The Real Awakener



The Light of lights

Words of Sri Aurobindo – 5

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". . it is only in proportion as we put from us the pre-occupation of bodily desires and interests, the sensual gratifications, lusts, longings, indolences of the material world, that we can return to the ocean of spiritual force within us.

…We need a nucleus of men in whom the Shakti is developed to its uttermost extent, in whom it fills every corner of the personality and overflows to fertilise the earth. These, having the fire of Bhawani in their hearts and brains, will go forth and carry the flame to every nook and cranny of our land."

– Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA 6: 88)

I. Selections from Plays and Stories, Part 1, CWSA Vol. 3

1. Conceit

"…there are men so weak in love,
They cannot bear more than an ass's load;
So high in their conceit, the tenderest
Kindest rebuke turns all their sweetness sour." (92)

2. Poor Human Man!

"Alas, poor human man!
Why, we have all so many sins to answer,
It would be hard to have cold justice dealt us.
We should be kindly to each other's faults
Remembering our own. Is't not enough
To see a face in tears and heal the sorrow,
Or must we weigh whether the face is fair
Or ugly? I think that even a snake in pain
Would tempt me to its succour, though I knew
That afterwards 'twould bite me! But he is a god
Perhaps who did this and his spotless radiance
Abhors the tarnish of our frailer natures." (418)

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

3. Power of the Blessings of Those One Helps

"…the mightiest strengths are broken
And divine favour lasts not long, but blessings
Of those thou helpest with thy kindly strength
Upon life's rugged way, can never fail thee." (511)

4. Justice and Mercy

"My child, thou art all pity;
But justice has her seat, and her fine balance
Disturbed too often spoils an unripe world
With ill-timed mercy.…" (516)

5. Truth Shall Grow

"…the blind nether forces still have power
And the ascent is slow and long is Time.
Yet shall Truth grow and harmony increase:
The day shall come when men feel close and one.
Meanwhile one forward step is something gained,
Since little by little earth must open to heaven
Till her dim soul awakes into the Light." (528)

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

II. Selections from Plays and Stories, Part 2, CWSA Vol. 4

1. Trinity of Glorious Manhood

"…Strength in the spirit, wisdom in the mind,
Love in the heart complete the trinity
Of glorious manhood.…" (579)

2. Truth's Dwelling

"Hope not to hear truth often in royal courts.
Truth! Seldom with her bright and burning wand
She touches the unwilling lips of men
Who lust and hope and fear. The gods alone
Possess her. Even our profoundest thoughts
Are crooked to avoid her and from her touch
Crawl hurt into their twilight, often hating her
Too bright for them as for our eyes the sun.
If she dwells here, it is with souls apart." (633)

3. This World

"…This world is other than our standards are
And it obeys a vaster thought than ours,
Our narrow thoughts! The fathomless desire
Of some huge spirit is its secret law.
It keeps its own tremendous forces penned
And bears us where it wills, not where we would.…" (641)

4. The Nature's Ways

"It was to amuse himself God made the world.
For He was dull alone! Therefore all things
Vary to keep the secret witness pleased.
How Nature knows and does her office well.
What poignant oppositions she combines!
Death fosters life that life may suckle death.
Her certainties are snares, her dreams prevail.
What little seeds she grows into huge fates,
Proves with a smile her great things to be small!
All things here secretly are right; all's wrong
In God's appearances. World, thou art wisely led
In a divine confusion." (642)

5. The Deepest Things are Lived but Not Seized

"The deepest things are those thought seizes not;
Our spirits live their hidden meaning out." (680)

III. Selections from Translations, CWSA Vol. 5

1. Translations from Sanskrit*

A. The Ramayana – Speech of Dussaruth

"…Say then shall Luxman's brother be your lord,
Glory's high favourite who empire breathes?
Yea, if the whole vast universe should own
My son for king, it would be kinged indeed
And regal: Lords, of such desirable
Fortune I would possess the mother of men;
Then would I be at peace, at last repose
Transferring to such shoulders Earth. Pronounce
If I have nobly planned, if counselled well;
Grant me your high permissive voices, People,
But if my narrower pleasure, private hope,
Of welfare general the smooth disguise
Have in your censure donned, then let the folk
Themselves advise their monarch or command.
For other is disinterested thought
And by the clash of minds dissimilar
Counsel increases." (6)

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

B. The Mahabharata

(i) The Bhagavad Gita

(a) "Even as the embodied spirit passes in this body to boyhood and youth and age, so also it passes away from this body to another; the strong man suffers not his soul to be clouded by this.… As a man casteth from him his worn out robes and taketh to him other & new raiment, so the embodied Spirit casteth away its worn out bodies and goeth to other & new casings. Him the sword cleaveth not, Him the fire cannot burn, Him water wetteth not and the hot wind withereth not away; indivisible, unconsumable, unmergible, unwitherable is He. He is for ever & everywhere, constant and moveth not, He is the One Sempiternal Being. If thou knowest Him as such, thou hast no cause to grieve." (80)

(b) ". . the enjoyments that are born of touch and contact are very wombs of misery, they begin and they end; the wise man taketh no delight in these. For he who even on this earth and before his release from this mortal body hath strength to stand up in the speed and rush of wrath and lust, he hath Yoga, he is the happy man." (94)

(c) "**To that man his self is a friend who has conquered self by the Self**, but when he is not in touch with his self, it worketh enmity against him like an outward foe. Now when he has mastered self and is at peace, then the Self of him is utterly at its ease, unaffected by heat & cold, pleasure or pain, imperturbable in honour & disgrace." (96)

(d) "**When a Yogin becometh one with all beings & loveth Me in all creatures, though he live & move in all manner of activities, he liveth & doeth only in Me.** For

him I deem to be the greatest Yogin, O Urjoona, **who looks alike on all beings everywhere as if they were his own self** whether it be for happiness or whether it be for pain." (98)

(e) "URJOONA

When a man hath faith but cannot strive aright & his mind swerveth from Yoga and he attaineth not to success in Yoga, what is the last state of such a man, O Krishna? Doth he lose both this world & that other, doth he perish like a breaking cloud, failing, O strong-armed, to get his immortal seat, losing his way on the path of the Eternal? This doubt of mine must thou solve to its very heart, O Krishna, for I shall not find any other who can destroy this doubt but only thee.

KRISHNA

Partha, **neither in this world nor in the other is there for that man any perdition; no man who doeth good, can come to an evil end**, O beloved. But to the world of the righteous he goeth and there dwelleth for endless seasons and then is born again, the man fallen from Yoga, in a house of pure and fortunate men. Or else he even cometh to being in the house of the wise men, in a family of Yogins, for such a birth as this in this world is one of the hardest to win. There he getteth touch again with the mind he had in his former body and with that to start him he striveth yet harder after perfection, O delight of the Kurus. For he is seized and hurried forward even by that former habit & askesis of his, though it be without his own will. Even if a man's mind is curious after Yoga, he overpasseth the outer Brahman in the Word." (99)

(f) "**Among many thousands of men hardly one striveth after perfection and of those even that strive & are spiritually whole, hardly one knoweth me without misprision.**" (100)

(ii) Vidula's Teaching to Her Sons

"He whose perfect deeds as of a demigod in strength and mind
Make not up the daily talk and glory of amazed mankind,
What is he but one more clod to feed the fire and help the soil?
He is neither man nor woman. Man is he whose fire and toil,
Turned to wealth or turned to wisdom, truth or piety of soul,
Travel through the spacious world renowned from pole to ringing pole,…" (107)

