THE AUTHOR

KANAIYALAL MANEKLAL MUNSHI'S versatility and achievements are in a way unique. He is an eminent lawyer, one of the framers of India's Constitution and a seasoned statesman. Coming under the inspiring influence of Shri Aurobindo during his student days, Munshi has been an ardent fighter for India's freedom working at different stages in close association with Jinnah, Tilak, Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru. His achievements as Home Minister of Bombay in 1937, as India's Agent-General in Hyderabad before the Police Action and as India's Food Minister have been characterised by rare courage and decisive energy.

Acknowledged as the foremost writer in modern Guja-
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Renaissance.

Munshi has guided several large educational institutions and also been associated with many literary and cultural organisations since 1938. As the President of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, he has been the spearhead of a vigorous movement for the cultural reintegration of India.

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

K. M. Munshi

GENERAL EDITORS

K. M. MUNSHI

ASEKHARA AIYER

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—*Rigveda*, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

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K. M. MUNSHI

N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER

3

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL

FIRST SERIES

BY K. M. MUNSHI

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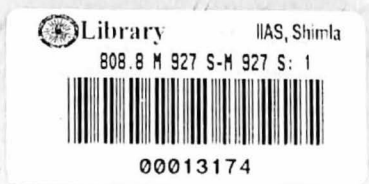
1951

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

CHAUPATTY, BOMBAY



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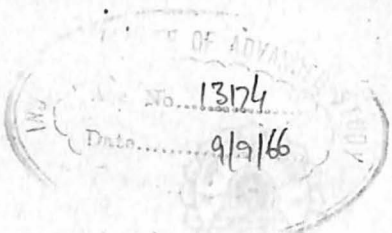

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

In March 1951, I organised the Book University of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Its object is to produce books in a uniform get-up and at cheap price covering the best literature in the world and in particular the literature which stands for India and the fundamentals for which Indian culture stands.

As a first step, it has been decided to publish in English 100 books selected by the General Editors, out of which 50 will be taken on hand immediately. The books will be approximately of 200 to 250 pages, priced at Rs. 1-12-0 per copy.

It is also the intention to publish these and other books also in eight other Indian languages, viz. (1) Hindi, (2) Bengali, (3) Gujarati, (4) Marathi, (5) Tamil, (6) Telugu, (7) Kannada and (8) Malayalam. This common pool of literature will enable the readers to appreciate world currents as also currents in our own Indian literature which, though differing in languages, have a common technique and urge.

This Scheme involving the publication of 900 volumes requires an all-India organisation as also ample resources. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to plan and organise it.

The Bhavan by its objective stands for the re-integration of Indian culture in the light of modern needs and a resuscitation of its fundamental values, viz. :

(*a*) the dignity of Man implying the imperativeness of social conditions conducive to his

freedom so that he may evolve on the lines of his own temperament and capabilities;

(*b*) harmony of individual efforts and social relations within the framework of the Moral Order;

(*c*) urge for the creative art of life, by which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of the Divine, and see Him in all and all in Him.

Fittingly, the Book University's first book is the *Mahabharata,* summarised by no less a person than C. Rajagopalachari, one of the greatest of living Indians; the second is on the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed that "What is not in it is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries we can say the same thing. Who knows it not, knows not life, its beauty, its trials, its tragedy and its grandeur.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic. It is also a romance, a tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine, a whole literature, a whole code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations and of speculative thought, with its core of the *Gita,* the noblest of scriptures and the grandest saga working up to the Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

The literature of India, ancient and modern, through all its languages, will also be brought into a common pool easily accessible to all. Books in other languages which may illustrate these principles

will also be included. The world, in all its sordidity, was, I felt, too much around us. Nothing will lift, inspire and uplift as beauty and aspiration learnt through books.

I thank all who have helped and worked to make this branch of Bhavan's activity successful.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI:
3rd October 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

PREFACE

SINCE my early days, I have written and spoken profusely; oft-times expressed myself clumsily and awkwardly, many times with studied effort and sometimes under the impact of an impression from outside or an upsurge from within. The last utterances are a class by themselves. They flew as sparks, as if by the impact of a hammer stroke, effortlessly bearing the impress of something which I have genuinely lived, felt or seen. That is why I have called these writings 'SPARKS'.

In this first Series are collected mostly tributes expressed spontaneously or diary notes kept at irregular intervals.

Most of these Sparks have not been emitted light-heartedly. Most of them arise from a deep faith and conviction and express an outlook on which my life has come to be moulded in some way. For instance, 'Bhagavad-Gita—An Approach' is not an essay on that scripture; it is a spark. While convalescing at Kosani near Naini Tal from a serious illness which put me out of jail in 1941, I wrote out diary notes for myself. They were collected in the form of articles and are now published as the last 'Spark' in this book.

In a sense, therefore, most of these Sparks are myself. They embody a philosophy of life. I have, therefore, no hesitation in presenting this volume to the public.

1, QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD,
NEW DELHI:
3rd October 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

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PART I

I

AS I LOOK BACK

To LOOK BACK on one's life is a very interesting pastime. It is pleasant to the listeners, too. In the consciousness of one's own perfection, it is enjoyable to learn of other people's follies and foibles.

Experience has been accumulating for me for many years and now there is a huge heap of it. I must remove the heap part by part before I can get a clear look back at different things.

If I remove the dust of a few years, I see myself as prisoner No. 6086 of the Bijapur District Jail; dressed in blue-striped uniform; Gita in hand; a victim of the supercilious insolence of petty jail officials, to whom treating a good man discourteously was the greatest fun of their lives. But to me the joy of duty done and the glory of forging a new tradition for the country were sufficient compensation.

For two long years I read the *Bhagavad-Gita* and numerous other books, or wrote—morning, noon and night; and the new forms, new images, new turns of expression that came to my mind gave the charm of freshness to a life which otherwise had been one of nerve-racking monotony.

