivalry, self-devotion, generosity, grandeur of soul; the life of the Vaishya, – trade, industry, thrift, prosperity, benevolence, philanthropy; the life of the Shudra, – honesty, simplicity, labour, religious and quiet service to the nation even in the humblest position and the most insignificant kind of work. The cause of India's decline was the practical disappearance of the Kshatriya and the dwindling of the Vaishya. The whole**

political history of India since the tyranny of the Nandas has been an attempt to resuscitate or replace the Kshatriya. But the attempt was only partially successful. The Vaishya held his own for a long time, indeed, until the British advent by which he has almost been extinguished.

When the *chaturvarnya* disappears, there comes *varnasankara*, utter confusion of the great types which keep a nation vigorous and sound. The Kshatriya dwindled, the Vaishya dwindled, the Brahmin and Shudra were left. The inevitable tendency was for the Brahmin type to disappear and the first sign of his disappearance was utter degeneracy, the tendency to lose himself and while keeping some outward signs of the Brahmin to gravitate towards Shudrahood. In the Kaliyuga the Shudra is powerful and attracts into himself the less vigorous Brahmin, as the earth attracts purer but smaller bodies, and the Brahmatej, the spiritual force of the latter, already diminished, dwindles to nothingness. **For the Satyayuga to return, we must get back the Brahmatej and make it general. For the Brahmatej is the basis of all the rest and in the Satyayuga all men have it more or less and by it the nation lives and is great.**

All this is, let us say, a parable. It is more than a parable, it is a great truth. But our educated class have become so unfamiliar with the deeper knowledge of their forefathers that it has to be translated into modern European terms before they can understand it. For it is the European ideas alone that are real to them and the great truths of Indian thought seem to them mere metaphors, allegories and mystic parables. So well has British education done its fatal denationalising work in India.

The Brahmin stands for religion, science, scholarship and the higher morality; the Kshatriya for war, politics and administration; the Vaishya for the trades, professions and industries; the Shudra for labour and service. It is only when these four great departments of human activity are all in a robust and flourishing condition that the nation is sound and great. When any of these disappear or suffer, it is bad for the body politic. And the two highest are the least easy to be spared. If they survive in full strength, they can provide themselves with the two others, but if either the Kshatriya or the Brahmin go, if either the political force or the spiritual force of a nation is lost, that nation is doomed unless it can revive or replace the missing strength. And of the two the Brahmin is the most important. He can always create the Kshatriya, spiritual force can always raise up material force to defend it. But if the Brahmin becomes the Shudra, then the lower instinct of the serf and the labourer becomes all in all, the instinct to serve and seek a living as the one supreme object of life, the instinct to accept safety as a compensation for lost greatness and inglorious ease and dependence in place of the ardours of high aspiration for the nation and the individual. **When spirituality is lost all is lost. This is the fate from which we have narrowly escaped by the resurgence of the soul of India in Nationalism.**

But that resurgence is not yet complete. There is the sentiment of Indianism, there is not yet the knowledge. There is a vague idea, there is no definite conception or deep insight. We have yet to know ourselves, what we were, are and may be; what we did in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future; our history and our mission. This is the first and most important work which the *Karmayogin* sets for itself,

to popularise this knowledge. The Vedanta or Sufism, the temple or the mosque, Nanak and Kabir and Ramdas, Chaitanya or Guru Govind, Brahmin and Kayastha and Namasudra, whatever national asset we have, indigenous or acclimatised, it will seek to make known, to put in its right place and appreciate. And the second thing is how to use these assets so as to swell the sum of national life and produce the future. It is easy to appraise their relations to the past; it is more difficult to give them their place in the future. The third thing is to know the outside world and its relation to us and how to deal with it. That is the problem which we find at present the most difficult and insistent, but its solution depends on the solution of the others.

We have said that Brahmatej is the thing we need most of all and first of all. In one sense, that means the pre-eminence of religion; but after all, what the Europeans mean by religion is not Brahmatej; which is rather spirituality, the force and energy of thought and action arising from communion with or self-surrender to that within us which rules the world. In that sense we shall use it. This force and energy can be directed to any purpose God desires for us; it is sufficient to knowledge, love or service; it is good for the liberation of an individual soul, the building of a nation or the turning of a tool. It works from within, it works in the power of God, it works with superhuman energy. The re-awakening of that force in three hundred millions of men by the means which our past has placed in our hands, that is our object.

The European is proud of his success in divorcing religion from life. Religion, he says, is all very well in its

place, but it has nothing to do with politics or science or commerce, which it spoils by its intrusion; it is meant only for Sundays when, if one is English, one puts on black clothes and tries to feel good, and if one is continental, one puts the rest of the week away and amuses oneself. In reality, the European has not succeeded in getting rid of religion from his life. It is coming back in Socialism, in the Anarchism of Bakunin and Tolstoy, in many other *isms*; and in whatever form it comes, it insists on engrossing the whole of life, moulding the whole of society and politics under the law of idealistic aspiration. It does not use the word God or grasp the idea, but it sees God in humanity. What the European understood by religion, had to be got rid of and put out of life, but real religion, spirituality, idealism, altruism, self-devotion, the hunger after perfection, is the whole destiny of humanity and cannot be got rid of. **After all God does exist and if He exists, you cannot shove Him into a corner and say: "That is your place, and, as for the world and life, it belongs to us." He pervades and returns. Every age of denial is only a preparation for a larger and more comprehensive affirmation.**

The *Karmayogin* will be more of a national review than a weekly newspaper. We shall notice current events only as they evidence, help, affect or resist the growth of national life and the development of the soul of the nation. Political and social problems we shall deal with from this standpoint, seeking first their spiritual roots and inner causes and then proceeding to measures and remedies. In a similar spirit we shall deal with all sources of national strength in the past and in the present, seeking to bring them home to all comprehensions and make them applicable to our life,



dynamic and not static, creative and not merely preservative. For if there is no creation, there must be disintegration; if there is no advance and victory, there must be recoil and defeat.” (18-22)

#### **4. The Ideal of the Karmayogin\***

##### ***A. The Greatness of India Has Become Necessary to the World***

“This nation is not a new race raw from the workshop of Nature or created by modern circumstances. One of the oldest races and greatest civilisations on this earth, the most indomitable in vitality, the most fecund in greatness, the deepest in life, the most wonderful in potentiality, after taking into itself numerous sources of strength from foreign strains of blood and other types of human civilisation, is now seeking to lift itself for good into an organised national unity. Formerly a congeries of kindred nations with a single life and a single culture, always by the law of this essential oneness tending to unity, always by its excess of fecundity engendering fresh diversities and divisions, it has never yet been able to overcome permanently the almost insuperable obstacles to the organisation of a continent. The time has now come when those obstacles can be overcome. The attempt which our race has been making throughout its long history, it will now make under entirely new circumstances. A keen observer would predict its success because the only important obstacles have been or are in the process of being removed. But we go farther and believe that it is sure to succeed because the freedom, unity and greatness of India have now become necessary to the world.” (23)

**B. The Most Important Task Before  
Us – the Application of the Sanatana  
Dharma to the Whole of Life**

“We believe that God is with us and in that faith we shall conquer. We believe that humanity needs us and it is the love and service of humanity, of our country, of the race, of our religion that will purify our heart and inspire our action in the struggle.

The task we set before ourselves is not mechanical but moral and spiritual. We aim not at the alteration of a form of government but at the building up of a nation. Of that task politics is a part, but only a part. We shall devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to social questions alone, nor to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but we include all these in one entity which we believe to be all-important, the *dharma*, the national religion which we also believe to be universal. **There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal religion.** Under the stress of alien impacts she has largely lost hold not of the structure of that *dharma*, but of its living reality. For the religion of India is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life, but to the whole of life; its spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, our individual character, affections and aspirations. To understand the heart of this *dharma*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life is what we understand by Karmayoga. We believe that it is to make the *yoga* the ideal of human life that

India rises today; by the *yoga* she will get the strength to realise her freedom, unity and greatness, by the *yoga* she will keep the strength to preserve it. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex.” (23-24)

### ***C. Western Motives and Methods Not Suited to India***

“The European sets great store by machinery. He seeks to renovate humanity by schemes of society and systems of government; he hopes to bring about the millennium by an act of Parliament. Machinery is of great importance, but only as a working means for the spirit within, the force behind. The nineteenth century in India aspired to political emancipation, social renovation, religious vision and rebirth, but it failed because it adopted Western motives and methods, ignored the spirit, history and destiny of our race and thought that by taking over European education, European machinery, European organisation and equipment we should reproduce in ourselves European prosperity, energy and progress.” (24-25)

### ***D. India to Work Out Her Own Independent Life and Civilisation***

“We believe... that India is destined to work out her own independent life and civilisation, to stand in the forefront of the world and solve the political, social, economical and moral problems which Europe has failed to solve, yet the pursuit of whose solution and the feverish passage in that pursuit from experiment to experiment, from failure to failure she calls her progress. Our means must be as great as our ends and the strength to discover and use the means so as to attain the end can only be found by seeking the eternal source of strength in ourselves.