C. Kalidasa – The Birth of the War-God*

(i) "They called her Parvati, the mountain child,
When love to love cried answer in the house
And to the sound she turned her lovely face.
A riper day the great maternal name
Of Uma brought.…
Wherever her bright laughing body rolled,
Wherever faltered her sweet tumbling steps,
All eyes were drawn to her like winging bees

Which sailing come upon the wanderer wind
Amid the infinite sweets of honeyed spring
To choose the mango-flower's delicious breast." (277)

(ii) "And easily out of that earlier time
All sciences and wisdoms crowding came
Into her growing thoughts like swans that haste
In autumn to a sacred river's shores.
They started from her soul as grow at night
Born from some luminous herb its glimmering rays.
Her mind, her limbs betrayed themselves divine.
Thus she prepared her spirit for mighty life,
Wandering at will in freedom like a deer
On Nature's summits, in enchanted glens,
Absorbed in play, the Mother of the world." (278)

(iii) "Her speech dropped nectar from a liquid voice
To which the coïl's call seemed rude and harsh
And sob of smitten lyres a tuneless sound.
The startled glance of her long lovely eyes
Stolen from her by the swift woodland deer
Fluttered like a blue lotus in the wind,
And the rich pencilled arching of her brows
Made vain the beauty of love's bow. Her hair's
Dense masses put voluptuously to shame
The mane of lions and the drift of clouds." (279-80)

(iv) "She brought him daily offerings of flowers
And holy water morn and noon and eve
And swept the altar of the divine fire
And plucking heaped the outspread sacred grass,
Then showering over his feet her falling locks
Drowned all her soft fatigue of gentle toils
In the cool moonbeams from the Eternal's head.
Though to austerity of trance a peril
The touch of beauty, he repelled her not.
Surrounded by all sweetness in the world
He can be passionless in his large mind,
Austere, unmoved, creation's silent king.
So had they met on summits of the world
Like the still Spirit and its unwakened force.
Near were they now, yet to each other unknown,
He meditating, she in service bowed.
Closing awhile her vast and shadowy wings
Fate over them paused suspended on the hills." (281-82)

*D. Bhartrihari**

(i) Invocation*

"To the calm Light inviolable all hail
Whom Time divides not, nor Space measures, One,
Boundless and Absolute who Is alone,
The eternal vast I Am immutable!" (315)

(ii) The Great Incurable*

"For all ill things there is a cure; the fire's
Red spleen cool water shall at once appease,
And noontide's urgent rays the sunshade tires,
And there are spells for poison, and disease
Finds in the leech's careful drugs its ease.

The raging elephant yet feels the goad,
And the dull ass and obstinate bullock rule
Cudgel and stick and force upon their road.
For one sole plague no cure is found – the fool." (319)

(iii) Bodies without Mind*

"Some minds there are to Art and Beauty dead,
Music and poetry on whose dull ear
Fall barren. Horns grace not their brutish head,
Tails too they lack, yet is their beasthood clear.
That Heaven ordained not upon grass their feasts,
Good fortune is this for the other beasts." (319)

(iv) A Choice*

"Better were this, to roam in deserts wild,
On difficult mountains and by desolate pools,
A savage life with wild beasts reconciled,
Than Paradise itself mated with fools." (320)

(v) Great and Meaner Spirits*

"Some from high action through base fear refrain;
The path is difficult, the way not plain.
Others more noble to begin are stayed
By a few failures. **Great spirits undismayed**
Abandon never what once to do they swore.
Baffled and beaten back they spring once more,
Buffeted and borne down, rise up again
And, full of wounds, come on like iron men." (326)

(vi) The Noble Nature*

"Eloquence in the assembly; in the field
The puissant act, the lion's heart; proud looks
Unshaken in defeat, but modest-kind
Mercy when victory comes; passionate for books
High love of learning; thoughts to fame inclined; –
These things are natural to the noble mind." (340)

(vii) The Aryan Ethic*

"Hear the whole Gospel and the Law thereto: –
Speak truth, and in wise company abide;
Slay lust, thine enemy; abandon pride;
Patience and sweet forgiveness to thee woo;
Set not in sin thy pleasure, but in God;
Follow the path high feet before thee trod;

Give honour to the honourable; conceal
Thy virtues with a pudent veil of shame,
Yet cherish to the end a stainless fame;
Speak sweetness to thy haters and their weal
Pursue; show pity to unhappy men,
Lift up the fallen, heal the sufferer's pain." (345)

(viii) Definitions*

"What is clear profit? Meeting with good men.
A malady? Of incompetent minds the spell.
What is a loss? Occasion given in vain.
True skill of life?
With heavenward thoughts to dwell.
A hero? The heart that is o'er passion lord.
A mistress? She to loving service sworn.
Best wealth? Wisdom. True happiness? The sward
Of one's own country, life where it was born.
A kingdom? Swift obedience fruitful found
At the low word from hearts of all around." (358)

(ix) The Words of the Wise*

"Serve thou the wise and good, covet their speech
Although to trivial daily things it keeps.
Their casual thoughts are foam from solemn deeps;
Their passing words make Scripture, Science; rich,
Though seeming poor, their common actions teach." (364)

E. A Note on Bhartrihari's Centuries

"Bhartrihari's Centuries are important to us as the finished expression of a thoroughly typical Aryan personality in the most splendid epoch of Indian culture. The most splendid, not the best; for the vigorous culture mirrored in the epics has been left behind; the nobly pure, strong and humane civilisation which produced Buddha gives way to a civilisation a little less humane, much less masculine, infinitely less pure, yet richer, more variously coloured, more delightful to the taste and senses; the millennium of philosophy and heroism yields to the millennium of luxury and art. Of the new civilisation Kalidasa is the perfect and many-sided representative; he had the receptive, alchemistic imagination of the great world-poets, Shakespeare, Homer and Valmekie, and everything that was in his world he received into that alembic with a deep creative delight and transmuted into forms and sounds of magical beauty. Bhartrihari's was a narrower mind and intenser personality. He represents his age in those aspects which powerfully touched his own individual life and character, but to others, not having catholicity of moral temper, he could not respond. He was evidently a Kshatriya; for all his poetry breathes that proud, grandiose, arrogantly noble spirit of the old magnanimous Indian aristocracy, extreme in its selfassertion, equally extreme in its self-abnegation, which made the ancient Hindu people one of the three or four great peoples of antiquity. The savour of the Kshatriya spirit in Bhartrihari is of the most personal, intimate kind, not the purely poetic and appreciative delight of Kalidasa. It is with him grain of character, not mere mental impression. It expresses itself even in his Vairagya by the fiery and ardent, almost fierce spirit which inspires his

asceticism, – how different from the fine quietism of the Brahmin! But the Century of World-disgust, although it contains some of his best poetry, is not to us his most characteristic and interesting work; we find that rather in the Century of Morals." (371-72)

"…The ideas of the Century of Morals are not in themselves extraordinary, nor does Bhartrihari, though he had a full share of the fine culture of his age, appear to have risen in intellectual originality beyond the average level; it is the personality which appears in the Centuries that is striking. Bhartrihari is, as Matthew Arnold would have said, in the grand style. He has the true heroic turn of mind and turn of speech; he breathes a large and puissant atmosphere. High-spirited, high-minded, high of temper, keen in his sympathies, admiring courage, firmness and daring aspiration above all things, thrilling to impulses of humanity, kindliness and self-sacrifice in spite of his rugged strength, dowered with a trenchant power of scorn and sombre irony, and occasionally of stern invective, but sweetening this masculine severity of character with varied culture and the old high Indian worship of knowledge, goodness and wisdom, such is the man who emerges from the one hundred and odd verses of the Shataka. The milder and more feminine shades of the Aryan ideal he does not so clearly typify. We have often occasion to ask ourselves, What manner of men did the old Aryan discipline, uniting with the new Helleno-Asiatic culture, succeed in producing? Bhartrihari is at least one type of its products.

