The Real Awakener



The Light of lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo – 3

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"The spiritual state is the one thing indispensable; until the mass of mankind can awaken into it, the dream of a perfect society, an open brotherhood of God's rule, must end in failure and disappointment. The kingdom of God within is the sole possible foundation for the kingdom of God without; for it is the spirit by which man lives that conditions the outer forms of his life."

– Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA 1, 586)

Selections from CWSA 1

I. Historical Impressions

1. The French Revolution

A. The Greatness of the French Revolution

"The greatness of the French Revolution lies not in what it effected, but in what it thought and was. Its action was chiefly destructive. It prepared many things, it founded nothing. Even the constructive activity of Napoleon only built a halfway house in which the ideas of 1789 might rest until the world was fit to understand them better and really fulfil them. The ideas themselves were not new; they existed in Christianity and before Christianity they existed in Buddhism; but in 1789 they came out for the first time from the Church and the Book and sought to remodel government and society. **It was an unsuccessful attempt, but even the failure changed the face of Europe. And this effect was chiefly due to the force, the enthusiasm, the sincerity with which the idea was seized upon and the thoroughness with which it was sought to be applied. The cause of the failure was the defect of knowledge, the excess of imagination. The basal ideas, the types, the things to be established were known; but there had been no experience of the ideas in practice. European society, till then, had been permeated, not with liberty, but with bondage and repression; not with equality, but with inequality and injustice; not with**

** Bold letters in the text, used here for emphasis, are from the editor and are not there in the original. The numbers at the end of the quotations are the page numbers of the original reference.*

brotherhood, but with selfish force and violence. The world was not ready, nor is it even now ready for the fullness of the practice. It is the goal of humanity, and we are yet far off from the goal. But the time has come for an approximation being attempted. And **the first necessity is the discipline of brotherhood, the organisation of brotherhood, – for without the spirit and habit of fraternity neither liberty nor equality can be maintained for more than a short season. The French were ignorant of this practical principle; they made liberty the basis, brotherhood the superstructure, founding the triangle upon its apex.** For owing to the dominance of Greece & Rome in their imagination they were saturated with the idea of liberty and only formally admitted the Christian and Asiatic principle of brotherhood. They built according to their knowledge, but the triangle has to be reversed before it can stand permanently." (512-13)

B. The Action of the French Revolution

"The action of the French Revolution was the vehement death-dance of Kali trampling blindly, furiously on the ruins She made, **mad with pity for the world and therefore utterly pitiless.** She called the Yatudhani in her to her aid and summoned up the Rakshasi. The Yatudhani is the delight of destruction, the fury of slaughter, Rudra in the Universal Being, Rudra, the bhuta, the criminal, the lord of the animal in man, the lord of the demoniac, Pashupati, Pramathanatha. **The Rakshasi is the unbridled, licentious self-assertion of the ego which insists on the gratification of all its instincts good and bad and furiously shatters all**

opposition. It was the Yatudhani and the Rakshasi who sent their hoarse cry over France, adding to the luminous mantra, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the stern and terrible addition "or Death." Death to the Asura, death to all who oppose God's evolution, that was the meaning. With these two terrible Shaktis Kali did Her work. She veiled Her divine knowledge with the darkness of wrath and passion, She drank blood as wine, naked of tradition and convention She danced over all Europe and the whole continent was filled with the warcry and the carnage and rang with the hunkara and the attahasyam. It was only **when She found that She was trampling on Mahadeva, God expressed in the principle of Nationalism, that She remembered Herself, flung aside Napoleon, the mighty Rakshasa, and settled down quietly to her work of perfecting nationality as the outer shell within which brotherhood may be securely and largely organised.**" (513)

C. The Conduct of the French Revolution – the Four Vehicles: Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre and Napoleon

"The Revolution was also great in its men filling them all with its vehemence, its passion, its fierce demand on the world, its colossal impetus. Through four of them chiefly it helped itself, through Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre and Napoleon. **Mirabeau initiated, Danton inspired, Robespierre slew, Napoleon fulfilled.** The first three appeared for the moment, the man in the multitude, did their work and departed. The pace was swift and, if they had remained, they would have outstayed their utility and injured the future. It is always well for the man to go the

moment his work is done and not to outstay the Mother's welcome. They are fortunate who get that release or are wise enough, like Garibaldi, to take it. Not altogether happy is their lot who, like Napoleon or Mazzini, outstay the lease of their appointed greatness." (513-14)

(i) Mirabeau

"Mirabeau ruled the morning twilight, the *sandhya* of the new age. Aristocratic tribune of the people, unprincipled champion of principles, lordly democrat, – a man in whom reflection was turbulent, prudence itself bold, unflinching and reckless, the man was the meeting-place of two ages. He had the passions of the past, not its courtly restraint; the turbulence, genius, impetuosity of the future, not its steadying attachment to ideas. There is an honour of the aristocrat which has its root in manners and respects the sanctity of its own traditions; that is the honour of the Conservative. There is an honour of the democrat which has its root in ideas and respects the sanctity of its own principles; that is the honour of the Liberal. Mirabeau had neither. **He was the pure egoist, the eternal Rakshasa. Not for the sake of justice and liberty did he love justice and liberty but for the sake of Mirabeau.** Had his career been fortunate, the forms of the old regime wide enough to satisfy his ambitions and passions, the upheaval of 1789 might have found him on the other side. But because the heart and senses of Mirabeau were unsatisfied, the French Revolution triumphed. So it is that God prepares the man and the moment, using good and evil with a divine impartiality for His mighty ends. **Without the man the moment is a lost opportunity; without the moment the**

man is a force inoperative. The meeting of the two changes the destinies of nations and the poise of the world is altered by what seems to the superficial an accident." (514)

(ii) Danton

"There are times when a single personality gathers up the temperament of an epoch or a movement and by simply existing ensures its fulfilment. It would be difficult to lay down the precise services which made the existence of Danton necessary for the success of the Revolution. There are certain things he did, and no man else could have done, which compelled destiny; there are certain things he said which made France mad with resolution and courage. These words, these doings ring through the ages. So live, so immortal are they that they seem to defy cataclysm itself and insist on surviving eternal oblivion. They are full of the omnipotence and immortality of the human soul and its lordship over fate. One feels that they will recur again in aeons unborn and worlds uncreated. The power from which they sprang, expressed itself rarely in deeds and only at supreme moments. **The energy of Danton lay dormant,** indolent, scattering itself in stupendous oratory, satisfied with feelings and phrases. **But each time it stirred, it convulsed events and sent a shock of primal elemental force rushing through the consciousness of the French nation. While he lived, moved, spoke, felt, acted, the energy he did not himself use, communicated itself to the millions; the thoughts he did not utter, seized on minds which took them for their own; the actions he might have done better himself, were done worse by others.** Danton was contented. Magnificent and ostentatious, he was singularly void of

personal ambition. He was satisfied to see the Revolution triumph by his strength, but in the deeds of others. His fall removed the strength of victorious Terror from the movement within France, its impulse to destroy and conquer. For a little while the impetus gathered carried it on, then it faltered and paused. Every great flood of action needs a human soul for its centre, an embodied point of the Universal Personality from which to surge out upon others. Danton was such a point, such a centre. His daily thoughts, feelings, impulses gave an equilibrium to that rushing fury, a fixity to that pregnant chaos. **He was the character of the Revolution personified, – its heart, while Robespierre was only its hand.** History which, being European, lays much stress on events, a little on speech, but has never realised the importance of souls, cannot appreciate men like Danton. Only the eye of the seer can pick them out from the mass and trace to their source those immense vibrations." (515-16)

(iii) Robespierre

"One may well speak of the genius of Mirabeau, the genius of Danton; it is superfluous to speak of the genius of Napoleon. But one cannot well speak of the genius of Robespierre. **He was empty of genius; his intellect was acute and well-informed but uninspired; his personality fails to impress. What was it then that gave him his immense force and influence? It was the belief in the man, his faith. He believed in the Revolution, he believed in certain ideas, he believed in himself** as their spokesman and executor; he came to believe in his mission to slay the enemies of the idea and make an end. And

whatever he believed, he believed implicitly, unfalteringly, invincibly and pursued it with a rigid fidelity. **Mirabeau, Danton, Napoleon were all capable of permanent discouragement, could recognise that they were beaten, the hour unsuitable, fate hostile. Robespierre was not. He might recoil, he might hide his head in fear, but it was only to leap again, to save himself for the next opportunity. He had a tremendous force of sraddha.** It is only such men, thoroughly conscientious and well-principled, who can slay without pity, without qualms, without resting, without turning. The Yatudhani seized on him for her purpose. The conscientious lawyer who refused a judgeship rather than sacrifice his principle by condemning a criminal to death, became the most colossal political executioner of his or any age. As we have said, **if Danton was the character of the French Revolution personified when it went forth to slay, Robespierre was its hand.** But, naturally, he could not recognise that limitation; he aspired to think, to construct, to rule, functions for which he was unfit. When Danton demanded that the Terror should cease and Mercy take its place, Robespierre ought to have heard in his demand the voice of the Revolution calling on him to stay his sanguinary course. But he was full of his own blind faith and would not hear. Danton died because he resisted the hand of Kali, but his mighty disembodied spirit triumphed and imposed his last thought on the country. The Terror ceased; Mercy took its place. Robespierre, however, has his place of honour in history; **he was the man of conscience and principle**

among the four, the man who never turned from the path of what he understood to be virtue." (516-17)

(iv) Napoleon

"Napoleon took up into himself the functions of the others. As Mirabeau initiated destruction, he initiated construction and organisation and in the same self-contradictory spirit; **he was the Rakshasa, the most gigantic egoist in history, the despot of liberty, the imperial protector of equality, the unprincipled organiser of great principles.** Like Danton, he shaped events for a time by his thoughts & character. While Danton lived, politics moved to a licentious democracy, war to a heroism of patriotic defence. From the time he passed, the spirit of Napoleon shaped events and politics moved to the rule first of the civil, then of the military dictator, war to the organisation of republican conquest. Like Robespierre he was the executive hand of destruction and unlike Robespierre the executive hand of construction. The fury of Kali became in him self-centred, capable, full of organised thought and activity, but nonetheless impetuous, colossal, violent, devastating." (517)

2. Napoleon

A. The Man – a Great Spirit, a Vibhuti

"The name of Napoleon has been a battle-field for the prepossessions of all sorts of critics, and, according to their predilections, idiosyncrasies and political opinions, men have loved or hated, panegyrised or decried the Corsican. **To blame Napoleon is like criticising Mont Blanc or throwing mud at Kinchinjunga. This phenomenon has**

to be understood and known, not blamed or praised. Admire we must, but as minds, not as moralists. It has not been sufficiently perceived by his panegyrists and critics that **Bonaparte was not a man at all, he was a force.** Only the nature of the force has to be considered. There are some men who are self-evidently superhuman, great spirits who are only using the human body. Europe calls them supermen, we call them *vibhutis*. They are manifestations of Nature, of divine power presided over by a spirit commissioned for the purpose, and that spirit is an emanation from the Almighty, who accepts human strength and weakness but is not bound by them. They are above morality and ordinarily without a conscience, acting according to their own nature. For they are not men developing upwards from the animal to the divine and struggling against their lower natures, but beings already fulfilled and satisfied with themselves. Even the holiest of them have a contempt for the ordinary law and custom and break them easily and without remorse, as Christ did on more than one occasion, drinking wine, breaking the Sabbath, consorting with publicans and harlots; as Buddha did when he abandoned his self-accepted duties as a husband, a citizen and a father; as Shankara did when he broke the holy law and trampled upon custom and *achar* to satisfy his dead mother. In our literature they are described as Gods or Siddhas or Titans or Giants. **Valmeki depicts Ravana as a ten-headed giant, but it is easy to see that this was only the vision of him in the world of imaginations, the "astral plane", and that in the terms of humanity he was a vibhuti or superman and one of the same order of beings as Napoleon.**" (518-19)

