

# THE REAL AWAKENER



## THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO – 6

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*The great rule of life is to have no schemes but one unalterable purpose. If the will is fixed on the purpose it sets itself to accomplish, then circumstances will suggest the right course; but the schemer finds himself always tripped up by the unexpected.*

— *Sri Aurobindo*  
(CWSA 7: 893)

# I. Selections from *Bande Mataram I*, CWSA Vol. 6

## 1. Reflections of Srinath Paul, Rai Bahadoor, on the Present Discontents\*

“Ah no! what has not Britain done for us?  
Were we not savage, naked, barbarous?  
Has she not snatched and raised us from the mire?  
Taught us to dress, eat, talk, write, sneeze, perspire,  
Like Europeans, giving civilisation  
To this poor ignorant degraded nation?  
Was not our India full of cuts and knocks?  
’Twas Britain saved us from those hideous shocks.  
No matter if our poor of hunger die,  
Us she gave peace and ease and property.  
Were’t not for Clive, Dalhausie, Curzon, all,  
You never would have heard of Srinath Paul.  
But is this then good cause we should not meet,  
Kiss their benevolent and booted feet,  
Remonstrate mildly, praise and pray and cry,  
“Have sympathy, great Minto, or we die”?  
If he’ll not hear, let then our humble oration  
Travel with Gokhale to the British nation.

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

To be industrious, prayerful, tearful, meek  
Is the sole end for which we meet this week.” (240)

## **2. The Ridiculous Effusions of the Calcutta *Englishman***

“Surrender your life, your liberty, your birth-rights to the English nation, go on ministering to their comforts and pleasures and you are credited with common sense, prudence, intelligence and all other mental equipments. But if you think of making any strides in the direction of manhood – if you take it into your head to hold your own in the conflict of interests – if you show the least sign of walking with your head erect you are damned wretches fit for the jail gallows because it has been settled once for all in the wise dispensations of Providence, that you are to sow and they are to reap, that you are to buy and they are to sell, that you are to be killed and they are to kill, that you are to be deprived of arms while they are to be in their full possession, that you will use arms for nefarious purposes, while they will wield them to defend themselves. What else can these ridiculous effusions of the Calcutta *Englishman* mean?” (249-50)

## **3. The Supreme Test of Nationalism**

**“...the supreme test of nationalism is a belief in the future of the nation and a love for it – with all its weaknesses.”** (252)

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

#### **4. Sir Pherozshah Mehta**

“...Sir Pherozshah Mehta could not understand the meaning of National Education. At Ahmedabad, we remember, the Swadeshi Resolution was disallowed in the Subjects Committee because Sir Pherozshah Mehta would not know where he could get his broadcloth, if it were passed! The nation was not to resolve on helping forward its commercial independence, because Sir Pherozshah Mehta preferred broadcloth to any other wear. And now the people of Bombay are not to educate themselves on national lines because Sir Pherozshah Mehta does not know what a nation means nor what nationalism means nor, in fact, anything except what Sir Pherozshah Mehta means.” (254-55)

#### **5. The Indispensability of Political Freedom**

**“Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation; to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility.** Such attempts are foredoomed to disappointment and failure; yet when the disappointment and failure come, we choose to attribute them to some radical defect in the national character, as if the nation were at fault and not its wise men who would not or could not understand the first elementary conditions of success. The primary requisite for national progress, national reform, is the free habit of free and healthy national thought and action which is impossible in a state of servitude...” (266)

## **6. Our Political Leaders of the Nineteenth Century**

“They had no national experience behind them of politics under modern conditions; they had no teachers except English books and English liberal “sympathisers” and “friends of India”. Schooled by British patrons, trained to the fixed idea of English superiority and Indian inferiority their imaginations could not embrace the idea of national liberty and perhaps they did not even desire it at heart preferring the comfortable ease which at that time still seemed possible in a servitude under British protection to the struggles and sacrifices of a hard and difficult independence. Taught to take their political lessons solely from the example of England and ignoring or not valuing the historical experience of the rest of the world, they could not even conceive of a truly popular and democratic Government in India except as the slow result of the development of centuries, progress broadening down from precedent to precedent. They could not then understand that the experience of an independent nation is not valid to guide a subject nation, unless and until the subject nation throws off the yoke and itself becomes independent. They could not realize that the slow, painful and ultra-cautious development, necessary in mediaeval and semi-mediaeval conditions when no experience of a stable popular Government had been gained, need not be repeated in the days of the steamship, railway and telegraph, when stable democratic systems are part of the world’s secured and permanent heritage. The instructive spectacle of Asiatic nations demanding and receiving constitutional and parliamentary government as the price of a few years’ struggle and civil turmoil, had not then been offered to the

world. But even if the idea of such happenings had occurred to the more sanguine spirits, they would have been prevented from putting it into words by their inability to discover any means towards its fulfilment. Their whole political outlook was bounded by the lessons of English history, and in English history they found only two methods of politics, – the slow method of agitation and the swift decisive method of open struggle and revolt. Unaccustomed to independent political thinking they did not notice the significant fact that the method of agitation only became effective in England when the people had already gained a powerful voice in the Government. In order to secure that voice they had been compelled to resort no less than three times to the method of open struggle and revolt. Blind to the significance of this fact, our nineteenth century politicians clung to the method of agitation, obstinately hoping against all experience and reason that it would somehow serve their purpose. From any idea of open struggle with the bureaucracy they shrank with terror and a sense of paralysis. Dominated by the idea of the overwhelming might of Britain and the abject weakness of India, their want of courage and faith in the nation, their rooted distrust of the national character, disbelief in Indian patriotism and blindness to the possibility of true political strength and virtue in the people, precluded them from discovering the rough and narrow way to salvation. Herein lies the superiority of the new school that they have an indomitable courage and faith in the nation and the people. By the strength of that courage and faith they have not only been able to enforce on the mind of the country a higher ideal but perceive an effective means to the realization of that ideal.” (272-74)

## **7. The Doctrine of Passive Resistance\***

“Liberty is the life-breath of a nation; and when the life is attacked, when it is sought to suppress all chance of breathing by violent pressure, any and every means of self-preservation becomes right and justifiable, — just as it is lawful for a man who is being strangled to rid himself of the pressure on his throat by any means in his power. It is the nature of the pressure which determines the nature of the resistance. Where, as in Russia, the denial of liberty is enforced by legalised murder and outrage, or, as in Ireland formerly, by brutal coercion, the answer of violence to violence is justified and inevitable. Where the need for immediate liberty is urgent and it is a present question of national life or death on the instant, revolt is the only course. But where the oppression is legal and subtle in its methods and respects life, liberty and property and there is still breathing time, the circumstances demand that we should make the experiment of a method of resolute but peaceful resistance which while less bold and aggressive than other methods, calls for perhaps as much heroism of a kind and certainly more universal endurance and suffering. In other methods, a daring minority purchase with their blood the freedom of the millions; but for passive resistance it is necessary that all should share in the struggle and the privation.

This peculiar character of passive resistance is one reason why it has found favour with the thinkers of the New party. There are certain moral qualities necessary to self-government which have become atrophied by long disuse in our people and can only be restored either by the healthy air of a free national life in which alone they can permanently thrive or by their vigorous exercise in the intensity of a

national struggle for freedom. If by any possibility the nation can start its career of freedom with a fully developed unity and strength, it will certainly have a better chance of immediate greatness hereafter. Passive resistance affords the best possible training for these qualities. Something also is due to our friends, the enemy. We have ourselves made them reactionary and oppressive and deserved the Government we possess. The reason why even a radical opportunist like Mr. Morley refuses us self-government is not that he does not believe in India's fitness for self-government, but that he does not believe in India's determination to be free; on the contrary, the whole experience of the past shows that we have not been in earnest in our demand for self-government. We should put our determination beyond a doubt and thereby give England a chance of redeeming her ancient promises, made when her rule was still precarious and unstable. For the rest, circumstances still favour the case of passive resistance. In spite of occasional Fullerism the bureaucracy has not yet made up its mind to a Russian system of repression." (278-79)

"The first principle of passive resistance, therefore, which the new school have placed in the forefront of their programme, is to make administration under present conditions impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which shall help either British commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it, – unless and until the conditions are changed in the manner and to the extent demanded by the people. This attitude is summed up in the one word, Boycott. If we consider the various departments of the administration one by one, we can easily see how administration in each can be rendered

impossible by successfully organized refusal of assistance. We are dissatisfied with the fiscal and economical conditions of British rule in India, with the foreign exploitation of the country, the continual bleeding of its resources, the chronic famine and rapid impoverishment which result, the refusal of the Government to protect the people and their industries. Accordingly, we refuse to help the process of exploitation and impoverishment in our capacity as consumers, we refuse henceforth to purchase foreign and especially British goods or to condone their purchase by others. By an organised and relentless boycott of British goods, we propose to render the farther exploitation of the country impossible. We are dissatisfied also with the conditions under which education is imparted in this country, its calculated poverty and insufficiency, its antinational character, its subordination to the Government and the use made of that subordination for the discouragement of patriotism and the inculcation of loyalty. Accordingly we refuse to send our boys to Government schools or to schools aided and controlled by the Government; if this educational boycott is general and well-organized, the educational administration of the country will be rendered impossible and the control of its youthful minds pass out of the hands of the foreigner. We are dissatisfied with the administration of justice, the ruinous costliness of the civil side, the brutal rigour of its criminal penalties and procedure, its partiality, its frequent subordination to political objects. We refuse accordingly to have any resort to the alien courts of justice, and by an organised judicial boycott propose to make the bureaucratic administration of justice impossible while these conditions continue. Finally, we disapprove of the executive

administration, its arbitrariness, its meddling and inquisitorial character, its thoroughness of repression, its misuse of the police for the repression instead of the protection of the people. We refuse, accordingly, to go to the executive for help or advice or protection or to tolerate any paternal interference in our public activities, and by an organized boycott of the executive propose to reduce executive control and interference to a mere skeleton of its former self. The bureaucracy depends for the success of its administration on the help of the few and the acquiescence of the many. If the few refused to help, if Indians no longer consented to teach in Government schools or work in Government offices, or serve the alien as police, the administration could not continue for a day. We will suppose the bureaucracy able to fill their places by Eurasians, aliens or traitors; even then the refusal of the many to acquiesce, by the simple process of no longer resorting to Government schools, courts of justice or magistrates' cutcherries, would put an end to administration.” (281-82)

### **8. Admirable Self-control of the Japanese**

“The Japanese have an excellent habit of keeping anger out of their speech and reserving all their strength for acts; they will express their disapproval of you with great plainness, indeed, but also with wonderful calmness and politeness. The Samurai used to rip up his enemy very mercilessly but also very politely; he did it as a duty, not out of passion. But of our emotional, sentimental race, so long accustomed to find its outlet in speech, nothing so heroic can be expected.” (308-09)

## **9. Things Perfectly Justifiable and Indispensable in Politics**

“..we think the young men of the New party would do well to follow the example of the Japanese as far as possible. We should be absolutely unsparing in our attack on whatever obstructs the growth of the nation, and never be afraid to call a spade a spade. Excessive good nature, *chakshu lajja* (the desire to be always pleasant and polite), will never do in serious politics. Respect of persons must always give place to truth and conscience; and the demand that we should be silent because of the age or past services of our opponents, is politically immoral and unsound. Open attack, unsparing criticism, the severest satire, the most wounding irony, are all methods perfectly justifiable and indispensable in politics. We have strong things to say; let us say them strongly; we have stern things to do; let us do them sternly. But there is always a danger of strength degenerating into violence and sternness into ferocity, and that should be avoided so far as it is humanly possible.” (309)

## **10. Astonishing Events During the New Year 1906-07 in the Far East**

“No year of the new century has been more full of events than 1906 – 07, our year 1313.

If we look abroad we find the whole affected zone in agitation and new births everywhere. In the Far East the year has not been marked by astonishing events, but the total results have been immense. Within these twelve months China has been educating, training and arming herself with a speed of which the outside world has a very meagre

conception. She has sent out a Commission of Observation to the West and decided to develop constitutional Government within the next ten years. She has pushed forward the work of revolutionising her system of education and bringing it into line with modern requirements. She has taken resolutely in hand the task of liberating herself from the curse of opium which has benumbed the energies of her people. She has sent her young men outside in thousands, chiefly to Japan, to be trained for the great work of development. With the help of Japanese instructors she is training herself quietly in war, and science has made an immense advance in the organisation of a disciplined army, and is now busy laying the foundations of an effective navy. In spite of the arrogant protests of British merchants, she has taken her enormous customs revenue into her own hands for national purposes. By her successful diplomacy she has deprived England of the fruits of the unscrupulous, piratical attack upon Tibet and is maintaining her hold on that outpost of the Mongolian world.

Japan during this year has been vigorously pushing on her industrial expansion at home and abroad; she has practically effected the commercial conquest of Manchuria and begun in good earnest the struggle with European trade and her manufactures are invading Europe and America. Her army reorganisation has been so large and thorough as to make the island Empire invincible in her own sphere of activity. A little cloud has sprung up between herself and America, but she has conducted herself with her usual *sang froid*, moderation and calm firmness; and, however far the difficulty may go, we may be sure that she will not come out of it either morally or materially a loser.

In other parts of the Far East there have only been slight indications of coming movements. The troubles in the Philippines are over and America has restored to the inhabitants a certain measure of self-government, which, if used by the Filipinos with energy and discretion, may be turned into an instrument for the recovery of complete independence. Siam has purchased release from humiliating restrictions on her internal sovereignty at the heavy price of a large cession of territory to intruding France; but she is beginning to pay more attention to her naval and military development and it will be well if this means that she has realised the only way to preserve her independence. At present Siam is the one weak point in Mongolian Asia. Otherwise the events of this year show that by the terrible blow she struck at Russia, Japan has arrested the process of European absorption in the Far East.” (312-13)

### **11. 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 realized 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 has 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." (315-16)

## **12. Babu Surendranath Banerji and the New Nationalism**

"We congratulate Babu Surendranath on his conversion to the New Nationalism, but we are not sure that we can congratulate the New Nationalism on its convert. Nationalism is, after all, primarily an emotion of the heart and a spiritual attitude and only secondarily an intellectual conviction. Its very foundation is the worship of national liberty as the one political deity and the readiness to consider all things well lost if only freedom is won. "Let my name be blasted," cried Danton, "but let France be saved." "Let my name, life, possessions all go," cries the true Nationalist, "let all that is dear to me perish, but let my country be free." But Babu Surendranath is not prepared to consider the world well lost for liberty. He wishes to drive bargains with God, to buy liberty from Him in the cheapest market, at the smallest possible price. Until now he was the leader of those who

desired to reach a qualified liberty by safe and comfortable means. He is now for an unqualified liberty; and since the way to absolute liberty cannot be perfectly safe and comfortable, he wants to make it as safe and comfortable as he can. It is evident that his conversion to the new creed is only a half and half conversion. He has acknowledged the deity, but he is not prepared for the sacrifice. It is always a danger to a new religion when it receives converts from among strong adherents of the old, for they are likely to bring in with them the spirit of the outworn creed and corrupt with it the purity of the new tenets.” (331)

### **13. The Imperative Necessity for the Nation**

“Our position is that it is imperatively necessary for this nation to enter into an immediate struggle for national liberty which we must win at any cost; that in this struggle we must be inspired and guided by the teachings of history and those glorious examples which show how even nations degraded, enslaved and internally disunited, can rapidly attain to freedom and unity; and that for this purpose the great necessity is to awake in the nation a burning, an irresistible, an unanimous will, to be free.” (333)

### **14. The Loyalists, the Moderates and the Nationalists**

“There are at present not two parties in India, but three, – the Loyalists, the Moderates and the Nationalists. The Loyalists would be satisfied with good government by British rulers and a limited share in the administration; the Moderates desire self-government within the British Empire, but are willing to wait for it indefinitely; the Nationalists

would be satisfied with nothing less than independence whether within the Empire, if that be possible, or outside it; they believe that the nation cannot and ought not to wait but must bestir itself immediately, if it is not to perish as a nation. The Loyalists believe that Indians have not the capacities and qualities necessary for freedom and even if they succeed in developing the necessary fitness, they would do better for themselves and mankind by remaining as a province of the British Empire; any attempt at freedom will, they think, be a revolt against Providence and can bring nothing but disaster on the country. The Loyalist view is that India cannot, should not and will not be a free, great and united nation. The Moderates believe the nation to be too weak and disunited to aim at freedom; they would welcome independence if it came, but they are not convinced that we have or shall have in the measurable future the means or strength to win it or keep it if won. They therefore put forward Colonial Self-Government as their aim and are unwilling to attempt any methods which presuppose strength and cohesion in the nation. The Moderate view is that India may eventually be united, self-governing within limits and prosperous, but not free and great. The Nationalists hold that Indians are as capable of freedom as any subject nation can be and their defects are the result of servitude and can only be removed by the struggle for freedom; that they have the strength, and, if they get the will, can create the means to win independence. They hold that the choice is not between autonomy and provincial Home Rule or between freedom and dependence, but between freedom and national decay and death. They hold, finally, that the past history of our country and the present circumstances are of such a kind

that the great unifying tendencies hitherto baffled by insuperable obstacles have at last found the right conditions for success. They believe that the fated hour for Indian unification and freedom has arrived. In brief they are convinced that India should strive to be free, that she can be free and that she will, by the impulse of her past and present, be inevitably driven to the attempt and the attainment of national self-realisation. The Nationalist creed is a gospel of faith and hope.” (355-56)