And yet in the end a doubt breaks in. Was he altogether of his age? Was he not born in an alien time and an evil day?

He would have been better at home, one fancies, with the more masculine temper depicted in the Mahabharata. Certainly he ended in disgust and fled for refuge to ascetic imaginations not wholly characteristic of his time. He had lived the life of courts, was perhaps an official of high standing and seems to have experienced fully the affronts, uncertainties, distastes to which such a career has always been exposed. From the beginning stray utterances point to a growing dissatisfaction and in the end there comes the poignant cry of a thwarted life. When we read the Century of Passion, we seem to come near the root of his malady. As in the earlier Century he has subdued to the law of poetical form the ethical aspects of life, so now will he deal with the delight of the senses; but how little of real delight there is in this misnamed Century of Passion! Bhartrihari is no real lover, certainly; but neither is he a genuine voluptuary. Of that keen-edged honey-laden delight in the joy of the senses and the emotions which thrills through every line of Kalidasa's Cloud, there is no faintest trace. Urged into voluptuous experience by fashion and habit, this high and stern nature had no real vocation for the life of the senses; in this respect, and who shall say in how many others, he was out of harmony with the moral atmosphere of his times, and at last turned from it all to cry aloud the holy name of Shiva by the waters of the pure and ancient river, the river Ganges, while he waited impatiently for the great release.... But this too was not his vocation. He had too much defiance, fire, self-will for the ascetic. To have fallen in the forefront of ancient heroic battle or to have consummated himself in some grandiose act of self-sacrifice, this would have been his life's fitting fulfilment, the true end of Bhartrihari." (372-73)

F. Bhagawat*

"This is the fruit fallen from the tree of Veda which giveth men every desire, – come, all you that are lovers of God on the earth and sensible to His delight, drink from the mouth of Shuka the Bhagawat's delightful juice into which wine of immortality has been poured, drink and drink again until the end of things." (380)

G. Bhavani : (From a Sanskrit Hymn of Shankaracharya)*

"Father nor mother, daughter nor son are mine,
I obey no master, served am I by none,
Learning or means I have not, wife nor kin;
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!

Charity I have not learned, Yoga nor trance,
Mantra nor hymn nor Tantra have I known,
Worship nor dedication's covenants:
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!

Virtue is not mine nor holy pilgrimage,
Salvation or world's joy I have never won,
Devotion I have not, Mother, no vows I pledge:
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!" (383)

2. Translations from Bengali*

A. Selected Poems of Horo thacoor*

"To please thee was our sole endeavour,

To love thee was our sole delight;
This was our sin; for this, O lover,
Dost thou desert us quite?
Is it therefore thou forsakest us for ever?

Ah why should I forbid thee so?
To Mothura let the wheels move thee,
To Mothura if thy heart go,
For the sad souls that love thee,
That thou art happy is enough to know." (457)

*B. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**

(i) Bande Mataram*

"Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free.
Glory of moonlight dreams
Over thy branches and lordly streams, –
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet,

Speaker sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
When the swords flash out in twice seventy million hands
And seventy million voices roar
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
With many strengths who art mighty and stored,
To thee I call, Mother and Lord!
Thou who savest, arise and save!
To her I cry who ever her foemen drave
Back from plain and sea
And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,
Thou the love divine, the awe
In our hearts that conquers death.
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,
Thine the beauty, thine the charm.
Every image made divine
In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,
With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,

Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,
And the Muse a hundred-toned.
Pure and perfect without peer,
Mother, lend thine ear.
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Dark of hue, O candid-fair
In thy soul, with jewelled hair
And thy glorious smile divine,
Loveliest of all earthly lands,
Showering wealth from well-stored hands!
Mother, mother mine!
Mother sweet, I bow to thee,
Mother great and free!" (465-66)

(ii) Bande Mataram – ***(Translation in Prose)****

"I bow to thee, Mother,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
cool with the winds of the south,
dark with the crops of the harvests,
the Mother!
Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss!

Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,
and the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,
who sayeth to thee, Mother, that thou art weak?
Holder of multitudinous strength,
I bow to her who saves,
to her who drives from her the armies of her foemen,
the Mother!

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
thou our heart, thou our soul,
for thou art the life in our body.
In the arm thou art might, O Mother,
in the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith,
it is thy image we raise in every temple.

For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses
and Speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,
to thee I bow!
I bow to thee, goddess of wealth,

Translator's Note. *It is difficult to translate the National Anthem of Bengal into verse in another language owing to its unique union of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force. All attempts in this direction have been failures. In order, therefore, to bring the reader unacquainted with Bengali nearer to the exact force of the original, I give the translation in prose line by line.*

pure and peerless,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
the Mother!
I bow to thee, Mother,
dark-hued, candid,
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,
the Mother!" (467-68)

(iii) Anandamath

(a) Mussulman Rulers

"In every country the relation with the ruler is that of protector and protected, but what protection do our Mussulman rulers give us? Our religion is destroyed, our caste defiled, our honour polluted, our family honour shamed and now our very lives are going the same way. Unless we drive out these vice-besodden longbeards, the Hinduism of the Hindu is doomed." (499-500)

(b) Difference between an Englighman and a Mussulman

" 'Then,' asked Mohendra, 'why is there such a difference between an Englishman and a Mussulman?'

'Take this first;' said Bhavananda, 'an Englishman will not run away even from the certainty of death. A Mussulman runs as soon as he perspires and roams in search of a glass of sherbet. Next take this, that the Englishman has tenacity; if he takes up a thing, he carries it through. 'Don't care' is a

Mussulman's motto. He is giving his life for a hire, and yet the soldiers don't get their pay. Then the last thing is courage. A cannon ball can fall only in one place, not in ten; so there is no necessity for two hundred men to run from one cannon ball. But one cannon ball will send a Mussulman with his whole clan running, while a whole clan of cannon balls will not put even a solitary Englishman to flight.' " (500-501)

C. Dwijendralal Roy : Hymn to India

"India, my India, where first human eyes awoke to heavenly light,
All Asia's holy place of pilgrimage, great Motherland of might!
World-mother, first giver to humankind of philosophy and sacred lore,
Knowledge thou gav'st to man, God-love, works, art, religion's opened door.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

To thy race, O India, God himself once sang the Song of Songs divine,
Upon thy dust Gouranga danced and drank God-love's mysterious wine,
Here the Sannyasin Son of Kings lit up compassion's deathless sun,
The youthful Yogin, Shankar, taught thy gospel: "I and He are one."