B. Napoleon – a Thoroughgoing Individualist, a Rakshasa

"The Rakshasa is the supreme and thoroughgoing individualist, who believes life to be meant for his own untrammelled self-fulfilment and self-assertion. A necessary element in humanity, he is particularly useful in revolutions. As a pure type in man he is ordinarily a thing of the past; he comes now mixed with other elements. But Napoleon was a Rakshasa of the pure type, colossal in his force and attainment. He came into the world with a tremendous appetite for power and possession and, like Ravana, he tried to swallow the whole earth in order to glut his supernatural hunger. **Whatever came in his way he took as his own, ideas, men, women, fame, honours, armies, kingdoms; and he was not scrupulous as to his right of possession. His nature was his right; its need his justification. The attitude may be expressed in some such words as these, "Others may not have the right to do these things, but I am Napoleon".**

* * *

The Rakshasa is not an altruist. If by satisfying himself he can satisfy others, he is pleased, but he does not make that his motive. If he has to trample on others to satisfy himself, he does so without compunction. Is he not the strong man, the efficient ruler, the mighty one? The Rakshasa has kama, he has no prema. Napoleon knew not what love was; he had only the kindliness that goes with possession. **He loved Josephine because she satisfied his nature, France because he possessed her, his mother because she was his and congenial, his soldiers because they were necessary to his glory. But the love did not go beyond his need of them.** It was self-satisfaction and had no element

in it of self-surrender. The Rakshasa slays all that opposes him and he is callous about the extent of the slaughter. But he is never cruel. Napoleon had no taint of Nero in him, but he flung away without a qualm whole armies as holocausts on the altar of his glory; he shot Hofer and murdered Enghien. What then is there in the Rakshasa that makes him necessary? He is individuality, he is force, he is capacity; he is the second power of God, wrath, strength, grandeur, rushing impetuosity, overbearing courage, the avalanche, the thunderbolt; he is Balaram, he is Jehovah, he is Rudra. As such we may admire and study him." (519-20)

C. The Greatness of Napoleon and His Work

"..the vibhuti, though he takes self-gratification and enjoyment on his way, never comes for self-gratification and enjoyment. He comes for work, to help man on his way, the world in its evolution. **Napoleon was one of the mightiest of vibhutis, one of the most dominant.** There are some of them who hold themselves back, suppress the force in their personality in order to put it wholly into their work. Of such were Shakespeare, Washington, Victor Emmanuel. There are others like Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Goethe, who are as obviously superhuman in their personality as in the work they accomplish. Napoleon was the greatest in practical capacity of all moderns. **In capacity, though not in character, he resembles Bhishma of the Mahabharat. He had the same sovran, irresistible, world-possessing grasp of war, politics, government, legislation, society; the same masterly handling of masses and amazing glut for details.** He had the iron brain that nothing fatigues, the faultless memory that loses nothing, the clear insight that puts

everything in its place with spontaneous accuracy. It was as if a man were to carry Caucasus on his shoulders and with that burden race successfully an express engine, yet note and forecast every step and never falter. To prove that anything in a human body could be capable of such work, is by itself a service to our progress for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful to Napoleon.

The work of Bonaparte was wholly admirable. It is true that he took freedom for a season from France, but France was not then fit for democratic freedom. She had to learn discipline for a while under the rule of the soldier of Revolution. He could not have done the work he did, hampered by an effervescent French Parliament ebullient in victory, discouraged in defeat. **He had to organise the French Revolution so far as earth could then bear it, and he had to do it in the short span of an ordinary lifetime. He had also to save it. The aggression of France upon Europe was necessary for self-defence, for Europe did not mean to tolerate the Revolution. She had to be taught that the Revolution meant not anarchy, but a reorganisation so much mightier than the old that a single country so reorganised could conquer united Europe. That task Napoleon did effectively.** It has been said that his foreign policy failed, because he left France smaller than he found it. That is true. But it was not Napoleon's mission to aggrandise France geographically. He did not come for France, but for humanity, and even in his failure he served God and prepared the future. The balance of Europe had to be disturbed in order to prepare new combinations and his gigantic operations disturbed it fatally. He roused the spirit of

Nationalism in Italy, in Germany, in Poland, while he established the tendency towards the formation of great Empires; and it is the harmonized fulfilment of Nationalism and Empire that is the future. He compelled Europe to accept the necessity of reorganisation political and social." (520-21)

D. The Punya of Overthrowing Napoleon

"The *punya* of overthrowing Napoleon was divided between England, Germany and Russia. He had to be overthrown, because, though he prepared the future and destroyed the past, he misused the present. To save the present from his violent hands was the work of his enemies, and this merit gave to these three countries a great immediate development and the possession of the nineteenth century. England and Germany went farthest because they acted most wholeheartedly and as nations, not as Governments. In Russia it was the Government that acted, but with the help of the people. On the other hand, the countries sympathetic to Napoleon, Italy, Ireland, Poland, or those which acted weakly or falsely, such as Spain and Austria, have declined, suffered, struggled and, even when partially successful, could not attain their fulfilment. But the *punya* is now exhausted." (521)

II. Things Seen in Symbols, the Real Difficulty, Art

1. Things Seen in Symbols*

"There are Four who are Beyond and they rule the mighty game of evolution. It is they who build the universe with their thoughts and imaginations. Vishnu or Virat put them in front each in turn, and they govern each a cycle. All the sons of immortality come forth from them and return to them, all the children of earth are their portions. One stands in front, the others incarnate to help him. They are God Himself in His fourfold manifestation. Once in each chaturyuga they come down together, – the chaturvyuha, Srikrishna, Balarama, Pradyumna, Aniruddha.

* * *

Srikrishna contains all the others and puts them out from His being. He is Ishwara, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu. Lordship is His manifestation, Might and Wisdom are His gunas. Balarama is the second Power. Force is His manifestation; strength and wrath are His attributes. Pradyumna is the third Power. Love is His manifestation; sweetness and delight are His attributes. Aniruddha is the fourth Power. Desire is His manifestation; bodily enjoyment and worldly reason are His attributes.

* * *

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

Srikrishna is the Brahmin served by the Kshatriya. He has the divine knowledge and uses His might under the guidance of the Knowledge. Balarama is the Kshatriya. He allows Srikrishna in Him to guide His strength and wrath, but He does not guide them Himself, He enjoys them. He is Rudra. Pradyumna is the Vaishya. He is for dana, prema, karuna. He gives Himself to men and buys their love in exchange. He is the universal philanthropist. He is the sweet and throbbing heart in things. Aniruddha is the Sudra. He is the kamin, the bhogin, the scientist, the user of material means, the democrat, the leveller.

* * *

The Satya is full of Srikrishna; it is the golden Age when men are full of might and wisdom. The Treta is full of Balarama; the Chakravarti Raja is the incarnation of the Treta; it is full of great wars and mighty sacrifices. The Dwapara is full of Pradyumna; He prepares in the Dwapara the love which supports men through the Kali. Aniruddha, the Sudra, reigns in the Kali; He breaks the ancient moulds, He shatters to pieces the achar; He questions everything, destroys everything, levels everything, rebuilds everything. He is a Sudra and has the passion for work and service; He puts off lordship in order to become the divine Slave of humanity.

* * *

For each of Them is not simple in Himself, but contains the other three and their attributes; only His own are usually foremost. Each is not a part but God Himself in His fullness. They are not different, but the same, Four who are One, One who is Four. That one is Srikrishna." (532-33)

2. The Real Difficulty*

"The real difficulty is always in ourselves, not in our surroundings. **There are three things necessary in order to make men invincible, Will, Disinterestedness and Faith.** We may have a will to emancipate ourselves, but sufficient faith may be lacking. We may have faith in our ultimate emancipation, but the will to use the necessary means may be wanting. And even if there are will and faith, we may use them with a violent attachment to the fruit of our work or with passions of hatred, blind excitement or hasty forcefulness which may produce evil reactions. For this reason it is necessary, in a work of such magnitude, to have resort to a higher Power than that of mind and body in order to overcome unprecedented obstacles. This is the need of sadhana.

God is within us, an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient Power; we & He are of one nature and, if we get into touch with Him and put ourselves in His hands, He will pour into us His own force and we shall realise that we too have our share of godhead, our portion of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. The path is long, but self-surrender makes it short; the way is difficult, but perfect trust makes it easy.

Will is omnipotent, but it must be divine will, selfless, tranquil, at ease about results. "If you had faith even as a grain of mustard-seed," said Jesus, "you would say to this mountain, Come, & it would come to you." What was meant by the word Faith, was really Will accompanied with perfect sraddha. Sraddha does not reason, it knows; for it commands sight and sees what God wills, and it knows that what is

God's will, must happen. **Sraddha, not blind but using sight spiritual, can become omniscient.**

Will is also omnipresent. It can throw itself into all in whom it comes into contact and give them temporarily or permanently a portion of its power, its thought, its enthusiasms. **The thought of a solitary man can become, by exercise of selfless and undoubting Will, the thought of a nation. The will of a single hero can breathe courage into the hearts of a million cowards.**

This is the sadhana that we have to accomplish. This is the condition of our emancipation. We have been using an imperfect will with imperfect faith and imperfect disinterestedness. Yet the task we have before us is not less difficult than to move a mountain.

The force that can do it, exists. But it is hidden in a secret chamber within us and of that chamber God holds the key. Let us find Him and claim it." (536-37)

3. Art – European and Indian

"**All Art is interpretation. Creation is a misnomer; nothing in this world is created, all is manifested. All exists previously in the mind of the Knower. Art may interpret that which is already manifest or was manifest at one time, or it may interpret what will be manifest hereafter. It may even be used as one of the agencies in the manifestation.** A particular type of face and figure may be manifested in the work of a popular artist and in a single generation the existing type of face and figure in the country may change and mould itself to the new conception. These things are there in the type in the causal world with

which our superconscious selves are perpetually in touch; they manifest in the psychical and become part of our thought. That thought we put out into the material world and there it takes shape and body, as movements, as institutions, as poetry, Art and Knowledge, as living men and women. Man creates his world because he is the psychic instrument through whom God manifests that which He had previously arranged in Himself. In this sense Art can create the past, the present and the future. It can remanifest that which was and has passed away, it can fix for us that which is, it can prophesy that which will be.

* * *

Its normal sphere, however, is interpretation of a less pregnant and forceful kind. Here too, there are three things which it can interpret in the object it selects, **the causal part or thing in itself; the psychical part or its passing imaginations, phases, emotions; or the physical part, the outward appearance, incident or movement** as our eyes see them. **Indian Art attaches itself to the two higher interpretations, European to the two lower.** They meet in the middle term of Art, the imaginative and emotional; but each brings with it the habits of vision, the conventions, the mastering movement and tendency of the soul downward to earth or upward to heaven, born of their main preoccupation, so that even here, though they meet on common ground, they remain diverse and unreconciled.