We do not believe that by changing the machinery so as to make our society the ape of Europe we shall effect social renovation. Widow-remarriage, substitution of class for caste, adult marriage, intermarriages, interdining and the other nostrums of the social reformer are mechanical changes which, whatever their merits or demerits, cannot by themselves save the soul of the nation alive or stay the course of degradation and decline. It is the spirit alone that saves, and only by becoming great and free in heart can we become socially and politically great and free.” (25-26)

### ***E. The Future World-Religion***

“We do not believe that by multiplying new sects limited within the narrower and inferior ideas of religion imported from the West or by creating organisations for the perpetuation of the mere dress and body of Hinduism we can recover our spiritual health, energy and greatness. The world moves through an indispensable interregnum of free thought and materialism to a new synthesis of religious thought and experience, a new religious world-life free from intolerance, yet full of faith and fervour, accepting all forms of religion because it has an unshakable faith in the One. The religion which embraces Science and faith, Theism, Christianity, Mahomedanism and Buddhism and yet is none of these, is that to which the World-Spirit moves. In our own, which is the most sceptical and the most believing of all, the most sceptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge, – that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which

is not a social framework but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing but insists on testing and experiencing everything and when tested and experienced turning it to the soul's uses, in this Hinduism we find the basis of the future world-religion. This *sanatana dharma* has many scriptures, Veda, Vedanta, Gita, Upanishad, Darshana, Purana, Tantra, nor could it reject the Bible or the Koran; but its real, most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has His dwelling. **It is in our inner spiritual experiences that we shall find the proof and source of the world's Scriptures, the law of knowledge, love and conduct, the basis and inspiration of Karmayoga.**" (26)

### *F. Our Message to Humanity*

"We say to humanity, 'The time has come when you must take the great step and rise out of a material existence into the higher, deeper and wider life towards which humanity moves. The problems which have troubled mankind can only be solved by conquering the kingdom within, not by harnessing the forces of Nature to the service of comfort and luxury, but by mastering the forces of the intellect and the spirit, by vindicating the freedom of man within as well as without and by conquering from within external Nature. For that work the resurgence of Asia is necessary, therefore Asia rises. For that work the freedom and greatness of India is essential, therefore she claims her destined freedom and greatness, and it is to the interest of all humanity, not excluding England, that she should wholly establish her claim.'" (26-27)

### ***G. Our Message to the Nation***

“We say to the nation, ‘It is God’s will that we should be ourselves and not Europe. We have sought to regain life by following the law of another being than our own. We must return and seek the sources of life and strength within ourselves. We must know our past and recover it for the purposes of our future. Our business is to realise ourselves first and to mould everything to the law of India’s eternal life and nature. It will therefore be the object of the *Karmayogin* to read the heart of our religion, our society, our philosophy, politics, literature, art, jurisprudence, science, thought, everything that was and is ours, so that we may be able to say to ourselves and our nation, ‘This is our *dharmā*.’ We shall review European civilisation entirely from the standpoint of Indian thought and knowledge and seek to throw off from us the dominating stamp of the Occident; what we have to take from the West we shall take as Indians. And the *dharmā* once discovered we shall strive our utmost not only to profess but to live, in our individual actions, in our social life, in our political endeavours.’” (27)

### ***H. Our Message to the Young***

“‘You cannot cherish these ideals, still less can you fulfil them if you subject your minds to European ideas or look at life from the material standpoint. Materially you are nothing, spiritually you are everything. It is only the Indian who can believe everything, dare everything, sacrifice everything. First therefore become Indians. Recover the patrimony of your forefathers. Recover the Aryan thought, the Aryan discipline, the Aryan character, the Aryan life. Recover the Vedānta, the Gīta, the Yoga.

Recover them not only in intellect or sentiment but in your lives. Live them and you will be great and strong, mighty, invincible and fearless. Neither life nor death will have any terrors for you. Difficulty and impossibility will vanish from your vocabularies. For it is in the spirit that strength is eternal and you must win back the kingdom of yourselves, the inner Swaraj, before you can win back your outer empire. There the Mother dwells and She waits for worship that She may give strength. Believe in Her, serve Her, lose your wills in Hers, your egoism in the greater ego of the country, your separate selfishness in the service of humanity. Recover the source of all strength in yourselves and all else will be added to you, social soundness, intellectual pre-eminence, political freedom, the mastery of human thought, the hegemony of the world.’” (27-28)

## **5. The Hindu-Mahomedan Unity**

“Of one thing we may be certain, that Hindu-Mahomedan unity cannot be effected by political adjustments or Congress flatteries. It must be sought deeper down, in the heart and the mind, for where the causes of disunion are, there the remedies must be sought. We shall do well in trying to solve the problem to remember that misunderstanding is the most fruitful cause of our differences, that love compels love and that strength conciliates the strong. We must strive to remove the causes of misunderstanding by a better mutual knowledge and sympathy; we must extend the unfaltering love of the patriot to our Musulman brother, remembering always that in him too Narayana dwells and to him too our Mother has given a

permanent place in her bosom; but we must cease to approach him falsely or flatter out of a selfish weakness and cowardice. We believe this to be the only practical way of dealing with the difficulty. As a political question the Hindu-Mahomedan problem does not interest us at all, as a national problem it is of supreme importance. We shall make it a main part of our work to place Mahomed and Islam in a new light before our readers, to spread juster views of Mahomedan history and civilisation, to appreciate the Musulman's place in our national development and the means of harmonising his communal life with our own, not ignoring the difficulties that stand in our way but making the most of the possibilities of brotherhood and mutual understanding. Intellectual sympathy can only draw together, the sympathy of the heart can alone unite. But the one is a good preparation for the other." (31)

## **6. We Are No Ordinary Race**

**“We are no ordinary race. We are a people ancient as our hills and rivers and we have behind us a history of manifold greatness, not surpassed by any other race. We are the descendants of those who performed tapasya and underwent unheard-of austerities for the sake of spiritual gain and of their own will submitted to all the sufferings of which humanity is capable. We are the children of those mothers who ascended with a smile the funeral pyre that they might follow their husbands to another world. We are a people to whom suffering is welcome and who have a spiritual strength within them, greater than any physical force. We are a people in whom God has chosen to manifest Himself**



more than any other at many great moments of our history. It is because God has chosen to manifest Himself and has entered into the hearts of His people that we are rising again as a nation.” (38-39)

## 7. The Roots of Man’s Slavery

“We are driven into action because we are ignorant of our true selves, of the true nature of the world. We identify ourselves with our bodies, our desires, our sorrows, and not our spirits. We lose ourselves in our happiness, griefs and pleasures.

By these motives we are driven into action. This life is a chain of bondage which keeps us revolving. We are surrounded on all sides by forces which we cannot control. As man has a perpetual desire for freedom, he is driven by forces he cannot control. Under the influence of these forces within or without, action takes place. The object of Hindu philosophy is to make man no longer a slave, but to escape from bondage and to make human beings free. Hindu philosophy tries to go into the root of things. What is the real beginning of *maya*? . . . . Whatever we may try, from the nature of the world we cannot escape from bondage. There is a knowledge, by attaining which we can become free.” (48)

## 8. Gopal Krishna Gokhale

“MR. GOPAL Krishna Gokhale has for long been the veiled prophet of Bombay. His course was so ambiguous, his sympathies so divided and self-contradictory that some have not hesitated to call him a masked Extremist. He has played with Boycott, “that criminal agitation”; he has gone

so far in passive resistance as to advocate refusal of the payment of taxes. Eloquent spokesman of the people in the Legislative Council, luminous and ineffective debater scattering his periods in vain in that august void, he has been at once the admired of the people and the spoilt darling of the *Times of India*, the trusted counsellor of John Morley and a leader of the party of Colonial self-government. For some time the victim of his own false step during the troubles in Poona he was distrusted by the people, favoured by the authorities, some of whom are said to have canvassed for him in the electoral fight between him and Mr. Tilak. The charge of cowardice which he now hurls against his opponents was fixed on his own forehead by popular resentment. So difficult was his position that he refrained for some years from speech on the platform of the Congress. But his star triumphed. His own opponents held out to him the hand of amity and re-established him in the universal confidence of the people. Gifted, though barren of creative originality, a shrewd critic, a splendid debater, a good economist and statistician, with the halo of self-sacrifice for the country over his forehead enringed with the more mundane halo of Legislative Councillorship, petted by the Government, loved by the people, he enjoyed a position almost unique in recent political life. He was not indeed a prophet honoured in his own country and black looks and black words were thrown at him by those who distrusted him, but throughout the rest of India his name stood high and defied assailants.

In his recent speech at Poona the veiled prophet has unveiled himself. The leader of the people in this strange and attractive double figure is under sentence of elimination

and the budding Indian Finance Minister has spoken. The speech has caused confusion and searchings of the heart among the eager patriots of the Bengal Moderate school, rejoicing in the ranks of Anglo-India. The *Bengalee* labours to defend the popular cause without injuring the popular leader, the *Statesman* rejoices and holds up the speech even as Lord Morley held up the certificate to him as the Saviour of India for the confusion of rebels in Parliament and outside it. Covered by a reprobation of the London murders it is a sweeping, a damning philippic against the work of the last four years and a call to the country to recede to the position occupied by us previous to 1905. It is a forcible justification of repression and a call to Government and people to crush the lovers and preachers of independence. The time at which it comes lends it incalculable significance. The Morleyan policy of crushing the new spirit and rallying the Moderates has now received publicly the imprimatur of the leading Moderate of western India and that which was suspected by some, prophesied by others at the time of the Surat Congress, the alliance of Bombay Moderatism with officialdom against the new Nationalism, an alliance prepared by the Surat sitting, cemented by subsequent events, confirmed by the Madras Convention, is now unmasked and publicly ratified.