I now remove the débris of a few more years. It is 1922. A struggling lawyer has just emerged from the obscurity of brieflessness. But the lawyer's life with its briefs and conferences and listening to words of wisdom falling from the lips of eminent judges seems dull to him. For a new impulse is throbbing

in this man. What up till then has been but spontaneous creative effort, now takes a more aggressive form. He tries to preach the gospel of a new literary Romanticism. He fights for the liberty of the literary artist to express beauty, in disregard of social or moral conventions; he himself tries to express it in new forms of literature—and Gujarat stands aghast. Prudes feel that the heavens are falling. In some literary gatherings, venerable and dry-as-dust, wise men anathematize him as the corrupter of morals. But those were glorious days for me; the joy of a crusader surged in my heart, and life took on new colours and a fresher charm.

I look back another nine or ten years. It is 1913. A poor student has just become a lawyer on the Original Side of the High Court. Friendless and resourceless, he wanders up Ridge Road and down Nepean Sea Road, alone and diffident, with none to guide him. Chance has flung him into a huge world where there is no one to share his hopes and fears. And yet a new joy is rising in him. Beautiful forms of men, women and children, piquant situations, strange phantoms of love and heroism float in his imagination; they all struggle to be brought into existence through language. But the young man knows only a little of English and but a little of his mother tongue; yet the vague forms are irresistible. They break through the prison walls of an untrained style and body forth the heroes and heroines of his stories. I could not resist their effort to burst into being; and I felt the joy of a new mother when I saw

them shaping into life on paper.

Yet another ten long years back in time. It is 1904. I am a student at the Baroda College. The Russo-Japanese war has just ended. Asia stirs in its slumber, conscious of its latent strength; Europe is beaten as it never was since Alexander withdrew from India. India is roused to a new feeling of nationhood. My professor of English is Shri Aurobindo Ghosh. His life and teachings stir mighty impulses in the hearts of the students of the day, and out of their imagination and will is born the Indian nation—one and indivisible; and with many of my friends I am initiated into the mysteries of a new faith, and every one of us feels that it is a privilege to be born an Indian. Then a great joy comes into being and pervades my existence.

I look back six more years. It is 1898. A little, weak, Brahmin boy of nine stands day after day before the shrine of the family god, Shiva. Thrice he takes his bath every day and thrice does he perform his *sandhya;* his mind is full of the mighty heroes and seers of the *Puranas;* to him they are living beings, members of the family to which he belongs; he lives with them in his imagination; they visit him in his dreams; he feels himself the heir of untold centuries of Indian culture. Day and night he lives in a dreamland of ancient men and women, and life is to him a joyous consecration.

Last week, at Karachi, I presided over the Gujarati Literary Conference. It was a signal honour, but I was weighed down by the thought of my short-

comings; the mistakes and the might-have-beens which made up the mosaic of my life rose up before me. But at that moment of diffidence, as I looked back on the past, the picture of the little boy of 1898 rose before me and instantly, I realised that that little boy of 1898, living in the thought of his glorious ancestry, was the true and real me; that in him were those impulses and associations which made and make India truly great; and that the subsequent stages of my life have been but crude, inartistic, modernised tawdry versions of that wonderful original work.

But it is time to end this chapter of random reminiscences. I must come back to earth and to 1938, and turn again to this drab and prosaic modern life.

(A talk on the Radio, January 1938.)

II

UNDER THE SACRED MANGO TREE

As you enter the Yeravda Central Prison at Poona, the first yard to the left is known to political prisoners as the Yeravda Mandir. In the Mandir, stands a stunted mango tree with low, knotted branches that spread out to give the tree a picturesque shape. Within sight of that tree, I lived from the time of my arrest till March 15, 1941.

Under its shade, Mahatmā Gandhi once lived, day and night—sitting, spinning, writing, praying. Under its branches, he fasted to secure the unity of the Hindu community. Under it, he communed with God. It had, therefore, for us, the sanctity of a Bodhi tree. We who lived in this sanctuary of the sacred Mango Tree were the Sardar, Bhulabhai Desai, Kher, Mangaldas Pakvasa, Nurie, Patil, Dr. Gilder and myself. The Sardar, with the legitimate pride of a high-priest, spoke of the reminiscences about the old days when he lived with Gandhiji during the epic fast of 1933. He recalled the incidents connected with every corner of the yard. And as we sat offering our prayers—Nurie chanting from the *Quran,* Gilder from the *Gathas,* and Kher and myself from the *Bhagavad-Gita;* as we clapped to the *dhun* of *Raghupati Raghava Rajaram,* I almost felt that Bapu himself was present. Under that magic tree, one felt the unity of life and the oneness of God which transcend the differences of faiths and creeds.

We were like lamas living in a solitary monastery

in the torrid Tibet of Yeravda.

It was a delightful surprise to discover a strong under-current of religious-mindedness in the matter-of-fact Sardar, whom India knows only as a pugnacious and indomitable fighter. Neither his almost uncanny shrewdness nor his expert knowledge of the weakness of men had prevented him from acquiring a devout attitude towards Gandhiji. It was a case of voluntary self-surrender. Of him it could be said that he had obeyed the injunction of Shri Krishna: "Be thou but an instrument"—*"Nimitta matram bhava savyasachi."*

As an old friend, I know Kher to be a deeply religious man. He has retained the familiarity with Sanskrit religious literature which he acquired as a Bhau Daji Prizeman of the Bombay University. At Yeravda he lived in *Gita* the best part of the day, and sang with deep emotion most of the *bhajans* from the *Ashram Bhajanavali.*

Dr. Gilder belied the reputation for godlessness generally ascribed to the members of his profession. In spite of years of close friendship, I had never suspected that he had such a deep religious vein.