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

Art thou not she, that India, where the Aryan Rishis chanted high
The Veda's deep and dateless hymns and are we not their progeny?
Armed with that great tradition we shall walk the earth with heads unbowed:
O Mother, those who bear that glorious past may well be brave and proud.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

O even with all that grandeur dwarfed or turned to bitter loss and maim,
How shall we mourn who are thy children and can vaunt thy mighty name?
Before us still there floats the ideal of those splendid days of gold:
A new world in our vision wakes, Love's India we shall rise to mould.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace
today?
Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's
inward ray!" (553-54)

D. Aruna : Sri Aurobindo

"The dust of your feet turned the prison into a temple,
Your lofty ideal has lifted the nation's life to a sublime aim,
Your accomplishment has brought to our door
the supreme treasure of Supermanhood,
Your feet faltered not even when the heart of the world trembled.
We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
Bringer of the New Light!
May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house
of the world!

You have made humanity hear the message, the great Truth
which none has ever uttered:
That man's birth-right is not only to freedom from slavery,
but to eternal divinity.
You have proclaimed: The whole earth shall march forward
with India in the van;
India will set the example and the earth will follow her ideal.

We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
Bringer of the New Light!
May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house
of the world!" (559-60)

IV. Selections from Bande Mataram I, CWSA Vol. 6

1. India and the British Parliament*

"The English are not, as they are fond of representing themselves, a people panting to do justice to all whom they have to govern. They are not an incarnation of justice, neither are they an embodiment of morality; but of all nations they are the most sentimental: hence it is that they like to think themselves, and to be thought by others, a just people and a moral people. It is true that in the dull comedy which we call English politics, Truth and Justice – written in large letters – cover the whole of the poster, but in the actual enactment of the play these characters have very little indeed to do. It was certainly not by appealing to the English sense of justice that the Irish people have come within reach of obtaining some measure of redress for their grievances. Mr. Parnell was enabled to force Mr. Gladstone's hand solely because he had built up a strong party with a purely Irish policy: but we unfortunately have neither a Parnell nor a party with a purely Indian policy. We have Mr. Naoroji and Sir W. Wedderburn, both staunch friends of India; we have Mr. Swift McNeill, true son of a high souled and chivalrous race; we have Mr. Mclaren, Mr. Paul and many others pledged to champion the Congress movement: but well nigh all these are Liberal members who must give their support to Mr. Gladstone, whether he is inclined to do justice to India or no. It is evident that if we wish to obtain any real justice from the British Parliament we must secure the pledges not of individual Liberals but of the responsible heads of the

party, and that is just what we are least likely to obtain. For we must remember that within the last 20 years the immense personal influence of Mr. Gladstone has been leavening and indeed remoulding English political life; and the tendency of that influence has been to convert politics into a huge market where statesmen chaffer for votes. In this political bazaar we have no current coin to buy justice from the great salesman, and if he is inclined to give the commodity gratis, he will jeopardise many of the voters he has already in his hand. What lever have we then by which we can alter the entire fuse of English opinion on Indian matters? It is clear that we have none.

Moreover the lessons of experience do not differ from the lessons of common sense. After years of constant effort and agitation a bill was brought forward in Parliament professing to remodel the Legislative Councils. This bill was nothing short of an insult to the people of India. We had asked for wheaten bread, and we got in its place a loaf made of plaster-of-Paris and when Mr. Schwann proposed that the genuine article should be supplied, Mr. Gladstone assured him on his honour as a politician that the Executive authority would do its best to make plaster-of- Paris taste exactly like wheat. With this assurance Mr. Schwann and the Indian people were quite satisfied. Happy Indian people! And yet now that the loaf has actually reached their hands, they seem a little inclined to quarrel with the gift: they have even complained that the proportion of plaster in its composition is extravagantly large. Nevertheless we still go on appealing to the English sense of justice.

The simple truth of the matter is that we shall not

get from the British Parliament anything better than nominal redress, or at the most a petty and tinkering legislation. This is no doubt a very disagreeable truth to the sanguine among us who believe that India can be renovated in a day, but we shall gain nothing by shutting our eyes to it. Rather we shall lose: for the more we linger in the wrong path, the further we shall wander from our real and legitimate goal. **If we are indeed to renovate our country, we must no longer hold out supplicating hands to the English Parliament,** like an infant crying to its nurse for a toy, **but must recognise the hard truth that every nation must beat out its own path to salvation with pain and difficulty, and not rely on the tutelage of another.**" (8-10)

2. New Lamps for Old*

A. Our Actual Enemy and the Futility of Our Rage Against the Anglo-Indians

"**Our actual enemy is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weaknesses, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism.** I really cannot see why we should rage so furiously against the Anglo-Indians and call them by all manner of opprobrious epithets. I grant that they are rude and arrogant, that they govern badly, that they are devoid of any great or generous emotion, that their conduct is that of a small coterie of masters surrounded by a nation of Helots. But to say all this is simply to say that they are very commonplace men put into a quite unique position. Certainly it would be very grand and noble, if they were to smother all thought of their own peculiar interests, and

aim henceforth, not at their own promotion, not at their own enrichment, but at the sole good of the Indian people. But such conduct is what we have no right to expect save from men of the most exalted and chivalrous character; and the sort of people England sends out to us are not as a rule exalted and chivalrous, but are usually the very reverse of that. They are really very ordinary men, – and not only ordinary men, but ordinary Englishmen – types of the middle class or Philistines, in the graphic English phrase, with the narrow hearts and commercial habit of mind peculiar to that sort of people. It is something very like folly to quarrel with them for not transgressing the law of their own nature. If we were not so dazzled by the artificial glare of English prestige, we should at once acknowledge that these men are really not worth being angry with: and if it is idle to be angry with them, it is still more unprofitable to rate their opinion of us at more than a straw's value. **Our appeal, the appeal of every high-souled and self-respecting nation, ought not to be to the opinion of the Anglo-Indians, no, nor yet to the British sense of justice, but to our own reviving sense of manhood, to our own sincere fellow-feeling – so far as it can be called sincere – with the silent and suffering people of India.** I am sure that eventually the nobler part of us will prevail, – that when we no longer obey the dictates of a veiled self-interest, but return to the profession of a large and genuine patriotism, when we cease to hanker after the soiled crumbs which England may cast to us from her table, then it will be to that sense of manhood, to that sincere fellow-feeling that we shall finally and forcibly appeal." (18-19)

B. The Congress Movement and the Nature of the Class from Which It Draws Its Origin

"I say, of the Congress, then, this, – that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders; – in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed." (21)

This class consists of "…those of us who have got some little idea of the machinery of English politics and are eager to import it into India along with cheap Liverpool cloths, shoddy Brummagem wares, and other useful and necessary things which have killed the fine and genuine textures. …it is really from this class that the Congress movement draws its origin, its support and its most enthusiastic votaries. And if I were asked to describe their class by a single name, I should not hesitate to call it our new middle class. For here too English goods have driven out native goods: our society has lost its old landmarks and is being demarcated on the English model. But **of all the brand new articles we have imported, inconceivably the most important is that large class of people – journalists, barristers, doctors, officials, graduates and traders – who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity under the aegis of the British rule: and this class I call the middle class**: for, when we are so proud of our imported English goods, it would be absurd, when we want labels for them, not to import their English names as well. Besides this name which I have chosen

is really a more accurate description than phrases like "thinking men" or "the educated class" which are merely expressions of our own boundless vanity and self-conceit. However largely we may choose to indulge in vague rhetoric about the all-pervading influence of the Congress, no one can honestly doubt that here is the constituency from which it is really empowered. There is indeed a small contingent of aristocrats and a smaller contingent of the more well-to-do ryots: but these are only two flying-wheels in the great middleclass machine. The fetish-worshipper may declare as loudly as he pleases, that it represents all sorts and conditions of people, just as the Anglo-Indians used to insist that it represented no one but the Bengali Babu. Facts have been too strong for the Anglo-Indian and they will be too strong in the end for the fetish-worshipper." (24-25)