* * *

In dealing with the form the question between them is Shall I reproduce what the eye sees or shall I reproduce what the soul sees? **The lower type of European Art is content with reproducing what the eye sees.** This it calls

realism and fidelity to Nature – narrowing Nature to the limited confines of the materially sensible. The reproduction, of course, is not a real reproduction, but only an approximation within the limitations imposed by the canvas, the brush and the paintbox. It is really as close an imitation as our instruments will allow, absolute fidelity being rarely possible. This style of Art had perhaps its utility, but now that we have photographs and can put colour into the photographs, its separate field is in danger of being taken from it.

* * *

A higher European Art takes imitation of the form as its basis, but its nobler objective is not the imitation of form, but the imitation of emotion. The artist tries to see and recover on canvas not only the body, but so much of the feeling as the body can for the moment express. This may often be a great deal. In certain moments of powerful feeling or critical action a great deal of our psychical selves may come out in the eyes, the face, the gesture, the pose. This the artist imitates. He not only shows us an object or an incident, but he fixes on the canvas a moment in the soul-life of the object. The habitual mood also stamps itself to a great extent on the face and certain traits of character betray themselves in expression and feature. These too the imitative artist transfers to the canvas. When not exaggerated or theatrical, this kind of art can be strong, effective and dramatic. But it has serious limitations. So much of the inner truth as the outward form interprets, this Art interprets. Its interpretation is secondhand, its vision derived and unable to go beyond its authority.

* * *

A still higher reach is attained by imaginative European Art. Imagination, according to the European idea, is creative, not interpretative. What is really meant is that **the imaginative artist transfers something that belongs to himself into the object of his study, some fancy that has flashed across or some idea that has mastered his mind. Either he reads it into his subject by unconscious transference or he deliberately uses his subject as a mere excuse for putting his fancy or his idea into line and colour. The artist is interpreting himself, not his subject. This egoistic Art has often a very high value and some of the best European work has been done in this kind.** More rarely his imaginative sympathy enables him to catch a glimpse of the thing itself hidden in the form. His imagination usually plays with it and prevents the vision from being true in all its parts, but he is able to do work of the highest attractiveness, vigour or artistic beauty.

* * *

In all these kinds the European binds himself by the necessity of reproducing the actual outward form imposed by material Nature. He is a bondsman to form and such do not attain to that spiritual freedom which is the first condition of the sight spiritual. When he tries to interpret the thing in itself, he degenerates usually into allegory. Recently the Impressionist school in Europe have tried to break the fetters of the form; they have insisted that what one really sees in an object is not the rounded, solid material form but something rarer and different. In reality, they are groping their way towards an attempt at seeing and interpreting something hidden in the object, something the soul sees before the eye can catch it. Ignorant

of the way, they seldom rise beyond a striking and fantastic imagination, but sometimes an inspired eye catches the true vision.

* * *

The Indian begins at the other end. He sees the thing itself either by sukshmadrishti, the soul-sight, or by dhyana, a spiritual union with the object studied in which the truth it expresses dawns on the mind by the process of revelation. This he transfers to canvas by letting his inspired and informed Will guide the pencil and the brush instead of using his intellect or merely technical means to find the best way of expression. He uses technique with power, but does not rely on it chiefly. The body he paints is the one which will in every part of it express the thing itself, not the actual material body which largely conceals it. When he descends into the psychical part and seeks to express imaginations, emotions, or passing phases, he carries his method with him. Not content with expressing as much of the feeling as the actual body reveals, he sees the emotion in its fullness by dhyana or soul-sight and forces the body into a mould fit for its absolute expression. **He sees the soul and paints it or he sees the heart or mind and paints it. He sees and can, if he will, paint the body merely. But usually he does not will it.**" (538-41)

III. Epistles / Letters from Abroad

1. European Life

"Was life always so trivial, always so vulgar, always so loveless, pale and awkward as the Europeans have made it? This well-appointed comfort oppresses me; this perfection of machinery will not allow the soul to remember that it is not itself a machine.

Is this then the end of the long march of human civilisation, this spiritual suicide, this quiet petrifaction of the soul into matter? Was the successful businessman that grand culmination of manhood toward which evolution was striving? After all, if the scientific view is correct, why not? An evolution that started with the protoplasm and flowered in the ourang-outang and the chimpanzee, may well **rest satisfied with having created hat, coat and trousers, the British Aristocrat, the American capitalist and the Parisian Apache. For these, I believe, are the chief triumphs of the European enlightenment to which we bow our heads.** For these Augustus created Europe, Charlemagne refounded civilisation, Louis XIV regulated society, Napoleon systematised the French Revolution. For these Goethe thought, Shakespeare imagined and created, St. Francis loved, Christ was crucified. What a bankruptcy! What a beggary of things that were rich and noble!

Europe boasts of her science and its marvels. But an Indian cannot content himself with asking like Voltaire, as the supreme question, "What have you invented?" His glance is at the soul; it is that into which he is accustomed to inquire. To the braggart intellect of Europe he is bound to reply, "I

am not interested in what you know, **I am interested in what you are. With all your discoveries and inventions, what have you become? Your enlightenment is great, – but what are these strange creatures that move about in the electric light you have installed and imagine that they are human?" Is it a great gain for the human intellect to have grown more acute and discerning, if the human soul dwindles?**

But Science does not admit the existence of soul. The soul, it says, is only an organised republic of animalcules, and it is in the mould of that idea Europe has recast herself; – that is what the European nations are becoming, organised republics of animalcules, – very intelligent, very methodical, very wonderful talking and reasoning animalcules, but still animalcules. Not what the race set out to be, creatures made in the image of the Almighty, gods that having fallen from heaven remember and strive to recover their heritage. Man in Europe is descending steadily from the human level and approximating to the ant and the hornet. The process is not complete but it is progressing apace, and if nothing stops the debacle, we may hope to see its culmination in this twentieth century. After all our superstitions were better than this enlightenment, our social abuses less murderous to the hopes of the race than this social perfection.

It is a very pleasant inferno they have created in Europe, a hell not of torments but of pleasures, of lights and carriages, of balls and dances and suppers, of theatres and cafés and music halls, of libraries and clubs and Academies, of National Galleries and Exhibitions, of factories, shops, banks and Stock Exchanges. But it is hell all the same, not the heaven of which the saints and

the poets dreamed, the new Jerusalem, the golden city. London and New York are the holy cities of the new religion, Paris its golden Paradise of Pleasure.

It is not with impunity that men decide to believe that they are animals and God does not exist. For what we believe, that we become. The animal lives by a routine arranged for him by Nature; his life is devoted to the satisfaction of his instincts bodily, vital and emotional, and he satisfies himself mechanically by a regular response to the working of those instincts. Nature has regularised everything for him and provided the machinery. Man in Europe arranges his own routine, invents his own machinery, and adds to the needs of which he is a slave, the intellectual. But there will soon be no other difference." (545-47)

2. The Formula of the French Revolution and the Organisation of Liberty

"System, organisation, machinery have attained their perfection. Bondage has been carried to its highest expression, and from a passion for organising external liberty Europe is slaying her spiritual freedom. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty will follow it, and a social tyranny more terrible, inquisitorial and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, will take its place. The process has already begun. The shell of external liberty remains, the core is already being eaten away. Because he is still free to gratify his senses and enjoy himself, the European thinks himself free. He does not know what teeth are gnawing into the heart of his liberty.

Still in his inmost self he has an uneasy consciousness of something terribly, vitally wrong, and therefore he is turning

more and more to Socialism among the thinking or cultured, among the unthinking to Anarchism. The Socialist hopes, by accepting, swiftly fulfilling and thoroughly organising the inevitable tyranny of society, at least to recover leisure and create a breathing space in which to realise the dignity, beauty and repose of the god in man. The Anarchist sees in Government and Society the enemy of the race and gropes for the bomb and the revolver to recover individual liberty and destroy the tyranny of the majority. Both are guilty of the same fallacy, the mechanical fallacy. One hopes to liberate man by perfecting machinery, the other by destroying it.

And yet the true secret is ready to their hand in the formula of the great Revolution. **Two ideas of that formula Europe has pursued with some eagerness, Liberty and Equality; but she has totally rejected the third and most necessary, Brotherhood.** In its place she has erected the idol of her heart, Machinery, and called it Association; for Association without Brotherhood is merely Machinery. Yet what can be more evident than that the French thinkers were perfectly guided in their selection of the three things necessary for an ideal associated happiness? **It is only Love that can prevent the misuse of Liberty; it is only Brotherhood which can make Equality tolerable.**" (547-48)

3. Love of India

"When I listen to the nightingale singing on English riverbank or garden-reaches or see the Seine flowing through the modern gaiety of Paris, I can hear again the manifold noise of the birds on an Indian morning and see rather Ganges flowing grandiose and leonine to her Eastern seas. The body is bound to its surroundings, but the heart exceeds them, and

I carry the love of India with me even to the coldest climes. The soul is yet more free. **It will be well when every Indian, instead of taking a waxlike stamp from his foreign surroundings, is able to carry India with him wherever he goes. For that will mean that India is destined to conquer and place her stamp upon the whole world.**" (550)

4. The Two Hinduisms

"There are two Hinduisms; one which takes its stand on the kitchen and seeks its Paradise by cleaning the body; another which seeks God, not through the cooking pot and the social convention, but in the soul. The latter is also Hinduism and it is a good deal older and more enduring than the other; it is the Hinduism of Bhishma and Srikrishna, of Shankara and Chaitanya, the Hinduism which exceeds Hindusthan, was from of old and will be for ever, because it grows eternally through the aeons. Its watchword is not *kriya*, but *karma*; not *shastra*, but *jnanam*; not *achar*, but *bhakti*. Yet it accepts *kriya*, *shastra* and *achar*, not as ends to be followed for their own sake, but as means to perfect *karma, jnanam* and *bhakti*. *Kriya* in the dictionary means every practice which helps the gaining of higher knowledge such as the mastering of the breath, the repetition of the mantra, the habitual use of the Name, the daily meditation on the idea. By *shastra* it means the knowledge which regulates *karma*, which fixes the *kartavyam* and the *akartavyam*, that which should be done and that which should not, and it recognises two sources of that knowledge, – the eternal wisdom, as distinct from the temporary injunctions, in our ancient books and the book that is written by God in the human heart, the eternal and *apaurusheya* Veda. By *achar* it understands all moral discipline by which the heart is purified

and made a fit vessel for divine love. There are certain *kriyas*, certain rules of *shastra*, certain details of *achar*, which are for all time and of perpetual application; there are others which are temporary, changing with the variation of *desh, kal* and *patra*, time, place and the needs of humanity. Among the temporary laws the cookingpot and the lustration had their place, but they are not for all, nor for ever. It was in a time of calamity, of contraction under external pressure that Hinduism fled from the inner temple and hid itself in the kitchen.