The most odious part of the Poona speech is that in which Mr. Gokhale justifies Government repression and attempts to establish by argument what Mr. Norton failed to establish by evidence, the theory that Nationalism and Terrorism are essentially one and under the cloak of passive resistance, Nationalism is a conspiracy to wage war against the King.” (116-17)

“In his view, the ideal of independence was the beginning of all evil. The ideal of independence is an insane ideal; the men who hold it even as an ultimate goal, Tilak, Chidambaram, Aswini Kumar, Manoranjan, Bipin Chandra, Aurobindo, are madmen outside the lunatic asylum. Not only is it an insane ideal, it is a criminal ideal. “It should be plain to the weakest understanding that *towards the idea of independence the Government could adopt only one attitude, that of stern and relentless repression*, for these ideas *were bound to lead to violence* and as a matter of fact they had, *as they could all see*, resulted in violence.” Farther, in order to leave no loophole of escape for his political opponents, he proceeds to assert that they were well aware of this truth and preached the gospel of independence knowing that it was a gospel of violence and “physical conflict with the Government”. We again quote the words of the reported speech. “Some of their friends were in the habit of saying that their plan was to achieve independence by merely peaceful means, by a general resort to passive resistance. The speaker felt bound to say that such talk was ridiculous nonsense and *was a mere cloak used by these men to save their own skins*.” In other words we are charged with having contemplated violence such as we all see, *viz.*, the murders in London and the assassinations in Bengal, as inevitable effects of our propaganda, and physical conflict with the Government, in other words rebellion, as the only possible means of achieving independence. We are charged with preaching this gospel of violence and rebellion while publicly professing passive resistance, with the sole motive of cowardly anxiety for our personal safety. The accusation is emphatic, sweeping, and allows of no exception. All the men of the Nationalist party

revered by the people are included in the anathema, branded as lunatics and cowards, and the country is called upon to denounce them as corruptors and perturbers of youth and the enemies of progress and the best interests of the people.

Mr. Gokhale stops short of finding fault with European countries for being free and clinging to their freedom. He is good enough not to uphold subjection as the best thing possible for a nation, and we must be grateful to him for stopping short of the gospel of the *Englishman* whose abusive style he has borrowed. But man is progressive and it may be that Mr. Gokhale before he finishes his prosperous career, will reach the Hare Street beatitudes. At present he adopts the philosophy of his ally and teacher, Lord Morley, and wraps himself in the Canadian fur coat. The love of independence may be a virtue in Europe, it is crime and lunacy in India. Acquiescence in subjection is weakness and unmanliness in non-Indians, in this favoured country it is the only path to salvation. In the West the apostles of liberty have been prophets when they succeeded, martyrs when they failed; in this country they are corruptors and perturbers of youth, enemies of progress and their country.” (118-19)

“Mr. Gokhale, at least, has become more English than the English. A British judge, certainly not in sympathy with Indian unrest, expressly admits the possibility of peaceful passive resistance and the blamelessness of the ideal of independence. A leader of Indian Liberalism denounces that ideal as necessarily insane and criminal and the advocates of passive resistance as lunatics and hypocritical cowards, and calls for the denunciation of them as enemies of their country and their removal by stern and relentless repression. Such are the ironies born of co-operation. It is well that we

should know who are our enemies even if they be of our own household. Till now many of us regarded Mr. Gokhale as a brother with whom we had our own private differences, but he has himself by calling for the official sword to exterminate us removed that error. He publishes himself now as the righteous Bibhishan who, with the Sugrives, Angads and Hanumans of Madras and Allahabad, has gone to join the Avatar of Radical absolutism in the India Office, and ourselves as the Rakshasa to be destroyed by this new Holy Alliance. Even this formidable conjunction does not alarm us. At any rate Bibhishan has gone out of Lanka, and Bibhishans are always more dangerous there than in the camp of the adversary.” (121)

“Mr. Gokhale declared that the ideal of independence was an ideal which no sane man could hold. He said that it was impossible to achieve independence by peaceful means and the people who advocate the peaceful methods of passive resistance are men who, out of cowardice, do not speak out the thought that is in their heart. That idea of Mr. Gokhale’s has been contradicted beforehand by the Sessions Judge of Alipore and even an Anglo-Indian paper was obliged to say that Mr. Gokhale’s justification of the repressions on the ground that stern and relentless repression was the only possible attitude the Government could adopt towards the ideal of independence was absurd because the ideals and the thoughts of a nation could not be punished. This was a very dangerous teaching which Mr. Gokhale introduced into his speech, that the ideal of independence – whether we call it Swaraj or autonomy or Colonial Self-Government, because these two things in a country circumstanced like India meant in practice the same (*loud*

*applause*), – cannot be achieved by peaceful means. Mr. Gokhale knows or ought to know that this ideal which he decries is deeply-rooted in the minds of thousands of people and cannot be driven out. He has told the ardent hearts which cherish this ideal of independence and are determined to strive towards it that their ideal can only be achieved by violent means. If any doctrine can be dangerous, if any teacher can be said to have uttered words dangerous to the peace of the country, it is Mr. Gokhale himself. (*Loud cheers*) We have told the people that there is a peaceful means of achieving independence in whatever form we aspire to it. We have said that by self-help, by passive resistance we can achieve it. We have told the young men of our country, ‘Build up your own industries, build up your own schools and colleges, settle your own disputes. You are always told that you are not fit for self-government. Show by example that you are fit to govern yourselves, show it by developing self-government through self-help and not by depending upon others.’” (123-24)

## **9. Madanlal Dhingra**

“Madanlal Dhingra pays the inevitable and foreseen penalty of his crime. We have no wish whatever to load the memory of this unfortunate young man with curses and denunciations. Rather we hope that in his last moments he will be able to look back in a calm spirit on his act and with a mind enlightened by the near approach of death prepare his soul for the great transit. No man but he can say what were the real motives for his deed. If personal resentment and exaggerated emotions were the cause of his crime, a realisation of the true nature of the offence may yet help

the soul in its future career. If on the other hand a random patriotism was at its back, we have little hope that reflection will induce him to change his views. Minds imbued with these ideas are the despair of the statesman and the political thinker. They follow their bent with a remorseless firmness which defies alike the arrows of the reasoner and the terrors of a violent death. He must in that case go forth to reap the fruits in other bodies and new circumstances. Here his country remains behind to bear the consequences of his act.” (144)

### **10. The Karma of the British People in India**

“The Karma of the British people in India has been of a mixed quality. So far as it has opened the gates of Western knowledge to the people of this country it has been good and in return the thought and knowledge of India has poured back upon Europe to return the gift with overmeasure. Had they in addition consciously raised up and educated the whole people, all the fruits of that good Karma would have gone to England. But the education they have given is bad, meagre and restricted to the few, and their sympathy for the people has been formal and deficient. In consequence the main flood of the new thought and knowledge has been diverted to America, the giant of the future, which alone of the nations has shown an active and practical sympathy and understanding of our nation. British Karma in India has been bad in so far as it has destroyed our industries and arrested our national development. This Karma is also beginning to recoil, patently in Boycott and unrest, much more subtly in the growing demoralisation of British politics.” (147)



## **11. The Summary of the Policy Suggested by Sri Aurobindo to the Nationalist Party**

“The policy I suggest to the Nationalist party may briefly be summed up as follows: –

1. Persistence with a strict regard to law in a peaceful policy of self-help and passive resistance.

2. The regulation of our attitude towards the Government by the principle of “No control, no co-operation.”

3. A rapprochement with the Moderate party wherever possible and the reconstitution of a united Congress.

4. The regulation of the Boycott movement so as to make both the political and the economic boycott effective.

5. The organisation of the Provinces if not of the whole country according to our original programme.

6. A system of co-operation which will not contravene the law and will yet enable workers to proceed with the work of self-help and national efficiency, if not quite so effectively as before, yet with energy and success.” (159-60)

## **12. Mazzini and Cavour**

“OF ALL the great actors who were in the forefront of the Italian Revolution, Mazzini and Cavour were the most essential to Italian regeneration. Of the two Mazzini was undoubtedly the greater. Cavour was the statesman and organiser, Mazzini the prophet and creator. Mazzini was busy with the great and eternal ideas which move masses of men in all countries and various ages, Cavour with the temporary needs and circumstances of modern Italy. The one was an

acute brain, the other a mighty soul. Cavour belongs to Italy, Mazzini to all humanity. Cavour was the man of the hour, Mazzini is the citizen of Eternity. But the work of Mazzini could not have been immediately crowned with success if there had been no Cavour. The work of Cavour would equally have been impossible but for Mazzini. Mazzini summed up the soul of all humanity, the idea of its past and the inspiration of its future in Italian forms and gave life to the dead. At his breath the dead bones clothed themselves with flesh and the wilderness of poisonous brambles blossomed with the rose. Mazzini found Italy corrupt, demoralised, treacherous, immoral, selfish, wholly divided and incapable of union; he gave her the impulse of a mighty hope, a lofty spirituality, an intellectual impulse which despising sophistry and misleading detail went straight to the core of things and fastened on the one or two necessities, an ideal to live and die for and the strength to live and die for it. This was all he did, but it was enough. Cavour brought the old Italian statesmanship, diplomacy, practicality and placed it at the service of the great ideal of liberty and unity which Mazzini had made the overmastering passion of the millions. Yet these two deliverers and lovers of Italy never understood each other. Mazzini hated Cavour as a dishonest trickster and Machiavellian, Cavour scorned Mazzini as a fanatic and dangerous fire-brand. It is easy to assign superficial and obvious causes for the undying misunderstanding and to say that the monarchist and practical statesman and the utopian and democrat were bound to misunderstand and perpetually distrust and dislike each other. But there was a deeper cause.