C. The English Mind

"However supreme in the domain of practical life, however gifted with commercial vigour and expansive energy, the English mind with its short range of vision, its too little of delicacy and exactness, its inability to go beyond what it actually sees, is wholly unfit for any nice appraisal of cause and effect. It is without vision, logic, the spirit of curiosity, and hence it has not any habit of entertaining clear and high ideals, any audacity of experiment, any power of finding just methods nicely adopted to produce the exact effect intended: – it is without speculative temerity and the scientific spirit, and hence it cannot project great political theories nor argue justly from effect to cause. All these incapacities have forced the English mind into a certain mould of thought and expression. Limited to the visible

and material, they have put their whole force into mechanical invention; void of curiosity, they have hazarded just so much experiment and no more, as was necessary to suit existing institutions to their immediate wants; inexact, they have never cared in these alterations to get at more than an approximation to the exact effect intended; illogical and without subtlety, they have trusted implicitly to the political machines, for whose invention they have a peculiar genius, and never cared to utilize mightier forces and a subtler method. Nor is this all: in their defect of speculative imagination, they are unable to get beyond what they themselves have experienced, what they themselves have effected. Hence, being unscientific and apt to impute every power to machinery, they compare certain sets of machines, and postulating certain effects from them, argue that as this of their own invention has been attended by results of the highest value, it is therefore of an unique excellence and conserves in any and every climate its efficiency and durability. And they do not simply flaunt this opinion in the face of reason, but, by their stupendous material success and vast expansion, they have managed to convince a world apt to be impressed by externals, that it is correct, and even obviously correct. Yet it is quite clear that this opinion, carefully analysed, reduces itself to a logical absurdity. By its rigid emphasizing of a single element it slurs over others of equal or superior importance: it takes no account of a high or low quality in the raw material, of variant circumstances, of incompatibilities arising from national temperament, and other forces which no philosophical observer will omit from his calculations. In fact it reduces itself to the statement, that, given good

machinery, then no matter what quality of material is passed through it, the eventual fabric will be infallibly of the most superior sort." (34-35)

D. The French People and the French Mind

"Gifted with a lighter, subtler and clearer mind than their insular neighbours, the French people have moved irresistibly towards a social and not a political development. It is true that French orators and statesmen, incapacitated by their national character from originating fit political ideals, have adopted a set of institutions curiously blended from English and American manufactures; but the best blood, the highest thought, the real grandeur of the nation does not reside in the Senate or in the Chamber of Deputies; it resides in the artistic and municipal forces of Parisian life, in the firm settled executive, in the great vehement heart of the French populace – and that has ever beaten most highly in unison with the grand ideas of Equality and Fraternity, since they were first enounced on the banner of the great and terrible Republic. Hence though by the indiscreet choice of a machine, they have been compelled to copy the working of English machinery and concede an undue importance to politics, yet the ideals which have genuinely influenced the spirit which has most deeply permeated their national life are widely different from that alien spirit, from those borrowed ideals. I have said that the French mind is clearer, subtler, lighter than the English. In that clarity they have discerned that without high qualities in the raw material excellence of machinery will not suffice to create a sound and durable national character, – that it may indeed develop a strong, energetic and capable temper, but that the fabric

will not combine fineness with strength, will not resist permanently the wear and tear of time and the rending force of social problems: – through that subtlety they divined that not by the mechanic working of institutions, but by the delicate and almost unseen moulding of a fine, lucid and invigorating atmosphere, could a robust and highly-wrought social temper be developed: – and through that lightness they chose not the fierce, sharp air of English individualism, but the bright influence of art and letters, of happiness, a wide and liberal culture, and the firm consequent cohesion of their racial and social elements." (36-37)

E. The Ancient Athenian and the Modern Frenchman

"The ancient Athenian, preeminent for lightness of temper and lucidity of thought, was content with the simplest and most nakedly logical machinery, and principally sought to base political life on equality, a wide diffusion of culture, and a large and just social principle. Moreover, as the subtlest and hence the most efficient way of conserving the high calibre of his national character, he chose the infusion of light, gaiety and happiness into the common life of the people. Clear in thought and felicitous in action, he pursued an ideal strictly consonant with his natural temper and rigidly exclusive of the anomalous: and so highly did he attain, that the quick, shifting, eager Athenian life, with its movement and colour, its happy buoyancy, its rapid genius, or, as the Attic poet beautifully phrases it, walking delicately through a fine and lucid air, has become the admiration and envy of posterior ages. The modern Frenchman closely allied by his clear habit of mind to the old Athenian, himself lucid in thought,

light in temper and not without a supreme felicity of method in practical things, evinces much the same sentiments, pursues much the same ideals. He too has a happily-adjusted executive machinery, elaborated indeed to fit the needs of a modern community, but pervaded by a thoroughly clear and logical spirit. He also has a passionate craving for equality and a large and just social principle, and prefers to conserve the high calibre of his national character by the infusion of light, gaiety and happiness into the common life of the people. And he too has so far compassed his ideal that a consensus of competent observers have pronounced France certainly the happiest, and, taken in the mass, the most civilized of modern countries." (37-38)

F. The English and the Americans

"..to the Englishman or American, intellect, lucidity, happiness are not of primary importance: they strike him in the light of luxuries rather than necessities. It is the useful citizen, the adroit man of business, the laborious worker, whom he commends with the warmest emphasis and copies with the most respectful emulation. Such a cast of mind being entirely incompatible with social success, he directs his whole active powers into the grosser sphere of commerce and politics, where practical energy, unpurified by thought, may struggle forward to some vulgar and limited goal. To put it in a concrete form Paris may be said to revolve around the Theatre, the Municipal Council and the French Academy, London looks rather to the House of Commons and New York to the Stock Exchange." (38)

G. India is Closer to the French and the Athenian than to the Anglo-Saxon

"**We in India**, or at any rate those races among us which are in the van of every forward movement, **are far more nearly allied to the French and Athenian than to the Anglo-Saxon**, but owing to the accident of British domination, our intellects have been carefully nurtured on a purely English diet. Hence we do not care to purchase an outfit of political ideas properly adjusted to our natural temper and urgent requirements, but must eke out our scanty wardrobe with the cast-off rags and threadbare leavings of our English Masters and this incongruous apparel we display with a pompous self-approval which no unfriendly murmurs, no unkind allusions are allowed to trouble. Absurd as all this is, its visible outcome is clearly a grave misfortune. Prompted by our English instruction we have deputed to a mere machine so arduous a business as the remoulding of our entire destinies, needing as it does patient and delicate manual adjustment and a constant supervising vigilance – and this to a machine not efficient and carefully pieced together but clumsy and made on a rude and cheap model. So long as this temper prevails, we shall never realise how utterly it is beyond the power of even an excellent machine to renovate an effete and impoverished national character and how palpably requisite to commence from within and not depend on any exterior agency. Such a retrospect as I propose will therefore be of peculiar value, if it at all induces us to acknowledge that it is a vital error, simply because we have invented a clumsy machine, to rest on our oars and imagine that expenditure of energy in other directions is at present superfluous." (38-39)