Nurie, I knew, was a devout Muslim, far more deeply learned in the ways of Islam than the Muslim League critics who described him, during the days of the Congress Ministry, as a *kaffir.* He spent many hours every day in studying Quranic literature and in writing a thesis on an important aspect of the Prophet Mohammad's life.

Patil is a born *bhakta.* He has the heritage of the

Maharashtra saints, Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram; and his heart yearns for emotional *Bhakti*. His favourite studies, naturally, were the *Bhagavata* and Tulsidas's *Ramayana*.

Mangaldas Pakvasa—he is still 'Honourable the President', though deprived of both function and salary—had his religious moments too. He read the *Gita* and joined in the prayers with the simple faith of the unsophisticated.

Even Bhulabhai caught the spirit. In a life of strikingly uniform success he had never, up till then, felt the need of a religious solace or inspiration which we less successful men had experienced. But so much religious feeling around led him to embark on a sympathetic inquiry; and every day we read the *Gita* together and pondered over its application to the problems of daily life.

I had my own problems, too; not so much of acquiring religious belief or experience, as of restoring if possible the basis of life—now battered by professional and political struggle—to its earlier shape and strength.

Let no one be misled into the idea that we were a community of devotees lashing ourselves into religious frenzy every minute of the day. We were intensely human. We talked and laughed and sang and spun. Some of us played cards and smoked and told each other stories which were by no means of a religious nature. We read newspapers avidly and prophesied the fates of armies and nations. We fed birds and squirrels and, as is the wont of prisoners, petted the

jail cats almost to death. These cats had, moreover, a special claim on us, as their pedigree could be traced back to the famous cat which, in 1933, delivered its kittens in Gandhiji's lap as he sat praying under the mango tree.

It was Gandhiji who awoke the spiritual instincts in all of us. Those who came into contact with him directly or indirectly experienced a compelling urge to a quest for life's spiritual foundations. And thus in the sanctuary of the Sacred Mango Tree, we wove a beautiful fabric of religious experiences.

(From "The Social Welfare", April 24, 1944.)

III

AN IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION

I COULD not resist the temptation of accepting an editorship again. I have been an editor, either *de facto* or *de jure*, on and off from my boyhood. I am no journalist, and yet the lure of the editorial chair has always been great for me. The last time I gave up editorship was of a Gujarati monthly. I had almost decided 'not to do it again.'

But now duty bids me do what I would never have done of choice. Many causes with which I was closely associated clamoured for a journal wherein experiences could be pooled, ideas discussed, and through which the minds of men might be reached.

There was the cause of Prohibition. In spite of the opinion those who love to drink may hold, it has been the dire source of unnumbered woes. I am convinced that only a drinkless society can be a civilised one. The Bombay Government, with which I was associated, made a great experiment to this end, an experiment which, though vastly shaken out of its old content, is still being carried on in our Province. And when my valued colleagues on the Prohibition Board asked me to revive the *Social Welfare* which the Bombay Government used to issue in connection with Prohibition and other constructive activities, I felt that it would be dereliction of duty if I allowed other preoccupations, or the difficulties of uncertain health, to stand in the way.

I must confess that I had for a long time been

playing with the idea of an all-India organ of cultural and constructive activities, and I yearned for a platform where thoughtful men could meet to discuss the varied activities of social reconstruction in India to-day.

The most important of such activities are cultural. Indians have, despite superficial differences, one cultural life which extends throughout the country. The vast cultural synthesis created by Hindus and Muslims since Kutbuddin Aibek founded the Muslim Kingdom of Delhi in 1190 A.D., though a vital factor in daily life, is ignored or misunderstood by intellectuals. The spontaneous social movements which have been raising communities from degradation and untouchability have passed almost unnoticed. The moderns excel in the art of creating their own difficulties and emphasizing differences. They forget the fundamental solidarity of Indian life. No wonder we have fallen on evil days. Consequently any attempt, however weak and isolated, to bring us back to reality was urgently needed.

Then there was the problem of the delinquent child. I was familiar with the educational aspects of the middle class child. I knew nothing of the delinquent or destitute child till, in the course of my duties as a Minister, I became the Vice-President of the Children's Aid Society. Whenever, I visit the institution of this Society, I am fascinated by the raw, uncouth, human material that I find there, bubbling with hope, and yearning for love and redemption. Such children present a terrible problem. Born amid poverty and

crime, they evoke pity but are a potential danger to society and civilization. They must be studied, shaped and saved, if possible. The Society is making an experiment which in India is perhaps new. But new experiments bring new difficulties to light and demand new solutions. Many parts of India have not even been awakened to the need for such efforts. Juvenile delinquency, juvenile courts and probation are yet but vague words here. Hence, in my presidential speech at the first All-India Penal Reform League Conference, I stressed the need for a Juvenile Research Bureau, which has now been established by the Children's Aid Society.

A Bureau, if it is to reach the persons interested in its problems, has to have a magazine in which experts can exchange ideas. The Penal Reform Association was founded last February. Perhaps this was premature. There are not enough men in India interested in the problem. But now that even a few have come together, it is necessary to keep them together, discussing the live problems of penal reform. Then there is village reconstruction with its problems of debt and poverty, of cattle-breeding and agricultural reorganisation. The logic of these interests pointed out but one way to a journal dealing with cultural and constructive activities. And so came the temptation.

Some may consider the time inopportune for such a venture. Hitler's war absorbs, no doubt, the greater part of everybody's attention, but it must not be forgotten that cultural and constructive activities are

moulded and redirected never so vigorously as when a great war threatens an old world's destruction. The period of catastrophic conflict thus provides the atmosphere in which old constructive forces shape themselves to new forms and worthier ends. And their study is never more valuable than when this process is going on.

But more than anything else, it is at such a moment that an effort has to be made to maintain the true perspective that life is not destruction; it is vitality, freedom and joy. So I yielded to the temptation, particularly as my friend Dr. Subbaroyan agreed to share the burden with me.