The one thing which Mazzini most hated and from

which he strove to deliver the hearts and imaginations of the young men of Italy was what he summed up in the word Machiavellianism. **The Machiavellian is the man of pure intellect without imagination who, while not intellectually dead to great objects, does not make them an ideal but regards them from the point of view of concrete interests and is prepared to use in effecting them every means which can be suggested by human cunning or put into motion by unscrupulous force.** Italian patriotism previous to the advent of Mazzini was cast in this Machiavellian mould. The Carbonari movement which was Italy's first attempt to live was permeated with it. Mazzini lifted up the country from this low and ineffective level and gave it the only force which can justify the hope of revival, the force of the spirit within, the strength to disregard immediate interests and surrounding circumstances and, carried away by the passion for an ideal, trusting oneself to the impetus and increasing velocity of the force it creates, to scorn ideas of impossibility and improbability and to fling life, goods and happiness away on the cast of dice already clogged against one by adverse Fortune and unfavourable circumstance. **The spiritual force within not only creates the future but creates the materials for the future. It is not limited to the existing materials either in their nature or in their quantity. It can transform bad material into good material, insufficient means into abundant means.**

It was a deep consciousness of this great truth that gave Mazzini the strength to create modern Italy. His eyes were always fixed on the mind and heart of the nation, very little on the external or internal circumstances of Italy. He

was not a statesman but he had a more than statesmanlike insight. His plan of a series of petty, local and necessarily abortive insurrections strikes the ordinary practical man as the very negation of common sense and political wisdom. It seems almost as futile as the idea of some wild brains, if indeed the idea be really cherished, that by random assassinations the freedom of this country can be vindicated. There is, however, a radical difference. Mazzini knew well what he was about. His eyes were fixed on the heart of the nation and as the physician of the Italian malady his business was not with the ultimate and perfect result but with the creation of conditions favourable to complete cure and resurgence. He knew final success was impossible without the creation of a force that could not be commanded for some time to come. But he also knew that even that force could not succeed without a great spiritual and moral strength behind its action and informing its aspirations. It was this strength he sought to create. The spiritual force he created by the promulgation of the mighty and uplifting ideas which pervade his writings and of which *Young Italy* was the organ.

But moral force cannot be confirmed merely by ideas, it can only be forged and tempered in the workshop of action. And it was the habit of action, the habit of strength, daring and initiative which Mazzini sought to recreate in the torpid heart and sluggish limbs of Italy. And with it he sought to establish the sublime Roman spirit of utter self-sacrifice and self-abnegation, contempt of difficulty and apparent impossibility and iron insensibility to defeat. For his purpose the very hopelessness of the enterprises he set on foot was more favourable than more possible essays.

And when others and sometimes his own heart reproached him with flinging away so many young and promising lives into the bloody trench of his petty yet impossible endeavours, the faith and wisdom in him upheld him in the face of every discouragement. Because he had that superhuman strength, he was permitted to uplift Italy. Had it been God's purpose that Italy should become swiftly one of the greater European powers, he would have been permitted to free her also. He would have done it in a different way from Cavour's, – after a much longer lapse of time, with a much more terrible and bloody expense of human life but without purchasing Italy's freedom in the French market by the bribe of Savoy and Nice and with such a divine output of spiritual and moral force as would have sustained his country for centuries and fulfilled his grandiose dream of an Italy spiritually, intellectually and politically leading Europe.

The work was given to Cavour precisely because he was a lesser man. Mazzini saw in him the revival of Machiavellianism and the frustration of his own moral work. He was wrong, but not wholly wrong. The temper and methods of Cavour were predominatingly Machiavellian. He resumed that element in Italian character and gave it a triumphant expression. Like the Carbonari he weighed forces, gave a high place to concrete material interests, attempted great but not impossible objects and by means which were bold but not heroic, used diplomacy, temporising and shuffling with a force of which they were incapable and unlike them did not shrink from material sacrifices. He succeeded where they failed, not merely because he was a great statesman, but because he had learned to cherish the

unity and freedom of Italy not as mere national interests but as engrossing ideals. The passion greater than a man's love for child and wife which he put into these aspirations and the emotional fervour with which he invested his Liberal ideal of a free Church in a free State, measure the spiritual gulf between himself and the purely Machiavellian Carbonari. It was this that gave him the force to attempt greatly and to cast all on the hazard of a single die. He had therefore the inspiration of a part of the Mazzinian gospel and he used the force which Mazzini created. Without it he would have been helpless. It was not Cavour who saved Italy, it was the force of resurgent Italy working through Cavour.

History often misrepresents and it formerly represented the later part of the Revolution as entirely engineered by his statecraft, but it is now recognised that more than once in the greatest matters Cavour planned one way and the great Artificer of nations planned in another. But Cavour had the greatest gift of a statesman, to recognise that events were wiser than himself and throwing aside his attachment to the success of his own schemes to see and use the advantages of a situation he had not foreseen. This gift Mazzini, the fanatic and doctrinaire, almost entirely lacked. Still the success of Cavour prolonged in the Italian character and political action some of the lower qualities of the long-enslaved nation and is responsible for the reverses, retardations and deep-seated maladies which keep back Italy from the fulfilment of her greatness. Mazzini, with his superior diagnosis of the national disease and his surgeon's pitilessness, would have probed deeper, intensified and prolonged the agony but made a radical cure." (183-87)

### **13. The Question of the Fitness of Indians for Democratic Politics and the Hypocrisy of the English People & Press**

“We freely admit that no nation can be fit for liberty unless it is free, none can be wholly capable of self-government until it governs itself. We freely admit that if we were given self-government we should commit mistakes which we would have to rectify, as has been done even by nations which were old in the exercise of free and self-governing functions. We freely admit that the liberated nation would have to face many and most serious problems even as Turkey and Persia have to face such problems today, as Japan had to face them in the period of its own revolution. But to argue from these propositions to the refusal of self-government is to use a sophistry which can only impose on the minds of children. In the nineteenth century owing to a stupefying education we had contracted the trustfulness, naivety and incapacity to think for itself of the childish intellect and we swallowed whole the sophisms which were administered to us. But we have thrown off that spell and if the impatient idealists of the Nationalist party had done nothing else for their country this would be sufficient justification for their existence that they have made a clean sweep of all this garbage and purified the intellect and the morale of the nation. It is enough if the capacity is there in the race and if we can show by our action that it is not dead. This we have shown by organised successful and national action under circumstances of unprecedented difficulty. If the success is now jeopardised, it is because of the temporary revival of the weaknesses of our nineteenth century politics and the desire to fall back into safe and easy methods in

spite of their unfruitfulness. That is a weakness which is not shared by the whole nation, but is only temporarily suffered because a situation of unprecedented difficulty has been created in which it was not easy to see our way and in the silence that was unfortunately allowed to fall on the country and deepen the uncertainty, the forces of reaction found their opportunity. In times of difficulty to stop still for a long time is a cardinal error, the best way is to move slowly forward, warily watching each step but never faltering. Action solves the difficulties which action creates. Inaction can only paralyse and slay.” (226-27)

“A favourite device of the opponents of progress is to point to the frequent ebullitions of tumult and excitement which have recently found their way into our political life and argue from them to our unfitness.

In the mouths of our own countrymen the use of this argument arises partly from political prejudice but still more from inexperience of political life and the unexamined acceptance of Anglo-Indian sophistries. But in the mouths of Englishmen this kind of language cannot be free from the charge of hypocrisy. They know well of the much worse things that are done in political life in the West and accepted as an inevitable feature of party excitement. The rough horseplay of public meetings which is a familiar feature of excited times in England, would not be tolerated by the more self-disciplined Indian people. As for really serious disturbance the worst things of that kind which have happened in India occurred at Surat when S. J. Surendranath Banerji was refused a hearing and on the next day when Mr. Tilak was threatened on the platform by the sticks and chairs of Surat loyalists and the Mahratta delegates charged and



after a free fight cleared the platform. The refusal to hear a speaker by dint of continuous clamour, hisses and outcries is of such frequent occurrence in England that it would indeed be a strange argument which would infer from such occurrences the unfitness of the English race for self-government. We may instance the University meeting at which Mr. Balfour was once refused a hearing and at the end of an inaudible speech two undergraduates dressed as girls danced up to the platform and gracefully offered the Conservative statesman a garland of shoes which was smilingly accepted. As for the storming of platforms and turning out of the speakers and organisers, that also is a recognised and not altogether infrequent possibility of political life in England. A case remarkable for its sequel happened at Edinburgh when a faith-healer attempted to speak against Medicine and the undergraduates forced their way in, attacked and wounded the police, smashed all the chairs, hurled a ruined piano from the platform and hooted the discreetly absent orator in his hotel and challenged him to come out with his speech. On complaint the Chancellor of the University declared his approval of this riot and in a court of law the students were acquitted on the plea of justification. It may well be said that such a view of what is permissible in political life ought not to be introduced into India, but it is the worst hypocrisy for the citizens of a country where such things not only happen but are tolerated and sometimes approved by public opinion, to turn up the whites of their eyes at Indian disorderliness and argue from it to the unfitness of the race for democratic politics. And it must be remembered that worse things happen on the Continent, free fights occurring even in august legislatures,

yet it has not been made an argument for the English people going over to the Continent to govern the unfit and inferior European races.” (227-29)