The higher and truer Hinduism is also of two kinds, sectarian and unsectarian, disruptive and synthetic, that which binds itself up in the aspect and that which seeks the All. The first is born of *rajasic* or *tamasic* attachment to an idea, an experience, an opinion or set of opinions, a temperament, an attitude, a particular guru, a chosen Avatar. This attachment is intolerant, arrogant, proud of a little knowledge, scornful of knowledge that is not its own. It is always talking of the *kusanskars*, superstitions, of others and is blind to its own; or it says, "My guru is the only guru and all others are either charlatans or inferior," or, "My temperament is the right temperament and those who do not follow my path are fools or pedants or insincere"; or "My Avatar is the real God Himself and all the others are only lesser revelations"; or "My ishta devata is God, the others are only His partial manifestations." When the soul rises higher, it follows by preference its own ideas, experiences, opinions, temperament, guru, ishta, but it does not turn an ignorant and exclusive eye upon others. "There are many paths," it cries, "and all lead equally to God. All men, even the sinner and the atheist, are my brothers in sadhana and the Beloved is drawing them each in His own way to the One without a second." But when

the full knowledge dawns, I embrace all experiences in myself, I know all ideas to be true, all opinions useful, all experiences and attitudes means and stages in the acquisition of universal experience and completeness, all gurus imperfect channels or incarnations of the one and only Teacher, all ishtas and Avatars to be God Himself." (551-52)

5. God and Suffering and Evil

"…would it not be a monotonous world that consisted only of roses and sweetmeats, virtue and success? Thorns have their necessity, grief has its mission, and without a part of sin, suffering and struggle heaven might not be so heavenly to the blest. I am not prepared even to deny a kind of beneficence to evil; I have sufficient faith in God's Love & Wisdom to believe that if evil [were] merely evil, it could not continue to exist." (555)

6. Europe

"**For my part I see failure written large over all the splendid and ostentatious achievements of Europe.** Her costliest experiments, her greatest expenditure of intellectual and moral force have led to the swiftest exhaustion of creative activity, the completest bankruptcy of moral elevation and of man's once infinite hope. When one considers how many and swift her bankruptcies have been, the imagination is appalled by the discouraging swiftness of this motor ride to ruin. The bankruptcy of the ideas of the French Revolution, the bankruptcy of Utilitarian Liberalism, the bankruptcy of national altruism, the bankruptcy of humanitarianism, the bankruptcy of religious faith, the bankruptcy of political sincerity, the bankruptcy of true

commercial honesty, the bankruptcy of the personal sense of honour, how swiftly they have all followed on each other or raced with each other for precedence and kept at least admirable pace. Only her manysided science with its great critical and analytical power and all the contrivances that come of analysis, is still living and keeps her erect. There remains that last bankruptcy yet to come, and when that is once over, what will be left? Already I see a dry rot begun in this its most sapful and energetic part. The firm materialism which was its life and protection, is beginning also to go bankrupt, and one sees nothing but craze and fantasy ready to take its place.…

They criticise everything subtly rather than well, but can create Nothing – except machines. **They have organised society with astonishing success and found the very best way to spread comfort and kill their souls.**" (556-57)

7. Hinduism

"**These hollow wormeaten outsides of Hinduism crumbling so sluggishly, so fatally to some sudden and astonishing dissolution, do not frighten me. Within them I find the soul of a civilisation alive, though sleeping. I see upon it the consoling sentence of God, "Because thou hast believed in me, therefore thou shalt live and not perish."** Also, I look through the garnished outsides, gaudy, not beautiful, pretentious, not great, boastful, not secure, of this vaunting, aggressive, dominant Europe and **I have seen written on the heart of its civilisation a sentence of death** and mounting already from the heart to the brain an image of annihilation." (560-61)

IV. Selections from Reviews of Books and Articles in Various Journals by Sri Aurobindo

1. A Brief Poem Entitled *Dukkhabhisar* by Sri Rabindra Nath Tagore in "Suprabhat" – a Bengali Monthly

"It is one of those poems in which the peculiar inimitable quality of our greatest lyric poet comes out with supreme force, beauty and sweetness. Rabindra Babu has a legion of imitators and many have been very successful in catching up his less valuable mannerisms of style and verse, as is the manner of imitators all the world over. But **the poignant sweetness, passion and spiritual depth and mystery of a poem like this, the haunting cadences subtle with a subtlety which is not of technique but of the soul, and the honeyladen felicity of the expression, these are the essential Rabindranath and cannot be imitated,** because they are things of the spirit and one must have the same sweetness and depth of soul before one can hope to catch any of these desirable qualities.… One of the most remarkable peculiarities of Rabindra Babu's genius is the happiness and originality with which he has absorbed the whole spirit of Vaishnav poetry and turned it into something essentially the same and yet new and modern. He has given the old sweet spirit of emotional and passionate religion an expression of more delicate and complex richness voiceful of subtler and more penetratingly spiritual shades of feeling than the deep-hearted but simple early age of Bengal could know." (565-66)

2. "South Indian Bronzes"*

"…the value of Eastern Thought and Eastern Art to

the world is altogether incalculable. For their greatness is that they have never yet fallen away from the ancient truth, the truth of the Soul; they have not gone out of the Father's house to live on the husks of the sense and the life and the body; they have always seen in the mind and body only instruments for the expression of that which is deeper and greater than its instruments. Even intellect and emotion had for them only a secondary value. Not to imitate Nature but to reveal that which she has hidden, to find significative forms which shall embody for us what her too obvious and familiar symbols conceal, has been the aim of the greatest Art, the Art of prehistoric antiquity and of those countries and ages whose culture has been faithful to the original truth of the Spirit." (576-77)

"Whatever benefits the laudable and well-meaning efforts of English educationists may have bestowed on this country, it is certain that, aided by the inrush of the vulgar, the mechanical and the commonplace from the commercial West, they had succeeded in entirely vulgarising the aesthetic mind and soul of the Indian people. Its innate and instinctive artistic taste has disappeared; the eye and the aesthetic sense have not been so much corrupted as killed. What more flagrant sign of this debacle could there be than the fact that **all educated India hailed the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, an incompetent imitation of the worst European styles,** as the glory of a new dawn and that hideous and glaring reproductions of them still adorning its dwellings? A rebirth of Indian taste supporting a new Indian Art which shall inspire itself with the old spirit while seeking for fresh forms is now, however, possible and it is certainly a great desideratum for the future. For nothing can be more helpful towards the

discovery of that which we are now vaguely seeking, a new Art which shall no longer labour to imitate Nature but strive rather to find fresh significant forms for the expression of the Self." (578-79)

"This is the motive of the Nataraja, the Dancing Shiva, which seems to us to strike the dominant note of this art; the self-absorbed concentration, the motionless peace and joy are within, outside is the whole mad bliss of the cosmic movement." (584)

3. About Astrology*

"Astrology is in the general mind associated with that class of subjects which goes under the name of the occult, and along with others of its class it has long been discredited by modern "enlightenment", one does not quite know on what grounds or with what rational justification. It has its psychic and mystical side, but that is not its ordinary presentation; there it claims to be a science like any other with fixed processes and an exact and definite system of rules which ought to be perfectly capable of verification or of disproof by experiment and induction like any other science. Its basis is astronomical and mathematical, its data perfectly open and positive and in no way hidden or occult, nor does it at all shrink back from the test or hide itself in secrecy and mystery. It does not indeed give ordinarily the why, but only the how of the causes and effects it professes to establish, but so it is with all other sciences; they do not give the reason of things, but only their processes. Yet astrology is supposed at some indefinite time in the march of human mind to have been exploded, – along with such things as witchcraft and demonology, not to speak

of the existence of spirits and the immortality of the soul, – and there is a sort of idea that it has been disproved and therefore put aside as a superstition which no reasonable man can even look at except with a lofty disdain, much less stoop to investigate with an open mind its truth or falsity. Still the anathema of Science has not been able to destroy it; in Europe it has revived, even though its practice as a profession is punishable by the law, and in India it has always survived. It is not indeed the habit of educated Indians to profess explicitly their belief in it, they fight shy of that as a rule, but it is largely consulted by numbers of them, as also by many Europeans." (595-96)

"That many predictions go wrong, proves nothing, essentially, against astrology any more than the constant failure of doctors to heal diseases proves anything essential against their science. The first reason of this failure may be that a great number of practising astrologers are either charlatans who seek to please their clients rather than predict by scientific rule, – of that kind there are perhaps many, – or else inefficient and ignorant men who practise only by rule of thumb, perfunctorily and with a main eye upon their fees. But if even capable astrologers fail often, that also only proves that either the science or their way of treating it is largely empirical or that some of its rules and theories may be errors. But every science has to pass through its empirical stage and some – as, again, the science of medicine, – have hardly emerged from it, and every science too burdens itself in its progress with false generalisations, incorrect theories and imperfect rules which have afterwards to be discarded or amended. As the main point in medicine is whether herbs and metals and other remedies have or have

not certain effects on the body and whether their workings can be substantiated by experience in a sufficient number of cases to establish a regular relation of cause and effect, so it is in astrology with the fundamental question of planetary influences upon earth and its creatures.

The *a priori* argument from the rational theory of the universe cannot stand. There is nothing essentially irrational in the idea that in this solar system, so closely linked together, there may be mutual influences of all the planets upon each other or that the beings of a particular planet are powerfully influenced or even dominated by influences from the others." (597-98)

"The *a priori* objections disappearing, the next step is to ask ourselves whether there is a sufficient *prima facie* empirical case for enquiring into the actual truth of astrology. This at present depends upon the experience of isolated individuals, a very unsatisfactory basis. But if this experience could be collected, sifted and published, I believe it would be found that a formidable *prima facie* case exists in favour of astrology, much stronger than that which encouraged the Society for Psychical Research to carry on its work in another psycho-physical field to such important conclusions. I may state my own experience in the matter in the belief, justified by many instances, that it is only typical of the experience of hundreds of others. My first accidental contact with an Indian astrologer was not encouraging. This gentleman was the most accomplished thought-reader I have ever seen; for he asked me to think my question without speaking it and not only successfully named the unspoken question I had fixed on, but

three others which had crossed my mind, one of them only in the merest flash and without leaving any impression behind: this he pretended to do by mathematical calculation, an operation which I took leave to regard as humbug or professional parade. For when it came to his answers, I found that he was still doing thought-reading and not astrology; he simply echoed the hopes or thoughts in my mind and his predictions did not come within one hundred miles of the truth. Other practitioners I have found to belong, a few plainly to the class of mere flattering charlatans, but most to the inefficient who read by rule of thumb and have made no profound study of their science. On the other hand, with capable astrologers the results have been often of such a remarkable accuracy as to put quite aside any possibility of chance hit, mere coincidence, intelligent prevision or any of the current explanations. I may instance the father of a friend of mine, a deep student of the science but not a professional, who predicted accurately the exact year, month, day, hour and even minute of his own death. In my own case accuracy was hampered by the inability to fix the precise moment of my birth; still some of the results were extraordinary. Two may be mentioned, from one and the same astrologer, which related to my public career. One, given when I had not yet plunged into the political vortex and my then obscure personality was quite unknown to the astrologer, predicted as an inevitable certitude of the future a political struggle with powerful non-Indian adversaries during which for a time even my life would fall under the shadow of danger. The other, given at the time of my first prosecution in the *Bande Mataram* case, predicted three successive criminal trials in each of which

the prosecution would fail. I may instance also two predictions by the book in which slokas from Sanskrit astrological writings indicating the results of certain conjunctions or planetary positions were shown to be applicable to my horoscope. One foretold specific chronic illnesses for the body of which there was no sign at the time, but long afterwards they put in their unexpected appearance and persisted. Another indicated very precisely that one of my future activities would be to found a new spiritual philosophy and its discipline; at that time I had no knowledge of philosophy or Yoga and no turn or inclination in my mind which could make the realisation of this prediction at all probable. These are only the most precise examples out of a number. Supposing all well-authenticated evidence of the kind to be collected, I am convinced there would be an overwhelmingly strong *prima facie* case and even a body of sufficiently strong empirical proof to establish at least a nucleus of truth in astrology." (599-601)