If our efforts serve any of these purposes in the slightest degree, the responsibility we are to-day inviting on ourselves will have been justified.

(From "The Social Welfare", September 19, 1940.)

IV

REFLECTIONS ON OLD DIARY NOTES

I HAD no intention of writing for this issue. The Assistant Editor and the staff wanted it to be connected with my sixtieth birthday. Now they want my reflections.

* * *

They say I am reaching my sixtieth birthday. It requires an effort to remember that I am so old. I do not feel it. It is only when grandchildren surround me that I see how venerable I have become—and I do not want to be venerable. I want to live like Prithvi Vallabha, extracting joy from every minute and every experience.

How time flies!—and I continue to be the same unrepentant, untamed man, who makes plans, submits to self-imposed discipline, and yet remains fundamentally unchanged.

At the age of eight or nine, I began my first diary. I placed control of the senses and self-perfection as my goal. Year after year, my diary bears testimony to the same resolve, which has been more often broken than maintained.

* * *

I am highly imaginative and impetuous. Every year I exhort myself to control my flights of fantasy, but I am as bad at overcoming them as I ever was. Again and again I have sworn that I will attain accuracy in writing, and yet I am as slipshod as ever.

* * *

I recall the perennial sources of inspiration which have made me what I am. My mother used to tell me stories of Puranic heroes—of Vishwamitra, Vasishta, Vyasa and Parasurama. They are among my earliest memories. At six or seven I used to take a small cricket bat and, pretending it was a battle axe, play as Parasurama. At fifty-nine, a few months ago, I completed my last Vedic novel, portraying the character of this same Parasurama—the sixth incarnation of Vishnu.

At the age of seven, when I was invested with the sacred thread as a little Brahmin, I thought of being Vasishta, Vishwamitra or Vyasa and having an *ashrama* of my own. Last year, in my Vedic novel again, I gave full-size portraits of Vasishta and Vishwamitra. In all the works which have occupied my blissful moments during the last forty-six years, I find the *Rishis* running through my imagination.

* * *

It is strange how the central thread of one's idealistic life is so divergent from one's actual life, yet without one ever being dishonest. The most powerful influence of my young days emanated from my worship of Napoleon and my reverence for Aurobindo Ghosh, our some time professor of English at the Baroda College. By reading his early works, I learned the new nationalism that he was preaching. I was attracted to *Karma Yoga* and my little ambition was to make myself an "eternal wheel of work", as I called it. The *Yogasutras* and the *Gita* were the twin sources of my inspiration, though intellectually,

in those days, I was a Spencerian by conviction. And throughout my stories, the subconscious *Rishi*-idea has grown.

* * *

I was drawn to Gandhiji in 1930, largely because I saw in him a Vedic *Rishi,* and in my latest studies I have tried to fathom the secret of integrating human personality so that one can reach the state of the Master. A man who is "of the earth, earthy", like me, has had to replenish the fountain source of his inspiration by constant meditation on an ideal which it is impossible for him to reach.

At the same time I have yearned for Beauty—beauty in life, in power, in strength. I have found it in the strength of a personality like Napoleon's, in the might of a corporate structure like the Roman or the British Empire; but more than in anything, in the human relations as a lover, friend, father.

The world is passing through a curious phase. It is trying to blind itself to Beauty—the perennial source of joy. Tolstoy's greatest disservice to mankind was to make an artificial distinction between love of beauty and love of mankind. He preached this gospel after the inspiration which led him to create beauty had faded. He even said that Beethoven and Shakespeare wasted their energy! I could never understand this. Shelley's *Epipsychydion,* Mira's songs, Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther,* the songs of Sappho—were all born from the anguished heart of an artist. That they have done good to humanity was incidental. I have never been able to be false to my faith—my

faith in Beauty, beauty for its own sake, beauty which has no purposive aim of bringing benefit to anybody. I hate literature which is propaganda—be it propaganda for morals or for five-year plans, or for philanthropy. It is beauty which makes Sappho and Mira, Shakespeare, Goethe and Shelley one with me and with men like me throughout the ages.

* * *

I have come to consider Westernism as the curse of mankind. According to its tenets, enthusiasm is meaningless. Death has no purpose. Faith is fraud. Belief in oneself is but pitiful illusion. All must fight for communal or private utility and personal advantage. The human spirit is thus being degraded and weakened. Moral energy is being destroyed all over the world.

We have given up religion. We welcome Communism. But the fundamental energy is the same Faith. We have given up God, the Masters, and the urge for self-realisation which is the basis of strong life, and replaced it by God Lenin, Son Stalin, the Kingdom Come of Russia and the spiritual force of a barren materialism. Young boys and girls take to Communism, for it provides faith in human destiny, which the foolish West destroys by that negative creed we call rationalism.

I look at the democracies, and I shudder. The democrats—except the democrats of India—are a routed force. They are totally defeated. Their aims are dissipated by doubts. They lack the concentrated vigour to fight. Their greatness is gone. Their songs

of triumph are stifled in their throats, for their leaders are like our old friend Smuts—who speaks the language of democrats and walks in the footsteps of Hitler!

Oh, if I had the power, I would let flow rivers of faith! I would have flames of enthusiasm rising from every hill-top. I would have no heart tepid or inert. How I wish some one would arise to lead this vulgarised world into the Promised Land of Faith and Ideals!

• • •

The basis of life is energy. I am sick of "results" which all the modern mind hankers for. Results are but flowers which blossom in the morning and wither at dusk. Strength, independent of environment, is the only thing which lives. I wish some one would lead us with the banner of strength. Our only enemies are cowardice; exhaustion, disintegration. If we can but become worshippers of unbending strength—strength based on faith—strength which is above time and the brute in man!