H. The Ancient Romans – The Lesson We Can Learn from Them

"The Romans were a nation quite unique in the composition and general style of their character; along with a predilection for practical energy, a purely material habit of mind, and an indifference to orderly and logical methods which suggest a strong affinity to the Anglo-Saxon temperament, they possessed a robust and clear perception, and a strong practical contempt for methods pronounced by hard experience to be ineffectual, which are entirely un-English and allied rather to the clarity and impatience of the Gaul. Moreover their whole character was moulded in a grand style, such as has not been witnessed by any prior or succeeding age – so much so that the striking description by which the Greek ambassador expressed the temper of the Roman Senate, might with equal justice be transferred to the entire people. They were a nation of Kings: that is to say, they possessed the gift of handling the high things of life in a grand and imposing style, and with a success, an astonishing sureness of touch, only possible to a natural tact in government and a just, I may say a royal instinct for affairs. Yet this grand, imperial nation, even while it was most felicitous abroad in the manner and spirit in which it dealt with foreign peoples, was at home convulsed to a surprising extent by the worst forms of internal disorder: – and all for the want of that clear, sane ideal which has so highly promoted the domestic happiness of France and Athens. At first, indeed, the **Romans inexpert in political methods, were inclined to repose an implicit trust in machinery**, just as the English have been inclined from the primary stages of their development, and just as we are led to do by the contagious influence of the

Anglomaniac disease. **They hoped by the sole and mechanic action of certain highly lauded institutions to remove the disorders with which the Roman body politic was ailing.** And though at Rome no less than among ourselves, the social condition of the poor filled up the reform posters and a consequent amelioration was loudly trumpeted by the popular leaders, yet the genuine force of the movement was disposed, as is the genuine force of the present Congress movement, to the minimising of purely political inequality. But when the coveted institutions were in full swing, a sense gradually dawned on the people that the middle class had the sole enjoyment of any profit accruing from the change, as indeed it is always to the middle class alone that any profit accrues from the elimination of merely political inequality; but the great Roman populace untouched by the change for which they had sacrificed their ease and expended their best and highest energies, felt themselves pushed from misery to misery and broke out again in a wild storm of rebellion. But to maintain a stark persistence in unreason, to repose an unmoved confidence in the bounded potency of a mechanic formula, proved ineffectual by the cogent logic of hard experience, they had no thought, or if they had the thought, they being a genuinely practical race, and not like the English, straining after practicality, had not the disposition. Hence that mighty struggle was fought out with perplexed watchwords, amid wild alarms and rumours of battle and in a confused medley of blood, terror and unspeakable desolation. In that horror of great darkness, the Roman world crashed on from ruin to ruin, until the strong hand of Caesar stayed its descent to poise it on the stable foundation of a sane and vigilant policy rigorously enforced by the fixed will of a single despotic

ruler. But **the grand secret of his success and the success of those puissant autocrats who inherited his genius and his ideals, was the clear perception attained to by them that only by social equality and the healing action of a firm despotism, could the disorders of Rome be permanently eradicated.** Maligned as they have been by those who suffered from their astuteness and calm strength of will, the final verdict of posterity will laud in them that terrible intensity of purpose and even that iron indifference to personal suffering, which they evinced in forcing the Caesarian policy to its bitter but salutary end. The main lesson for us however is the pregnant conclusion that the Romans, to whom we cannot deny the supreme rank in the sphere of practical success, by attempting a cure through external and mechanic appliances entailed on themselves untold misery, untold disorder, and only by a thorough organic treatment restored the sanity, peace, settled government and calm felicity of an entire world." (40-42)

3. Bhawani Mandir*

"India, the ancient mother, is indeed striving to be reborn, striving with agony and tears, but she strives in vain. What ails her, she, who is after all so vast and might be so strong? There is surely some enormous defect, something vital is wanting in us; nor is it difficult to lay our finger on the spot. We have all things else, but we are empty of strength, void of energy. We have abandoned Shakti and are therefore abandoned by Shakti. The Mother is not in our hearts, in our brains, in our arms." (80)

"**The deeper we look, the more we shall be convinced**

that the one thing wanting, which we must strive to acquire before all others, is strength – strength physical, strength mental, strength moral, but above all strength spiritual which is the one inexhaustible and imperishable source of all the others. If we have strength, everything else will be added to us easily and naturally. In the absence of strength we are like men in a dream who have hands but cannot seize or strike, who have feet but cannot run." (82)

"**India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is *she* who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. In the sphere of morality, likewise, it is her mission to purge barbarism (mlecchahood) out of humanity and to *aryanise* the world. In order to do this, she must first re-aryanise herself.**" (84)

4. Bande Mataram, August 30, 1906

"India's hope lies not in English Liberalism or Labour, but in her own strong heart and giant limbs. Titaness, who by thy mere attempt to rise can burst these Lilliputian bonds, why shouldst thou clamour feebly for help to these pigmies over the sea?" (125)

5. Lala Lajpat Rai

"…Lala Lajpat Rai is the last man to countenance

opposition to Mr. Tilak. In itself the candidature of Lala Lajpat Rai would not be unwelcome to the new party. He is one of those men who act, more than they talk, a man with a splendid record of solid patriotic work behind him and to him above all other belongs the credit of building up the Arya Samaj into the most powerful and practically effective organisation in the country. Were both Mr. Tilak and Mr. Naoroji to decline the Presidentship, Lala Lajpat Rai's would be the only other possible candidature." (163)

6. Last Friday's Folly

"…Had last Friday's dinner been associated with some specific public function, or been held in honour of any particular public men, no one would have, we believe, taken any serious notice of it. The folly of it lay in the idea that interdining was a necessary condition of nation building in India; and it deserves condemnation for propounding the foolish and suicidal ideal that social and religious differences must first of all be destroyed before India can ever hope to realise her own true civic life.

This is the Anglo-Indian and the British idea. It is the main plea upon which the present despotism supports and justifies itself. It is the plea upon which even our own old-school patriots proclaim the fatal doctrine that India is not, and will never for a very long period be, fitted for self-government, and, therefore, the strong hand of the foreigner must be over her, to prevent her various castes and creeds flying at each others' throats, and thus falling a prey to some other and infinitely worse foreign yoke, if the present one is removed; and that, therefore, the highest political wisdom

demands that we should, as long as there are diversities of creeds and castes among us, cultivate with care the present servitude, trying to make it easy to bear for the nation, and profitable for the individual, by adopting the policy of "association with and opposition to the Government". This plea must be knocked on the head, therefore, before we can expect to make out a reasonable case for that propaganda of national freedom and autonomy which has been taken up by the new party in the country.