#### **14. Mr. Coomaraswamy and the Nationalists**

“Dr. Coomaraswamy is above all a lover of art and beauty and the ancient thought and greatness of India, but he is also, and as a result of this deep love and appreciation, an ardent Nationalist. Writing as an artist, he calls attention to the debased aesthetic ideas and tastes which the ugly and sordid commercialism of the West has introduced into the mind of a nation once distinguished for its superior beauty and grandeur of conception and for the extent to which it suffused the whole of life with the forces of the intellect and the spirit. He laments the persistence of a servile imitation of English ideas, English methods, English machinery and production even in the new Nationalism. And he reminds his readers that nations cannot be made by politics and economics alone, but that art also has a great and still unrecognised claim. The main drift of his writing is to censure the low imitative un-Indian and bourgeois ideals of our national activity in the nineteenth century and to recall our minds to the cardinal fact that, if India is to arise and be great as a nation, it is not by imitating the methods and institutions of English politics and commerce, but by carrying her own civilisation, purified of the weaknesses that have overtaken it, to a much higher and mightier fulfilment than any that it has reached in the past. Our mission is to outdistance, lead and instruct Europe, not merely to imitate and learn from her. Dr. Coomaraswamy speaks of art, but it is certain that a man of his wide culture

would not exclude, and we know he does not exclude, thought, literature and religion from the forces that must uplift our nation and are necessary to its future. To recover Indian thought, Indian character, Indian perceptions, Indian energy, Indian greatness, and to solve the problems that perplex the world in an Indian spirit and from the Indian standpoint, this, in our view, is the mission of Nationalism. We agree with Dr. Coomaraswamy that an exclusive preoccupation with politics and economics is likely to dwarf our growth and prevent the flowering of originality and energy. We have to return to the fountainheads of our ancient religion, philosophy, art and literature and pour the revivifying influences of our immemorial Aryan spirit and ideals into our political and economic development. This is the ideal the *Karmayogin* holds before it, and our outlook and Dr. Coomaraswamy's do not substantially differ. But in judging our present activities we cannot look, as he does, from a purely artistic and idealistic standpoint, but must act and write in the spirit of a practical idealism.

The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commercial, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact on which the young Nationalism has always insisted. The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our productions pre-eminence, distinction and mastery of the European markets, is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great. To reverse the process

and recover what we have lost, is undoubtedly the first object to which we ought to devote ourselves. And as the loss of originality, aspiration and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective. The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism was to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present, that because temporary causes had brought us low and made us weak, low therefore must be our aims and weak our methods. They pointed the mind of the people to a great and splendid destiny, not in some distant millennium but in the comparatively near future, and fired the hearts of the young men with a burning desire to realise the apocalyptic vision. As a justification of what might otherwise have seemed a dream and as an inexhaustible source of energy and inspiration, they pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandiose civilisation of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage. It cannot be denied that this double effort to realise the past and the future has been the distinguishing temperament and the chief uplifting force in the movement, and it cannot be denied that it is bringing back to our young men originality, aspiration and energy. By this force the character, temper and action of the Bengali has been altered beyond recognition in a few years. To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the perceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual experiences, realisations and aspirations which made us the deepest-hearted, deepest-thoughted and most delicately

profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency. We had hoped by means of National Education to effect this great object as well as to restore to our youth the intellectual heritage of the nation and build up on that basis a yet greater culture in the future. We must admit that the instrument which we cherished and for which such sacrifices were made, has proved insufficient and threatens, in unfit hands, to lose its promise of fulfilment and be diverted to lower ends. But the movement is greater than its instruments. We must strive to prevent the destruction of that which we have created and, in the meanwhile, build up a centre of culture, freer and more perfect, which will either permeate the other with itself or replace it if destroyed. Finally, the artistic awakening has been commenced by that young, living and energetic school which has gathered round the Master and originator, S. J. Abanindranath Tagore. The impulse which this school is giving, its inspired artistic recovery of the past, its intuitive anticipations of the future, have to be popularised and made a national possession.

Dr. Coomaraswamy complains of the survivals of the past in the preparations for the future. But no movement, however vigorous, can throw off in a few years the effects of a whole century. We must remember also why the degradation and denationalisation, “the mighty evil in our souls” of which the writer complains, came into being. A painful but necessary work had to be done, and because the English nation were the fittest instrument for His purpose, God led them all over those thousands of miles of alien Ocean, gave strength to their hearts and subtlety to their brains, and set them up in India to do His work, which they

have been doing faithfully, if blindly, ever since and are doing at the present moment. The spirit and ideals of India had come to be confined in a mould which, however beautiful, was too narrow and slender to bear the mighty burden of our future. When that happens, the mould has to be broken and even the ideal lost for a while, in order to be recovered free of constraint and limitation. We have to recover the Aryan spirit and ideal and keep it intact but enshrined in new forms and more expansive institutions. We have to treasure jealously everything in our social structure, manners, institutions, which is of permanent value, essential to our spirit or helpful to the future; but we must not cabin the expanding and aggressive spirit of India in temporary forms which are the creation of the last few hundred years. That would be a vain and disastrous endeavour. The mould is broken; we must remould in larger outlines and with a richer content. For the work of destruction England was best fitted by her stubborn individuality and by that very commercialism and materialism which made her the antitype in temper and culture of the race she governed. She was chosen too for the unrivalled efficiency and skill with which she has organised an individualistic and materialistic democracy. We had to come to close quarters with that democratic organisation, draw it into ourselves and absorb the democratic spirit and methods so that we might rise beyond them. Our half-aristocratic half-theocratic feudalism had to be broken, in order that the democratic spirit of the Vedanta might be released and, by absorbing all that is needed of the aristocratic and theocratic culture, create for the Indian race a new and powerful political and social organisation. We have to learn and use the democratic principle and

methods of Europe, in order that hereafter we may build up something more suited to our past and to the future of humanity. We have to throw away the individualism and materialism and keep the democracy. We have to solve for the human race the problem of harmonising and spiritualising its impulses towards liberty, equality and fraternity. In order that we may fulfil our mission we must be masters in our own home. It is out of no hostility to the English people, no race hatred that we seek absolute autonomy, but because it is the first condition of our developing our national self and realising our destiny. It is for this reason that the engrossing political preoccupation came upon us; and we cannot give up or tone down our political movement until the lesson of democratic self-government is learned and the first condition of national self-fulfilment realised. For another reason also England was chosen, because she had organised the competitive system of commerce, with its bitter and murderous struggle for existence, in the most skilful, discreet and successful fashion. We had to feel the full weight of that system and learn the literal meaning of this industrial realisation of Darwinism. It has been written large for us in ghastly letters of famine, chronic starvation and misery and a decreasing population. We have risen at last, entered into the battle and with the Boycott for a weapon, are striking at the throat of British commerce even as it struck at ours, first by protection and then by free trade. Again it is not out of hatred that we strike, but out of self-preservation. We must conquer in that battle if we are to live. We cannot arrest our development of industry and commerce while waiting for a new commercial system to develop or for beauty and art to

reconquer the world. As in politics so in commerce, we must learn and master the European methods in order that we may eventually rise above them. The crude commercial Swadeshi, which Dr. Coomaraswamy finds so distasteful and disappointing, is as integral a part of the national awakening as the movement towards Swaraj or as the new School of Art. If this crude Swadeshi were to collapse and the national movement towards autonomy come to nothing, the artistic renaissance he has praised so highly, would wither and sink with the drying up of the soil in which it was planted. A nation need not be luxuriously wealthy in order to be profoundly artistic, but it must have a certain amount of well-being, a national culture and, above all, hope and ardour, if it is to maintain a national art based on a widespread development of artistic perception and faculty. Moreover, aesthetic arts and crafts cannot live against the onrush of cheap and vulgar manufactures under the conditions of the modern social structure. Industry can only become again beautiful if poverty and the struggle for life are eliminated from society and the co-operative State and commune organised as the fruit of a great moral and spiritual uplifting of humanity. We hold such an uplifting and reorganisation as part of India's mission. But to do her work she must live. Therefore the economical preoccupation has been added to the political. We perceive the salvation of the country not in parting with either of these, but in adding to them a religious and moral preoccupation. On the basis of that religious and moral awakening the preoccupation of art and fine culture will be added and firmly based. There are many who perceive the necessity of the religious and moral regeneration, who are inclined to turn from the prosaic



details of politics and commerce and regret that any guide and teacher of the nation should stoop to mingle in them. That is a grievous error. The men who would lead India must be catholic and many-sided. When the Avatar comes, we like to believe that he will be not only the religious guide, but the political leader, the great educationist, the regenerator of society, the captain of cooperative industry, with the soul of the poet, scholar and artist. He will be in short the summary and grand type of the future Indian nation which is rising to reshape and lead the world.” (244-49)