• • •

Distinctions of truth and untruth are but a web of words woven by wiseacres. Whatever uplifts life is truth. Whatever invests life with faith and enthusiasm is truth. That alone conquers defeat. That alone takes us above and beyond the woes of life.... ....Manhood lies in fighting for the unattainable, always, ever!

(From "The Social Welfare", December 1946.)

V

A RETROSPECT

I REALLY do not know how to thank you. If I was addressing a court about other people's affairs, if I was combating some one or something, I would have a lot to say. But I am crushed under the weight of your affection.

I have reached my sixtieth year. But I feel today as much a beginner as when I began. Like a rolling stone which gathers no moss, I have gathered neither knowledge, experience, nor wisdom; but, unlike the stone, I have gathered many friends, and I thank God for it.

One of the volumes of my autobiography I have styled "The Steep Climb". The whole of my life has been a steep climb: from a weak childhood to a tolerably good health at sixty; from an eating house costing Rs. 5 a month to a comparative luxury; from complete obscurity to some recognition; from inability to frame two sentences well, to about half a hundred volumes in every branch of prose. But God has been indeed good. I have climbed, no doubt strenuously, but laughing, playing, running. Sometimes I have stumbled, but on my way I have picked flowers, and every morn has brought me new joy.

I have fought ceaselessly against frustration, despair and inertia. I have fought every philosophy of life that I considered false. I gained success but I was never content with it. I made money, but I could not remain satisfied with making it all the time.

I was popular in 1930—over a hundred thousand people came to receive me at the Victoria Terminus. I have been unpopular; critics have called me a traitor to the country and to Gandhiji—the Master whose affection and confidence I have cherished more than most things in the world. My writings have been both admired and condemned.

I am indifferent to praise or blame. But it is not the result of vanity; this attitude has been acquired by me through a long and strenuous struggle. In the words of Shri Krishna—"indifferent to praise or censure"—I have always found the greatest strength.

Like most men, I have concealed thoughts and often acted contrary to what I thought proper. But ever since I can remember, I have hated divergence between thought, word and deed.

It was a hard, ceaseless struggle for achieving this unity. I often yearned for strength and courage; and I was weak, sensitive and timid. I wanted my words to be like burning shafts—and I was shy, diffident, unable to speak well. I wanted hungering, all-absorbing love—and the life around me furnished no scope for it. I wanted my Motherland to be powerful; and I found her sons enslaved. I longed to be a *Rishi* as my forefathers were, and I was no more than a little Brahmin boy enclosed in a fossilized religious and social groove. And like a child trying to grasp the moon, I struggled to project my world of imagination into reality. I yearned; I cried and struggled; at times I thought of killing myself; and I worked. I was neither a philosopher nor a man of great intellect.

But my heart was full of passionate longings and my soul of irrepressible tumult. Through vast, foolish programmes of self-development, through laborious efforts to become what I called "the incessant wheel of work", through childish efforts at crudely practised Yoga—I tried to bring unity to my imagination, word and reality....and I only succeeded in bringing confusion instead.

Through this confusion something, nevertheless, led me on—something that was unattainable and yet which roused high enthusiasm. Napoleon's deeds, Dayanand's fiery gospel, Shri Aurobindo's prophetic vision, all threw light on this something. Oft it took the shape of a phantom—a vision of beauty. And the beauty and strength which I missed in real life, I tried to create by imagination; and thus I gave them life in words. My passing experiences became piquant situations in my fantasy. My problems became heroes and heroines. My unspoken sentiments found a voice in their speech. I was repelled by reality, the problem of poverty, the difficulty of making my way in this hideous city of ours—but I was also moulded by it.

I turned to the writing of romantic plays. I almost gave up the effect at attaining unity of thought, word and deed. But Yogasutra was there—my sacred recital day and night—though practised mostly for worldly ends. Then I studied the *Mahabharata,* the mighty Book of Life. It was 1922, and I was shaken out of the self-complacency of a successful lawyer and author.

That Something that was leading me on became a Pillar of Fire, though shrouded in smoke. Suddenly, as if under its magic influence, the vision of Beauty came to life. My dream became reality, yet was more unattainable than any dream. Through years of trial and torture, with the aid of whatever little training I had in Yoga, I summoned all my powers to prevent the unattainable Beauty that had come to life from vanishing again into nothingness. The dream became reality unexpectedly, with startling suddenness. In that moment of realization, two Truths, fundamentally woven into Aryan culture, yet which I had not perceived before, appeared to my dazzled eyes.

My individual nature alone prescribed my way of life; to pursue this way was the law of my being; any other law for me was false and fraught with fear. To be ready to die any minute to fulfil this law of life was my self-realization—this was the first of the two Truths.

The other Truth which I perceived rent for me, once and for ever, the curtain separating creative art from creative life: whenever my concentration on any object or experience was steadfast, vivid and intense, to the elimination of my consciousness of being myself, it became creative; and creation followed.

Shri Krishna and Patanjali, the great Masters, had taught these truths to the world. It was given to me, a humble, worldly man, to capture—in a little way—their secrets in actual life. The vision of beauty, for which I had yearned so intensely, thus became a true, living reality for me.

The Pillar of Fire was assuming a definite shape as it led me on, destroying the mists of sorrow and defeat and guiding me from darkness into light. For a moment it took the form of Gandhiji. I saw how the Truths which I had captured had come to life in him. Then, one evening, under the influence of a highly charged imagination, I saw the Pillar of Fire in all its blazing glory. The radiance blinded me, but in that moment my faith in Aryan culture was strengthened a million-fold.

In that wonderful light, I felt, I understood the secrets of Shri Aurobindo and Gandhiji, of Aryan culture as an eternal, over-arching phenomenon of life. Truth—compactness of thought, word and deed —stood revealed as but a step to the Absolute Integration of Human Personality attained through a stern adherence to the Law of Moral Causation on which the order of the Universe was ordained.