### **15. The Great Weakness of India in the Past**

**“The great weakness of India in the past has been the political depression and nullity of the mass of the population.** It was not from the people of India that India was won by Moghul or Briton, but from a small privileged class. On the other hand the strength and success of the Marathas and Sikhs in the eighteenth century was due to the policy of Shivaji and Guru Govind which called the whole nation into the fighting line. They failed only because the Marathas could not preserve the cohesion which Shivaji gave to their national strength or the Sikhs the discipline which Guru Govind gave to the Khalsa.” (365)

### **16. The Logic of the Growth of a Nation and the Position of the British in India**

“If a nation were an artificial product which could be made, then it might be possible for one nation to make another. But a nation cannot be made, – it is an organism which grows under the stress of a principle of life within. We speak indeed of nation-building and of the makers of

a nation, but these are only convenient metaphors. The nation-builder, Cavour or Bismarck, is merely the incarnation of a national force which has found its hour and its opportunity, of an inner will which has awakened under the stress of shaping circumstances. A nation is, indeed, the outward expression of a community of sentiment, whether it be the sentiment of a common blood or the sentiment of a common religion or the sentiment of a common interest or any or all of these sentiments combined. Once this sentiment grows strong enough to develop into a will towards unity and to conquer obstacles and make full use of favouring circumstances, the development of the nation becomes inevitable and there is no power which can ultimately triumph against it. But the process, however rapid it may be, is one of growth and not of manufacture. The first impulse of the developing nation is to provide itself with a centre, a means of self-expression and united action, a chief organ or national nerve-centre with subsidiary organs acting under and in harmony with it. If the need of self-protection is its first overpowering need, the organization may be military or semi-military under a single chief or a warlike ruling class; if the pressure from outside is not overpowering or the need of internal development strongly felt, it may take the shape of some form of partial or complete self-government. In either case the community becomes a nation or organic State.

What, then, is the place of foreign rule in such an organic development? The invasion of the body politic by a foreign element must result either in the merging of the alien into the indigenous nationality or in his superimposition on the

latter in a precarious position which can only be maintained by coercion or by hypnotizing the subject people into passivity. If the alien and the native-born population are akin in blood and in religion, the fusion will be easy. Even if they are not, yet if the former settles down in the conquered country and makes it his motherland, community of interests will in the end inevitably bring about union. The foreigners become sons of the country by adoption and the sentiment of a common motherland is always a sufficient substitute for the sentiment of a common race-origin. The difficulty of religion may be solved by the conversion of the foreigner to the religion of the people he has conquered, as happened with the ancient invaders of India, or by the conversion of the conquered people to the religion of their rulers, as happened in Persia and other countries conquered by the Arabs. Even if no such general change of creed can be effected, yet the two religions may become habituated to each other and mutually tolerant, or the sentiment of a common interest and a common sonhood of one motherland may overcome the consciousness of religious differences. In all these contingencies there is a fusion, complete or partial; and the nation, though it may be profoundly affected for good or evil, need not be disorganized or lose the power of development. **India under Mahomedan rule, though greatly disturbed and thrown into continual ferment and revolution, did not lose its power of organic readjustment and development.** Even the final anarchy which preceded the British domination, was not a process of disorganization but an acute crisis, – the attempt of Nature to effect an organic readjustment in the body politic.

Unfortunately the crisis was complicated by the presence and final domination of a foreign body, foreign in blood, foreign in religion, foreign in interest. This body remains superimposed on the native-born population without any roots in the soil. Its presence, so long as it is neither merged in the nation nor dislodged, must make for the disorganization and decay of the subject people. It is possible for a foreign body differing in blood, religion and interest, to amalgamate with the native organism but only on one of two conditions; either the foreign body must cut itself off from its origin and take up its home in the conquered country, – a course which is obviously impossible in the present problem, – or it must assimilate the subject State into the paramount State by the removal of all differences, inequalities, and conflicting interests. We shall point out the insuperable difficulties in the way of any such arrangement which will at once preserve British supremacy and give a free scope to Indian national development. At present there is no likelihood of the intruding force submitting easily to the immense sacrifices which such an assimilation would involve. Yet if no such assimilation takes place, the position of the British bureaucracy in India in no way differs from the position of the Turkish despotism as it existed with regard to the Christian populations of the Balkans previous to their independence or of the Austrians in Lombardy before the Italian Revolution. It is a position which endangers, demoralizes and eventually weakens the ruling nation as Austria and Turkey were demoralized and weakened, and which disorganizes and degrades the subject people. A very brief consideration of the effects of British rule in India will carry this truth home.” (367-69)

## **17. The Three Centres of Organised Strength in Pre-British India and Their Dissolution Under the British**

“There were three actual centres of organised strength in pre-British India, – the supreme ruler, Peshwa or Raja or Nawab reposing his strength on the Zamindars or Jagirdars; the Zamindar in his own domain reposing his strength on his retinue and tenants; and the village community independent and self-existent. **The first result of the British occupation was to reduce to a nullity the supreme ruler, and this was often done, as in Bengal, by the help of the Zamindars. The next result was the disorganisation of the village community. The third was the steady breaking-up of the power of the Zamindars with the help of a new class which the foreigners created for their own purposes, – the bourgeois or middle class.** Unfortunately for the British bureaucracy it had, in order to get the support and assistance of the middle class, to pamper the latter and allow it to grow into a strength and develop organs of its own, such as the Press, the Bar, the University, the Municipalities, District Boards, etc. Finally, the situation with which British statesmen had to deal was this: – the natural sovereigns of the land helpless and disorganised, the landed aristocracy helpless and disorganised, the peasantry helpless and disorganised, but a middle class growing in strength, pretensions and organisation. British statesmanship, following the instinctive and inevitable trend of an alien domination, set about breaking down the power it had established in order to destroy the sole remaining centre of national strength and possible revival. If this could be done, if the middle class could be either tamed, bribed

or limited in its expansion, the disorganisation would be complete. Nothing would be left of the people of India except a disorganised crowd with no centre of strength or means of resistance.

It was in Bengal that the middle class was most developed and self-conscious; and it was in Bengal therefore that a quick succession of shrewd and dangerous blows was dealt at the once useful but now obnoxious class. The last effort to bribe it into quietude was the administration of Lord Ripon. It was now sought to cripple the organs through which this strength was beginning slowly to feel and develop its organic life. The Press was intimidated, the Municipalities officialised, the University officialised and its expansion limited. Finally the Partition sought with one blow to kill the poor remnants of the Zamindar's power and influence and to weaken the middle class of Bengal by dividing it. The suppression of the middle class was the recognised policy of Lord Curzon. After Mr. Morley came to power, it was, we believe, intended to recognise and officialise the Congress itself if possible. Even now it is quite conceivable, in view of the upheaval in Bengal and the Punjab, that an expanded Legislature with the appearance of a representative body but the reality of official control, may be given, not as a concession but as a tactical move. The organs of middle-class political life can only be dangerous so long as they are independent. By taking away their independence they become fresh sources of strength for the Government, – of weakness for the class which strives to find in them its growth and self-expression.

The Partition opened the eyes of the threatened class

to the nature of the attack that was being made on it; and the result was a widespread and passionate revolt which has now spread from Bengal to the Punjab and threatens to break out all over India. The struggle is now a struggle for life and death. If the bureaucracy conquers, the middle class will be broken, shattered, perhaps blotted out of existence; if the middle class conquers, the bureaucracy are not for long in the land. Everything depends on the success or failure of the middle class in getting the people to follow it for a common salvation. They may get this support by taking their natural place as awakeners and leaders of the nation; they may get it by the energy and success with which they wage their battle with the bureaucracy. In Eastern Bengal, for instance, the aid of a few Mahomedan aristocrats has enabled the bureaucracy to turn a large section of the Mahomedan masses against the Hindu middle class; and the educated community is fighting with its back to the wall for its very existence. If it succeeds under such desperate circumstances, even the Mahomedan masses will eventually follow its leading.

This process of political disorganisation is not so much a deliberate policy on the part of the foreign bureaucracy, as an instinctive action which it can no more help than the sea can help flowing. The dissolution of the subject organisation into a disorganised crowd is the inevitable working of an alien despotism.” (374-76)

### **18. The *Bengalee* on a Second Outrage on the Hindu Religion in Bengal**

“The *Bengalee*, excited by the news of a second outrage

on the Hindu religion at Ambariya in Mymensingh, came out yesterday with a frankly extremist issue. We only wish that we could look on this as anything more than a fit of passing excitement; but the *Bengalee* is hot today and cold tomorrow. Nevertheless, what it says is true, and it is well and pointedly expressed: –

“Fifty years ago, such a revolting outrage, committed upon the religious susceptibilities of Hindus, would have resulted in grave complications and the Government would have left no stone unturned to propitiate the Hindu Chiefs and the Hindu population, and last, though not the least, the Hindu section of the Native Army. Today Government officials openly side, presumably with the approval of the head of the Provincial Administration, with those who break Hindu images, desecrate Hindu temples, plunder the houses and shops of Hindus and ravish Hindu women.

“Is this the sum total of our progress after a century and a half of British rule? Have we, Bengali Hindus, become so craven-hearted, so utterly incapable of self-defence, that the Government no longer thinks it necessary to avoid wounding our tenderest feelings or even to keep up appearances? Verily, **a nation gets precisely the kind of treatment it deserves; and it appears that in the opinion of Mr. Hare – so far tacitly endorsed by Lord Minto – a nation of weeping and shrieking women as the Bengalis are regarded by their rulers, deserves only to be trampled underfoot.** And recent happenings in the district of Mymensingh show that the Government has taken an exact measure of the Hindus of Bengal. For are they not the embodiment of patience and – propriety? They are too highly educated and reflective, you

know, to do anything rashly and the native hue of their resolution is most reasonably and naturally and speedily sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. They may be quite right from their personal standpoint; but national heroes are not usually made of such stuff nor are national interests promoted by the wearers of soft raiment. **The worship of Motherland is the sole privilege of those choice spirits who have the heart to incur sacrifice, the hand to execute the mandate of conscience, and the recklessness to hang propriety and prudence.**”” (377-78)

### **19. The Delusion of British Nobility and Benevolence**

“Britain, the benevolent, Britain, the mother of Parliaments, Britain, the champion of liberty, Britain, the deliverer of the slave, – such was the sanctified and legendary figure which we have been trained to keep before our eyes from the earliest years of our childhood. Our minds imbued through and through with the colours of that legend, we cherished a faith in the justice and benevolence of Britain more profound, more implicit, more a very part of our beings than the faith of the Christian in Christ or of the Mahomedan in his Prophet. Officials might be oppressive, Viceroys and Lieutenant-Governors reactionary, the Secretary of State obdurate, Parliament indifferent, the British public careless, but our faith was not to be shaken. If Anglo-India was unkind, we wooed the British people in India itself. If the British people failed us, we said that it was because the Conservatives were in power. If a Liberal Secretary showed himself no less obdurate, we set it down to his personal failings and confidently awaited justice from a Liberal Government in which he should have no part. If the most Radical of Radical

Secretaries condemned us to age-long subjection to a paternal and absolute bureaucracy, we whispered to the people, “Wait, wait; Britain, the true Britain, the generous, the benevolent, the lover and giver of freedom, is only sleeping; she shall awake again and we shall see her angelic and transfigured beauty.” Where precisely was this Britain we believed in, no man could say, but we would not give up our faith. “Credo quia impossibile”; – I believe because it is impossible, had become our political creed. Other countries might be selfish, violent, greedy, tyrannical, unjust; in other countries politics might be a continual readjustment of conflicting interests and clashing strengths. But Britain, the Britain of our dreams, was guided only by the light of truth and justice and reason; high ideals, noble impulses, liberal instincts, these were the sole guides of her political actions, – by the lustre of these bright moral fires she guided her mighty steps through an admiring and worshipping world. That was the dream; and so deeply had it lodged in our imaginations that not only the professed Loyalists, the men of moderation, but even the leading Nationalists, those branded as Extremists, could not altogether shake off its influence.” (381-82)

## **20. The Action of the British Bureaucracy – Incompetence or Connivance**

“The question has been raised whether the action of the officials in Mymensingh amounts to incompetence or connivance. In face of the open partiality of these bureaucrats, their severity to Hindus and leniency to Mahomedans, it seems absurd to ask the question. To arrest the leading local Hindus *en masse* and leave the Mahomedans untouched, although influential local Mahomedans have been

publicly charged by name with fomenting riots; to loot houses and cutcherries under the pretence of search with a Mahomedan mob at their back; to institute rigorous enquiry into the wounding of a Mahomedan and none into the death of a Hindu; to turn a deaf ear to appeals for help from threatened Hindus in the villages and delay action till the looting and outrage have been accomplished; to look on inactive in the face of a surging Mahomedan tumult and be on the alert when there is a rumour of Hindu retaliation; – all this is not incompetence, but connivance. We could have understood it, if the authorities had been equally supine and helpless in dealing with Hindus as with Mahomedans, but this is not the case. Compare the action of the Government in the Punjab with that of the Government in Bengal. In the Punjab, because there was a popular riot, all the leading Hindu gentlemen have been arrested on outrageous charges, the town held by cavalry, siege-guns pointed upon it, the police ordered to butcher any group of five to be seen in the streets or public places. If the East Bengal Nawabs and Maulavis had been similarly treated and similar measures taken in Jamalpur, we could have admired the impartial, if ferocious energy of the bureaucracy. Compare again the action in Bengal itself. A rumour is spread that the Hindus would attack the Mahomedan piece-goods shops in Comilla; at once Mr. Lees posts constables and himself stands on guard over the bazaar. A rumour is spread that the Jamalpur accused are coming up with an army of volunteers and the Gurkhas are out to receive them on the station. Compare this with the action against Mahomedan riot. “Armed police have been sent only after the occurrence. The authorities are taking no preventive measures. The Magistrate is sending

Gurkhas and constables after everything has been finished.” This phenomenon has been more than once repeated. “All shops at Bakshiganj, Mymensingh, have been looted and papers destroyed. The Image of Kali has been broken to pieces;” but “I hear that a regular enquiry is not taking place in the Bakshiganj case. Some of the accused who were arrested, have been let off. First informations have not been taken in all the cases.” Or take this suggestive telegram from Rangpur District: “The rowdy Mahomedans of the locality gathered and looted Bakshiganj Bazar and the houses of several Hindu residents of Charkaseria. Females were outraged. The looting continued *from noon to midnight.*” Looting of Hindus accompanied by outrages on their women may continue from noon to midnight, and no one thinks it his business to interfere; but a few Mahomedan shops were supposed to be threatened and a British Magistrate at once appears on the scene.” (388-90)

## **21. Lala Lajpat Rai Deported\***

“The sympathetic administration of Mr. Morley has for the present attained its records; – but for the present only. Lala Lajpat Rai has been deported out of British India. The fact is its own comment. The telegram goes on to say that indignation meetings have been forbidden for four days. Indignation meetings? The hour for speeches and fine writing is past. The bureaucracy has thrown down the gauntlet. We take it up. Men of the Punjab! Race of the lion! Show these men who would stamp you into the dust that for one Lajpat they have taken away, a hundred Lajpats will arise in his place. Let them hear a hundred times louder your war-cry – *Jai Hindusthan!*” (395)

## **22. The Crisis\***

“The bureaucracy has declared with savage emphasis that it will tolerate a meekly carping loyalism, it will tolerate an ineffective agitation of prayer, protest and petition, but it will not tolerate the new spirit. If the Indian harbours aspirations towards freedom, towards independence, towards self-government in his mind, let him crush them back and keep them close-locked in his heart; for from English Secretary or Anglo-Indian pro-consul, from Conservative or from Liberal they can expect neither concession nor toleration. Indian aspirations and bureaucratic autocracy cannot stall together; one of them must go. The growth of the new spirit had been so long tolerated in Bengal because the rulers, though alarmed at the new portent, could not at once make up their mind whether it was a painted monster or a living and formidable force. Even when its real nature and drift had become manifest, they waited to see whether it was likely to take hold of the people. They were not prepared for the enormous rapidity with which like a sudden conflagration in the American prairies, the new spirit began to rush over the whole of India....” (396)