"An acceptance of the truth of astrology would not necessarily carry with it a complete determinism of Fate or mechanical law of Karma. In the Indian theory at least there is room for a determination by human will and endeavour, for Fate is mainly a determination by past action and a new will and action can cancel it; only a very strong Karma is imperative and irreducible. Even that may possibly be cancelled if one can enter into the freedom of the spiritual consciousness. One instance at any rate came to my knowledge in which the life had corresponded exactly with the pre-indications of the horoscope so long as the subject remained in the world but, as soon as he left it for a spiritual life, there was no longer any correspondence." (601-02)

4. "Sanskrit Research"*

"Mr. Subbarao admits that it is impossible to establish an exclusive Adwaitavada, much less the Mayavada, from the Veda, Upanishads, Brahmasutras or the Gita. It is impossible not because the great thinkers who gave us these writings thought confusedly or without a clear grasp of principles, but because theirs was an entirely different method. India began with a synthetic and intuitive manner of thinking based not upon logical distinctions and verbal oppositions, but upon the facts of spiritual experience and vision. In such synthetic and intuitive philosophies truths are arranged according to the place of each in the actual fact of things, as different laws and generalisations are arranged in Science, each positive in its own field and each having its proper relation to the others. The perfection of this method is to be found in the Upanishads and the Gita; and that is the reason why all attempts to interpret these great works by the methods of logical debate and the rigorous exclusions dear to the analytic metaphysician always fail even in the strongest hands; they raise questions about the sense of these works which cannot be conclusively solved, but must necessarily lead to eternal debate, because the method is wrong and the original work itself never intended to cause or countenance such discussions. Only a synthetic method of interpretation can explain a synthetic and intuitive philosophy.

The analytical tendency began with the gradual divisions which ended in the establishment of the six philosophical schools. Each of them claims to be justified by the Veda and from its own point of view each is quite in the right, for the primary data of each are there in the sacred writings. It is

where they press to exclusive conclusions and deny and refute each other that they can no longer truly claim Vedic authority. Even the Buddhists could, if they had chosen, have based themselves on the Veda, for there are passages which, if taken by themselves, seem to deny the Atman and attribute all to Karma or to assert the Non- Existent as the source of things. The perfect resort to the analytical method came later; it was employed with great effect though often rather naively by the Buddhists, but it was Shankara who applied rigorously the analytical method of the intellectual reason in all its trenchant clearness and force to metaphysics. Hence the greatness of his position in the history of Indian thought. From his time forward Indian metaphysics was bound to the wheels of the analytical and intellectual mind. Still, it is to be noted that while the philosophers thus split the catholicity of the ancient Truth into warring schools, the general Indian mind was always overpoweringly attracted by the synthetical tendency. The Gita seems to be in part the expression of such a synthetic reaction, the Puranas show constantly the same tendency and even into the philosophical schools it made its entry." (605-07)

"**Sanskrit ought still to have a future as a language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken.** But if it is to survive, it must get rid of the curse of the heavy pedantic style contracted by it in its decline with the lumbering impossible compounds and the overweight of hair-splitting erudition." (612-13)

V. Bankim – Tilak – Dayananda

1. Rishi Bankim Chandra*

"Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness, holiness may be overclouded but never, even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil; and there has been no age in which they have not been born. Among the Rishis of the later age we have at last realised that we must include the name of the man who gave us the reviving mantra which is creating a new India, the mantra *Bande Mataram*.

The Rishi is different from the saint. His life may not have been distinguished by superior holiness nor his character by an ideal beauty. He is not great by what he was himself but by what he has expressed. A great and vivifying message had to be given to a nation or to humanity; and God has chosen this mouth on which to shape the words of the message. A momentous vision had to be revealed; and it is his eyes which the Almighty first unseals. The message which he has received, the vision which has been vouchsafed to him, he declares to the world with all the strength that is in him, and in one supreme moment of inspiration expresses it in words which have merely to be uttered to stir men's inmost natures, clarify their minds, seize their hearts and impel them to things which would have been impossible to them in their ordinary moments. Those words are the mantra which he was born to reveal and of that mantra he is the seer.

What is it for which we worship the name of Bankim

today? What was his message to us or what the vision which he saw and has helped us to see? He was a great poet, a master of beautiful language and a creator of fair and gracious dreamfigures in the world of imagination; but it is not as a poet, stylist or novelist that Bengal does honour to him today. It is probable that the literary critic of the future will reckon *Kapalkundala*, *Bishabriksha* and *Krishnakanter Will* as his artistic masterpieces, and speak with qualified praise of *Devi Chaudhurani*, *Ananda Math*, *Krishnacharit* or *Dharmatattwa*. Yet it is the Bankim of these latter works and not the Bankim of the great creative masterpieces who will rank among the Makers of Modern India. The earlier Bankim was only a poet and stylist – the later Bankim was a seer and nation-builder." (637-38)

2. Bankim's Three Great Services to India

A. His First Service – He Gave a Perfect and Satisfying Medium of Expression

"No nation can grow without finding a fit and satisfying medium of expression for the new self into which it is developing – without a language which shall give permanent shape to its thoughts and feelings and carry every new impulse swiftly and triumphantly into the consciousness of all. It was Bankim's first great service to India that he gave the race which stood in its vanguard such a perfect and satisfying medium. He was blamed for corrupting the purity of the Bengali tongue; but the pure Bengali of the old poets could have expressed nothing but a conservative and unprogressing Bengal. The race was expanding and changing, and it needed a means of

expression capable of change and expansion. He was blamed also for replacing the high literary Bengali of the Pundits by a mixed popular tongue which was neither the learned language nor good vernacular. But the Bengali of the Pundits would have crushed the growing richness, variety and versatility of the Bengali genius under its stiff inflexible ponderousness. We needed a tongue for other purposes than dignified treatises and erudite lucubrations. We needed a language which should combine the strength, dignity or soft beauty of Sanskrit with the verve and vigour of the vernacular, capable at one end of the utmost vernacular raciness and at the other of the most sonorous gravity. Bankim divined our need and was inspired to meet it, – **he gave us a means by which the soul of Bengal could express itself to itself.**" (638-39)

B. His Second Service – He Gave to the Country the Religion of Patriotism

"As he had divined the linguistic need of his country's future, so he divined also its political need. He, first of our great publicists, understood the hollowness and inutility of the method of political agitation which prevailed in his time and exposed it with merciless satire in his *Lokarahasya* and *Kamalakanter Daptar*. But he was not satisfied merely with destructive criticism, – he had a positive vision of what was needed for the salvation of the country. He saw that the force from above must be met by a mightier reacting force from below, – the strength of repression by an insurgent national strength. He bade us leave the canine method of agitation for the leonine. The Mother of his vision held trenchant steel in her twice seventy million hands and not the bowl of the

mendicant. It was the gospel of fearless strength and force which he preached under a veil and in images in *Ananda Math* and *Devi Chaudhurani*. And he had an inspired unerring vision of the moral strength which must be at the back of the outer force. He perceived that the first element of the moral strength must be *tyaga*, complete self-sacrifice for the country and complete self-devotion to the work of liberation. His workers and fighters for the motherland are political *byragees* who have no other thought than their duty to her and have put all else behind them as less dear and less precious and only to be resumed when their work for her is done. Whoever loves self or wife or child or goods more than his country is a poor and imperfect patriot; not by him shall the great work be accomplished. Again, he perceived that the second element of the moral strength needed must be self-discipline and organisation. This truth he expressed in the elaborate training of Devi Chaudhurani for her work, in the strict rules of the Association of the "Ananda Math" and in the pictures of perfect organisation which those books contain. Lastly, he perceived that the third element of moral strength must be the infusion of religious feeling into patriotic work. **The religion of patriotism, – this is the master idea of Bankim's writings.** It is already foreshadowed in *Devi Chaudhurani*. In *Dharmatattwa* the idea and in *Krishnacharit* the picture of a perfect and many-sided Karma Yoga is sketched, the crown of which shall be work for one's country and one's kind. **In *Ananda Math* this idea is the keynote of the whole book and receives its perfect lyrical expression in the great song which has become the national anthem of United India.** This is the second great service of Bankim to his country that he pointed out to it the

way of salvation and gave it the religion of patriotism. Of the new spirit which is leading the nation to resurgence and independence, he is the inspirer and political guru." (639-40)

C. His Third Service – He Gave Us the Vision of Our Mother

"The third and supreme service of Bankim to his nation was that he gave us the vision of our Mother. The bare intellectual idea of the Motherland is not in itself a great driving force; the mere recognition of the desirability of freedom is not an inspiring motive. There are few Indians at present, whether loyalist, moderate or nationalist in their political views, who do not recognise that the country has claims on them or that freedom in the abstract is a desirable thing. But most of us, when it is a question between the claims of the country and other claims, do not in practice prefer the service of the country; and while many may have the wish to see freedom accomplished, few have the will to accomplish it. There are other things which we hold dearer and which we fear to see imperilled either in the struggle for freedom or by its accomplishment. It is not till the Motherland reveals herself to the eye of the mind as something more than a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals, it is not till she takes shape as a great Divine and Maternal Power in a form of beauty that can dominate the mind and seize the heart that these petty fears and hopes vanish in the all-absorbing passion for the Mother and her service, and the patriotism that works miracles and saves a doomed nation is born. To some men it is given to have that vision and reveal it to others. It was thirty-two years ago that Bankim wrote his great song and few listened; but

in a sudden moment of awakening from long delusions the people of Bengal looked round for the truth and **in a fated moment somebody sang *Bande Mataram*. The mantra had been given and in a single day a whole people had been converted to the religion of patriotism. The Mother had revealed herself.** Once that vision has come to a people, there can be no rest, no peace, no farther slumber till the temple has been made ready, the image installed and the sacrifice offered. A great nation which has had that vision can never again bend its neck in subjection to the yoke of a conqueror." (640-41)

3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak*

A. The Secret of His Greatness – He Kept Back Nothing and Gave All Himself to His Country

"The condition of things in India being given, the one possible aim for political effort resulting and the sole means and spirit by which it could be brought about, this man had to come and, once in the field, had to come to the front. He could not but stand in the end where he stands today, as one of the two or three leaders of the Indian people who are in their eyes **the incarnations of the national endeavour and the God-given captains of the national aspiration.** His life, his character, his work and endurance, his acceptance by the heart and the mind of the people are a stronger argument than all the reasonings in his speeches, powerful as these are, for Swaraj, Self-government, Home Rule, by whatever name we may call the sole possible present aim of our effort, the freedom of the life of India, its self-determination by the people of India. Arguments and

speeches do not win liberty for a nation; but where there is a will in the nation to be free and a man to embody that will in every action of his life and to devote his days to its realisation in the face of every difficulty and every suffering, and where the will of the nation has once said, "This man and his life mean what I have in my heart and in my purpose," that is a sure signpost of the future which no one has any excuse for mistaking.