But to understand a truth is one thing, to concentrate on it is another—to realise it by creative concentration is again quite different....and so infinitely more difficult.

I have tried to understand the phenomenon of Aryan culture—its spread, its trials, its triumphs, its eternal power. My English works—*Gujarat and its Literature, The Aryans of the West Coast, The Imperial Gurjaras, Creative Art of Life, Bhagavad-Gita and Modern Life*—are but feeble attempts at studying this phenomenon. I know that the picture I have drawn is but a faint, inadequate sketch of what I saw. How I wish I had the creative touch of

a master artist—a Vyasa, a Homer, a Phedias, a Michael Angelo!

In my active life the Pillar of Fire has led me on, often without my knowing it. Building up a tradition of law and order, the spreading of the gospel of Akhanda Hindustan, the constructive effort which has culminated in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and the little contributions towards restoring India to the free and mighty Aryavarta of our dreams, are but the materialisation of an urge which is not mine, but only lent to me. For I know, I feel, that I am of the earth, earthy. Effective integration of personality, without which creation is not possible, is not for one like me. Attachment, fear and wrath have not been easy for me to control, much less to subdue. You say I have achieved something, but I know I have achieved nothing. I have tried to keep my gaze fixed on the Pillar of Fire, now distinct, now enveloped in a phosphorescent blaze, now lost in a cloud. I have but the crude, passing expression of the Radiance through the weak vehicle which I know myself to be.

(Reply to felicitations at his Diamond Jubilee Celebration, held at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, January 7, 1947.)

VI

THE CULT OF BEAUTY

For the last two months I have been overwhelmed with kindness. Old and young have joined in celebrating my sixtieth birthday. As late as last week, the students of the Kabibai School and the Gujarati Associations of all the Bombay colleges offered their felicitations to me.

I always feel at home amongst you—students. There are many things in common between you and me. Whatever the number of birthdays I have left behind, I have not yet ceased to be a student. I still aspire. I feel the craving to revere. I feel awe-struck at greatness. And are not these the hallmarks of the student?

But there is a great difference between the days when I was a student and the present time when you are at school and college. You are lucky in some matters; unlucky in others. Fifty-three years ago, the White Master dominated our motherland. Those of you who have read my autobiography will perhaps remember the little incident which burnt an indelible scar on my mind.

I worshipped my father. He was a strong, true, honest man and served the Government with rare conscientiousness. Sir Frederick Lely, an old I.C.S. officer, once described him as "the prop and pillar" of the Empire—the White Man's Empire. Once a White *burra saheb*, my father's superior, issued an order that the vehicles of all visitors should be stopped

at his compound gate. I was with my father when the order was conveyed to him by the *pattavala*. His face grew red; earlier British officers had always treated him with respect. Our carriage, in consequence, was kept outside the compound. My father stepped down, controlling his anger, to pay his respects to the White Man who could with impunity insult a good and true Indian because his race held ours in thraldom. I cried over the insult that night. I have never forgotten this incident; whenever I have seen White snobbery, its memory has made me see red.

This was fifty years ago. About three months back, the wife of a White officer was asked by an Indian shopkeeper to walk out of his shop, as he would not put up with her remarks. The husband complained to me. I was sorry that an Indian should have forgotten himself in this manner—but the old incident came back to my mind. The clock has gone round. The dread of the Whites is no more. Indians rule at Delhi, Indians command the world's attention in international assemblies; Indians are on the march to world influence.

When I was a college student, the entry of Dadabhai Navroji into the British Parliament was hailed as a day of salvation. Now we are dissatisfied that Panditji is only the Vice-President of an interim Government and not the President of a free Union of India.

You are therefore lucky. One ugliness has disappeared. But you are unlucky too, for you have

another ugliness forced on you from which we were spared.

In our school days, our cultural background was made by our elders, who related to us, night after night, the stories of our heroic forbears as narrated by Vyasa and Valmiki. Your parents have forgotten them. Your teachers, steeped in western influence, are too busy coaching you for examinations to look after your cultural background. And the current theories of the West are too much advertised to let you see the utter ruin into which you are being led by them. A soulless Westernism is destroying your soul. Wrong values are in the air and right values are withheld from you. In this respect, you are unlucky.

But the felicitations you have given me, I know, come from your soul. They are not for me; they are given because I have tried to unveil, in however small a degree, Beauty Ineffable.

The cult of the worshippers of Beauty is universal, unfettered by the laws of men, undivided by the barriers of caste, colour or creed—or of national boundaries. Of this cult, the seers have been souls like Vyasa and Valmiki; Homer, Kalidasa and the author of Bhagavata, Sappho, Hafeez and Mirabai; Dante, Tulsidas and Shakespeare; Goethe, Shelley, Hugo and Dumas.

The hunger for Beauty—Beauty in words, in colour and in stone, in life and in character—has no transient limitations set up by different ages, races or countries. It is not given to everyone to satisfy

this hunger—the capacity to satisfy the hunger for Beauty cannot be given by law, or public opinion, or the votes of men, or by ingenuity of artifice. But the man to whom this capacity is given has but one law—to enjoy Beauty, to create Beauty and to impart to others such vision of it as he can.

We are passing through a dark age. Beauty is belittled. Vulgarity is a badge of good living. The lowest of values is often made the basis for regulating the life of the highest. Such an age can naturally have little appreciation for true Beauty or for a joyous existence unaffected by petty fears and hatreds; or for the harmony which lifts personality above the sordidness of life. I deem it a blessing to be able, in some measure, to impart to others the vision of Beauty which haunts me.

But I have no illusions. During the last two generations my literary work has been to Gujarat like the poison in Shiva's throat—something which it can neither throw out nor swallow. Most of my readers have loved to read my works; many have been shocked at some of them—some genuinely, some so as not to lose respectability. But my work has been with life as it is lived; not with life as, in the opinion of prudes or saints, it should be lived. And yet I have not been able to reconcile myself to the pseudo-realism which reduces literature to the level of the gutter inspector's report.