“The fight in which we are engaged is not like the wars of old in which when the King or leader fell, the army fled. The King whom we follow to the wars today, is our own Motherland, the sacred and imperishable; the leader of our onward march is the Almighty himself, that element within and without us whom sword cannot slay, nor water drown, nor fire burn, nor exile divide from us, nor a prison confine. Lajpat Rai is nothing, Tilak is nothing, Bipin Pal is nothing!

these are but instruments in the mighty Hand that is shaping our destinies and if these go, do you think that God cannot find others to do His will? Lala Lajpat Rai has gone from us, but doubt not that men stronger and greater than he will take his place. For when a living and rising cause is persecuted, this is the sure result that in the place of those whom persecution strikes down, there arise, like the giants from the blood of Raktabij, men who to their own strength add the strength, doubled and quadrupled by death or persecution, of the martyrs for the cause. It was the exiled of Italy, it was the men who languished in Austrian and Bourbon dungeons, it was Poerio and Silvio Pellico and their fellow-sufferers whose collected strength reincarnated in Mazzini and Garibaldi and Cavour to free their country. Let there be no fainting of heart and no depression, and also let there be no unforeseeing fury, no blindly-striking madness. We are at the beginning of a time of terrible trial. The passage is not to be easy, the crown is not to be cheaply earned. India is going down into the valley of the shadow of death, into a great horror of darkness and suffering. Let us realise that what we are now suffering, is a small part of what we shall have to suffer, and work in that knowledge, with resolution, without hysteria. A fierce and angry spirit is spreading among the people which cries out for violent action and calls upon us to embrace death. **We say, let us be prepared for death but work for life, – the life not of our perishable bodies but of our cause and country. Whatever we do, let it be with knowledge and foresight. Let our first and last object be to help on the cause, not to gratify blindly our angry passions. The first need at the present moment is courage, a courage which knows not how to flinch or shrink. The**

**second is self-possession.** God is helping us with persecution; we must accept it with joy and use that help, calmly, fearlessly, wisely. On the manner and spirit in which we shall resist and repel outrage and face repression, while not for a moment playing into the hands of the adversary, will depend the immediate success or failure of our mission.” (397-99)

### **23. Lala Lajpat Rai\***

“Great has been the good fortune of the Punjab leader in being selected as the first and noblest victim on the altar of Motherland. But for our part we may be pardoned if we indulge a feeling of regret and grief at the sudden parting from a friend. We have not been acquainted with Lajpat Rai for very long, but even these brief months of acquaintance and increasing friendship have been enough to make us feel the charm of his personality. There was always in Lajpat Rai a singular union of tenderness with strength, of quietness with fervour, a ready sympathy and kindly feeling which could not fail to attract. This sympathy and kindness is evident in the warm phrases of appreciation he wrote to us. And there is a touch in his subscription to the letter which subsequent events have brought startlingly home to us – “an humble servant of the motherland, Lajpat Rai.” Happy is he, for his Mother has accepted his service and given it the highest reward for which a patriot can hope, the privilege of not merely serving but suffering for her. When India raises statues to the heroes and martyrs of her emancipation, it will inscribe on his the simple and earnest phrase which remains behind to us as his modest boast and his sufficient message.” (399)

## **24. Government by Panic\***

“... a lawyer militarist leading an army of Indian peasants, Lahore Fort to be stormed by an unarmed mob with their fists – or with stones, the British Empire to be overthrown by this extraordinary army – the whole is a wild nightmare of panic-stricken brains. We are told that the Europeans were so panic-stricken, many of them passed the night on the railway platform, ready for flight. The *Civil and Military Gazette* also solemnly affirms that Lajpat Rai was an arch-rebel with a hundred thousand men under his orders and hints pretty plainly that the prompt action of Sir Denzil Ibbetson saved the British from a rebellion. And these are the men who think that they can go on ruling a nation of three hundred millions by mere repression and the terror of the sword, after the moral bases of their supremacy are gone! The great strong successful despots of the world were not men who started at every shadow and took every bush in the darkness for an enemy. Government by panic has never yet been a success and we doubt whether it will be any more successful in India than elsewhere. But here we find panic initiating a policy, bewilderment approving of it and alarm sanctioning it. Not only the Punjab Government, not only the “level-headed” Lord Minto, but even the austere and philosophical Mr. Morley has committed himself to government by panic. It is for us to take full advantage of the mistakes of our political adversaries.” (401-02)

## **25. In Praise of the Government\***

“We cannot sufficiently admire the vigorous and unselfish efforts of the British Government to turn all India

into a nation of Extremists. We had thought that it would take us long and weary years to convert all our countrymen to the Nationalist creed. Nothing of the kind. The Government of India is determined that our efforts shall not fail or take too long a time to reach fruition. It will not suffer us to preach Nationalism to the people, but in its noble haste and zeal is resolved to preserve the monopoly of the Nationalist propaganda to itself. "Alone I will do it," they have evidently said to themselves, even as Louis XVI said to his people when he resolved to take the work of reform out of the hands of the States General into his own. The Government of India also has resolved to take the work of inculcating Nationalism into its own hands. There is no farther need of the inspiring oratory or compelling logic of a Bipin Chandra, the fine and vigorous lucidity and competent organisation of a Tilak, the attractive charm, self-sacrifice, moral force and steady quiet work of a Lajpat Rai. The Government will brush them aside and take their place. We cannot deny that the methods of the Government far excel our poor efforts. Our methods are long, wordy, weary, and when all is said and done, only half-effective; those of the Government are magnificent, brief, laconic, decisive, triumphantly effective. By its policy of leaving the Mymensingh Mahomedans for weeks together to inflict the utmost horrors of rapine and brigandage on a Hindu population sedulously disarmed and terrorised by official severity, they have convinced the country that the Pax Britannica is an illusion and no peace worth having which is not maintained by our own strength and manhood. By the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai they have destroyed the belief in British justice. By their Resolution for the prohibition of

meetings they have convinced everyone that we possess the right of free speech not as a right, not as a possession, but as a temporary and conditional favour depending for its continuance on despotic caprice. We await with confidence fresh developments of this admirable Nationalist propaganda.” (402-03)

## **II. Selections from Bande Mataram II, CWSA Vol. 7**

### **1. What We Need to Do With the Ideal of Patriotism in India?**

“This is what we have to do with the modern ideal of patriotism in India. We have to fill the minds of our boys from childhood with the idea of the country, and present them with that idea at every turn and make their whole young life a lesson in the practice of the virtues which afterwards go to make the patriot and the citizen. If we do not attempt this, we may as well give up our desire to create an Indian nation altogether; for without such a discipline nationalism, patriotism, regeneration are mere words and ideas which can never become a part of the very soul of the nation and never therefore a great realised fact. Mere academical teaching of patriotism is of no avail.” (455)

### **2. The Strength of the Idea\***

“The mistake which despots, benevolent or malevolent, have been making ever since organised states came into existence and which, it seems, they will go on making to the end of the chapter, is that they overestimate their coercive power, which is physical and material and therefore palpable, and underestimate the power and vitality of ideas and sentiments. A feeling or a thought, Nationalism, Democracy, the aspiration towards liberty, cannot be estimated in the terms of concrete power, in so many fighting men, so many armed police, so many guns, so many prisons, such and such laws, ukases, and executive powers. But such feelings and thoughts

are more powerful than fighting men and guns and prisons and laws and ukases. Their beginnings are feeble, their end is mighty. But of despotic repression the beginnings are mighty, the end is feeble. **Thought is always greater than armies, more lasting than the most powerful and best-organised despotisms.** It was a thought that overthrew the despotism of centuries in France and revolutionised Europe. It was a mere sentiment against which the irresistible might of the Spanish armies and the organised cruelty of Spanish repression were shattered in the Netherlands, which brought to nought the administrative genius, the military power, the stubborn will of Aurangzeb, which loosened the iron grip of Austria on Italy. In all such instances the physical power and organisation behind the insurgent idea are ridiculously small, the repressive force so overwhelmingly, impossibly strong that all reasonable, prudent, moderate minds see the utter folly of resistance and stigmatise the attempt of the idea to rise as an act of almost criminal insanity. But the man with the idea is not reasonable, not prudent, not moderate. He is an extremist, a fanatic. He knows that his idea is bound to conquer, he knows that the man possessed with it is more formidable, even with his naked hands, than the prison and the gibbet, the armed men and the murderous cannon. He knows that in the fight with brute force the spirit, the idea is bound to conquer. The Roman Empire is no more, but the Christianity which it thought to crush, possesses half the globe, covering “regions Caesar never knew”. The Jew, whom the whole world persecuted, survived by the strength of an idea and now sits in the high places of the world, playing with nations as a chess player with his pieces. He knows too that his own life and the lives of others are of no value, that they are mere dust in the

balance compared with the life of his idea. The idea or sentiment is at first confined to a few men whom their neighbours and countrymen ridicule as lunatics or hare-brained enthusiasts. But it spreads and gathers adherents who catch the fire of the first missionaries and creates its own preachers and then its workers who try to carry out its teachings in circumstances of almost paralysing difficulty. The attempt to work brings them into conflict with the established power which the idea threatens and there is persecution. **The idea creates its martyrs. And in martyrdom there is an incalculable spiritual magnetism which works miracles. A whole nation, a whole world catches the fire which burned in a few hearts; the soil which has drunk the blood of the martyr imbibes with it a sort of divine madness which it breathes into the heart of all its children, until there is but one overmastering idea, one imperishable resolution in the minds of all beside which all other hopes and interests fade into insignificance and until it is fulfilled, there can be no peace or rest for the land or its rulers.** It is at this moment that the idea begins to create its heroes and fighters, whose numbers and courage defeat only multiplies and confirms until the idea militant has become the idea triumphant. Such is the history of the idea, so invariable in its broad lines that it is evidently the working of a natural law.” (493-94)

### **3. The Main Feeder of Patriotism**

“If Britons love England with all her faults, why should we fail to love India whose faults were whittled down to an irreducible minimum till foreign conquests threw the whole society out of gear? But instead of being

dominated by the natural ambition of carrying the banner of such a civilisation all over the world, we are unable to maintain its integrity in its own native home. This is betraying a trust. This is unworthiness of the worst type. We have not been able to add anything to this precious bequest; on the contrary we have been keeping ourselves and generations yet unborn from a full enjoyment of their lawful heritage. For Eastern civilisation though it is not dead, though it is a living force, is yet a submerged force, and that not because it has no intrinsic merit but because it has been transmitted to a class of people devoid of a love for things their own. It seems as if they have no past to guide, instruct or inspire them.” (511)

“We make no appeal in the name of any material benefit. **No desire for earthly gain can nerve a people to such superhuman activity as the eager hope of maintaining their greatness and glory. We must first realise that we are great and glorious, that we are proud and noble, and it is through voluntary prostration that we are being stamped into the dust. No material ideal of riches and prosperity has ever made a nation. But when the sense of honour has been touched, when the consciousness of greatness has been reawakened, then and then only have the scattered units of a fallen nation clustered round one mighty moral force.**” (512)

“But why should not India then be the first power in the world? Who else has the undisputed right to extend spiritual sway over the world? This was Swami Vivekananda’s plan of campaign. **India can once more be made conscious of her greatness by an overmastering sense**

**of the greatness of her spirituality. This sense of greatness is the main feeder of all patriotism.** This only can put an end to all self-depreciation and generate a burning desire to recover the lost ground.” (513)

#### **4. Reception of Warren Hastings in the British House of Commons**

“Whoever is a scourge of India must naturally be a demigod to the British people. The political instinct of a free people long accustomed to the international struggle for life, shrewd, commercial, practical, is not likely to be misled by humanitarian generalities as the politically inexperienced middle class in India have been misled; they have always felt that the man who trod down India under a mailed heel and crushed Indian manhood and aspiration was serving their own interests. The sequel to the trial of Warren Hastings is an excellent example of this dominant instinct. Twenty-seven years after the impeachment, sixteen years after the death of Burke had left his orations as a classic to English literature, – a scene was enacted in the House of Commons similar in spirit to the unanimous acclamation of Mr. Morley’s speech. Warren Hastings – an old man of eighty – appeared at the bar to give evidence in connection with the renewal of the East India charter. He was received with acclamations, a chair was ordered for him, and when he retired the members rose and uncovered. The political instinct of the people perceived that this man, ruthless and monstrous tyrant though he had been, had consolidated for them a political empire and a basis of commercial supremacy, and the means by which this great work had been accomplished, were sanctified by the result. The scourge of

India, a recital of whose misdeeds had 27 years before made some of Burke's listeners swoon with horror, was honoured as a hero and god, and biographies and histories have been written by the score to justify his action and exalt him to the skies." (568)

## **5. Why India Must Have Swaraj**

"...we advocate the struggle for Swaraj, first, because Liberty is in itself a necessity of national life and therefore worth striving for for its own sake; secondly, because Liberty is the first indispensable condition of national development intellectual, moral, industrial, political (we do not say it is the only condition) and therefore worth striving for for India's sake; thirdly, because **in the next great stage of human progress it is not a material but a spiritual, moral and psychological advance that has to be made and for this a free Asia and in Asia a free India must take the lead, and Liberty is therefore worth striving for for the world's sake. India must have Swaraj in order to live; she must have Swaraj in order to live well and happily; she must have Swaraj in order to live for the world, not as a slave for the material and political benefit of a single purse-proud and selfish nation, but as a free people for the spiritual and intellectual benefit of the human race.**" (572)

## **6. Asia Versus Europe**

"Asia is long-lived, Europe brief and ephemeral. Asia is in everything hugely-mapped, immense and grandiose in its motions, and its life-periods are measured accordingly. Europe lives by centuries, Asia by millenniums. Europe is

parcelled out in nations, Asia in civilisations. The whole of Europe forms only one civilisation with a common, derived and largely second-hand culture; Asia supports three civilisations, each of them original and of the soil. Everything in Europe is small, rapid and short-lived; she has not the secret of immortality. Greece, the chief source of her civilisation, matured in two or three centuries, flourished for another two, and two more were sufficient for her decline and death. How few in years are the modern European nations, yet Spain is already dead, Austria death-stricken and suffering from gangrene and disintegration, France overtaken by a mortal and incurable malady, England already affected by the initial processes of decay. Germany and America alone show any signs of a healthy and developing manhood. In the place which is left vacant by the decline of the European nations Asia young, strong and vigorous, dowered with the gift of immortality and the secret of self-transmutation, is preparing to step forward and possess the future. She alone can teach the world the secret of immortality which she possesses and in order that she may do so, she must reign. Asia has been described by the Europeans as decrepit; they will find to their amazement and dismay that she is rather emerging into her age of robust and perfect manhood. It is true that she reached ages ago heights of science, philosophy, civilisation which Europe is now toilfully trying to reach and that afterwards there was a slackening down, loss and disturbance from which she is only now recovering, but there was no decay or decline. It was rather the disturbance, the temporary arrest, disorganization and derangement which marks the transition from boyhood to manhood. Her mighty civilizations, her great philosophies, her acute scientific observations and intuitions

were the toys and games of her yet immature and imperfect powers, the light and easy play of a child-giant, and form merely a slight index of the far greater things she will accomplish in the coming days of her ripe strength and maturity. What she did, she did by the activity of intuition and imagination, the first free penetrating sympathy of a mind fresh from the divine source of life. She will now learn the scientific method of the adult and senescent West and apply it with a far greater force and ability to lines of development in which Europe is a bungler and novice.

The wisdom of the West is but a madness,  
The fret of shallow waters in their bed.