### **15. The British Character and the Policy of the Nationalist**

“The civilised conscience is a remarkably queer and capricious quantity, on which, frankly, we place no reliance whatever. It is very sensitive to breaches of principle by others and very indignant when the same breaches of principle are questioned in its own conduct. It sees the mote in other eyes; it is obstinately unaware of the beam in its own. It is always criticising other nations, but it ignores or is furious at criticism of its own. It has fits of sensitiveness in which it makes large resolutions, but it can never be trusted to persist in them contrary to its own interests. This civilised conscience is not peculiar to the British people, but belongs in a greater or less degree to every European nation with the possible exception of Russia. We prefer infinitely to rely, if we have to rely on anything, on the sense of enlightened self-interest. Here also we differ from Bipin Babu. He argues as if the British were a thoughtful and clear-minded people, and only needed the data to be correctly placed before them in order to understand their interests correctly. This is far

from the truth about British character. The English are, or were, a people with a rough practical common sense and business-like regularity and efficiency which, coupled with a mighty thew and sinew and a bulldog tenacity and courage, have carried them through all dangers and difficulties and made them one of the first peoples of the globe. They have had men of unsurpassed thought-power and clearness of view and purpose, but the race is not thoughtful and clear-minded; on the contrary on all questions requiring thought, intelligence and sympathy they are amazingly muddle-headed and can only learn by knocking their shins against hard and rough facts. When this first happens, they swear profusely, rub their shins and try to kick the obstacle out of the way. If it consents to be kicked out of the path, they go on their way rejoicing; otherwise, after hurting their shins repeatedly they begin to respect the obstacle, stop swearing and kicking, and negotiate with it. In this process, familiar to all who have to do with Englishmen from the point of view of conflicting interests, there is much rough practical sense but little thought and intelligence. It is on this conception of the British character that the Nationalist party has hitherto proceeded. The hard fact of a continued and increasing Boycott, an indomitable national movement, a steady passive resistance, have been the obstacles they have sought to present to the British desire for an absolute lordship. We must prevent these obstacles from being kicked out of the way by repression, but the way to achieve that end is to show a tenacity and courage and a power of efficiency rivalling the British, and not to make an appeal to the conscience and clear common sense of the British public.” (271-72)

## **16. Mr. Hasan Imam and the Question of Students and Politics**

“All India and especially Bengal owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. Hasan Imam for his strong, manly and sensible remarks on the vexed question of students and politics as President of the Beharee Students Conference at Gaya. Contrast this honest utterance and robust recognition of unalterable facts with the fencings, refinements and unreal distinctions of Mr. Gokhale’s utterance. The difference is between a man with an eye and a clear practical sense and a mere intellectual, a man of books and words and borrowed thoughts, proud of his gift of speech and subtlety of logic, but unable to penetrate a fact even when he sees it. With Mr. Hasan Imam a strong personal force enters the field of politics.” (297-98)

## **17. Prince Hirobumi Ito**

“A GREAT man has fallen, perhaps the greatest force in the field of political action that the nineteenth century produced, the maker of Japan, the conqueror of Russia, the mighty one who first asserted Asia’s superiority over Europe in Europe’s own field of glory and changed in a few years the world’s future. Some would say that such a death for such a man was a tragedy. We hold otherwise. Even such a death should such a man have died, in harness, fighting for his country’s expansion and greatness, by the swift death in action which, our scriptures tell us, carry the hero’s soul straight to the felicity of heaven. The man who in his youth lived in imminent deadly peril from the swords of his countrymen because he dared to move forward by new paths

to his God-given task, dies in his old age by a foreign hand because, at the expense of justice and a nation's freedom, he still moved forward in the path of his duty. It is a difficult choice that is given to men of action in a world where love, strength and justice are not yet harmonised, and he who chooses in sincerity and acts thoroughly, whether he has chosen well or ill, gathers *punya* for himself in this world and the next. Then he was building a nation and he lived to do his work, for his death would not have profited. He was building an Empire when he died and by his death that Empire will be established. The soul of a great man, fulfilled in development but cut off in the midst of his work, enters into his following or his nation and works on a far wider scale than was possible to him in the body. Korea will gain nothing by this rash and untimely act, the greatest error in tactics it could have committed. The Japanese is the last man on earth to be deterred from his ambition or his duty by the fear of death, and the only result of this blow will be to harden Japan to her task. She has science, organisation, efficiency, ruthlessness, and she will grind the soul out of Korea until it is indistinguishable from Japan. That is the only way to perpetuate a conquest, to kill the soul of the subject nation, and the Japanese know it. A subject nation struggling for freedom must always attract Indian sympathy, but the Koreans have not the strength of soul to attain freedom. Instead of seeking the force to rise in their own manhood, they have always committed the unpardonable sin against Asiatic integrity of striving to call in a European power against a brother Asiatic. The Koreans have right on their side, but do not know how to awaken might to vindicate the right. The Japanese cause is wrong from the standpoint

of a higher morality than the merely patriotic, but they believe intensely in their religion of patriotic duty and put all their might into its observance. It is not difficult to predict with which side the victory will lie.

Prince Hirobumi Ito was the typical man of his nation, as well as its greatest statesman and leader. He went ahead of it for a while only to raise it to his level. He had all its virtues in overflowing measure and a full share of its defects and vices. Absolutely selfless in public affairs, quiet, unassuming, keeping himself in the background unless duty called him into prominence, calm, self-controlled, patient, swift, energetic, methodical, incapable of fear, wholly devoted to the nation – such is the Japanese, and such was Ito. As a private man he had the Japanese defects. Even in public affairs, he had something of the narrowness, unscrupulousness in method and preference of success to justice of the insular and imperial Japanese type. Added to these common characteristics of his people he had a genius equal to that of any statesman in history. The eye that read the hearts of men, the mouth sealed to rigid secrecy, the rare, calm and effective speech, the brain that could embrace a civilisation at a glance and take all that was needed for his purpose, the swift and yet careful intellect that could divine, choose and arrange, the power of study, the genius of invention, the talent of application, a diplomacy open-minded but never vacillating, a tireless capacity for work, – all these he had on so grand a scale that to change the world's history was to him a by-no-means stupendous labour. And he had the ancient Asiatic gift of self-effacement. In Europe a genius of such colossal proportions would have filled the world with the mighty bruit of his personality; but Ito

worked in silence and in the shade, covering his steps, and it was only by the results of his work that the world knew him. Like many modern Japanese, Ito was a sceptic. His country was the God of his worship to whom he dedicated his life, for whom he lived and in whose service he died. Such was this great Vibhuti, who came down to earth in a petty family, an Eastern island clan, a nation apart and far behind in the world's progress, and in forty years created a nation's greatness, founded an Empire, changed a civilisation and prepared the liberation of a continent. His death was worthy of his life. For there are only two deaths which are really great and carry a soul to the highest heaven, to die in self-forgetting action, in battle, by assassination, on the scaffold for others, for one's country or for the right, and to die as the Yogin dies, by his own will, free of death and disease, departing into that from which he came. To Ito, the sceptic, the patriot, the divine worker, the death of the selfless hero was given." (299-301)

### **18. Hindu Sabha and the Possibility of Hindu Nationalism**

“..we do not understand Hindu nationalism as a possibility under modern conditions. Hindu nationalism had a meaning in the times of Shivaji and Ramdas, when the object of national revival was to overthrow a Mahomedan domination which, once tending to Indian unity and toleration, had become oppressive and disruptive. It was possible because India was then a world to itself and the existence of two geographical units entirely Hindu, Maharashtra and Rajputana, provided it with a basis. It was necessary because the misuse of their domination by the

Mahomedan element was fatal to India's future and had to be punished and corrected by the resurgence and domination of the Hindu. And because it was possible and necessary, it came into being. But under modern conditions India can only exist as a whole. A nation depends for its existence on geographical separateness and geographical compactness, on having a distinct and separate country. The existence of this geographical separateness is sure in the end to bear down all differences of race, language, religion, history. It has done so in Great Britain, in Switzerland, in Germany. It will do so in India.” (304)

“These things are therefore necessary to Indian nationality, geographical separateness, geographical compactness and a living national spirit. The first was always ours and made India a people apart from the earliest times. The second we have attained by British rule. The third has just sprung into existence.

But the country, the *swadesh*, which must be the base and fundament of our nationality, is India, a country where Mahomedan and Hindu live intermingled and side by side. What geographical base can a Hindu nationality possess? Maharashtra and Rajasthan are no longer separate geographical units but merely provincial divisions of a single country. The very first requisite of a Hindu nationalism is wanting. The Mahomedans base their separateness and their refusal to regard themselves as Indians first and Mahomedans afterwards on the existence of great Mahomedan nations to which they feel themselves more akin, in spite of our common birth and blood, than to us. Hindus have no such resource. For good or evil, they are bound to the soil and to the soil alone. They cannot deny

their Mother, neither can they mutilate her. Our ideal therefore is an Indian Nationalism, largely Hindu in its spirit and traditions, because the Hindu made the land and the people and persists, by the greatness of his past, his civilisation and his culture and his invincible virility, in holding it, but wide enough also to include the Moslem and his culture and traditions and absorb them into itself. It is possible that the Mahomedan may not recognise the inevitable future and may prefer to throw himself into the opposite scale. If so, the Hindu, with what little Mahomedan help he may get, must win Swaraj both for himself and the Mahomedan in spite of that resistance. There is a sufficient force and manhood in us to do a greater and more difficult task than that, but we lack unity, brotherhood, intensity of single action among ourselves. It is to the creation of that unity, brotherhood and intensity that the Hindu Sabha should direct its whole efforts. Otherwise we must reject it as a disruptive and not a creative agency.” (305-06)

### **19. Political Assassinations and Death Penalty**

“Even in the case of actual political assassins the infliction of the death sentences, however legally justifiable, is bad policy. Death sentences for political crimes only provide martyrs to a revolutionary cause, nerve the violent to fresh acts of vengeance and terrorism, and create through the liberation of the spirits of the dead men a psychical force making for further unrest and those passions of political revolt and fierceness to which they were attached in life. The prolongation of terrorism is undesirable in the interests of the country; for, so long as young men are attached to these methods of violence, the efforts of a more



orderly though not less strenuous Nationalism to organise and spread itself must be seriously hampered.” (331)