True literature mirrors human experience, but not its naked vulgarity. Such experience, to become the subject of literature, must first have been born in the

creative imagination and its outline harmonised into a heart-reaching universality. Next, it must be expressed in symbols—words or images—so vividly that another man's imagination is stimulated and his sense of Beauty thrilled with ecstasy.

This is literature which, from Vyasa downwards, has been the greatest heritage of mankind. Whether what I have written conforms to this conception is not for me to say, nor even for you—but for generations to come, if my works survive so long.

(Reply to the felicitations on his Diamond Jubilee, at a reception arranged by the Gujarati Literary Association of the St. Xavier's College, Bombay, on February 20, 1947.)

PART II

I

DEVOTED TO THE DEVOTEES

A YEAR and three-quarters have gone by since Gandhiji died. A certain void, however, still persists in me. It looks a strange world—a world in which something deep and essential is wanting, in a personal sense. Gandhiji was great to the world; the architect of the Nation; the prophet of non-violence. But all these tributes come from the intellect; the sense of personal desolation arises from a deeper source. He had penetrated into the fibres of my being. The time has come to measure the greatness of Gandhiji not in vague words but to record the immensity of this greatness which permeated even his smallest acts.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita,* God is described as *Sarvatragama*—all-penetrating. In a limited sense, Gandhiji could enter the hearts of those with whom he came in close contact. If you kept the portals of your heart open, he would enter it and abide there. Then slowly and unconsciously, all your thought and actions would come to be tested on the touch-stone of his approval. He would then no longer be a leader; a great man; not a father nor a father-confessor; but something bigger and yet nearer—the divine element in your little life, warming, inspiring and uplifting it. And once you belonged to him, you were his.

Gandhiji entered my life in 1930. With Mr. Jinnah, then the President of the Bombay Home Rule League, I resigned from the Congress in 1919. We found

Gandhiji revolutionary, impractical, un-understandable. I stood away from him till Bardoli. But in 1930, something in me impelled me to join him. I offered satyagraha and was jailed for six months.

I came out of jail in October. I was an active leader of satyagraha in Bombay. A canard was started that I was a Government spy. Nobody cared to inquire what temptation could make me a spy or bring me to the Congress as one. I had nothing to gain and in those days, everything to lose.

Politics are often dirty, a whispering campaign is a powerful instrument: and highly placed persons complained to Bapu about me. I felt terribly annoyed. I had joined the Congress with no ulterior motive and I asked Gandhiji for a personal interview. At about 4 o'clock one early morning, I joined him in his morning walk. I told him what I felt. I also told him that I had decided to leave the Congress, where I found the jabs of malice more poisonous than the thrusts of swords. As I told him, the anguish of my heart expressed itself in tears. He heard me patiently: he told me not to worry. "That was politics," he said. "You must steel yourself against such weakness and I will see that no harm comes to you," he added. True to his word, he admitted me into his inner circle and up to the day of his death, he was to me not only a leader but a father, a *guru*.

Since then, he entered our life; my wife's and mine. He took interest in every small detail of our life. This was the greatest of all his gifts; he made every devotee feel that he had a place reserved for him in his heart.

My trials came with the Pakistan riots of 1941; my soul rose in revolt against Gandhiji's dictum in an interview which he gave at the time that no Congressman should resist Muslims by force, even in Hindu-Muslim riots. When I submitted my protest, he summoned me. After a day's consideration, he advised me to go out of the Congress and tell the country what I felt. How could I part with him? He said: "You won't part with me; you will be the dearer to me for this."

He "blessed" me out of the Congress. I went on my Akhanda Hindustan tour and he took interest in every one of my activities thereafter. He followed my subsequent career with intense solicitude. Once when Sardar, at the request of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, wanted me to stand for the Assembly, he emphatically overruled the idea. "It is not in Munshi's interest," he said. "I will fix the time of his re-entry into the Congress," he added. I left it to him, and in due time he told me to come back to the Congress, which I did. This way he inspired a confidence which led persons to leave themselves in his keeping—a kind of *Bhakta* attitude.

A similar thing happened after I was sent to Hyderabad. The day before he died, I had an hour's conversation with him about Hyderabad. Some one had been saying malicious things about me. He frankly mentioned them to me and I with equal frankness told him what I was doing and the plan that I was following. At the end of it, I asked him a question: "What am I to do with the man who

comes to you with such tales?'' His reply was characteristic: ''I have left Hyderabad to you; not to him.'' He left it to me to deal with this man in an appropriate manner. That was the great thing about him.

Once he entered into your heart, once he placed confidence in you, there was no going back unless you proved dishonest; no malice, no whispers, could make the slightest impression on him. That gave one confidence and the courage to take risks. That was why one always felt joy in fulfilling his wishes.

If he took a person, he took him for good and all. He took me into the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. I worked for Hindi for several years with him. Then he changed over to Hindustani. I could not follow him into the wilderness of a non-Sanskritic tongue. Sanskritic culture, of which modern Hindi was becoming the vehicle, was to me as dear as the breath of my life. He pressed me to take up the cause of Hindustani. I frankly told him I could not. I parted company with him but he would not allow this difference of views to come in the way of our relationship. This was the secret of his influence over men.

According to the Hindus, God is *Bhaktavatsala*, solicitous of the welfare of His devotees; *Bhaktadhina*, devoted to His devotees. Gandhiji had these qualities in more than a man's measure.

(From P. T. I. Features, October 1, 1949.)

II

FOLLOWING THE MAHATMA

WHAT Gandhiji has taught us is the religion of Truth. It offers no kingdom of heaven except in oneself. It seeks for no other salvation except in being true to oneself. God is Truth, sang the seers of old. Truth is God, proclaims this seer of the new world.