This shallowness proceeds from the fact that the West has developed materially and on the surface, but has not sought for strength and permanence in the deeper roots of life of which our outer activity is only a partial manifestation. The fundamental difference between East and West has been exemplified more than once in recent times. What European nation could have changed its whole political, social and economic machinery in a few years like Japan, with so little trouble, with such thoroughness and science, with the minimum of disturbance to its national economy? The phenomenon is so alien to European nature and European experience that even to this day Western observers have been unable to understand it. Japan is a “weird” nation, that is all the conclusion they can come to on the subject. What European nation again would deal so swiftly, directly and earnestly with its own national vices as the Chinese are dealing with the opium vice in China? The very idea that China really meant it, was incredible to English observers. And well it might be, for

one can imagine what would be the fate of any such attempt to deal with the national vice of drunkenness in England. If India is unable to show such signal triumphs, it is because she has been disorganized by the merciless pressure of the alien rule and all her centres of strength and action destroyed or disabled. Yet even so, she has shown and is still showing signs of a prolonged and unconquerable vitality such as no nation subject for an equally long time has evinced since history began. It is this moral strength, this ability to go to the roots, this gift of diving down into the depths of self and drawing out the miraculous powers of the Will, this command over one's own soul which is the secret of Asia. And he who is in possession of his soul, the Scripture assures us, shall become the master of the world." (574-76)

## **7. The Nature of the European and His View of India and Her Politicians**

"The European remains today essentially as he was in the time of Aristotle, "a political animal". His nature has retained throughout history its ingrained and inalienable political bent; polity has played the greatest part in the moulding of his life and destiny; the ideas that have irresistibly moved him to heroic strivings, passionate hopes or death-defying sufferings have been mainly those of independence, freedom, liberty; the greatest names in his history are those of political heroes or governors; the one call that has ever rung truly in his ears and commanded his unquestioning obedience is the call to the service of his country; the courting of death for the fulfilment or the upholding of the above ideas has been as natural to him as breathing; the history of his country is the history of the increasing

consummation of those ideas, in which faith and intellect have filled a subsidiary place. Such is the European by constitution. To him India is an insoluble riddle. How a country of three hundred million men can consent to be governed by a handful of foreigners he simply cannot understand. He thinks of the Indian as a member of a sub-human race, outside the pale of his privileges, his code of morality, his civilisation. And that new-fangled specimen of the Indian race, the educated Indian, only intensifies his contempt. That a man who has been nurtured on the literature of England, and has read the history of Europe, can still have failed to be touched by the European ideal, to be visited by an insatiable longing for liberty, and can continue, on the other hand, in a life of contented acquiescence in foreign rule, and feel happy and proud merely to serve under it and ensure its continuation, strikes the native of Europe as a most monstrous mockery, as some unimaginable and unaccountable perversion of human nature. He gradually gets to believe that whatever may be the excellence of his domestic life or the greatness of his philosophy, the Indian is by birth fit only to be a slave, and education succeeds in perfecting him only in the art of slavery. And as slavery means to the European the permanent extinction of all the nobler possibilities that lie before man, servile India ceases altogether to engage his least consideration or enlist his sympathy; let her alone with her slave's philosophy and art, thinks he, she can be of no service to the future of the human race.

And the politics and politicians of India heighten further his convictions about the lowering nature and effect of slavery, and the impossibility of India ever lifting herself

to the level of civilised humanity. Her politics are the slave's politics whose method is prayer and petition and whose resentment or disapproval can find expression only in weeping and sobbing. And rebuff merely urges the Indian politician to greater efforts of supplication and to higher feats of wailing. And by such persistent mendicancy alone he aspires to win his country's liberty – liberty to which Europe has wilfully waded her way through a welter of blood after her struggles of centuries. No, cries the irritated European, India can never be fit to govern herself. This is the secret of John Morley's point-blank refusal to satisfy Moderate aspirations; he has thrown to them a plaything or two, for they deserve nothing better. And because Mr. Morley loves and prizes liberty more highly than the average man, therefore has he been the more intolerant of the Moderate's pretensions, the more merciless in felling to the ground all his cherished delusions based on his inverted conception of liberty. The Partition of Bengal Mr. Morley admits to be a wrong, but he will not undo it because it is a settled fact; in other words, in dealing with dependent India he refuses to observe the rules of political morality which he has himself so clearly enunciated; in enunciating them, he would say, he had in contemplation only the rights and obligations that arise between one free people and another, and not the relationship between a ruling race and their abjectly servile subjects. All his other pronouncements point to the same moral. And have we not heard of the common English labourer who on being harangued eloquently by a Moderate missionary about Indian grievances asked him bluntly if he was really relating the true state of affairs, and on being answered in the

affirmative told the missionary without much ceremony that a people who could submit to such wrongs and could think of nothing better than the sending of representatives to England to plead for their removal, fully deserved to be ruled by an arbitrary despotism? Unknowingly perhaps he was summarising the verdict of the civilised world on Indian politics. The moneymaking middle class in England say the same thing, and further strengthen their argument with the interesting inquiry, “What is to become of our boys if we leave the management of India in your hands?” The man from the Continent or America asks plainly, “How can the whole three hundred million of you be kept under by 70,000 tommies?”” (584-87)

### **8. An Englishman’s Treatment of an Indian**

“...an Englishman carries his conception of the white man’s burden and his benevolent sympathy for the race in whose interests he is unselfishly toiling under the Indian sun, so far as to kick an Indian to death. For this reassertion of British prestige he is fined Rs. 50 by a fellow white, who is equally conscious of the burden and equally flowing over with the milk of Morleyesque sympathy, but who has also to consider the health of Delhi which was threatened by the sweepers’ strike. We do not know who killed Ganga Uriya; we do know who killed the Delhi sweeper. The Indian murderer, if he had been caught, would have been hanged; the English manslaughterer has to pay Rs. 50 to the Government treasury, which may be regarded either as the price which the bureaucracy puts on Indian life or a sort of tax on the luxurious amusement of rupturing Indian spleens. We are surprised by the way that the Anglo-Indian Defence

Association has not as yet moved in the matter or made any protest against making a poor man pay so heavily for his amusements.” (597)

## **9. Limitations of a Despot and the Spirit in Which We Must Conquer**

“The despot in all ages can lay bonds and stripes and death on our body; his power is only limited by his will, for law is an instrument forged by himself and which he can turn to his own uses and morality is a thing which he regards not at all, or if he affects to regard it, he is cunning enough to throw a veil of words over his actions and mislead the distant and ill-informed opinion which is all he cares for. But if the despot can lay on the body the utmost ills of the scourge and the rack and the sword, if he can directly or indirectly plunder the goods of those who resist him and seek to crush them by wounding them in their dearest point of honour, the enthusiast for liberty can also turn suffering into strength, bonds into a glorious emancipation and death into the seed of a splendid and beneficent life. He can refuse to allow the tortures of the body to affect the calm and illumined strength of his soul where it sits, a Divine Being in the white radiance of its own self-existent bliss, rejoicing in all the glorious manifestations of its Will, rejoicing in its pleasures, rejoicing in its anguish, rejoicing in victory, rejoicing in defeat, rejoicing in life, rejoicing in death. For we in India who are enthusiasts for liberty, fight for no selfish lure, for no mere material freedom, for no mere economic predominance, but for our national right to that large freedom and noble life without which no spiritual emancipation is possible; for it is not among an enslaved,

degraded and perishing people that the Rishis and great spirits can long continue to be born. And **since the spiritual life of India is the first necessity of the world's future, we fight not only for our own political and spiritual freedom but for the spiritual emancipation of the human race.** With such a glorious cause to battle for, there ought to be no craven weakness among us, no flinching, no cowardly evasion of the consequences of our action. It is a mistake to whine when we are smitten, as if we had hoped to achieve liberty without suffering. To meet persecution with indifference, to take punishment quietly as a matter of course, with erect head and undimmed eyes, this is the spirit in which we must conquer.” (610-11)

### **10. The Straightforward Utterance of a Patriot and the Over-careful Language of Legality**

“...it might have been better if Srijut Bhupendranath had rejected even this brilliant legal assistance and relied on the frank and straightforward utterance which wells up from the depths of a strong and abiding feeling and profound intellectual conviction. The over-careful language of legality, guiding its feet with delicate scrupulousness among a million traps and pitfalls and intent only upon avoiding a stumble, that is one thing; the clear bold speech of the patriot speaking straight to his countrymen's hearts, enamoured of martyrdom, exalted with the passionate realisation of sacred liberty, that is quite another. Bhupendranath's statement was a political declaration, not a legal formula, and it should so have been expressed. Unfortunately it was toned down into legal form and lost half its force. In the original statement drawn up under the instructions of the accused he had

declared sans phrase, “I have done what I considered my duty to my country” and ended by saying, “I do not wish to make any farther statement or *to take any part in the case.*” This was clear enough; the editor of *Yugantar*, consistent with the views he had publicly professed, refused to do anything which would seem to be an acknowledgement of responsibility to the codified caprice or selfishness of the small handful of alien officials who call themselves the Government established by law. He had written with his eye not on the limitations imposed by the Penal Code, but on the needs of his country. This responsibility was to his countrymen, not to a group of English officials. To plead before a Court constituted by the bureaucracy, was to admit his responsibility to aliens and deny his responsibility to his countrymen.” (612-13)

### **11. Other People Cannot Give Us Enlightenment, Civilisation, Political Training etc. Which We Do Not Acquire Ourselves**

“it is nonsense to talk of other people guiding our destinies, that is only an euphemism for killing our destinies altogether; it is nonsense to talk of others giving us enlightenment, civilisation, political training, for the enlightenment that is given and not acquired brings not light but confusion, the civilisation that is imposed from outside kills a nation instead of invigorating it, and the training which is not acquired by our own experience and effort incapacitates and does not make efficient. The issue of freedom is therefore the only issue. All other issues are merely delusion and Maya, all other talk is the talk of men that sleep or are in intellectual and moral bondage.” (617)

## 12. The Way Freedom is Assured

“The princes of Bengal at the time of Plassey did not realise that we could save ourselves, they thought that something outside would save us. We were not enslaved by Clive, for not even a thousand Clives could have had strength enough to enslave us, we were enslaved by our own delusions, by the false conviction of weakness. And **the moment we get the full conviction of our strength, the conviction that we are for ever and inalienably free, and that nobody but ourselves can either take or keep from us that inalienable and priceless possession, from that moment freedom is assured.**” (618)

## 13. Bhupendra Nath Dutt – Swami Vivekananda’s Brother

“In the beginning of the *Yugantar* case one young man who was questioned by the police wished to take upon himself the responsibility for the incriminating articles, but the inquiring officer told him, “Whatever you may say, you will not save Bhupen Dutt; the mere fact that he is Swami Vivekananda’s brother will be enough to send him to prison.”” (621)

## 14. The Narrow Spirit of Caste System, the Ideal of Equality and the Spirit of Nationalism

“The baser ideas underlying the degenerate perversions of the original caste system, the mental attitude which bases them on a false foundation of caste, pride and arrogance, of a divinely ordained superiority depending on the accident of birth, of a fixed and intolerant inequality, are inconsistent

with the supreme teaching, the basic spirit of Hinduism which sees the one invariable and indivisible Divinity in every individual being. Nationalism is simply the passionate aspiration for the realisation of that Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions as political, social or economic factors, are yet really and fundamentally one and equal. **In the ideal of Nationalism which India will set before the world, there will be an essential equality between man and man, between caste and caste, between class and class, all being** as Mr. Tilak has pointed out **different but equal and united parts of the Virat Purusha as realised in the nation.** The insistent preaching of our religion and the work of the Indian Nationalist is to bring home to every one of his countrymen this ideal of their country's religion and philosophy. We are intolerant of autocracy because it is the denial in politics of this essential equality, we object to the modern distortion of the caste system because it is the denial in society of the same essential equality. While we insist on reorganising the nation into a democratic unity politically, we recognise that the same principle of reorganisation ought to and inevitably will assert itself socially; even if, as our opponents choose to imagine, we are desirous of confining its working to politics, our attempts will be fruitless, for the principle once realised in politics must inevitably assert itself in society. No monopoly racial or hereditary can form part of the Nationalist's scheme of the future, his dream of the day for the advent of which he is striving and struggling.

The caste system was once productive of good, and as a fact has been a necessary phase of human progress through

which all the civilizations of the world have had to pass. The autocratic form of government has similarly had its use in the development of the world's polity, for there was certainly a time when it was the only kind of political organisation that made the preservation of society possible. The Nationalist does not quarrel with the past, but he insists on its transformation, the transformation of individual or class autocracy into the autocracy, self-rule or Swaraj, of the nation and of the fixed, hereditary, anti-democratic caste-organisation into the pliable, self-adapting, democratic distribution of function at which socialism aims. In the present absolutism in politics and the present narrow caste-organisation in society he finds a negation of that equality which his religion enjoins. Both must be transformed. The historic problem that the present attitude of Indian Nationalism at once brings to the mind, as to how a caste-governed society could co-exist with a democratic religion and philosophy, we do not propose to consider here today. We only point out that Indian Nationalism must by its inherent tendencies move towards the removal of unreasoning and arbitrary distinctions and inequalities. Ah! he will say, this is exactly what we Englishmen have been telling you all these years. You must get rid of your caste before you can have democracy. There is just a little flaw in this advice of the Anglo-Indian monitors, it puts the cart before the horse, and that is the reason why we have always refused to act upon it.

It does not require much expenditure of thought to find out that the only way to rid the human mind of abuses and superstitions is through a transformation of spirit and not merely of machinery. We must educate every Indian,

man, woman and child, in the ideals of our religion and philosophy before we can rationally expect our society to reshape itself in the full and perfect spirit of the Vedantic gospel of equality.” (679-81)

### **15. Caste and Democracy\***

“We fear our correspondent who has criticised on another page the consistency of our views on caste, has hardly taken any trouble to understand the real drift of our articles. His attitude seems to be that we must be either entirely for caste as it at present exists or entirely against the institution and condemn it root and branch in the style of the ordinary unthinking social reformer. Because on the one hand we protested against the ignorant abuse of the institution often indulged in simply because it is different in form and spirit from European institutions, and on the other hand emphasized the perversions of its form and spirit and the necessity of its transformation in the pure spirit of Hinduism, our correspondent imagines that we are inconsistent and guilty of adopting successively two different and incompatible attitudes. Our position is perfectly clear and straightforward. **Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society**, just as much as class in Europe, **but the principle on which the distribution was based in India was peculiar to this country.** The civilisation of Europe has always been preponderatingly material and the division of classes was material in its principles and material in its objects, but our civilisation has always been preponderatingly spiritual and moral, and caste division in India had a spiritual object and a spiritual and moral basis. The division of classes in Europe

had its root in a distribution of powers and rights and developed and still develops through a struggle of conflicting interests; its aim was merely the organisation of society for its own sake and mainly indeed for its economic convenience. The division of castes in India was conceived as a distribution of duties. **A man's caste depended on his dharma, his spiritual, moral and practical duties, and his dharma depended on his swabhava, his temperament and inborn nature.** A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which could alone qualify him for the task. The Kshatriya was a Kshatriya not merely because he was the son of warriors and princes, but because he discharged the duty of protecting the country and preserving the high courage and manhood of the nation, and he had to cultivate the princely temperament and acquire the strong and lofty Samurai training which alone fitted him for his duties. So it was with the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Sudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common good. This was what we meant when we said that caste was a socialistic institution. No doubt there was a gradation of social respect which placed the function of the Brahmin at the summit and the function of the Sudra at the base, but this inequality was accidental, external, *vyavaharika*. **Essentially there was, between the devout Brahmin and the devout Sudra, no inequality in the single Virat Purusha of which each was a necessary part.** Chokha Mela, the Maratha Pariah,

became the guru of Brahmins proud of their caste purity; the Chandala taught Shankaracharya: for the Brahman was revealed in the body of the Pariah and in the Chandala there was the utter presence of Shiva the Almighty. Heredity entered into caste divisions, and in the light of the conclusions of modern knowledge who shall say erroneously? But it entered into it as a subordinate element. For Hindu civilisation being spiritual based its institutions on spiritual and moral foundations and subordinated the material elements and material considerations. Caste therefore was not only an institution which ought to be immune from the cheap second-hand denunciations so long in fashion, but a supreme necessity without which Hindu civilisation could not have developed its distinctive character or worked out its unique mission.

But to recognise this is not to debar ourselves from pointing out its later perversions and desiring its transformation. **It is the nature of human institutions to degenerate, to lose their vitality, and decay, and the first sign of decay is the loss of flexibility and oblivion of the essential spirit in which they were conceived.** The spirit is permanent, the body changes; and a body which refuses to change must die. **The spirit expresses itself in many ways while itself remaining essentially the same, but the body must change to suit its changing environments if it wishes to live.** There is no doubt that the institution of caste degenerated. It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications which, once essential, have now come to be subordinate and even immaterial and is determined by the purely material tests of occupation and birth. By this change it has set itself against the fundamental tendency of Hinduism

which is to insist on the spiritual and subordinate the material and thus lost most of its meaning. The spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition. It is these perversions which we wish to see set right. The institution must transform itself so as to fulfil its essential and permanent object under the changed conditions of modern times. If it refuses to change, it will become a mere social survival and crumble to pieces. If it transforms itself, it will yet play a great part in the fulfilment of civilisation.