“...the whole country must be grateful to Sir Lawrence Jenkins for the courtesy, patience and fairness with which he has heard the case and given every facility to the defence, an attitude which might with advantage be copied by certain civilian judges in and outside the High Court and even by certain Judges, not civilians, in other provinces.” (333)

## **20. The Transvaal Indians\***

“There can be no two opinions outside South Africa, and possibly Hare Street, as to the moral aspects of the question; for it must be remembered that the Indians in the Transvaal are not claiming any political rights, but merely treatment as human beings first, and, next, equality before the law. It is open to the South Africans to exclude Indians altogether, but, once they are admitted, they are morally bound to refrain from a treatment of them which is an extreme and unpardonable outrage on humanity. To degrade any part of the human race to the level of cattle is in the present stage of progress an insult and an offence to the whole of mankind. It would be equally reprehensible to whatever race the humanity so degraded belonged, but the fact that these men are Indians has made their sufferings a national question to us and a standing reproach to the British people who, out of selfish fear of offending their own kith and kin, allow this outrage to be committed on their own subjects whom they have deprived of all means of self-protection. The great glory of the Transvaal Indians is that while men under such circumstances have always sunk into the condition to which they have been condemned and

needed others to help them out of the mire, these sons of Bharatavarsha, inheritors of an unexampled moral and spiritual tradition, have vindicated the superiority of the Indian people and its civilisation to all other peoples in the globe and all other civilisations by the spirit in which they have refused to recognise the dominance of brute force over the human soul. Stripped of all means of resistance, a helpless handful in a foreign land, unaided by India, put off with empty professions of sympathy by English statesmen, they, ignored by humanity, are fighting humanity's battle in the pure strength of the spirit, with no weapon but the moral force of their voluntary sufferings and utter self-sacrifice. Mr. Polak has well said that the Indian nation is being built up in South Africa. The phrase is true in this sense that the supreme example of the moral and spiritual strength which must be behind the formation of the new nation, has been shown first not in India but in South Africa. The passive resistance which we had not the courage and unselfishness to carry out in India, they have carried to the utmost in the Transvaal under far more arduous circumstances, with far less right to hope for success. Whether they win or lose in the struggle, they have contributed far more than their share to the future greatness of their country.

We must consider their chances of success, and though we do not wish to speak words of discouragement, it will not do to hide from ourselves the enormous difficulties in the way. For success, either the Government in England must interfere and compel the Transvaal to do right, or the Transvaal must be stirred by shame and by the interest of the poorer part of the Boer community to reverse the laws, or the Indian Government must intervene to protect its

subjects. The first course is unthinkable. It would mean a quarrel with the newly conciliated Transvaal, the marring of the work of which the Liberal Government is justly proud, and a resentment in South Africa which the English ministry will not face for the sake of all India, much less of a handful of Indian coolies and shopkeepers. The poorer Boers will be only inconvenienced, not seriously hurt by the extinction of the Indian shopkeeper, and, in any case, they are not a class who are wont to act politically. The Transvaal Government is not likely to yield to any sense of shame. The Boers are a stark race, stubborn to the death, and the grit they showed in the face of the British Empire, they are also likely to show in this very minor trouble. Nor are they likely to have forgotten the action of the Indians who rewarded the comparative leniency of the Boer Government previous to the war by helping actively in the British attack on the liberty of the Transvaal. With their slow minds and tenacious memories they are a people not swift to forget and forgive; we do not rely greatly on their present professions of friendship to the Power that took from them their freedom, and they are wholly unlikely to put from their minds the unpardonable intrusion of the Indian residents into a quarrel in which they had no concern or status.

There remains the Indian Government, and what can the Indian Government do? It can forbid, as has been suggested, Indian cooly recruitment for Natal. This would undoubtedly be a great blow to the planters and they would throw their whole influence into the Indian scale. But, on the other hand, the mass of the Natal whites are full of race prejudice and their desire is for that impossible dream, a white South Africa. A more effective measure would be the

suspension of trade relations by the boycott of Colonial goods and the cessation of the importation of Indian raw materials into South Africa. But that is a step which will never be taken. Even if the Indian Government were willing to use any and every means, the decision does not rest with them but with the Government in England, which will not consent to offending the colonies. The Indian Government would no doubt like to see an end of the situation in the Transvaal as it weakens such moral hold as they still have over India, and they would prefer a favourable termination because the return of ruined Indians from the Transvaal will bring home a mass of bitterness, burning sense of wrong and standing discontent trained in the most strenuous methods of passive resistance. And many of them are Mahomedans.

The one favourable factor in favour of the Transvaal Indians is their own spiritual force and the chance of its altering the conditions by sheer moral weight. It is India's duty to aid them by financial succour which they sorely need and the rich men of the country can easily afford, by the heartening effect of public and frequently expressed moral sympathy and by educating the whole people of India literate and illiterate in an accurate knowledge of what is happening in the Transvaal. This is the only help India can give to her children over the seas so long as she is not master of her own destinies." (347-50)

## **21. The Personalities Constituting Moderatism**

“THE PRACTICAL exclusion of the educated classes, other than Mahomedans, landholders and titled

grandees, from the new Councils and the preference of Mahomedans to Hindus has rung the death-knell of the old Moderate politics in India. If the Moderate party is to survive, it has to shift its base and alter its tactics. If its leaders ignore the strong dissatisfaction and disillusionment felt by educated Hindus all over India or if they tamely acquiesce in a reform which seems to have been deliberately framed in order to transfer political preponderance from Hindus to Mahomedans and from the representatives of the educated class to the landed aristocracy, they will very soon find themselves leaders without a following. The Moderate party at present is held together merely by the prestige and personal influence of the small secret Junta of influential men who lead it, not by any settled convictions or intelligent policy. The personalities of Mr. Gokhale and Sir Pherozshah Mehta in Bombay, of S. J. Surendranath Banerji and S. J. Bhupendranath Bose in Bengal, of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the United Provinces, of Mr. Krishnaswamy Aiyar in Madras constitute Moderatism in their respective provinces.” (356)

## **22. A Call to the Nation and the Nationalists**

“The period of waiting is over. We have two things made clear to us, first, that the future of the nation is in our hands, and, secondly, that from the Moderate party we can expect no cordial co-operation in building it. Whatever we do, we must do ourselves, in our own strength and courage. Let us then take up the work God has given us, like courageous, steadfast and patriotic men willing to sacrifice greatly and venture greatly because the mission also is great. If there are any unnerved by the fear of repression, let them

stand aside. If there are any who think that by flattering Anglo-India or coquetting with English Liberalism they can dispense with the need of effort and the inevitability of peril, let them stand aside. If there are any who are ready to be satisfied with mean gains or unsubstantial concessions, let them stand aside. But all who deserve the name of Nationalists, must now come forward and take up their burden.” (373-74)

### **23. Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya’s Address to the 1909 Convention of the Indian National Congress at Lahore**

“The most remarkable feature of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya’s address is not what he said, but what he omitted to say. If the accounts telegraphed can be trusted, he said nothing about self-government, nothing about Swadeshi, – the Boycott, of course, the Convention has boycotted, – nothing about the Bengal deportees, only a few words about the Transvaal. The speech was really a speech about the Reforms and every other great question of Indian politics was ignored or neglected. The attitude of the Convention on the Reforms is marked by that open insincerity which is the hallmark of Moderate politics. The Convention resolution is made up of two parts, an ecstatic tribute of praise and gratitude to the two Lords Morley and Minto, for their earnest and “arduous” endeavours, (note the grotesque absurdity of the language), in extending to the people of this country a “fairly liberal” measure of constitutional reform, and a detailed and damning indictment of the measure for restrictions and provisions which are “excessive and

unfair”, “unjust, invidious and humiliating”, “arbitrary and unreasonable”, and for the “general distrust” of the educated classes and the “ineffective and unreal” composition of the non-official majority. If there is any meaning in language, the second part of the resolution gives the lie direct to the first. The language used is far stronger than any the *Karmayogin* has ever permitted itself to employ in its condemnation of the Reforms and, if the condemnation is at all justified by facts, the Reforms are a reactionary and not a progressive piece of legislation. And yet who is the chief mouthpiece of the Convention and the most damaging critic of the Reforms? A gentleman who has set the seal of approval on Lord Morley’s measure by entering the Council of his province as an elected member. Actions speak more strongly than words, and the Government of India care little for criticism in detail so long as they get acceptance of the whole. From the Viceroy down to the obscurest Anglo-Indian scribbler the appeal to the Moderates is to criticise details hereafter, if they choose, but to accept the Reforms, the perpetual division of the two Indian communities, the humiliation of the Hindus, the extrusion of the educated classes from their old leading position, the denial of the only true basis of self-government, – to let, as the *Indian Daily News* persuasively puts it, by-gones be by-gones. Anglo-India pats Moderatism on the back and says in effect: “What if we have kicked you downstairs? Can’t you be a good fellow and sit quietly on the bottom step until we take it in our heads to pull you up a little farther?” And Moderatism must comply if it wishes to be tolerated.” (378-80)

#### **24. To Silence Nationalism is to Help Terrorism – the Nasik Murder**

“...where there is sporadic repression of a severe kind on the part of the authorities, there is sporadic retaliation on the part of a few youthful conspirators, perfectly random in its aim and objective. The Nasik murder is an act of terrorist reprisal for the dangerously severe sentence passed on the revolutionary versifier Savarkar. It is natural that there should have been many meetings in Maharashtra to denounce the assassination, but such denunciations do not carry us very far. They have no effect whatever on the minds of the men who are convinced that to slay and be slain is their duty to their country. The disease is one that can only be dealt with by removing its roots, not by denouncing its symptoms. The Anglo-Indian papers find the root in our criticism of Government action and policy and suggest the silencing of the Press as the best means of removing the root. If the Government believe in this antiquated diagnosis, they may certainly try the expedient suggested. Our idea is that it will only drive the roots deeper. We have ourselves, while strongly opposing and criticising the actions and policy of the bureaucracy, abstained from commenting on specific acts of repression, as we had no wish to inflame public feeling; but to silence Nationalism means to help Terrorism.” (382)

#### **25. The Arya Samaj and Politics\***

“Aryaism is not an independent religion. It is avowedly an attempt to revive the Vedic religion in its pristine purity.