That indomitable will, that unwavering devotion have been the whole meaning of Mr. Tilak's life; they are the reason of his immense hold on the people. For he does not owe his preeminent position to any of the causes which have usually made for political leading in India, wealth and great social position, professional success, recognition by Government, a power of fervid oratory or of fluent and taking speech; for he had none of these things to help him. He owes it to himself alone and to the thing his life has meant and because he has meant it with his whole mind and his whole soul. He has kept back nothing for himself or for other aims, but has given all himself to his country." (642-43)

B. The Landmarks in Mr. Tilak's Life

"The landmarks of Mr. Tilak's life are landmarks also in the history of his province and his country. **His first great step associated him in a pioneer work whose motive was to educate the people for a new life under the new conditions,** – on the one side a purely educational movement of **which the fruit was the Ferguson College,** fitly founding the reawakening of the country by an effort of which co-operation in self-sacrifice was the moving spirit, on **the other**

the initiation of the *Kesari* newspaper, which since then has figured increasingly as the characteristic and powerful expression of the political mind of Maharashtra. Mr. Tilak's career has counted three periods each of which had an imprisonment for its culminating point. **His first imprisonment in the Kolhapur case belongs to this first stage of self-development** and development of the Maratha country for new ideas and activities and for the national future.

The second period brought in a wider conception and a profounder effort. For now it was to reawaken not only the political mind, but the soul of the people by linking its future to its past; it worked by a more strenuous and popular propaganda which **reached its height in the organisation of the Shivaji and the Ganapati festivals.** His separation from the social reform leader, Agarkar, had opened the way for the peculiar role which he has played as a trusted and accredited leader of conservative and religious India in the paths of democratic politics. It was this position which enabled him to effect the union of the new political spirit with the tradition and sentiment of the historic past and of both with the ineradicable religious temperament of the people, of which these festivals were the symbol. The Congress movement was for a long time purely occidental in its mind, character and methods, confined to the English-educated few, founded on the political rights and interests of the people read in the light of English history and European ideals, but with no roots either in the past of the country or in the inner spirit of the nation. Mr. Tilak was the first political leader to break through the routine of its somewhat academical methods, to bridge the gulf between the present and the past and to restore continuity to the

political life of the nation. He developed a language and a spirit and he used methods which Indianised the movement and brought into it the masses. To his work of this period we owe that really living, strong and spontaneously organised movement in Maharashtra, which has shown its energy and sincerity in more than one crisis and struggle. This divination of the mind and spirit of his people and its needs and this power to seize on the right way to call it forth prove strikingly the political genius of Mr. Tilak; they made him the one man predestined to lead them in this trying and difficult period when all has to be discovered and all has to be reconstructed. What was done then by Mr. Tilak in Maharashtra, has been initiated for all India by the Swadeshi movement. To bring in the mass of the people, to found the greatness of the future on the greatness of the past, to infuse Indian politics with Indian religious fervour and spirituality are the indispensable conditions for a great and powerful political awakening in India. Others, writers, thinkers, spiritual leaders, had seen this truth. Mr. Tilak was the first to bring it into the actual field of practical politics. **This second period of his labour for his country culminated in a longer and harsher imprisonment** which was, as it were, the second seal of the divine hand upon his work; for there can be no diviner seal than suffering for a cause.

A third period, that of the Swadeshi movement, brought Mr. Tilak forward prominently as an All-India leader; it gave him at last the wider field, the greater driving power, the larger leverage he needed to bring his life-work rapidly to a head, and not only in Maharashtra but throughout the country. The incidents of that period are too fresh in memory to need recalling. From the inception of the Boycott

to the Surat catastrophe and **his last and longest imprisonment, which was its sequel, the name and work of Mr. Tilak are a part of Indian history.** These three imprisonments, each showing more clearly the moral stuff and quality of the man under the test and the revealing glare of suffering, have been the three seals of his career. The first found him one of a small knot of pioneer workers; it marked him out to be the strong and inflexible leader of a strong and sturdy people. The second found him already the inspiring power of a great reawakening of the Maratha spirit; it left him an uncrowned king in the Deccan and gave him that high reputation throughout India which was the foundation-stone of his present commanding influence. The last found him the leader of an All-India party, the foremost exponent and head of a thoroughgoing Nationalism; it sent him back to be one of the two or three foremost men of India adored and followed by the whole nation. He now stands in the last period of his lifelong toil for his country." (644-46)

C. Some Rare Qualities of Mr. Tilak

"The qualities which have supported him and given him his hard-earned success, have been comparatively rare in Indian politics. The first is his entirely representative character as a born leader for the sub-nation to which he belongs. India is a unity full of diversities and its strength as well as its weakness is rooted in those diversities: the vigour of its national life can exist only by the vigour of its regional life. Therefore in politics as in everything else a leader, to have a firm basis for his life-work, must build it upon a living work and influence in his own sub-race or province. No man was more fitted to do this than Mr. Tilak. He is the very type and

incarnation of the Maratha character, the Maratha qualities, the Maratha spirit, but with the unified solidity in the character, the touch of genius in the qualities, the vital force in the spirit which make a great personality readily the representative man of his people. **The Maratha race, as their soil and their history have made them, are a rugged, strong and sturdy people, democratic in their every fibre, keenly intelligent and practical to the very marrow, following in ideas, even in poetry, philosophy and religion the drive towards life and action, capable of great fervour, feeling and enthusiasm, like all Indian peoples, but not emotional idealists, having in their thought and speech always a turn for strength, sense, accuracy, lucidity and vigour, in learning and scholarship patient, industrious, careful, thorough and penetrating, in life simple, hardy and frugal, in their temperament courageous, pugnacious, full of spirit, yet with a tact in dealing with hard facts and circumventing obstacles, shrewd yet aggressive diplomatists, born politicians, born fighters. All this Mr. Tilak is with a singular and eminent completeness,** and all on a large scale, adding to it all a lucid simplicity of genius, a secret intensity, an inner strength of will, a single-mindedness in aim of quite extraordinary force, which remind one of the brightness, sharpness and perfect temper of a fine sword hidden in a sober scabbard. As he emerged on the political field, his people saw more and more clearly in him their representative man, themselves in large, the genius of their type. They felt him to be of one spirit and make with the great men who had made their past history, almost believed him to be a reincarnation of one of them returned to carry out his old work in a new form and under new conditions.

They beheld in him the spirit of Maharashtra once again embodied in a great individual. He occupies a position in his province which has no parallel in the rest of India.

On the wider national field also Mr. Tilak has rare qualities which fit him for the hour and the work. He is in no sense what his enemies have called him, a demagogue: **he has not the loose suppleness, the oratorical fervour, the facile appeal to the passions which demagogy requires; his speeches are too much made up of hard and straight thinking, he is too much a man of serious and practical action. None more careless of mere effervescence, emotional applause, popular gush, public ovations. He tolerates them since popular enthusiasm will express itself in that way; but he has always been a little impatient of them as dissipative of serious strength and will and a waste of time and energy which might better have been solidified and devoted to effective work. But he is entirely a democratic politician, of a type not very common among our leaders, one who can both awaken the spirit of the mass and respond to their spirit, able to lead them, but also able to see where he must follow the lead of their predominant sense and will and feelings. He moves among his followers as one of them in a perfect equality, simple and familiar in his dealings with them by the very force of his temperament and character, open, plain and direct and, though capable of great reserve in his speech, yet, wherever necessary, admitting them into his plans and ideas as one taking counsel of them, taking their sense even while enforcing as much as possible his own view of policy and action with all the great strength of quiet will at his command. He has that closeness of spirit**

to the mass of men, that unpretentious openness of intercourse with them, that faculty of plain and direct speech which interprets their feelings and shows them how to think out what they feel, which are preeminently the democratic qualities. For this reason he has always been able to unite all classes of men behind him, to be the leader not only of the educated, but of the people, the merchant, the trader, the villager, the peasant. All Maharashtra understands him when he speaks or writes; all Maharashtra is ready to follow him when he acts. Into his wider field in the troubled Swadeshi times he carried the same qualities and the same power of democratic leadership.

It is equally a mistake to think of Mr. Tilak as by nature a revolutionary leader; that is not his character or his political temperament. **The Indian peoples generally, with the possible exception of emotional and idealistic Bengal, have nothing or very little of the revolutionary temper; they can be goaded to revolution, like any and every people on the face of the earth, but they have no natural disposition towards it. They are capable of large ideals and fervent enthusiasms, sensitive in feeling and liable to gusts of passionate revolt which are easily appeased by even an appearance of concession; but naturally they are conservative in temperament and deliberate in action. Mr. Tilak, though a strong-willed man and a fighter by nature, has this much of the ordinary Indian temperament, that with a large mind open to progressive ideas he unites a conservative temperament strongly in touch with the sense of his people.** In a free India he would probably have figured as an advanced Liberal statesman eager for national progress and greatness, but as careful of every step as firm and decided

in it and always seeking to carry the conservative instinct of the nation with him in every change." (646-49)

D. Mr. Tilak's Attitude on Social Reforms and His Stand on Political Emancipation of the Country

"This character of Mr. Tilak's mind explains his attitude in social reform. **He is no dogmatic reactionary. The Maratha people are incapable of either the unreasoning or too reasoning rigid conservatism or of the fiery iconoclasm** which can exist side by side, – they are often only two sides of the same temper of mind, – in other parts of India. It is attached to its social institutions like all peoples who live close to the soil, but it has always shown a readiness to adapt, loosen and accommodate them in practice to the pressure of actual needs. Mr. Tilak shares this general temperament and attitude of his people. But there have also been other reasons which a strong political sense has dictated; and first, **the clear perception that the political movement could not afford to cut itself off from the great mass of the nation or split itself up into warring factions by a premature association of the social reform question with politics. The proper time for that, a politician would naturally feel, is when the country has a free assembly of its own which can consult the needs or carry out the mandates of the people.** Moreover, he has felt strongly that political emancipation was the one pressing need for the people of India and that all else not directly connected with it must take a second place; that has been the principle of his own life and he has held that it should be the principle of the national life at the present hour. **Let us have first liberty and the organised control of the life of the nation,**

afterwards we can see how we should use it in social matters; meanwhile let us move on without noise and strife, only so far as actual need and advisability demand and the sense of the people is ready to advance. This attitude may be right or wrong; but, Mr. Tilak being what he is and the nation being what it is, he could take no other.