Our correspondent accuses us of attempting to corrupt society with the intrusion of the European idea of Socialism. **Socialism is not an European idea, it is essentially Asiatic and especially Indian.** What is called Socialism in Europe, is the old Asiatic attempt to effect a permanent solution of the economic problem of society which will give man leisure and peace to develop undisturbed his higher self. Without Socialism democracy would remain a tendency that never reached its fulfilment, a rule of the masses by a small aristocratic or monied class with the consent and votes of the masses, or a tyranny of the artisan classes over the rest. **Socialistic democracy is the only true democracy, for without it we cannot get the equalised and harmonised distribution of functions, each part of the community existing for the good of all and not struggling for its own separate interests,** which will give humanity as a whole the necessary conditions in which it can turn its best energies to its higher development. To realise those conditions is also the aim of Hindu civilisation and the original intention of caste. The fulfilment of Hinduism is the fulfilment of the

highest tendencies of human civilisation and it must include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life. It will include democracy and Socialism also, purifying them, raising them above the excessive stress on the economic adjustments which are the means, and teaching them to fix their eyes more constantly and clearly on the moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection of mankind which is the end.” (682-85)

## **16. India & Its People**

“This great and ancient nation was once the fountain of human light, the apex of human civilisation, the exemplar of courage and humanity, the perfection of good government and settled society, the mother of all religions, the teacher of all wisdom and philosophy. It has suffered much at the hands of inferior civilisations and more savage peoples; it has gone down into the shadow of night and tasted often of the bitterness of death. Its pride has been trampled into the dust and its glory has departed. Hunger and misery and despair have become the masters of this fair soil, these noble hills, these ancient rivers, these cities whose life-story goes back into prehistoric night. But do you think that therefore God has utterly abandoned us and given us up for ever to be a mere convenience for the West, the helots of its commerce, and the feeders of its luxury and pride? **We are still God’s chosen people and all our calamities have been but a discipline of suffering, because for the great mission before us prosperity was not sufficient, adversity had also its training; to taste the glory of power and beneficence and joy was not sufficient, the knowledge of weakness and torture and humiliation was also needed;** it was not enough that we

should be able to fill the role of the merciful sage and the beneficent king, we had also to experience in our own persons the feelings of the outcaste and the slave. **But now that lesson is learned, and the time for our resurgence is come. And no power shall stay that uprising and no opposing interest shall deny us the right to live, to be ourselves, to set our seal once more upon the world.** Every race and people that oppressed us even in our evening and our midnight has been broken into pieces and their glory turned into a legend of the past.” (707-08)

### **17. The Mistake of Egyptian Nationalists and the Impossibility of Keeping India Subjugated Due to the Awakening of the Masses**

“The Egyptian nationalists made the mistake of trying to accomplish their ends by diplomacy, by reliance upon European support and, when that failed them, by a military struggle between their armed force and the British intruders, without first awakening the people and inspiring them with the passion for liberty which can alone give a long-subject nation the strength to endure and survive, to thrive on disaster and overcome defeat. The work of Mazzini must be done before the work of Cavour and Garibaldi can begin. In India the awakening has come, the passion for liberty is abroad, and we have the satisfaction of knowing that the fire we have kindled is unquenchable and the impetus given is one against which no human power can stand. In Egypt Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. John Morley and their allies had only to create an excuse for armed interference and to crush a feeble military resistance in order that their nefarious work might be done. But to coerce indignation and resistance of a whole people is

a more difficult task than to win battles, for here it is not the engines of war, but the engines of the spirit which decide the conflict, and when the motive power on one side comes from Heaven itself while the source is merely human, the task of despotism becomes an impossibility.” (716)

### **18. Nationalism**

“Nationalism is an *avatara* and cannot be slain. Nationalism is a divinely appointed *shakti* of the Eternal and must do its God-given work before it returns to the bosom of the Universal Energy from which it came.” (750)

### **19. Sri Ramakrishna and the Work of Salvation of India**

“...the man who had the greatest influence and has done the most to regenerate Bengal, could not read and write a single word. He was a man who had been what they call absolutely useless to the world. But he had this one divine faculty in him, that he had more than faith and had realised God. He was a man who lived what many would call the life of a madman, a man without intellectual training, a man without any outward sign of culture or civilisation, a man who lived on the alms of others, such a man as the English-educated Indian would ordinarily talk of as one useless to society; even if he does not call him a bane to society, he will call him useless to society. He will say, “This man is ignorant. What does he know? What can he teach me who have received from the West all that it can teach?” But God knew what he was doing. He sent that man to Bengal and set him in the temple of Dakshineswar in Calcutta, and from North and South and East and West, the educated men, men

who were the pride of the university, who had studied all that Europe can teach, came to fall at the feet of this ascetic. The work of salvation, the work of raising India was begun.” (821-22)

## **20. Swadeshi, Boycott and the Conduct of the Marwaris**

“People have accepted Swadeshim in total disregard of the quality and price of the Swadeshi goods because of the awakening of the national life everywhere in the shape of the Swadeshi and boycott movements started on account of the Partition of Bengal. Though the rates of the Swadeshi navigation companies were two or three times greater than those of the foreign companies, yet the former were patronised by the patriots. This is due to the development of the new force.

It is well known to all what efforts were made by the young men of Bengal. It is they who worked for the boycott. They purchased Swadeshi cloth and sold it at cost price without taking any profit from the villagers in the mofussil. If at that time the Bombay merchants and mill-owners and the Marwaris of Calcutta had co-operated with us sincerely, the Swadeshi and boycott movements would have been in a different condition today. The mill-owners of Bombay took advantage of the Swadeshi movement and enhanced their rates, thus putting impediments in our way and compelling us to buy the same goods dearly. We had to work hard to command the market, because our Marwari brethren did not give up their profession as brokers and continued to sell English goods.

It is very necessary to boycott English goods. Did not

the English boycott your goods? A hundred years ago, your trades and industries were in a flourishing condition and your goods, after satisfying the demands of the whole of India, used to be exported to other countries. But by making all sorts of crooked laws, they managed to shut out your goods from our markets and, on the contrary, afforded all sorts of facilities enabling the foreign merchants to flood the market with their own goods. Our Marwari brethren ought to have understood this. They purposely or through obstinacy born of ignorance caused a loss to the country, so God has punished them for it. All-powerful God brought down calamity on them, considering that those who acted against the interests of His children will never come to their senses unless they are punished. The Marwaris are mostly Jains. Government has taken possession of Parswanath Hill, and on the spot where people used to flock for worship, there will be bungalows erected in which there will be dancing and *tamashas*, and the eating and drinking of prohibited foods and drinks. What does Government care for the entreaties, petitions and deputations of the Jains? God must have designed this to serve as an eye-opener to these Marwaris and to show them how much regard those English have for their welfare – the English for whose benefit the Marwaris acted treacherously towards their own people. The Marwaris ought to take a lesson from the calamity and be prepared to act in accordance with God’s design.” (861-62)

## **21. National Education**

“Education should be imparted on national lines and under national control. **True national education consists in awakening in one’s mind the highest ideas of national**

**activity, which make one forget oneself and feel that he does not exist separately from his country.** The expressions “national lines” and “national control” are very important, and therefore we insisted on having them in the resolution of the National Congress.” (863)

## **22. Work and Ideal\***

“We are being advised by many nowadays not to quarrel over ideals but to attend to the work lying nearest to our hands. We must not talk of faith and hope, or revel in Utopian visions but run to the nearest scene of work, be one of the drudging millions, try to improve their lot and set ourselves to the task of mitigating human sufferings. The old villages are so many pictures of desolation and distress, they are the hot-beds of malaria, the sepulchres of our greatness; so go to them and try to reinstate our tutelary angel in his ancient seat. Or we must erect mills, start small industries, educate the masses, do philanthropic work and not talk of free or united India until this is done. When the spade work has not yet begun, why talk of a fine superstructure and create difficulties in the way of solid and substantial work? You have not yet put the plough to your land, why quarrel over the prospective produce and sow seeds of dissension amongst yourselves before you have sown the seed that is to yield any good to the country? The buoyant Nationalism of the day is sought to be repressed by such timid truisms and guarded amenities with which our advisers justify their placid course of life. They want us to take note of our limitations, our environment and not to tempt the country to the skies with wings so heavily weighed down. Common sense, it is said, should be our guide and not imagination.

All this is well, and we would be the last to deny the necessity of the work so much insisted upon. But the work is nothing without the ideal, and will be fruitless if divorced from its inspiring force. Which is common sense? To tread the right path or to avoid it because it promises to be thorny? Which is common sense? To mislead ourselves or to speak the truth and do the right? The uplifting of a nation cannot be accomplished by a few diplomatic politicians. **The spirit to serve, the spirit to work, the spirit to suffer must be roused.** Men in their ordinary utilitarian course of life do not feel called upon to serve anyone except themselves.

The daily duties are engrossing enough for the average man. His own individual prospects in life generally become his sole concern. He is propelled by the inertia of his own individual needs, and if any other sort of work is expected of him a different and more intense force must be continuously applied to him to produce the necessary energy. Or, in other words, we must continuously appeal to his better nature, we must evoke the spiritual in him, we must call forth his moral enthusiasm.

These may not be human nature's daily food, they may not be necessary for our daily life, they may not have their use in the ordinary selfish pursuits, but they are essential for working a change in our social or political life. Buddha only preached and lived a holy life, Christ only preached and lived a holy life, Shankara only preached and lived a holy life, and they have each worked a mighty revolution in the history of the world. **Inspiration is real work. Let the truly inspiring word be uttered and it will breathe life into dry bones. Let the inspiring life be lived and it**

**will produce workers by thousands.** England draws her inspiration from the names of Shakespeare and Milton, Mill and Bacon, Nelson and Wellington. They did not visit the sickroom, they did not do philanthropic work in the parishes, they did not work spinning jennies in Manchester, they did not produce cutlery in Sheffield, but theirs are the names which have made nationhood possible in England, which have supplied work and enterprise with its motive and sustaining force. England is commercially great because Adam Smith gave her the secret of free-trade. England is politically great because her national ideals have been bold and high, not because of her parish work and municipalities. He was no fool or Utopian who wished to be the maker of songs for his country rather than its law giver. Wolfe had Gray's "Elegy" recited to him on his death-bed, and said he would rather be the author of these lines than the captor of Quebec. These are the utterances of great workers and heroes, they have given the greatest credit to the givers of ideas and ideals, because they have felt in their own life where the inspiration for work comes from. **Work without ideals is a false gospel.**" (879-81)

### **23. The West and India**

"The West is full of interest in phenomena, and it is for this reason that no great religion has ever come out of the West. Asia on the other hand is full of interest in Brahman and she is therefore the cradle of every great religion. Christianity, Mahomedanism, Buddhism and the creeds of China and Japan are all offshoots of one great and eternal religion of which India has the keeping." (890)

## **24. India's Mission**

**“So with India rests the future of the world. Whenever she is aroused from her sleep, she gives forth some wonderful shining ray of light to the world which is enough to illuminate the nations.** Others live for centuries on what is to her the thought of a moment. God gave to her the book of Ancient Wisdom and bade her keep it sealed in her heart, until the time should come for it to be opened. Sometimes a page or a chapter is revealed, sometimes only a single sentence. Such sentences have been the inspiration of ages and fed humanity for many hundreds of years. **So too when India sleeps, materialism grows apace and the light is covered up in darkness. But when materialism thinks herself about to triumph, lo and behold! a light rushes out from the East and where is Materialism? Returned to her native night.”** (890)

## **25. European's Christianity and India's Vedanta**

“When Europe left Christianity to the monk and the ascetic and forgot the teachings of the Galilean, she exposed herself to a terrible fate which will yet overtake her. God in man is the whole revelation and the whole of religion. What Christianity taught dimly, Hinduism made plain to the intellect in Vedanta. When India remembers the teaching she received from Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva, when she realises what Sri Ramakrishna came to reveal, then she will rise. Her very life is Vedanta.

**If anyone thinks that we are merely intellectual beings, he is not a Hindu. Hinduism leaves the glorification of intellectuality to those who have never**

seen God. She is commissioned by Him to speak only of His greatness and majesty and she has so spoken for thousands of years. When we first received a European education, we allowed ourselves to be misled by the light of science. **Science is a light within a limited room, not the sun which illumines the world. The Apara Vidya is the sum of science but there is a higher Vidya, a mightier knowledge.** When we are under the influence of the lower knowledge, we imagine that we are doing everything and try to reason out the situation we find ourselves in, as if our intellect were sovereign and omnipotent. But this is an attitude of delusion and Maya. **Whoever has once felt the glory of God within him can never again believe that the intellect is supreme. There is a higher voice, there is a more unfailling oracle. It is in the heart where God resides. He works through the brain, but the brain is only one of His instruments. Whatever the brain may plan, the heart knows first and whoever can go beyond the brain to the heart, will hear the voice of the Eternal.**” (891-92)

## **26. National Education**

“**National education cannot be defined briefly in one or two sentences, but we may describe it tentatively as the education which starting with the past and making full use of the present builds up a great nation.** Whoever wishes to cut off the nation from its past, is no friend of our national growth. Whoever fails to take advantage of the present is losing us the battle of life. We must therefore save for India all that she has stored up of knowledge, character and noble thought in her immemorial past. We must acquire for her the best knowledge that Europe can give her and assimilate it to

her own peculiar type of national temperament. We must introduce the best methods of teaching humanity has developed, whether modern or ancient. And all these we must harmonise into a system which will be impregnated with the spirit of self-reliance so as to build up men and not machines – national men, able men, men fit to carve out a career for themselves by their own brain power and resource, fit to meet the shocks of life and breast the waves of adventure. So shall the Indian people cease to sleep and become once more a people of heroes, patriots, originators, so shall it become a nation and no longer a disorganised mass of men.

**National education must therefore be on national lines and under national control. This necessity is the very essence of its being.** No one who has not grasped it, can hope to build up a National University. Mrs. Besant has recently begun a campaign in favour of national education and in a recent speech has outlined her idea of a National University.” (895)

## **27. The Future of India**

“One thing only we are sure of, and one thing we wear as a life-belt which will buoy us up on the waves of the chaos that is coming on the land. This is the fixed and unalterable faith in an overruling Purpose which is raising India once more from the dead, the fixed and unalterable intention to fight for the renovation of her ancient life and glory. Swaraj is the lifebelt, Swaraj the pilot, Swaraj the star of guidance. If a great social revolution is necessary, it is because the ideal of Swaraj cannot be accomplished by a nation bound to forms which are no longer expressive of the ancient and immutable Self

of India. She must change the rags of the past so that her beauty may be readorned. She must alter her bodily appearance so that her soul may be newly expressed. We need not fear that any change will turn her into a second-hand Europe. Her individuality is too mighty for such a degradation, her soul too calm and self-sufficient for such a surrender. If again an economical revolution is inevitable, it is because the fine but narrow edifice of her old industrial life will not allow of Swaraj in commerce and industry. The industrial energies of a free and perfect national life demand a mightier scope and wider channels. Neither need we fear that the economic revolution will land us in the same diseased and disordered state of society as now offends the nobler feelings of humanity in Europe. India can never so far forget the teaching which is her life and the secret of her immortality as to become a replica of the organized selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified in the West by the name of Industry. She will create her own conditions, find out the secret of order which Socialism in vain struggles to find and teach the peoples of the earth once more how to harmonize the world and the spirit.