**The Vedic religion is a national religion, and it embraces in its scope all the various activities of the national life.** Swami Dayananda as a restorer of Vedicism included the theory of politics in his scope and revealed the intensely national character of the Hindu religion and morality. His work was avowedly a work of national regeneration. In dealing with the theory of politics as based on the Vedic religion he had naturally to include the truth that independence is the true and normal condition of a nation and all lapse into subjection must be a sin and degeneration, temporary in its nature. No man can deny this great truth. Freedom is the goal of humanity and Aryaism was in its nature a gospel of freedom, individual freedom, social freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom in all things, and the accomplishment of such an all-pervading liberation cannot come about without bringing national freedom in its train. If to perceive these truths of Vedism and of nature is to be political and seditious, then Swami Dayananda's teaching was political and seditious and the religion he preached may be stigmatised as political and seditious. But if sedition be limited to its proper meaning, an attempt by illegal and violent means to bring about the fall of the established authority or prepare by word or action lawless opposition and revolution, then there is no sedition in the Swami's preaching or in the belief and actions of the Arya Samaj. They use the perfectly legitimate means of strengthening the national life at all points and their objective is national regeneration through an active and free religion, not political revolution. Individual members may be Loyalists, Moderates, Nationalists, even Terrorists, but a religious body is not responsible for the

political opinions of its individual members. The religious teaching of Swami Dayananda was inspired by national motives, not political; and the aims of the Arya Samaj are national, not political.” (403-04)

## **26. A Thing that Happened\***

“The basis of our claim to Swaraj is not that the English bureaucracy is a bad or tyrannical Government; a bureaucracy is always inclined to be arrogant, self-sufficient, self-righteous and unsympathetic, to ignore the abuses with which it abounds, and a bureaucracy foreign and irresponsible to the people is likely to exhibit these characteristics in an exaggerated form. But even if we were ruled by a bureaucracy of angels, we should still lay claim to Swaraj and move towards national self-sufficiency and independence. On the same principle we do not notice or lay stress on the collisions between Englishmen and Indians which are an inevitable result of the anomalous and unnatural relations existing between the races. It is the relations themselves we seek to alter from the root instead of dealing with the symptoms. But the incident at Goalundo detailed in this week’s *Dharma* is one which the country has to take notice of, unless we are to suppose that the movement of 1905 was the last flaring up of national strength and spirit previous to extinction and that the extinction has now come. We have received a letter from the sufferer translated into English, it is from his own account that we summarise the facts.

A Brahmin Pandit with the title of Kavyatirtha, ignorant of English, was proceeding with two Bengali ladies from Mymensingh to Calcutta on Sunday the 2nd January by the

Kaligunge mail steamer, and reached Goalundo at 11 o'clock at night, too late to catch the Calcutta train. He and some other passengers decided to spend the night in the steamer. While he was going down to look after his luggage, a European came up to him, caught his wrapper, twisted it tightly round his neck and said in Hindustani, "Who are you?" Getting no answer to his request for an explanation except the repetition of the question, he replied that he was a passenger. Thereupon without farther parley the Englishman proceeded to drag the unresisting Pandit to another steamer lying alongside. On the way the latter appealed to the sub-agent of the Steamer Company, a certain Sarat Babu, but, after a word from the Saheb, was told that he must accompany the aggressor to the Company's agent, with a name which the Pandit caught as Joyce. It was not, however, to the Agent, but into a first-class cabin where there were three other Europeans and two English women, that the Brahmin was dragged and the door closed behind him. No sooner was he in the hands of this company than he was charged with having abused the Englishman whom he had never seen before in his life, and a savage blow dealt him in the left eye which cut the skin and set blood flowing freely. Blows after blows were rained on head and body, the head being cruelly battered, the lips cut open and some of the teeth loosened. His appeals for mercy were answered by a shower of kicks with booted feet on his head and the English women joined in the pastime by beating him furiously on the thigh with a dog chain. The unfortunate Bengali was by this time sick, stunned and almost senseless with the beating. The pain of the blows falling on his already bruised and battered head was intense and the iron chain

drew blood with each cut. Fortunately he happened to fall against the door and it flew open. With difficulty he managed to crawl to the staircase; but at this moment the Englishman drew a revolver and, pointing it at him, cried out "Shala, I will shoot you." In terror of his life the Brahmin managed anyhow to plunge down the stairs and dropped almost senseless at the bottom. His eyes were clotted with blood, but he caught a glimpse of Sarat Babu coming near him with a European whom he conjectured to be the Agent Mr. Joyce. A few words were spoken between the two. Afterwards Sarat Babu returned and told the Pandit that he could expect no redress from the Company, but he might bring a criminal suit if he cared to do so. The farther happenings of that night need not be entered into, except to note the extraordinary conduct of the Company's officers who almost immediately separated the two steamers and took the Kaligunge mail into midstream where they kept it until the Europeans had escaped in their steamer to Naraingunge. It was only possible to discover from the luggage labels that they belonged to a jute factory in Nakail near Aralia. There were some Bengali passengers present, including a pleader from Jessore and an employee of the Sealdah District Superintendent's Audit office but, though they sympathised with and cared for their compatriot after he had escaped with his life, there was none to assist him at the moment of the outrage, nor could even the piteous cries of the ladies awake a spark of resolution anywhere in those present. The Samitis of young men are disbanded, the cry of Bande Mataram has sunk to rest, and royally-minded individuals like the perpetrators of this murderous assault can finish their imperial pastime unhindered.

We feel a great difficulty in dealing with this case. We are not in the habit of dealing in violent language, yet to write coolly of it is a little difficult. And if we describe the assault as an infamous atrocity or describe these English gentlemen and ladies as cowardly ruffians and fiendish assassins, we have to recollect that such phrases are properly applied to Indian Terrorists and we may be prosecuted under Sec. 153A if we apply them to Europeans who, after all, did nothing but amuse themselves. Moreover, any indication of the proper deserts of these people, however carefully expressed, might expose us to forfeiture of our Press and prosecution under the new laws. If we point out that such things seem to happen with impunity under the present conditions in India, Sec. 124A is lying in wait, ready to trip us up, and the Andamans or twenty years' hard labour with handcuffs and fetters loom before our uneasy apprehensions. We do not know whether, considering how the Sedition law is being interpreted in Bombay, Nagpur and the Punjab, even mentioning this incident may not bring us within its provisions. It is impossible, however, to pass it over in silence, and we proceed, therefore, to make a few observations, treading amid the pitfalls of the law as carefully as we can.

First, we have a word to the Government of East Bengal. It is very busy dealing with romantic dacoities, shapeless conspiracies, vague shadows of Terrorism, Arms Act Cases, meetings of Reform Councils overstocked with landholders and Mahomedans. We do not know whether it has any time or interest to spare for little sordid unromantic incidents of this kind. If it has any spare time, it might do worse in its own interests than glance once at that night's doings at Goalundo. It is obviously impossible to appeal to

the law. Even if the identity of the assailants were fixed, the culprits would at once bring a trumped-up counter-charge, say, of robbery, dacoity, Anarchism or any handy accusation, and the word of a hundred Bengalis, of whatever position or honourable antecedents, would not weigh with any but an exceptional Judge, against that of a single Englishman, whatever his antecedents or education. The only probable result would be to add a term of imprisonment to the Pandit's misfortunes. Even to reveal his name might expose him to the gentle mercies of the local Police in his District. All we can do, therefore, is to advertise the Shillong Government of what has happened and give them the chance of action.

Then, we have one word to say to the nation. The assault was motiveless and seems to have been committed merely because the Pandit was a Bengali and the Europeans felt in the mood to hammer a Bengali, perhaps out of the race-hatred which organs like the *Englishman* are busy fomenting with perfect impunity. There is no other explanation of the facts. The thing has happened and we wish to say at once that nothing in our remarks must be held to mean that we advise retaliation. But incidents like these never happen to a brave, patriotic and self-respecting nation; they happen only to those who cower and fear and, by their character, justify men who think themselves entitled to treat them like slaves.” (408-11)

## **27. The Life in Ancient India**

“We are too apt to forget how noble, great and well-appointed a life it was. There were no railways, telegraphs

or steamships, it is true, and democracy was beginning to go out of fashion in favour of a centralised bureaucratic monarchy. But in spite of these drawbacks, **the ancient life of India was as splendid, as careful, as convenient, as humane, as enlightened in its organisation as that of any modern society or administration.**” (450)

## **28. Faith and Knowledge**

The eye of Faith is not one with the eye of Knowledge; – Faith divines in the large what Knowledge sees distinctly and clearly; but in the main thing Faith and Knowledge are one and the wisdom of the Lover is justified and supported by the wisdom of the Seer. Faith fights for God, while Knowledge is waiting for fulfilment, and so long as the latter is withheld, the former is necessary. **For without indomitable Faith or inspired Wisdom no great cause can conquer.**” (462-63)

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