Those who say that caste and religious differences must first of all be destroyed before India can ever rise to the status of a nation, have very hazy and confused notions regarding the character and constitution of that nation. Our history has been different in many respects from the history of other peoples. The composition of the Indian people has been unique in all the world. Nations grew in the past by the accretion and assimilation of different tribes. This is an earlier process. But **India has not been a mere meeting place of tribes, but a meeting place of grown up nations with developed social and religious lines of their own, and with original castes and types of cultures peculiar to them.** The character and composition of the coming Indian nation, therefore, will differ very materially from those of the European nations, the process of unification among whom took place at a much earlier and comparatively more nebular stage of their growth. This is a fact which our old school politicians and social reformers do not seem as yet to have had any time to think of, and we are not hopeful that even now, after it is pointed out to them, in the plainest language possible, they will have the patience to do so and recognise this essential peculiarity of our infant national life. The nation-

idea in India will realise itself, in all its departments, along what may be called federal lines, – it will be a union of different nationalities, each preserving its own specific elements both of organisation and ideal, each communicating to the others what they lack in either thought or character, and all moving together towards one universal end, both in civic and social life, progressively realising that end along its own historic and traditional lines, and thus indefinitely drawing near to each other, without, for an equally indefinite period, actually losing themselves in any one particular form of that life, whether old or new. The Mahomedan, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Christian in India will not have to cease to be Mahomedan, Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian, in any sense of the term, for uniting into one great and puissant Indian nation. Devotion to one's own ideals and institutions, with toleration and respect for the ideals and institutions of other sections of the community, and an ardent love and affection for the common civic life and ideal of all – these are what must be cultivated by us now, for the building up of the real Indian nation. To try to build it up in any other way will be impossible, whether that way be the way of the Brahmo, the Christian, or the propagandist Mahomedan. To make any attempt along any of these lines, will not make for but work against national unity; and the reckless men who organised this so-called national dinner will, if they persist in their folly, instead of bringing the different races and religions together, only help to arouse the opposition of orthodoxy everywhere, and drive the great forces that range always with orthodoxy to an attitude of open hostility to the great national movement, and bring about a reaction that will seek to accentuate those very differences and tighten those very bonds of caste and

custom which in their unphilosophic and unscientific zeal they are trying by these wrong and obtrusive methods to obliterate and loosen. It is in this view that we condemn the folly that was perpetrated on Friday last under the name of a National Dinner." (167-69)

7. Is Mendicancy Successful?*

The *Bengalee* in his columns argued that "The policy of petitioning was recommended by Raja Rammohan Roy, has been pursued consistently since then and has been eminently successful – at least whatever political gains have been ours in the last century, have been won by this policy." (173)

To this Sri Aurobindo replied thus: "We are not concerned to deny the antiquity of the petitioning policy, nor its illustrious origin. Raja Rammohan Roy was a great man in the first rank of active genius and set flowing a stream of tendencies which have transformed our national life. But what was the only possible policy for him in his times and without a century of experience behind him, is neither the only policy nor the best policy for us at the present juncture. We join issue with our contemporary on his contention that whatever we have gained politically has been due to petitioning. It appears to us to show a shallow appreciation of political forces and an entire inability to understand the fundamental facts which underlie outward appearances. When the sepoys had conquered India for the English, choice lay before the British, either to hold the country by force and repression, or to keep it as long as possible by purchasing the co-operation of a small class of the people who would be educated so entirely on Western lines as to lose their separate individuality

and their sympathy with the mass of the nation. An essential part of this policy which became dominant owing to the strong personalities of Macaulay, Bentinck and others, was to yield certain minor rights to the small educated class, and concede the larger rights as slowly as possible and only in answer to growing pressure. This policy was not undertaken as the result of our petitions or our wishes, but deliberately and on strong grounds. India was a huge country with a huge people strange and unknown to their rulers. To hold it for ever was then considered by most statesmen a chimerical idea; even to govern it and keep it tranquil for a time was not feasible without the sympathy and co-operation of the people themselves. It was therefore the potential strength of the people and not the wishes of a few educated men, which was the true determining cause of the scanty political gains we so much delight in. Since then the spirit of the British people and their statesmen has entirely changed, – so changed that even a Radical statesman like Mr. Morley brushes aside the expressed "will of the community" with a few abrupt and cavalier phrases. Why is this? Precisely because we have been foolish enough to follow a purely mendicant policy and to betray our own weakness. If we had not instituted the National Congress we might have continued in the old way for some time longer, getting small and mutilated privileges whenever a strong Liberal Viceroy happened to come over. But the singularly ineffective policy and inert nature of the Congress revealed to British statesmen – or so they thought, – the imbecility and impotence of our nation. A period of repression, ever increasing in its insolence and cynical contempt for our feelings, has been the result. And now that a Liberal

Government of unprecedented strength comes into power, we find that the gains we can expect will be of the most unsubstantial and illusory kind and that we are not to get any guarantee against their being withdrawn by another reactionary Viceroy after a few years. It is perfectly clear therefore that the policy of mendicancy will no longer serve. After all, cries the *Bengalee*, we have only failed in the case of the Partition. We have failed in everything of importance for these many years, measure after measure has been driven over our prostrate heads and the longed-for Liberal Government flouts us with a few grudging concessions in mere symptomatic cases of oppression. The long black list of reactionary measures remains and will remain unrepealed. We do not care to deny that in small matters petitioning may bring us a trivial concession here or a slight abatement of oppression there; even there we shall fail in nine cases and win in one. But nothing important, nothing lasting, nothing affecting the vital questions which most closely concern us, can be hoped for from mere mendicancy. To the contention of antiquity and success, therefore, our answer is that this antique policy has not succeeded in the long run, but utterly failed, and that the time has come for a stronger and more effective policy to take its place." (173-75)

8. The Simple Psychology of the Briton

"The interest which the British press has recently been showing in India was not brought about by this insignificant clique, it is the Swadeshi, the boycott, the violent unrest in Bengal which have compelled the lordly Briton [.....] his [.....]. There is only one process which can rouse him from his comfortable prosperous sleep

and that is to prod him continually in the ribs, there is only one way to make him feed his cow as well as milk her and that is for the cow to kick over the pail and refuse to be milked. Flattery may please the Briton and it always delights him to play the lordly and generous patron, but he will take good care never to purchase this pleasure by the sacrifice of any substantial interest. For he is above all things a practical man of business. Tears and prayers do not move him, for he finds them [.....] and contemptible. Abuse has not any lasting effect on him, for it wounds his self-respect without hurting his interests or awaking his fears. But the strong determined man who can make himself permanently unpleasant and ever dangerous, awakes his respect and seems to him a force to be reckoned with; in any tussle of interests he will try to cajole and outwit him, he will try to intimidate, bully and coerce him but, failing, he will finally concede what is wanted, shake hands and make friends. This is the simple psychology of the Briton which the Congress agitation has throughout ignored. Our agitation has been a wonderful feminine mixture of flattery, abuse, tears and entreaties; it is only from that we are trying the effects of strength and determination. For thirty years we have used the weapons of women; now, very late in the day, we are trying to use the weapons of men. (193-94)

9. Naoroji and Tilak – the Man of the Past and the Man of the Future

"Two men of the moment stand conspicuously before the eyes of the public in connection with the present session of the National Congress. The advent of these two men close upon each other is full of meaning for us at the present juncture. Both of them are sincere patriots, both have done

what work lay in them for their people and for the land that bore them; both are men of indomitable perseverance and high ability; but there the resemblance ends. One of them worn and aged, bowed down with the burden of half a century's toils and labours, comes to us as the man of the past, reminding us of a generation that is passing away, ideals that have lost their charm, methods that have been found to be futile, an energy and hope once buoyant and full of life but which now live on only in a wearied and decrepit old age phantomlike, still babbling exploded generalities and dead formulas. The other comes with his face to the morning, a giant of strength and courage bearing on his unbowed shoulders the mighty burden of our future. We do not know yet what will be the nature of Mr. Dadabhai's Presidential speech; it may contain Pisgah sights of the future, to a great extent it is likely to be the swan song of the dying past. From Mr. Tilak we expect no great speech and no sensational pronouncement, his very presence is more powerful than the greatest declamations; for it is not as an orator he stands prominent in spite of his clear incisive utterances, nor as a writer in spite of the immense influence which as the editor of the *Kesari* he exercises on the political ideal of Maharashtra, but as the man who knows what has to be done and does it, knows what has to be organized and organizes it, knows what has to be resisted and resists it. He is preeminently the man who acts, and action is to be the note of our future political energies.