If we realise this truth, if we perceive in all that is happening a great and momentous transformation necessary not only for us but for the whole world, we shall fling ourselves without fear or misgivings into the times which are upon us. India is the *guru* of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit. But Swaraj is the necessary condition of her work and before she can do the work, she must fulfil the condition.” (905-06)

## **28. The True Cause of the Failure of India to Achieve an Organised Self-Conscious Nationality and How the British Helped Prepare the Irresistible Movement Towards National Unity – the Ideal of National Swaraj**

“Ancient India could not build itself into a single united nation, not because of caste or social differences as the European writers assert, – caste and class have existed in nations which achieved a faultless national unity, – but because the old polity of the Hindus allowed the village to live to itself, the clan to live to itself, the province or smaller race-unit to live to itself. The village, sufficient to itself, took no interest in the great wars and revolutions which affected only the ruling clans of the kingdom including it in its territorial jurisdiction. The Kshatriya clans fought and married and made peace among themselves, and were the only political units out of which a nation might have been built. But the clan too was so attached to its separate existence that it was not till the clans were destroyed on the battlefield of Kurukshetra that larger national units could be built out of their ruins. Small kingdoms took their place based on provincial or racial divisions and until the inrush of foreign peoples an attempt was in progress to build them into one nation by the superimposition of a single imperial authority. Many causes prevented the success of the attempt, and the provincial unit has always remained the highest expression of the nation-building tendencies in India. One cause perhaps more than any other contributed to the failure of the centripetal tendency to attain self-fulfilment, and that was the persistence of the village community which prevented the people, the real nation, from taking any part in the great struggles out of which a

nation should have emerged. **In other countries the people had to take part in the triumphs, disasters and failures of their rulers either as citizens or at least as soldiers, but in India they were left to their little isolated republics with no farther interest than the payment of a settled tax in return for protection by the supreme power. This was the true cause of the failure of India to achieve a distinct organized and self-conscious nationality.** It is worthy of notice that the Indian race in which the national idea attained its most conscious expression and most nearly attained realization, was the Mahratta people who drew their strength from the village democracies and brought them to interest themselves in the struggle for national independence. If the Mahrattas had been able to rise above the idea of provincial or racial separateness, they would have established a permanent empire and neither of the Wellesleys could have broken their power by diplomacy or in the field. The British, historians have told us, conquered India in a fit of absence of mind. In a fit of absence of mind also they destroyed the separate life of our village communities and, by thus removing the greatest obstacle in the way of national development, prepared the irresistible movement towards national unity which now fills them with dismay. The provinces have been brought together, the village has been destroyed. It only remains for the people to fulfil their destiny.

We are now turning our eyes again to the village under the stress of an instinct of self-preservation and part of our programme is to recreate village organization. In doing so we must always remember that the village can be so organized as to prove a serious obstacle to national cohesion. One or two of our leading publicists have sometimes expressed

themselves as if our salvation lay in the village and not in the larger organization of the nation. Swaraj has been sometimes interpreted as a return to the old conditions of self-sufficient village life leaving the imperial authority to itself, to tax and pass laws as it pleased – ignored because it is too strong to be destroyed. Even those who see the futility of ignoring Government which seeks to destroy every centre of strength, however minute, except itself, sometimes insist on the village as the secret of our life and ask us to give up our ambitious strivings after national Swaraj and realise it first in the village. Such counsel is dangerous, even if it were possible to follow it. Nothing should be allowed to distract us from the mighty ideal of Swaraj, national and pan-Indian. This is no alien or exotic ideal, it is merely the conscious attempt to fulfil the great centripetal tendency which has pervaded the grandiose millenniums of her history, to complete the work which Srikrishna began, which Chandragupta and Asoka and the Gupta Kings continued, which Akbar almost brought to realisation, for which Shivaji was born and Bajirao fought and planned. The organization of our villages is an indispensable work to which we must immediately set our hands, but we must be careful so to organize them as to make them feel that they are imperfect parts of a single national unity, and dependent at every turn on the co-operation first of the district, secondly of the province, and finally of the nation. The day of the independent village or group of villages has gone and must not be revived; the nation demands its hour of fulfilment and seeks to gather the village life of its rural population into a mighty, single and compact democratic nationality. We must make the nation what the village community was of old, self-sufficient, self-centred,

autonomous and exclusive – the ideal of national Swaraj.”  
(908-10)

## 29. The Foundations of Hinduism

“...the foundations of Hinduism are truth and manhood, *esha dharmah sanatanah*. **Hinduism is no sect or dogmatic creed, no bundle of formulas, no set of social rules, but a mighty, eternal and universal truth.** It has learned the secret of preparing man’s soul for the divine consummation of identity with the infinite existence of God; rules of life and formulas of belief are only sacred and useful when they help that great preparation. And **the first rule of life is that man must live the highest life of which he is capable, overcoming selfishness, overcoming fear, overcoming the temptation to palter with truth in order to earn earthly favours.** The first formula of belief is *satyannasti paro dharmah*, there is no higher law of conduct than truth.” (928)

## 30. Asiatic Democracy and India’s Mission in Humanity

“India from ancient times had received the gospel of Vedanta which sought to establish the divine unity of man in spirit; but in order to secure an ordered society in which she could develop her spiritual insight and perfect her civilization, she had invented the system of caste which by corruptions and departures from caste ideals came to be an obstacle to the fulfilment in society of the Vedantic ideal. From the time of Buddha to that of the saints of Maharashtra every great religious awakening has sought to restore the ancient meaning of Hinduism and reduce caste to its original subordinate importance as a social convenience, to exorcise the spirit of caste pride and restore that of brotherhood and the eternal

principles of love and justice in society. But the feudal spirit had taken possession of India and the feudal spirit is wedded to inequality and the pride of caste.

When the feudal system was broken in Europe by the rise of the middle class, the ideals of Christianity began to emerge once more to light, but by this time the Christian Church had itself become feudalized, and the curious spectacle presents itself of Christian ideals struggling to establish themselves by the destruction of the very institution which had been created to preserve Christianity. When the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity were declared at the time of the French Revolution and mankind demanded that society should recognise them as the foundation of its structure, they were associated with a fierce revolt against the relics of feudalism and against the travesty of the Christian religion which had become an integral part of that feudalism. This was the weakness of European democracy and the source of its failure. It took as its motive the rights of man and not the *dharma* of humanity; it appealed to the selfishness of the lower classes against the pride of the upper; it made hatred and internecine war the permanent allies of Christian ideals and wrought an inextricable confusion which is the modern malady of Europe. It was in vain that the genius of Mazzini rediscovered the heart of Christianity and sought to remodel European ideas; the French Revolution had become the starting point of European democracy and coloured the European mind. Now that democracy has returned to Asia, its cradle and home, it will be purged of its foreign elements and restored to its original purity. The movements of the nineteenth century in India were European movements, they were coloured with the hues of the West. Instead of seeking

for strength in the spirit, they adopted the machinery and motives of Europe, the appeal to the rights of humanity or the equality of social status and an impossible dead level which Nature has always refused to allow. Mingled with these false gospels was a strain of hatred and bitterness, which showed itself in the condemnation of Brahminical priestcraft, the hostility to Hinduism and the ignorant breaking away from the hallowed traditions of the past. What was true and eternal in that past was likened to what was false or transitory, and the nation was in danger of losing its soul by an insensate surrender to the aberrations of European materialism. Not in this spirit was India intended to receive the mighty opportunity which the impact of Europe gave to her. **When the danger was greatest, a number of great spirits were sent to stem the tide flowing in from the West and recall her to her mission; for, if she had gone astray the world would have gone astray with her.**

**Her mission is to point back humanity to the true source of human liberty, human equality, human brotherhood. When man is free in spirit, all other freedom is at his command; for the Free is the Lord who cannot be bound.** When he is liberated from delusion, he perceives the divine equality of the world which fulfils itself through love and justice, and this perception transfuses itself into the law of government and society. When he has perceived this divine equality, he is brother to the whole world, and in whatever position he is placed he serves all men as his brothers by the law of love, by the law of justice. **When this perception becomes the basis of religion, of philosophy, of social speculation and political aspiration, then will liberty, equality and fraternity take their place in the structure of**

**society and the Satya Yuga return.** This is the Asiatic reading of democracy which India must rediscover for herself before she can give it to the world. It is the *dharma* of every man to be free in soul, bound to service not by compulsion but by love; to be equal in spirit, apportioned his place in society by his capacity to serve society, not by the interested selfishness of others; to be in harmonious relations with his brother men, linked to them by mutual love and service, not by shackles of servitude, or the relations of the exploiter and the exploited, the eater and the eaten. It has been said that democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideas. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action, and regain their deep and eternal unity. **Dharma is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe.** Through Dharma the Asiatic evolution fulfils itself; this is her secret.” (930-32)

### **31. The Alchemy of Faith and Aspiration**

**“All that we do and attempt proceeds from faith, and if we are deficient in faith nothing can be accomplished.** When we are deficient in faith our work begins to flag and failure is frequent; but if we have faith things are done for us. No great work has ever been done without this essential courage. Misled by egoism, we believe that we are working, that the results of what we do are our creation, and when anything has to be done we ask ourselves whether we have the strength, the means, the requisite qualities, but in reality all

work is done by the will of God and when faith in Him is the mainspring of our actions, success is inevitable. Sometimes we wish a thing very intensely and our wish is accomplished. The wish was in fact a prayer, and all sincere prayer receives its answer. It need not be consciously addressed to God, because prayer is not a form of words but an aspiration. If we aspire, we pray. But the aspiration must be absolutely unselfish, not alloyed by the thought of petty advantages or lower aims if it is to succeed. When we mingle self with our aspirations, we weaken to that extent the strength of the prayer and the success is proportionately less.” (937)

### **32. The Higher and the Lower Self and the Working of the Will**

“Whoever believes in God, rises above his lower self; for God is the true self of the Universe and of everything within the Universe. When we rely upon our lower self, we are left to that lower self, and succeed or fail according to our strength of body or intellect under the law of our past life and actions. There is one law for the lower self and another for the higher. The lower self is in bondage to its past; the higher is lord of the past, the present and the future. So the will of the lower self is born of *abankara* and limited by *abankara*, but the will of the higher self is beyond *abankara* and cannot be limited by it. It is omnipotent. But so long as it works through the body, it works under the laws of time, space and causality, and we have to wait for its fulfilment till the time is ready, the environment prepared, the immediate causes brought about. **The will once at work infallibly brings about the necessary conditions; all we have to do is to allow it to work.**” (937-38)

### **33. The Early Indian Polity\***

“The principle of popular rule is the possession of the reins of government by the mass of the people, but by the possession is not intended necessarily the actual exercise of administration. When the people are able to approve or to disapprove of any action of the Government with the certainty that such approval or disapproval will be absolutely effective, the spirit of democracy is present even if the body is not evolved. India in her ancient polity possessed this spirit of democracy. Like all Aryan nations she started with the three great divisions of the body politic, King, Lords and Commons, which have been the sources of the various forms of government evolved by the modern nations. In the period of the Mahabharata we find that the King is merely the head of the race, possessed of executive power but with no right to legislate and even in the exercise of his executive functions unable to transgress by a hair’s breadth the laws which are the sum of the customs of the race. Even within this limited scope he cannot act in any important matter without consulting the chief men of the race who are usually the elders and warriors; often he is a cipher, a dignified President, an ornamental feature of the polity which is in the hands of the nobles. His position is that of first among equals, not that of an absolute prince or supreme ruler. We find this conception of kingship continued till the present day in the Rajput States; at Udaipur, for instance, no alienation of land can take place without the signature of all the nobles; although the Maharaja is the head of the State, the sacred descendant of the Sun, his power is a delegated authority. The rule of the King is hereditary, but only so long as he is approved of by the people. A tyrannical king can be

resisted, an unfit heir can be put aside on the representation of the Commons. This idea of kingship is the old Aryan idea, it is limited monarchy and not the type of despotism which is called by the Western writers Oriental, though it existed for centuries in Europe and has never been universal in Asia.

The Council of Chiefs is a feature of Indian polity universal in the time of the Mahabharata. That great poem is full of accounts of the meetings of these Councils and some of the most memorable striking events of the story are there transacted. The Udyoga Parva especially gives detailed accounts of the transactions of these Council meetings with the speeches of the princely orators. The King sits as President, hears both sides and seems to decide partly on his own responsibility, partly according to the general sense of the assembly. The opinion of the Council was not decided by votes, an invention of the Greeks, but as in the older Aryan systems, was taken individually from each Councillor. The King was the final arbiter and responsible for the decision, except in nations like the Yadavas where he seems to have been little more than an ornamental head of an aristocratic polity.

Finally, the Commons in the Mahabharata are not represented by any assembly, because the times are evidently a period of war and revolution in which the military caste had gained an abnormal preponderance. The opinion of the people expresses itself in public demonstrations of spontaneous character, but does not seem to have weighed with the proud and self-confident nobles who ruled them. This feature of the Mahabharata is obviously peculiar to the times, for we find that the Buddhist records preserve to us

the true form of ancient Indian polity. The nations among whom Buddha lived were free communities in which the people assembled as in Greek and Italian States to decide their own affairs. A still more striking instance of the political existence of the Commons is to be found in the Ramayana. We are told that on the occasion of the association of Rama as Yuvaraj in the government, Dasaratha summoned a sort of States General of the Realm to which delegates of the different provinces and various orders, religious, military and popular were summoned in order to give their sanction to the act of the King. A speech from the throne is delivered in which the King states the reasons for his act, solicits the approval of his people and in case of their refusal of sanction, asks them to meet the situation by a counter-proposal of their own. The assembly then meets “separately and together”, in other words, the various Orders of the Realm consult first among themselves and then together and decide to give their sanction to the King’s proposal.

The growth of large States in India was fatal to the continuance of the democratic element in the constitution. The idea of representation had not yet been developed, and without the principle of representation democracy is impossible in a large State. The Greeks were obliged to part with their cherished liberty as soon as large States began to enter into the Hellenic world; the Romans were obliged to change their august and cherished institutions for the most absolute form of monarchy as soon as they had become a great Empire; and democracy disappeared from the world until the slow development of the principle of representation enabled the spirit of democracy to find a new body in which it could be reborn. The contact with Greek and Persian

absolutism seems to have developed in India the idea of the divinity of Kinghood which had always been a part of the Aryan system; but while the Aryan King was divine because he was the incarnate life of the race, the new idea saw a divinity in the person of the King as an individual, – a conception which favoured the growth of absolutism. The monarchy of Chandragupta and Asoka seems to have been of the new type, copied perhaps from the Hellenistic empires, in which the nobles and the commons have disappeared and a single individual rules with absolute power through the instrumentality of officials. The Hindu King, however, never became a despot like the Caesars, he never grasped the power of legislation but remained the executor of laws over which he had no control nor could he ignore the opinion of the people. When most absolute, he has existed only to secure the order and welfare of society, and has never enjoyed immunity from resistance or the right to disregard the representations of his subjects. The pure absolutist type of monarchy entered India with the Mahomedans who had taken it from Europe and Persia and it has never been accepted in its purity by the Hindu temperament.” (943-46)

### **34. British Education**

**“British education has denationalised the educated community, laid waste the fertile soil of the Indian intellect, suppressed originality and invention, created a gulf between the classes and the masses and done its best to kill that spirituality which is the soul of India.** The petty privileges which British statecraft has thrown to us as morsels from the rich repast of liberty, have pauperised us politically, preserved all that was low, weak and dependent in our political

temperament and discouraged the old robust manhood of our forefathers.” (969-70)

### **35. Sri Ramakrishna – the Culmination of Indian Spritual Tradition**

“Mankind have a natural inclination to hero-worship and the great men who have done wonders for human civilisation will always be the inspiration of future ages. We are Hindus and naturally spiritual in our temperament, because **the work which we have to do for humanity is a work which no other nation can accomplish, the spiritualisation of the race; so the men whom we worship are those who have helped the spiritual progress of mankind.** Without being sceptical no spiritual progress is possible, for blind adoration is only the first stage in the spiritual development of the soul. We are wont to be spiritually sceptical, to hesitate to acknowledge to ourselves anything we have not actually experienced by the process of silent communion with God, so that the great sages of antiquity were as sceptical as any modern rationalist. They did away with all preconceived notions drawn from the religion of the Vedas, plunged into the void of absolute scepticism and tried to find there the Truth. They doubted everything, the evidence of the senses, the reality of the world, the reality of their own existence, and even the reality of God. This scepticism reached its culmination in the teachings of Buddha, who would admit nothing, presuppose nothing, declare nothing dogmatically, and insisted only on self-discipline, self-communion, self-realisation as the only way to escape from the entanglement of the intellect and the senses. When scepticism had reached its height, the time had come for spirituality to assert itself

and establish the reality of the world as a manifestation of the spirit, the secret of the confusion created by the senses, the magnificent possibilities of man and the ineffable beatitude of God. This is the work whose consummation Sri Ramakrishna came to begin and all the development of the previous two thousand years and more since Buddha appeared has been a preparation for the harmonization of spiritual teaching and experience by the *avatar* of Dakshineshwar.