If, then, Mr. Tilak has throughout his life been an exponent of the idea of radical change in politics and during the Swadeshi agitation the head of a party which could be called extremist, it is due to that clear practical sense, essential in a leader of political action, which seizes at once on the main necessity and goes straight without hesitating or deviation to the indispensable means. **There are always two classes of political mind: one is preoccupied with details for their own sake, revels in the petty points of the moment and puts away into the background the great principles and the great necessities, the other sees rather these first and always and details only in relation to them. The one type moves in a routine circle which may or may not have an issue; it cannot see the forest for the trees and it is only by an accident that it stumbles, if at all, on the way out. The other type takes a mountain-top view of the goal and all the directions and keeps that in its mental compass through all the deflections, retardations and tortuosities which the character of the intervening country may compel it to accept; but these it abridges as much as possible. The former class arrogate the name of statesman in their own day; it is to the latter that posterity concedes it and sees in them the true leaders of great movements. Mr. Tilak, like all men of pre-eminent political genius, belongs to this second and greater order of mind.**" (650-51)

E. Political Career of Mr. Tilak

"..Mr. Tilak has never been an academical politician, a "student of politics" meddling with action; his turn has always been to see actualities and move forward in their light. …He saw from the first that for a people circumstanced like ours there could be only one political question and one aim, not the gradual improvement of the present administration into something in the end fundamentally the opposite of itself, but the early substitution of Indian and national for English and bureaucratic control in the affairs of India. A subject nation does not prepare itself by gradual progress for liberty; it opens by liberty its way to rapid progress. The only progress that has to be made in the preparation for liberty, is progress in the awakening of the national spirit and in the creation of the will to be free and the will to adopt the necessary means and bear the necessary sacrifices for liberty. It is these clear perceptions that have regulated his political career.

Therefore the whole of **the first part of his political life was devoted to a vigorous and living propaganda for the reawakening and solidifying of the national life of Maharashtra.** Therefore, too, when the Swadeshi agitation gave the first opportunity of a large movement in the same sense throughout India, he seized on it with avidity, while his past work in Maharashtra, his position as the leader of a small advanced section in the old Congress politics and his character, sacrifices and sufferings at once fixed the choice of the New Party on him as their predestined leader. The same master-idea made him seize on the four main points which the Bengal agitation had thrown into some beginning of practical form, Swaraj, Swadeshi, National Education and Boycott, and formulate them into a definite

programme, which he succeeded in introducing among the resolutions of the Congress at the Calcutta session, – much to the detriment of the uniformity of sage and dignified impotence which had characterised the august, useful and calmly leisurely proceedings of that temperate national body. We all know the convulsion that followed the injection of this foreign matter; but we must see why Mr. Tilak insisted on administering annually so potent a remedy. The four resolutions were for him the first step towards shaking the Congress out of its torpid tortoise-like gait and turning it into a living and acting body.

Swaraj, complete and early self-government in whatever form, had the merit in his eyes of making definite and near to the national vision the one thing needful, the one aim that mattered, the one essential change that includes all the others. No nation can develop a living enthusiasm or accept great action and great sacrifices for a goal that is lost to its eye in the mist of far-off centuries; it must see it near and distinct before it, magnified by a present hope, looming largely and actualised as a living aim whose early realisation only depends on a great, sustained and sincere effort. **National education meant for him the training of the young generation in the new national spirit to be the architects of liberty,** if that was delayed, the citizens of a free India which had rediscovered itself, if the preliminary conditions were rapidly fulfilled. **Swadeshi meant an actualising of the national self-consciousness and the national will and the readiness to sacrifice which would fix them in the daily mind and daily life of the people. In Boycott, which was only a popular name for passive resistance, he saw the means to give to the struggle**

between the two ideas in conflict, bureaucratic control and national control, a vigorous shape and body and to the popular side a weapon and an effective form of action. Himself a man of organisation and action, he knew well that by action most, and not by thought and speech alone, can the will of a people be vivified, trained and made solid and enduring. To get a sustained authority from the Congress for a sustained effort in these four directions seemed to him of capital importance; this was the reason for his inflexible insistence on their unchanged inclusion when the programme seemed to him to be in danger.…

Not revolutionary methods or revolutionary idealism, but the clear sight and the direct propaganda and action of the patriotic political leader insisting on the one thing needful and the straight way to drive at it, have been the sense of Mr. Tilak's political career." (652-55)

"**Two facts of his life and character have to be insisted** on as of special importance to the country because they give a great example of two things in which its political life was long deficient and is even now not sufficient. **First, the inflexible will of the patriot and man of sincere heart and thorough action which has been the very grain of his character: for aspirations, emotion, enthusiasm are nothing without this; will alone creates and prevails.** And wish and will are not the same thing, but divided by a great gulf: the one, which is all most of us get to, is a puny, tepid and inefficient thing and, even when most enthusiastic, easily discouraged and turned from its object; the other can be a giant to accomplish and endure. **Secondly, the readiness to sacrifice and face suffering, not needlessly or with a**

useless bravado, but with a firm courage when it comes, to bear it and to outlive, returning to work with one's scars as if nothing had happened. No prominent man in India has suffered more for his country; none has taken his sacrifices and sufferings more quietly and as a matter of course." (655-56)

"Mr. Tilak's principles of work have been accepted; the ideas which he had so much trouble to enforce have become the commonplaces and truisms of our political thought. The only question that remains is the rapidity of a now inevitable evolution. That is the hope for which Mr. Tilak still stands, a leader of all India. Only when it is accomplished, will his life-work be done; not till then can he rest while he lives, even though age grows on him and infirmities gather, – for his spirit will always remain fresh and vigorous, – any more than a river can rest before the power of its waters has found their goal and discharged them into the sea. But whether that end, – the end of a first stage of our new national life, **the beginning of a greater India reborn for self-fulfilment and the service of humanity, – come tomorrow or after a little delay, its accomplishment is now safe, and Mr. Tilak's name stands already for history as a nation-builder, one of the half-dozen greatest political personalities, memorable figures, representative men of the nation in this most critical period of India's destinies, a name to be remembered gratefully so long as the country has pride in its past and hope for its future.**" (656-57)

*F. A Great Mind, a Great Will**

"A GREAT mind, a great will, a great and pre-eminent leader of men has passed away from the field of his achievement

and labour. To the mind of his country Lokamanya Tilak was much more, for he had become to it a considerable part of itself, the embodiment of its past effort, and the head of its present will and struggle for a free and greater life. His achievement and personality have put him amidst the first rank of historic and significant figures. **He was one who built much rapidly out of little beginnings, a creator of great things out of an unworked material. The creations he left behind him were a new and strong and self-reliant national spirit, the reawakened political mind and life of a people, a will to freedom and action, a great national purpose. He brought to his work extraordinary qualities, a calm, silent, unflinching courage, an unwavering purpose, a flexible mind, a forward-casting vision of possibilities, an eye for the occasion, a sense of actuality, a fine capacity of democratic leadership, a diplomacy that never lost sight of its aim and pressed towards it even in the most pliant turns of its movement, and guiding all, a single-minded patriotism that cared for power and influence only as a means of service to the Motherland and a lever for the work of her liberation. He sacrificed much for her and suffered for her repeatedly and made no ostentation of his suffering and sacrifice. His life was a constant offering at her altar and his death has come in the midst of an unceasing service and labour.**" (658)

4. Dayananda*

*A. The Man and His Work**

"AMONG the great company of remarkable figures that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renascence, one stands out by himself with peculiar and solitary distinctness, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work. It is as if one were to walk for a long time amid a

range of hills rising to a greater or lesser altitude, but all with sweeping contours, green-clad, flattering the eye even in their most bold and striking elevation. But amidst them all, **one hill stands apart, piled up in sheer strength, a mass of bare and puissant granite, with verdure on its summit, a solitary pine jutting out into the blue, a great cascade of pure, vigorous and fertilising water gushing out from its strength as a very fountain of life and health to the valley. Such is the impression created on my mind by Dayananda.**" (661)

"**Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children."** So it is with all. Not only are the men greater than their definite works, but their influence is so wide and formless that it has little relation to any formal work that they have left behind them.

Very different was the manner of working of Dayananda. Here was one who did not infuse himself informally into the indeterminate soul of things, but stamped his figure indelibly as in bronze on men and things. Here was one whose formal works are the very children of his spiritual body, children fair and robust and full of vitality, the image of their creator. Here was one who knew definitely and clearly the work he was sent to do, chose his materials, determined his conditions with a

sovereign clairvoyance of the spirit and executed his conception with the puissant mastery of the born worker. As I regard the figure of this formidable artisan in God's workshop, images crowd on me which are all of battle and work and conquest and triumphant labour. Here, I say to myself, was a very soldier of Light, a warrior in God's world, a sculptor of men and institutions, a bold and rugged victor of the difficulties which matter presents to spirit. And the whole sums itself up to me in a powerful impression of spiritual practicality. The combination of these two words, usually so divorced from each other in our conceptions, seems to me the very definition of Dayananda." (662-63)

"He was not only plastic to the great hand of Nature, but asserted his own right and power to use Life and Nature as plastic material. We can imagine his soul crying still to us with our insufficient spring of manhood and action, "Be not content, O Indian, only to be infinitely and grow vaguely, but see what God intends thee to be, determine in the light of His inspiration to what thou shalt grow. Seeing, hew that out of thyself, hew that out of Life. Be a thinker, but be also a doer; be a soul, but be also a man; be a servant of God, but be also a master of Nature!" For this was what he himself was; a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision. Hew is the right word. Granite himself, he smote out a shape of things with great blows as in granite.

In Dayananda's life we see always the puissant jet of this spiritual practicality. A spontaneous power and decisiveness is stamped everywhere on his work. And to begin with, what a master-glance of practical intuition was this to go back trenchantly to the very root of Indian life and

culture, to derive from the flower of its first birth the seed for a radical new birth! And what an act of grandiose intellectual courage to lay hold upon this scripture defaced by ignorant comment and oblivion of its spirit, degraded by misunderstanding to the level of an ancient document of barbarism, and to perceive in it its real worth as a scripture which conceals in itself the deep and energetic spirit of the forefathers who made this country and nation, – a scripture of divine knowledge, divine worship, divine action. I know not whether Dayananda's powerful and original commentary will be widely accepted as the definite word on the Veda. I think myself some delicate work is still called for to bring out other aspects of this profound and astonishing Revelation. But this matters little. The essential is that **he seized justly on the Veda as India's Rock of Ages and had the daring conception to build on what his penetrating glance perceived in it a whole education of youth, a whole manhood and a whole nation-hood. Rammohan Roy, that other great soul and puissant worker who laid his hand on Bengal and shook her – to what mighty issues – out of her long, indolent sleep by her rivers and rice-fields – Rammohan Roy stopped short at the Upanishads. Dayananda looked beyond and perceived that our true original seed was the Veda. He had the national instinct and he was able to make it luminous, – an intuition in place of an instinct. Therefore the works that derive from him, however they depart from received traditions, must needs be profoundly national.**" (363-66)

*B. Dayananda and the Veda**

"DAYANANDA accepted the Veda as his rock of firm foundation, he took it for his guiding view of life, his rule of

inner existence and his inspiration for external work, but he regarded it as even more, the word of eternal Truth on which man's knowledge of God and his relations with the Divine Being and with his fellows can be rightly and securely founded. This everlasting rock of the Veda, many assert, has no existence, there is nothing there but the commonest mud and sand; it is only a hymnal of primitive barbarians, only a rude worship of personified natural phenomena, or even less than that, a liturgy of ceremonial sacrifice, half religion, half magic, by which superstitious animal men of yore hoped to get themselves gold and food and cattle, slaughter pitilessly their enemies, protect themselves from disease, calamity and demoniac influences and enjoy the coarse pleasures of a material Paradise. To that we must add a third view, the orthodox, or at least that which arises from Sayana's commentary; this view admits, practically, the ignobler interpretation of the substance of Veda and yet – or is it therefore? – exalts this primitive farrago as a holy Scripture and a Book of Sacred Works." (667)

"A nation grows into what it shall be by the force of that which it was in the past and is in the present,... and Dayananda was one of its great and formative spirits. But **among all the materials of our past the Veda is the most venerable and has been directly and indirectly the most potent. Even when its sense was no longer understood, even when its traditions were lost behind Pauranic forms, it was still held in honour, though without knowledge, as authoritative revelation and inspired Book of Knowledge, the source of all sanctions and standard of all truth.**

But there has always been this double and incompatible tradition about the Veda that it is a book of ritual and mythology and that it is a book of divine knowledge. The

Brahmanas seized on the one tradition, the Upanishads on the other. Later, the learned took the hymns for a book essentially of ritual and works, they went elsewhere for pure knowledge; but the instinct of the race bowed down before it with an obstinate inarticulate memory of a loftier tradition. And when in our age the Veda was brought out of its obscure security behind the purdah of a reverential neglect, the same phenomenon reappears. While Western scholarship extending the hints of Sayana seemed to have classed it for ever as a ritual liturgy to Nature-Gods, **the genius of the race looking through the eyes of Dayananda pierced behind the error of many centuries and received again the intuition of a timeless revelation and a divine truth given to humanity.** In any case, we have to make one choice or another. We can no longer securely enshrine the Veda wrapped up in the folds of an ignorant reverence or guarded by a pious self-deceit. Either the Veda is what Sayana says it is, and then we have to leave it behind for ever as the document of a mythology and ritual which have no longer any living truth or force for thinking minds, or it is what the European scholars say it is, and then we have to put it away among the relics of the past as an antique record of semi-barbarous worship; or else it is indeed Veda, a book of divine knowledge, and then it becomes of supreme importance to us to know and to hear its message.