Mr. Dadabhai on the other hand is the man who remonstrates; all his life has been spent in one energetic and unceasing remonstrance through books, through public speeches, through letters and writings in public print.

Remonstrance, not action, was the note of our political energies in the past. Action was, according to the old gospel, the prerogative of the Government whether in India or in Great Britain and our only duty was to urge them to act justly and not unjustly, in our interests and not in their own. We expected them to be angels and remonstrated with them when they proved to be merely men; this spur of that remonstrance, it was hoped, would prick them or at least the home-bred of Englishmen to justify the angelic hues in which they had painted themselves, for our benefit. To the young generation these hopes nowadays seem so incredibly futile that they are tempted to wonder how men of ability and education, many of whom had studied something at least of history, could ever have cherished them. But when Mr. Naoroji began his career nothing more real and solid was possible. The falling in pieces of the Maratha Confederacy and the overthrow of the Sikh power had left the Punjab and the Deccan stupefied and apathetic; the rest of India was politically exhausted and inert. In such circumstances it was inevitable that the task of reviving the life of the nation should fall into the hands of a small class of men educated in English schools and in English ways of thinking. It was the one great service these men did to our country, that they accustomed us to hope once more and live politically. It was our misfortune rather than their fault that the hopes they proclaimed were delusive and the life they imparted meagre and superficial. Destitute of political experience they could not avoid basing their political creed on theories and ideals rather than upon facts; without any education but what the rulers chose to impart they had no choice but to borrow their theories and ideas

from their English teachers; confined to English books and influence, cut off from the wide wholesome atmosphere of the world's culture they were obliged to accept Englishmen at their own valuation. They were for the most part men of talent and ability; and it requires more than talent and ability; it needs the eye of genius to dispense with the necessity of experience and see truth with a single intuitive glance.

The ideas on which our agitation in the nineteenth century proceeded were therefore fantastic and unfounded; its methods were unsuited to the realities of political life in this country, its spirit and aim were so purely Westernized as to preclude the possibility of seizing on the whole people and creating a new national life. The energy expended on it was therefore small, limited both in intensity and area; and the results it brought about were not even commensurate with the little energy expended. But two things were gained – the renewal of political activity in the country and of political experience. A renewed life might have been brought about in other ways and with greater power and reality; but for experience that long wandering in the desert of unrealities and futilities was probably indispensable. However that may be, Mr. Naoroji was among the small knot of able men who first set in motion the new political activities of the country. And one thing distinguished him above most of his fellows that while they wasted themselves on things petty and unreal, he seized on one great fact and enforced it in season and out of season on all who could be got to listen, – the terrible poverty of India and its rapid increase under British rule. It was necessary that a persistent voice should din

this into the ears of the people; for what with the incessant pratings about British peace, British justice and the blessings of British rule on the one side and the clamour for Legislative Councils, Simultaneous Examinations, High Education and similar shams on the other, this one central all-important reality was in danger of being smothered out of sight. It was necessary for the nation but to realise its increasing poverty under British rule; only then could it take the next step and take to heart the fact that British rule and increasing poverty stood in the relation of cause and effect; last of all comes the inevitable conclusion that the effect could only be cured by the removal of the cause, in other words by the substitution of autonomy in place of a British or British-controlled Government. Mr. Naoroji's was the persistent voice that compelled the nation to realise the first two of these fundamental truths; Mr. Romesh Dutt and others powerfully assisted the result, but it was Mr. Naoroji who first forced the question of Indian poverty into prominence, and for this India owes him a debt of gratitude deeper than that due to any other of our older politicians dead or living. It is true that he has not been able to proclaim the third of the three connected truths consistently and frankly; especially have those of his utterances which were meant for purely Indian consumption, been marred by the desire to qualify, moderate and even conceal a plain fact, which though it was necessary, it might yet be dangerous to proclaim. Nevertheless it is something that a man of his age and traditions should at least have frankly declared that freedom from foreign rule must needs be the only governing ideal of Indian politics." (201-04)

10. The Reality of British Protection

"There are two superstitions which have driven such deep root into the mind of our people that even where the new spirit is strongest, they still hold their own. One is the habit of appealing to British courts of justice; the other is the reliance upon the British executive for our protection. The frequent recurrence of incidents such as the Mymensingh and Comilla disturbances will have its use if it drives into our minds the truth that in the struggle we have begun we cannot and ought not to expect protection from our natural adversaries. It is perfectly true that one of the main preoccupations of the executive mind has been the maintenance of order and quiet in the country, because a certain kind of tranquillity was essential to the preservation of an alien bureaucratic control. This was the secret of the barbarous system of punishments which make the Indian Penal Code a triumph of civilised savagery; of the licence and the blind support allowed by the Magistracy to a phenomenally corrupt and oppressive Police; of the doctrine of no conviction no promotion, which is the gospel of the Anglo-Indian executive, holding it better that a hundred innocent should suffer than one crime be recorded as unpunished. This was the reason of the severity with which turbulent offences have always been repressed, of the iniquitous and oppressive system of punitive Police and of the undeclared but well-understood Police rule that any villager of strong physique, skill with weapons and active habits should be entered in the list of bad characters. By a rigid application of these principles the bureaucracy have succeeded in creating the kind of tranquillity they require.

The Romans created a desert and called the result peace; the British in India have destroyed the spirit and manhood of the people and call the result law and order. It is true, on the other hand, that there have been exceptions to the promptness and severity with which turbulence of any kind is usually dealt with; and the most notable is the supineness and dilatoriness, habitually shown by the authorities, in dealing with outbreaks of Mahomedan fanaticism and the gingerly fashion in which repression in such cases is enforced. Fear is undoubtedly at the root of this weakness. The bureaucracy are never tired of impressing the irresistible might of British supremacy on the subject populations; but in their own hearts they are aware that that supremacy is insecure and without root in the soil; the general upheaval of any deep-seated and elemental passion in the hearts of the people might easily shatter that supremacy as so many others have been shattered before it. The one passion which in past times has been proved capable of so upheaving the national consciousness in India is religious feeling; and outraged religious feeling is therefore the one thing which the bureaucracy dreads and the slightest sign of which turns their courage into nervousness or panic and their strength into paralysed weakness. The alarm which the Swadeshi movement created was due to this abiding terror; for in the Swadeshi movement for the first time patriotism became a national religion, the name of the motherland was invested with divine sacredness and her service espoused with religious fervour and enthusiasm. In its alarm Anglo-India turned for help to that turbulent Mahomedan fanaticism which they had so dreaded; hoping to drive out poison by poison, they menaced the insurgent religion of patriotism

with the arming of Mahomedan prejudices against what its enemies declared to be an essentially Hindu movement. The first fruits of this policy we have seen at Mymensingh, Serajgunge and Comilla. It was a desperate and dangerous and might easily prove a fatal expedient; but with panic-stricken men the fear of the lesser danger is easily swallowed in the terror of the greater." (219-20)

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