The long ages of discipline which India underwent, are now drawing to an end. A great light is dawning on the East, a light whose first heralding glimpses are already seen on the horizon; a new day is about to break, so glorious that even the last of the *avatars* cannot be sufficient to explain it, although without him it would not have come. The perfect expression of Hindu spirituality was the signal for the resurgence of the East. **Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of a perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has it succeeded in realising the ultimate secret of life.** Nowhere has it found satisfaction. No scheme of society or politics has helped it to escape from the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, dissatisfaction from which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find one by material means must inevitably fail. The East alone has some knowledge of the truth, the East alone can teach the West, the East alone can save mankind. Through all these ages Asia has been seeking for a light within, and whenever she has been blessed with a glimpse of what she seeks a great religion has been born, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity,

Mahomedanism with all their countless sects. But **the grand workshop of spiritual experiment, the laboratory of the soul has been India, where thousands of great spirits have been born in every generation who were content to work quietly in their own souls, perfect their knowledge, hand down the results of their experiments to a few disciples and leave the rest to others to complete.** They did not hasten to proselytise, were in no way eager to proclaim themselves, but merely added their quota of experience and returned to the source from which they had come. The immense reservoir of spiritual energy stored up by the self-repression was the condition of this birth of *avatars*, of men so full of God that they could not be satisfied with silent bliss, but poured it out on the world, not with the idea of proselytising but because they wished to communicate their own ecstasy of realisation to others who were fit to receive it either by previous *tapasya* or by the purity of their desires. Of all these souls Sri Ramakrishna was the last and greatest, for while others felt God in a single or limited aspect, he felt Him in His illimitable unity as the sum of an illimitable variety. In him the spiritual experiences of the millions of saints who had gone before were renewed and united. **Sri Ramakrishna gave to India the final message of Hinduism to the world.** A new era dates from his birth, an era in which the peoples of the earth will be lifted for a while into communion with God and spirituality become the dominant note of human life. What Christianity failed to do, what Mahomedanism strove to accomplish in times as yet unripe, what Buddhism half-accomplished for a brief period and among a limited number of men, Hinduism as summed up in the life of Sri Ramakrishna has to attempt for all the world. This is the reason

of India's resurgence, this is why God has breathed life into her once more, why great souls are at work to bring about her salvation, why a sudden change is coming over the hearts of her sons. The movement of which the first outbreak was political, will end in a spiritual consummation." (977-79)

### **36. The Degeneration of Indian Peasantry Under the British**

"The Indian peasantry have always been distinguished from the less civilized masses of Europe by their superior piety, gentleness, sobriety, purity, thrift and native intelligence. They are now being brutalized by unexampled oppression; attracted to the liquor shops which a benevolent Government liberally supplies, bestialized by the example of an increasingly immoral aristocracy and gradually driven to the same habits of looseness and brutality which disgrace the European proletariats. This degeneration is proceeding with an alarming rapidity. In some parts of the country it has gone so far that recovery seems impossible. We have heard of districts in which the peasantry are so far reduced to poverty by the exactions of Zamindars, planters and police that the sturdier classes among them are taking to highway robbery and dacoity as the only possible means of livelihood. We have heard of villages where the liquor shop and the prostitute, institutions unknown twenty-five years ago, have now the mastery of the poorest villagers. Many of the villages in West Bengal are now well supplied with these essentials of Western civilization. The people ground down between the upper millstone of the indigo planter and the nether millstone of the Zamindar, are growing full of despair and look to violence as their only remedy. These conditions of the worst districts tend to

become general and unless something is done to stem the tide of evil, it will sweep away the soul of India in its turbid current and leave only a shapeless monstrosity of all that is worst in human nature.” (985-86)

### **37. The Awakening of Asia – the Yellow Peril for Europe**

“The awakening of Asia is the fact of the twentieth century, and in that awakening the lead has been given to the Mongolian races of the Far East. In the genius, the patriotic spirit, the quick imitative faculty of Japan; in the grand deliberation, the patient thoroughness, the irresistible organization of China, Providence found the necessary material force which would meet the European with his own weapons and outdo him in that science, strength and ability which are his peculiar pride. The political instinct of the European races has enabled them to understand the purpose of the Almighty in the awakening of the Mongol. A terror is in their hearts, a palsy has come upon their strength, and with blanched lips they watch every movement of the two Eastern giants, each wondering when his turn will come to feel the sword of the Mikado or what will happen when China, the Titan of the world, shall have completed her quiet, steady, imperturbable preparation. The vision of a China organized, equipped, full of the clang of war and the tramp of armed men, preparing to surge forth westwards is the nightmare of their dreams. And another terror of economic invasion, of the Mongol swamping Europe with cheap labour and stifling the industries of Europe adds a fresh poignancy to the apprehensions which convulse the West. Hence the panic in America, in Australia, in Africa, the savage haste to expel the Asiatic at any cost before the military strength of China is

sufficiently developed to demand entrance for her subjects with the sword emphasizing her demand. This is the Yellow Peril, and every European knows in his heart of hearts that it is only a question of the time necessary for his vision to translate itself into the waking world. But one thing the European has not yet perceived and that is that the Mongolian is no wild adventurer to go filibustering to Australia or bombard with his siege-guns San Francisco or New York before Asia is free. The first blow given by the Mongolian fell upon Russia because she stood across the Asiatic continent barring the westward surge of his destiny. The second blow will fall on England because she holds India.” (989-90)

### **38. The Rule of the Mohuls & Aurangzeb**

“When the Mogul ruled, he ruled as a soldier and a conqueror, in the pride of his strength, in the confidence of his invincible greatness, the lord of the peoples by natural right of his imperial character and warlike strength and skill. He stooped to no meanness, hedged himself in with no army of spies, entered into no relations with foreign powers, but, grandiose and triumphant, sat on the throne of a continent like Indra on his heavenly seat, master of his world because there was none strong enough to dispute it with him. He trusted his subjects, gave them positions of power and responsibility, used their brain and arm to preserve his conquests and by the royalty of that trust and noble pride in his own ability to stand by his innate strength, was able to hold India for over a century until Aurangzeb forgot the *kuladharmā* of his house and by distrust, tyranny and meanness lost for his descendants the splendid heritage of his forefathers.” (1014)

### **39. The Result of the Hundred Years of British Misrule**

“The nation which has passed through a century of such a misgovernment must necessarily have degenerated. The bureaucracy has taken care to destroy every centre of strength not subservient to itself. A nation politically disorganised, a nation morally corrupted, intellectually pauperised, physically broken and stunted is the result of a hundred years of British rule, the account which England can give before God of the trust which He placed in her hands. The condition of the people is the one answer to all the songs of praise which the bureaucrats sing of their rule, which the people of England chorus with such a smug self-satisfaction and which even foreign peoples echo in the tune of admiration and praise. But for us the people who have suffered, the victims of the miserable misuse which bureaucrats have made of the noblest opportunity God ever gave to a nation, the song has no longer any charm, the *mantra* has lost its hypnotic force, the spell has ceased to work. While we could we deceived ourselves, but we can deceive ourselves no longer.” (1015-16)

### **40. Faith of Superhuman Virtue in India and the Ideal of Sanatana Dharma**

“India has in herself a faith of superhuman virtue to accomplish miracles, to deliver herself out of irrefragable bondage, to bring God down upon earth. She has a secret of will power which no other nation possesses. All she needs to rouse in her that faith, that will, is an ideal which will induce her to make the effort. That ideal is now being preached by Srijiut Bipin Chandra Pal in every speech he delivers and never has it been delivered with such beauty of expression, such a

passion of earnestness and pathos, such a sublimity of feeling as at Uttarpara on Sunday when he addressed a meeting of the people in the compound of the Uttarpara Library. **The ideal is that of humanity in God, of God in humanity, the ancient ideal of the *sanatana dharma* but applied as it has never been applied before to the problem of politics and the work of national revival. To realise that ideal, to impart it to the world is the mission of India.** She has evolved a religion which embraces all that the heart, the brain, the practical faculty of man can desire but she has not yet applied it to the problems of modern politics. This therefore is the work which she has still to do before she can help humanity; the necessity of this mission is the justification for her resurgence, the great incentive of saving herself to save mankind is the native power which will give her the force, the strength, the vehemence which can alone enable her to realise her destiny.” (1017)

#### **41. Europe and Asia & the Role of Asia**

“The genius of the Hindu is not for pure action, but for thought and aspiration realized in action, the spirit premeditating before the body obeys the inward command. The life of the Hindu is inward and his outward life aims only at reproducing the motions of his spirit. This intimate relation of his thought and his actions is the secret of his perpetual vitality. His outward life, like that of other nations, is subject to growth and decay, to periods of greatness and periods of decline, but while other nations have a limit and a term, he has none. Whenever death claims his portion, the Hindu race takes refuge in the source of all immortality, plunges itself into the fountain of spirit and comes out

renewed for a fresh term of existence. The elixir of national life has been discovered by India alone. This immortality, this great secret of life, she has treasured up for thousands of years, until the world was fit to receive it. The time has now come for her to impart it to the other nations, who are now on the verge of decadence and death. The peoples of Europe have carried material life to its farthest expression, the science of bodily existence has been perfected, but they are suffering from diseases which their science is powerless to cure. England with her practical intelligence, France with her clear logical brain, Germany with her speculative genius, Russia with her emotional force, America with her commercial energy have done what they could for human development, but each has reached the limit of her peculiar capacity. Something is wanting which Europe cannot supply. It is at this juncture that Asia has awakened because the world needed her. **Asia is the custodian of the world's peace of mind, the physician of the maladies which Europe generates. She is commissioned to rise from time to time from her ages of self-communion, self-sufficiency, self-absorption and rule the world for a season so that the world may come and sit at her feet to learn the secrets she alone has to give.** When the restless spirit of Europe has added a new phase of discovery to the evolution of the science of material life, has regulated politics, rebased society, remodelled law, rediscovered science, the spirit of Asia, calm, contemplative, self-possessed, takes possession of Europe's discovery and corrects its exaggerations, its aberrations by the intuition, the spiritual light she alone can turn upon the world. When Greek and Roman had exhausted themselves, the Arab went out from his desert to take up

their unfinished task, revivify the civilisation of the old world and impart the profounder impulses of Asia to the pursuit of knowledge. Asia has always initiated, Europe completed. The strength of Europe is in details, the strength of Asia in synthesis. When Europe has perfected the details of life or thought, she is unable to harmonize them into a perfect symphony and she falls into intellectual heresies, practical extravagances which contradict the facts of life, the limits of human nature and the ultimate truths of existence. It is therefore the office of Asia to take up the work of human evolution when Europe comes to a standstill and loses itself in a clash of vain speculations, barren experiments and helpless struggles to escape from the consequences of her own mistakes. Such a time has now come in the world's history.” (1019-20)

## **42. The Story of India of the Ages and the Future Resurgence of India**

“In former ages India was a sort of hermitage of thought and peace apart from the world. Separated from the rest of humanity by her peculiar geographical conformation, she worked out her own problems and thought out the secrets of existence as in a quiet *ashram* from which the noise of the world was shut out. Her thoughts flashed out over Asia and created civilisations, her sons were the bearers of light to the peoples; philosophies based themselves on stray fragments of her infinite wisdom; sciences arose from the waste of her intellectual production. When the barrier was broken and nations began to surge through the Himalayan gates, the peace of India departed. She passed through centuries of struggle, of ferment in

which the civilisations born of her random thoughts returned to her developed and insistent, seeking to impose themselves on the mighty mother of them all. To her they were the reminiscences of her old intellectual experiments laid aside and forgotten. She took them up, rethought them in a new light and once more made them part of herself. So she dealt with the Greek, so with the Scythian, so with Islam, so now she will deal with the great brood of her returning children, with Christianity, with Buddhism, with European science and materialism, with the fresh speculations born of the world's renewed contact with the source of thought in this ancient cradle of religion, science and philosophy. The vast amount of new matter which she has to absorb, is unprecedented in her history, but to her it is child's play. Her all-embracing intellect, her penetrating intuition, her invincible originality are equal to greater tasks. The period of passivity when she listened to the voices of the outside world is over. No longer will she be content merely to receive and reproduce, even to receive and improve. The genius of Japan lies in imitation and improvement, that of India in origination. The contributions of outside peoples she can only accept as rough material for her immense creative faculty. It was the mission of England to bring this rough material to India, but in the arrogance of her material success she presumed to take upon herself the role of a teacher and treated the Indian people partly as an infant to be instructed, partly as a serf to be schooled to labour for its lords. The farce is played out. England's mission in India is over and it is time for her to recognise the limit of the lease given to her. When it was God's will that she should possess India, the world was amazed at the miraculous ease of the conquest and gave all

the credit to the unparalleled genius and virtues of the English people, a fiction which England was not slow to encourage and on which she has traded for over a century. The real truth is suggested in the famous saying that England conquered India in a fit of absence of mind, which is only another way of saying that she did not conquer it at all. It was placed in her hands without her realising what was being done or how it was being done. The necessary conditions were created for her, her path made easy, the instruments given into her hands. The men who worked for her were of comparatively small intellectual stature and with few exceptions did not make and could not have made any mark in European history where no special Providence was at work to supplement the deficiencies of the instruments. The subjugation of India is explicable neither in the ability of the men whose names figure as the protagonists nor in the superior genius of the conquering nation nor in the weakness of the conquered peoples. It is one of the standing miracles of history. In other words, it was one of those cases in which a particular mission was assigned to a people not otherwise superior to the rest of the world and a special *faustitas* or decreed good fortune set to watch over the fulfilment of the mission. Her mission once over, the angel of the Lord who stood by England in her task and removed opponents and difficulties with the waving of his hand, will no longer shield her. She will stay so long as the destinies of India need her and not a day longer, for it is not by her own strength that she came or is still here, and it is not by her own strength that she can remain. The resurgence of India is begun, it will accomplish itself with her help, if she will, without it if she does not, against it if she opposes.” (1020-22)

### 43. The Demand of the Mother India

“As Chaitanya ceased to be Nimai Pandit and became Krishna, became Radha, became Balaram, so every one of us must cease to cherish his separate life and live in the nation. **The hope of national regeneration must absorb our minds as the idea of salvation absorbs the minds of the *mumukshu*. Our *tyaga* must be as complete as the *tyaga* of the nameless ascetic. Our passion to see the face of our free and glorified Mother must be as devouring a madness as the passion of Chaitanya to see the face of Sri Krishna.** Our sacrifice for the country must be as enthusiastic and complete as that of Jagai and Madhai who left the rule of a kingdom to follow the *sankirtan* of Gauranga. Our offerings on the altar must be as wildly liberal, as remorselessly complete as that of Carthaginian parents who passed their children through the fire to Moloch. If any reservation mars the completeness of our self-abandonment, if any bargaining abridges the fullness of our sacrifice, if any doubt mars the strength of our faith and enthusiasm, if any thought of self pollutes the sanctity of our love, then the Mother will not be satisfied and will continue to withhold her presence. We call her to come, but the call has not yet gone out of the bottom of our hearts. **The Mother’s feet are on the threshold, but she waits to hear the true cry, the cry that rushes out from the heart, before she will enter. We are still hesitating between ourselves and the country; we would give one anna to the service of the Mother and keep fifteen for ourselves, our wives, our children, our property, our fame and reputation, our safety, our ease. The Mother asks all before she will give herself.** Not until Surath Raja offered

the blood of his veins did the Mother appear to him and ask him to choose his boon. Not until Shivaji was ready to offer his head at the feet of the Mother, did Bhavani in visible form stay his hand and give him the command to free his people. Those who have freed nations, have first passed through the agony of utter renunciation before their efforts were crowned with success, and those who aspire to free India, will first have to pay the price which the Mother demands. **The schemes by which we seek to prepare the nation, the scheme of industrial regeneration, the scheme of educational regeneration, the scheme of political regeneration through self-help are subordinate features of the deeper regeneration which the country must go through before it can be free. The Mother asks us for no schemes, no plans, no methods. She herself will provide the schemes, the plans, the methods better than any that we can devise. She asks us for our hearts, our lives, nothing less, nothing more.** Swadeshi, National Education, the attempt to organise Swaraj are only so many opportunities for self-surrender to her. She will look to see not how much we have tried for Swadeshi, how wisely we have planned for Swaraj, how successfully we have organised education, but how much of ourselves we have given, how much of our substance, how much of our labour, how much of our ease, how much of our safety, how much of our lives. **Regeneration is literally rebirth and rebirth comes not by the intellect, not by the fullness of the purse, not by policy, not by change of machinery, but by the getting of a new heart by throwing away all that we were into the fire of sacrifice and being reborn in the Mother. Self-abandonment is the demand made upon us. She**

asks of us, “How many will live for me? How many will die for me?” and awaits our answer.” (1031-33)

#### **44. Indian Resurgence Necessary for the Survival of Europe**

“If India follows in the footsteps of Europe, accepts her political ideals, social system, economic principles, she will be overcome with the same maladies. Such a consummation is neither for the good of India nor for the good of Europe. If India becomes an intellectual province of Europe, she will never attain to her natural greatness or fulfil the possibilities within her. *Paradharma bhayavahab*, to accept the *dharma* of another is perilous; it deprives the man or the nation of its secret of life and vitality and substitutes an unnatural and stunted growth for the free, large and organic development of Nature. Whenever a nation has given up the purpose of its existence, it has been at the cost of its growth. India must remain India if she is to fulfil her destiny. Nor will Europe profit by grafting her civilisation on India, for if India, who is the distinct physician of Europe’s maladies, herself falls into the clutch of the disease, the disease will remain uncured and incurable and European civilisation will perish...” (1041)