It is objected to the sense Dayananda gave to the Veda that it is no true sense but an arbitrary fabrication of imaginative learning and ingenuity, to his method that it is fantastic and unacceptable to the critical reason, to his teaching of a revealed Scripture that the very idea is a rejected superstition impossible for any enlightened mind to admit or to announce sincerely. I will not now examine the solidity of

Dayananda's interpretation of Vedic texts, nor anticipate the verdict of the future on his commentary, nor discuss his theory of revelation. I shall only state the broad principles underlying his thought about the Veda as they present themselves to me. For in the action and thought of a great soul or a great personality the vital thing to my mind is not the form he gave to it, but in his action the helpful power he put forth and in his thought the helpful truth he has added or, it may be, restored to the yet all too scanty stock of our human acquisition and divine potentiality.

To start with the negation of his work by his critics, in whose mouth does it lie to accuse Dayananda's dealings with the Veda of a fantastic or arbitrary ingenuity? Not in the mouth of those who accept Sayana's traditional interpretation. For **if ever there was a monument of arbitrarily erudite ingenuity, of great learning divorced, as great learning too often is, from sound judgment and sure taste and a faithful critical and comparative observation, from direct seeing and often even from plainest common sense or of a constant fitting of the text into the Procrustean bed of preconceived theory, it is surely this commentary,** otherwise so imposing, so useful as first crude material, so erudite and laborious, left to us by the Acharya Sayana. Nor does the reproach lie in the mouth of those who take as final the recent labours of European scholarship. **For if ever there was a toil of interpretation in which the loosest rein has been given to an ingenious speculation, in which doubtful indications have been snatched at as certain proofs, in which the boldest conclusions have been insisted upon with the scantiest justification, the most enormous difficulties ignored and preconceived prejudice maintained in face of the clear and often admitted**

suggestions of the text, it is surely this labour, so eminently respectable otherwise for its industry, good will and power of research, performed through a long century by European Vedic scholarship.

What is the main positive issue in this matter? An interpretation of Veda must stand or fall by its central conception of the Vedic religion and the amount of support given to it by the intrinsic evidence of the Veda itself. Here Dayananda's view is quite clear, its foundation inexpugnable. The Vedic hymns are chanted to the One Deity under many names, names which are used and even designed to express His qualities and powers. Was this conception of Dayananda's an arbitrary conceit fetched out of his own too ingenious imagination? Not at all; it is the explicit statement of the Veda itself: "One existent, sages" – not the ignorant, mind you, but the seers, the men of knowledge, – "speak of in many ways, as Indra, as Yama, as Matariswan, as Agni." The Vedic Rishis ought surely to have known something about their own religion, more, let us hope, than Roth or Max Muller, and this is what they knew." (667-70)

"I ask… and it is *the* fundamental point, who deals most straightforwardly with the text, Dayananda or the Western scholars?

But if this fundamental point of Dayananda's is granted, if the character given by the Vedic Rishis themselves to their gods is admitted, we are bound, whenever the hymns speak of Agni or another, to see behind that name present always to the thought of the Rishi the one Supreme Deity or else one of His powers with its attendant qualities or workings. Immediately the whole character of the Veda is fixed in the sense Dayananda gave to it; the merely ritual, mythological, polytheistic interpretation of Sayana collapses, the merely

meteorological and naturalistic European interpretation collapses. We have instead a real Scripture, one of the world's sacred books and the divine word of a lofty and noble religion." (671)

"The Vedic godheads are constantly hymned as Masters of Wisdom, Power, Purity, purifiers, healers of grief and evil, destroyers of sin and falsehood, warriors for the truth; constantly the Rishis pray to them for healing and purification, to be made seers of knowledge, possessors of the truth, to be upheld in the divine law, to be assisted and armed with strength, manhood and energy. Dayananda has brought this idea of the divine right and truth into the Veda; the Veda is as much and more a book of divine Law as Hebrew Bible or Zoroastrian Avesta.

The cosmic element is not less conspicuous in the Veda; the Rishis speak always of the worlds, the firm laws that govern them, the divine workings in the cosmos. But **Dayananda goes farther; he affirms that the truths of modern physical science are discoverable in the hymns.** Here we have the sole point of fundamental principle about which there can be any justifiable misgivings. I confess my incompetence to advance any settled opinion in the matter. But this much needs to be said that his idea is increasingly supported by the recent trend of our knowledge about the ancient world. **The ancient civilisations did possess secrets of science some of which modern knowledge has recovered, extended and made more rich and precise but others are even now not recovered. There is then nothing fantastic in Dayananda's idea that Veda contains truth of science as well as truth of religion. I will even add my own conviction that Veda contains other truths of a science the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case Dayananda has rather understated than overstated the depth and**

range of the Vedic wisdom." (672-73)

"…Dayananda stands justified by the substance of Veda itself, by logic and reason and by our growing knowledge of the past of mankind. The Veda does hymn the one Deity of many names and powers; it does celebrate the divine Law and man's aspiration to fulfil it; it does purport to give us the law of the cosmos.

On the question of revelation I have left myself no space to write. Suffice it to say that here too Dayananda was perfectly logical and it is quite grotesque to charge him with insincerity because he held to and proclaimed the doctrine. There are always three fundamental entities which we have to admit and whose relations we have to know if we would understand existence at all, God, Nature and the Soul. If, as Dayananda held on strong enough grounds, the Veda reveals to us God, reveals to us the law of Nature, reveals to us the relations of the Soul to God and Nature, what is it but a revelation of divine Truth? And if, as Dayananda held, it reveals them to us with a perfect truth, flawlessly, he might well hold it for an infallible Scripture. The rest is a question of the method of revelation, of the divine dealings with our race, of man's psychology and possibilities. Modern thought, affirming Nature and Law but denying God, denied also the possibility of revelation; but so also has it denied many things which a more modern thought is very busy reaffirming. We cannot demand of a great mind that it shall make itself a slave to vulgarly received opinion or the transient dogmas of the hour; the very essence of its greatness is this, that it looks beyond, that it sees deeper.

In the matter of Vedic interpretation I am convinced

that whatever may be the final complete interpretation, Dayananda will be honoured as the first discoverer of the right clues. Amidst the chaos and obscurity of old ignorance and age-long misunderstanding his was the eye of direct vision that pierced to the truth and fastened on that which was essential. He has found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned fountains." (674-75)

5. Romesh Chandra Dutt

"…Romesh Dutt had achieved a high distinction among the men of his own generation, and we doubt whether another man could be pointed out among them so many-sided, so full of strength and hope and energy, so confident, so uniformly successful. Nature was liberal to him of her gifts, Fortune of her favours. A splendid physique, robust and massive, equipped him to bear the strain of an unceasing activity: a nature buoyant, sanguine, strong, as healthy as his frame, armed him against the shocks of life and commanded success by insisting upon it; an egoism natural to such a robust vitality seized on all things as its provender and enabled its possessor thoroughly to enjoy the good things of life which it successfully demanded; a great tact and *savoir faire* steered him clear of unnecessary friction and avoidable difficulties; an unrivalled quickness of grasp, absorption and assimilation, more facile than subtle or deep, helped him to make his own all that he heard or read; a rapid though not ingenious brain showed him how to use his material with the best effect and most practical utility; and a facile pen and speech which never paused for a thought or a word, could always be trusted to clothe what he wished to convey in a form respectable and

effective and so well put as to conceal the absence of native literary faculty and intellectual distinction. These were Nature's presents to him at his birth. Fortune placed him in a wealthy, well-read and well-known family, gave him the best advantages of education the times could afford, sent him to England and opened the doors of the Civil Service, the pinnacle of the young Indian's aspiration in his days, and crowned him with the highest prizes that that highest of careers could yield to a man of his hue and blood. It is characteristic of his career that he should have died as Prime Minister of the Indian State which has been most successful in reproducing and improving upon the Anglo-Indian model of administration.

There were limits, as we have hinted, to the liberality of Nature. **Of all the great Bengalis of his time Romesh Dutt was perhaps the least original.** His administrative faculties were of the second order, not of the first; though he stood for a time foremost among the most active of Congress politicians and controversialists, he was neither a Ranade nor a Surendranath, had neither the gift of the organiser and political thinker nor the gift of the orator; he had literary talent of an imitative kind but no literary genius; he wrote well on scholastic subjects and translated pleasantly and effectively, but was no great Sanskrit scholar: he cannot rank with Ranade or even with Gokhale as an economist, and yet his are the most politically effective contributions to economic literature in India that recent years have produced. It must be admitted that his activity and dexterity of work were far in excess of his literary ability or scholastic conscientiousness." (676-78)

"**The best things he ever did were, in our view, his letters to Lord Curzon and his Economic History. The**

former fixed public opinion in India irretrievably and nobody cared even to consider Lord Curzon's answer. "That settles it" was the general feeling every ordinary reader contracted for good after reading this brilliant and telling indictment. Without the Economic History and its damning story of England's commercial and fiscal dealings with India we doubt whether the public mind would have been ready for the Boycott. In this one instance it may be said of him that he not only wrote history but created it. But all his works, with the exception of the historical novels, were rather pieces of successful journalism than literature. Still, even where it was most defective, his work was always useful to the world." (678-79)

"An education at once more subtle and more massive, a greater originality, force and range of intellectual activity, an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the glut of a giant for work and action, mighty qualities of soul, a superhuman courage, self-abnegation and power to embrace and practise almost impossible ideals, these are the virtues and gifts India demands from the greatest among her sons in the future so that they may be sufficient to her work and her destinies. But such gifts as Romesh Dutt possessed are not to be despised. Especially did his untiring capacity for work and his joyous vitality and indestructible buoyancy make him a towering reproach to the indolent, listless, sneering and anaemic generation that intervened between him and the recent renascence." (679)

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