#### **45. The Work of India – to Organise Life in Terms of Vedanta**

“Of all the proud nations of the West there is an end determined. When their limited special work for mankind is done they must decay and disappear. But the function of India is to supply the world with a perennial source of light and

renovation. Whenever the first play of energy is exhausted and earth grows old and weary, full of materialism, racked with problems she cannot solve, the function of India is to restore the youth of mankind and assure it of immortality. She sends forth a light from her bosom which floods the earth and the heavens, and mankind bathes in it like St. George in the well of life and recovers strength, hope and vitality for its long pilgrimage. Such a time is now at hand. The world needs India and needs her free. The work she has to do now is to organize life in the terms of Vedanta...” (1086)

#### **46. The Indian Versus the Anglo-Saxon Culture**

“The genius of India is separate from that of any other race in the world, and perhaps there is no race in the world whose temperament, culture and ideals are so foreign to her own as those of the practical, hard-headed, Pharisaic, shopkeeping Anglo-Saxon. The culture of the Anglo-Saxon is the very antipodes of Indian culture. The temper of the Anglo-Saxon is the very reverse of the Indian temper. His ideals are of the earth, earthy. His institutions are without warmth, sympathy, human feeling, rigid and accurate like his machinery, meant for immediate and practical gains. The reading of democracy which he has adopted and is trying to introduce first in the colonies because the mother country is still too much shackled by the past, is the most sordid possible, centred on material aims and void of generous idealism. In such a civilisation, as part of such an Empire, India can have no future. If she is to model herself on the Anglo-Saxon type she must first kill everything in her which is her own.” (1086-87)

### **47. The Bourgeois and the Samurai**

“Describe the type of human character which prevails in a nation during a given period of its life under given conditions, and it is possible to predict in outline what the general history of the nation must be during that period. In Japan the dominant Japanese type had been moulded by the shaping processes of an admirable culture and when the Western impact came, Japan remained faithful to her ancient spirit; she merely took over certain forms of European social & political organization necessary to complete her culture under modern conditions and poured into these forms the old potent dynamic spirit of Japan, the spirit of the Samurai. It is the Samurai type which has been dominant in that country during the nineteenth century. In India the mass of the nation has remained dormant; European culture has had upon it a powerful disintegrating and destructive influence, but has been powerless to reconstruct or revivify. But in the upper strata a new type has been evolved to serve the necessities and interests of the foreign rulers, a type which is not Indian, but foreign – and in almost all our social, political, educational, literary & religious activities the spirit of this new & foreign graft has predominated & determined the extent & quality of our progress. This type is the bourgeois. In India, the bourgeois, in Japan, the Samurai; in this single difference is comprised the whole contrasted histories of the two nations during the nineteenth century.

What is the bourgeois? For the word is unknown in India, though the thing is so prominent. The bourgeois is the average contented middle class citizen who is in all countries much the same in his fundamental character & habits of thought, in

spite of pronounced racial differences in temperament & self-expression. He is a man of facile sentiments and skindEEP personality; generally “enlightened” but not inconveniently illuminated. In love with his life, his ease and above all things his comforts, he prescribes the secure maintenance of these precious possessions as the first indispensable condition of all action in politics and society; whatever tends to disturb or destroy them, he condemns as foolish, harebrained, dangerous or fanatical, according to the degree of its intensity and is ready to repress by any means in his power. In the conduct of public movements he has an exaggerated worship for external order, moderation and decorum and hates over-earnestness and over-strenuousness. Not that he objects to plenty of mild & innocuous excitement; but it must be innocuous and calculated not to have a disturbing effect on the things he most cherishes. He has ideals and likes to talk of justice, liberty, reform, enlightenment and all similar abstractions; he likes too to see them reigning and progressing around him decorously and with their proper limitations. He wishes to have them maintained, if they already exist, but in moderation and with moderation; if they do not exist, the craving for them should be, in his opinion, a lively but still well regulated fire, not permitted to interfere with the safety, comfort and decorum of life, – the means adopted towards acquiring them should be also moderate and decorous and as far as may be safe and comfortable. An occasional sacrifice of money, leisure and other precious things for their sake, he is always ready to meet; he has a keen zest for the reputation such sacrifices bring him and still more for the comfortable sense of personal righteousness which they foster. The bourgeois is the man of good sense and enlightenment, the man of moderation, the

man of peace and orderliness, the man in every way “respectable”, who is the mainstay of all well-ordered societies. As a private man he is respectable; that is to say, his character is generally good, and when his character is not, his reputation is; he is all decorous in his virtues, decent in the indulgence of his vices or at least in their concealment, often absolutely honest, almost always as honest as an enlightened self-interest will permit. His purse is well filled or at any rate not indecently empty; he is a good earner, a conscientious worker, a thoroughly safe & reliable citizen. But this admirable creature has his defects and limitations. For great adventures, tremendous enterprises, lofty achievements, the storm and stress of mighty & eventful periods in national activity, he is unfit. These things are for the heroes, the martyrs, the criminals, the enthusiasts, the degenerates, geniuses, the men of exaggerated virtue, exaggerated ability, exaggerated ideas. He enjoys the fruit of their work when it is done, but while it is doing, he opposes and hinders more often than helps. For he looks on great ideals as dreams and on vehement enthusiasms as harebrained folly; he distrusts everything new & disturbing, everything that has not been done before or is not sanctioned by success & the accomplished fact; revolt is to him a madness & revolution a nightmare. Fiery self-annihilating enthusiasm, noble fanaticism, relentless & heroic pursuit of an object, the original brain that brings what is distant & ungrasped into the boundaries of reality, the dynamic Will and genius which makes the impossible possible; these things he understands as matters of history and honours them in the famous dead or in those who have succeeded; but in living & yet striving men they inspire him with distrust and repulsion. He will tell you that these things are not to be found in the present

generation; but if confronted with the living originator, he will condemn him as a learned idiot; face to face with the living hero, he will decry him as a dangerous madman, – unless & until he sees on the head of either the crown of success & assured reputation.

He values also the things of the mind in a leisurely comfortable way as adorning and setting off his enlightened ease and competence. A little art, a little poetry, a little religion, a little scholarship, a little philosophy, all these are excellent ingredients in life, and give an air of decorous refinement to his surroundings. They must not be carried too far or interfere with the great object of life which is to earn money, clothe and feed one's family, educate one's sons to the high pitch of the B.A. degree or the respectable eminence of the M.A., marry one's daughters decently, rank high in service or the professions, stand well in the eye of general opinion and live & die decorously, creditably and respectably. Anything disturbing to these high duties, anything exaggerated, intense, unusual is not palatable to the bourgeois. He shrugs his shoulders over it and brushes it aside with the one word, "mad", or eccentric." (1091-95)

#### **48. The Spirit of Ancient India**

"Ancient India, mediaeval India were not a favourable soil for his growth. **The spirit of ancient India was aristocratic; its thought & life moulded in the cast of a high & proud nobility, an extreme & lofty strenuousness. The very best in thought, the very best in action, the very best in character, the very best in literature & art, the very best in religion and all the world**

**well lost if only this very best might be attained, such was the spirit of ancient India.** The Brahmin who devoted himself to poverty & crushed down every desire in the wholehearted pursuit of knowledge & religious self-discipline; the Kshatriya who, hurling his life joyously into the shock of chivalrous battle, held life, wife, children, possessions, ease, happiness as mere dust in the balance compared with honour & the Kshatriya dharma, the preservation of self-respect, the protection of the weak, the noble fulfilment of princely duty; the Vaishya, who toiling all his life to amass riches, poured them out as soon as amassed in self-forgetting philanthropy holding himself the mere steward & not the possessor of his wealth; the Shudra who gave himself up loyally to humble service, faithfully devoting his life to his dharma, however low, in preference to selfadvancement & ambition; these were the social ideals of the age.

The imagination of the Indian tended as has been well said to the grand & enormous in thought and morals. The great formative images of legend & literature to the likeness with which his childhood was encouraged to develop & which his manhood most cherished were of an extreme & lofty type. He saw Harischundra give up all that life held precious & dear rather than that his lips should utter a lie or his plighted word be broken. He saw Prahlada buried under mountains, whelmed in the seas, tortured by the poison of a thousand venomous serpents, yet calmly true to his faith. He saw Buddha give up his royal state, wealth, luxury, wife, child & parents so that mankind might be saved. He saw Shivi hew the flesh from his own limbs to save one small dove from the pursuing falcon; Karna tear his own body

with a smile for the joy of making a gift; Duryodhan refuse to yield one inch of earth without noble resistance & warlike struggle. He saw Sita face exile, hardship, privation & danger in the eagerness of wifely love & duty, Savitri rescue by her devotion her husband back from the visible grip of death. These were the classical Indian types. These were the ideals into the mould of which the minds of men & women were trained to grow. The sense-conquering thought of the philosopher, the magnificent achievements of the hero, the stupendous renunciations of the Sannyasin, [the] unbounded liberality of the man of wealth, everything was exaggeration, extreme, filled with an epic inspiration, a world-defying enthusiasm.” (1095-97)

#### **49. Our Education in British India**

“In our schools & colleges we were set to remember many things, but learned nothing. We had no real mastery of English literature, though we read Milton & Burke and quoted Byron & Shelley, nor of history though we talked about Magna Charta & Runnymede, nor of philosophy though we could mispronounce the names of most of the German philosophers, nor science though we used its name daily, nor even of our own thought & civilisation though its discussion filled columns of our periodicals. We knew little & knew it badly... Worse than the Narrowness & inefficiency, was the unreality of our culture. Our brains were as full of liberty as our lives were empty of it. We read and talked so much of political rights that we never so much as realized that we had none to call our own. The very sights & sounds, the description of which formed the staple of our daily reading, were such as most of us would at no time see

or hear. We learned science without observation of the objects of science, words & not the things which they symbolised, literature by rote, philosophy as a lesson to be got by heart, not as a guide to truth or a light shed on existence. We read of and believed in English economy, while we lived under Indian conditions, and worshipped the free trade which was starving us to death as a nation. We professed notions of equality, and separated ourselves from the people, of democracy, and were the servants of absolutism. We pattered off speeches & essays about social reform, yet had no idea of the nature of a society. We looked to sources of strength and inspiration we could not reach and left those untapped which were ours by possession and inheritance. We knew so little of life that we expected others who lived on our service to prepare our freedom, so little of history that we thought reform could precede liberty, so little of science that we believed an organism could be reshaped from outside. We were ruled by shopkeepers and consented enthusiastically to think of them as angels. We affected virtues we were given no opportunity of assimilating and lost those our fathers had handed down to us. All this in perfect good faith, in the full belief that we were Europeanising ourselves, and moving rapidly toward political, social, economical, moral, intellectual progress. The consummation of our political progress was a Congress which yearly passed resolutions it had no power to put in practice, statesmen whose highest function was to ask questions which need not even be answered, councillors who would have been surprised if they had been consulted, politicians who did not even know that a Right never lives until it has a Might to support it... Never was an education

more remote from all that education truly denotes; instead of giving the keys to the vast mass of modern knowledge, or creating rich soil for the qualities that conquer circumstance & survive, they made the mind swallow a heterogeneous jumble of mainly useless information; trained a tame parrot to live in a cage & talk of the joys of the forest. British rule, Britain's civilizing mission in India has been the record success in history in the hypnosis of a nation. It persuaded us to live in a death of the will & its activities, taking a series of hallucinations for real things and creating in ourselves the condition of morbid weakness the hypnotist desired, until the Master of a mightier hypnosis laid His finger on India's eyes and cried "Awake." Then only the spell was broken, the slumbering mind realised itself and the dead soul lived again." (1102-04)

### **50. The Mantra of Bande Mataram**

"When Bankim discovered the *mantra* Bande Mataram and the song wrote itself out through his pen, he felt that he had been divinely inspired, but the people heard his song and felt nothing. "Wait" said the prophet, "wait for thirty years and all India will know the value of the song I have written." The thirty years have passed and Bengal has heard; her ears have suddenly been opened to a voice to which she had been deaf and her heart filled with a light to which she had been blind. The Mother of the hymn is no new goddess, but the same whom we have always worshipped; only she has put off the world-form in which she was familiar to us, she has assumed a human shape of less terrible aspect, less fierce and devastating power to attract her children back to her bosom." (1114-15)

## **51. Surface Morality and the Conduct in Politics**

“A certain class of minds shrink from aggressiveness as if it were a sin. Their temperament forbids them to feel the delight of battle and they look on what they cannot understand as something monstrous and sinful. “Heal hate by love, drive out injustice by justice, slay sin by righteousness” is their cry. Love is a sacred name, but it is easier to speak of love than to love. The love which drives out hate, is a divine quality of which only one man in a thousand is capable. A saint full of love for all mankind possesses it, a philanthropist consumed with the desire to heal the miseries of the race possesses it, but the mass of mankind do not and cannot rise to that height. Politics is concerned with masses of mankind and not with individuals. To ask masses of mankind to act as saints, to rise to the height of divine love and practise it in relation to their adversaries or oppressors, is to ignore human nature. It is to set a premium on injustice and violence by paralysing the hand of the deliverer when raised to strike. The Gita is the best answer to those who shrink from battle as a sin and aggression as a lowering of morality.” (1117)

## **52. The Morality of Boycott**

“A poet of sweetness and love who has done much to awaken Bengal, has written deprecating the boycott as an act of hate. The saintliness of spirit which he would see brought into politics is the reflex of his own personality colouring the political ideals of a sattwic race. But in reality the boycott is not an act of hate. It is an act of self-defence, of aggression for the sake of self-preservation. To call it an act of hate is to say that a man who is being slowly murdered, is not justified in striking

out at his murderer. To tell that man that he must desist from using the first effective weapon that comes to his hand because the blow would be an act of hate, is precisely on a par with this deprecation of boycott. Doubtless the self-defender is not precisely actuated by feelings of holy sweetness towards his assailant, but to expect so much from human nature is impracticable. Certain religions demand it, but they have never been practised to the letter by their followers.” (1118)

### **53. The Varnasankara**

“Hinduism recognizes human nature and makes no such impossible demand. It sets one ideal for the saint, another for the man of action, a third for the trader, a fourth for the serf. To prescribe the same ideal for all is to bring about *varnasankara*, the confusion of duties, and destroy society and the race. If we are content to be serfs, then indeed boycott is a sin for us, not because it is a violation of love, but because it is a violation of the Sudra’s duty of obedience and contentment. Politics is the field of the Kshatriya and the morality of the Kshatriya ought to govern our political actions. To impose on politics the Brahminical duty of saintly sufferance, is to preach *varnasankara*.” (1118)

### **54. The Place of Love in Politics**

“Love has a place in politics, but it is the love for one’s country, for one’s countrymen, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine *ananda* of self-immolation for one’s fellows, the ecstasy of relieving their sufferings, the joy of seeing one’s blood flow for country and freedom, the bliss of union in death with the fathers of the race. The feeling

of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the sight of Indian surroundings, Indian men, Indian women, Indian children, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, great service and high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother, the knowledge of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother.” (1118-19)

### **55. The Place of Hatred in the Web of Life**

“If hatred is demoralising, it is also stimulating. The web of life has been made a mingled strain of good and evil and God works His ends through the evil as well as through the good. Let us discharge our minds of hate, but let us not deprecate a great and necessary movement because in the inevitable course of human nature, it has engendered feelings of hostility and hatred. If hatred came, it was necessary that it should come as a stimulus, as a means of awakening. When *tamas*, inertia, torpor have benumbed a nation, the strongest forms of *rajas* are necessary to break the spell, and there is no form of *rajas* so strong as hatred. Through *rajas* we rise to *sattwa*, and for the Indian temperament, the transition does not take long. Already the element of hatred is giving place to the clear conception of love for the Mother as the spring of our political actions.” (1119-20)

**56. The Nature of Justice and Righteousness in Politics**

“Justice and righteousness are the atmosphere of political morality, but the justice and righteousness of the fighter, not of the priest. Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked, violence unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends. It is a barren philosophy which applies a mechanical rule to all actions, or takes a word and tries to fit all human life into it. The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfilment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint. Ramdas is not complete without Shivaji. To maintain justice and prevent the strong from despoiling and the weak from being oppressed is the function for which the Kshatriya was created. Therefore, says Sri Krishna in the Mahabharat, God created battle and armour, the sword, the bow and the dagger.” (1121)

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