I wrote a book called *I Follow the Mahatma,* in which I acknowledged Gandhiji to be a Master. And men who neither read my book nor understood Gandhiji often upbraided me for not following him. It is easy to sing Gandhiji's praises. It is easier still to fall in line with the powerful organisations which he has built up. But what he builds is not what he stands for. What he does is different from what he is. It is difficult to realise what he is; and more difficult by far to bring one's feet to the path he treads.

Gandhiji is the Master who teaches Truth—the Truth which is the compactness of thought, word and deed—the Truth to be oneself at all costs. To follow the Truth as I see it, to stand up for it fearlessly; that is to follow the Mahatma, to be myself in my own Truth—though in but a small way—that is the path of his disciple.

To follow Gandhiji is not to stifle your own sense of values. It is not to pursue, blind-folded, the path that he indicates, unjudging and judged only by literal compliance. This is not the discipleship of Truth, but of untruth.

We must pursue the arduous path of his discipleship if we want to be worthy of him. First, we must try to realise Truth; then, we must try to practise it.

Truth is the inseparable oneness of our thought, word and deed. This truth is hard to understand, harder to follow. More often than not, we think in one way, talk in another and act in a third. Every moment we are impelled by love of fame, position, wealth, conceit; we are deterred by fear, contumely, persecution; we are driven by wrath, malice, spite, and the fabric of truth falls to pieces as word, thought and deed follow different directions. That is untruth. But in the brief moments when these three become one, we realise God, Who is Truth. A conscious effort to attain this unity is to follow the Mahatma, is to be a Satyagrahi.

Satyagraha is to adhere to *your Satya* at the cost of your life. Getting arrested in the cause of freedom is Satyagraha no doubt, but only when, without the lure of power or coercion of discipline, you voluntarily court suffering to vindicate Truth as you see it. Satyagraha thus becomes the noblest discipline which enters into the smallest detail of life.

I have very often offended, and still go on offending, the susceptibilities of my friends by my frankness. But if I did not speak and follow Truth as I see it, I should stray from the path of discipleship which I have chosen to follow. It is a severe discipline, this spontaneous, wholehearted surrender to God. To acquire even the elements of it we have to go through

long training, scrupulously and cheerfully accepted.

To undertake this self-discipline is to follow the Mahatma.

(From "The Social Welfare", August 20, 1943.)

III

SHRI AUROBINDO

SHRI AUROBINDO is dead. It is almost unbelievable. Five months ago I saw him in radiant health and listened to the words of wisdom which fell from his lips. A few days ago he gave *darshan* to his disciples. We looked forward to celebrating his 80th birthday in August 1951. Suddenly he has been called away. Motherland has lost one of the noblest of her sons.

Shri Aurobindo's life, works and views challenge the values of ordinary men. In 1893 he returned after 14 years of study in England, where he had a most brilliant academic career and a self-invited failure in the I.C.S. When I joined the Baroda College in 1903 he was our professor; for some time he was the Private Secretary of Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda. During the partition of Bengal movement of 1905 he emerged as the most powerful apostle of militant Indian nationalism. Through his *Bande Mataram* he gave our political movement a new direction and a new content. He sacrificed his all for the country when the hope of freedom seemed but a dim and distant light. He defined the goal, the technique and the weapons of redeeming our nation from bondage. In one of his early writings, I remember, he also emphasised the need of a non-violent movement to secure independence and even prophesied the arrival of another who would by these means achieve independence.

Shri Aurobindo was one of the great masters of

the English language in the world. His thundering editorials in the *Bande Mataram* attracted attention as much for their power as for the mastery over the language. His poetic works have been India's contribution to English literature. His works teem with aptness of phrase and wealth of imagery.

In 1904 he took to Yoga and gave up his anglicised life. In 1907, jointly with Lokmanya Tilak and Lala Lajpatrai, he led the young band of fiery nationalists against Pherozshah Mehta and Surendranath Banerji at Surat. But soon he ceased to be a mere political, for he was already on his way to higher evolution. In 1909 when he was an under-trial prisoner for about a year he spent the time in silence and spiritual experience. He summarised his experience thus:

> "In this seclusion, the earliest realisation, the first lesson came to me. I remembered then that a month or more before my arrest, a call had come to me to put aside all activity, to go into and look into myself, so that I might enter into closer communion with Him."

In 1910 he went into seclusion at Pondicherry. This was for him the beginning of a great period of life—a period of creative interpretation of all that India stood for. His works of the period contain the most comprehensive survey of reintegrating Indian culture. They include his essays on the *Bhagavad-Gita,* "Synthesis of Yoga," "The Secret of the Vedas," "The Life Divine," "The Psychology of Social Development," "The Ideal of Human Unity," "The Future of Poetry" and "The Defence of Indian Culture." He built upon the work of Dayananda and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, re-integrated Indian

culture and gave *Sanatana Dharma* a new world-wide significance. He was thus the prophet of modern India. Romain Rolland rightly called him "the completest synthesis that has been realized to this day by the geniuses of Asia and geniuses of Europe."

His mind, even in matters practical, was as clear as crystal. In the Second World War he declared unequivocally in favour of the Allies though the whole country was against the view. His views stood justified. Recently he described the invasion of South Korea as the first step in the subjugation of Asia. Some of his remarks on current problems in our recent conversation indicated uncanny shrewdness. He was not a mere idealist; he was a seer who had related idealism to realities. He was a Yogi and Truth came to him in her naked unabashed form.

He came to be recognised as one of the greatest philosophers of modern times and his discovery of the Super Mind is a distinct contribution to human thought and spiritual advance. As I stated, in 1904 he took to Yoga; since then he scaled successive heights of Yogic realisation till on 24th November 1926 he reached the top. He gave to a mad, materialistic world the doctrine of the Descent of Divine Consciousness—a living place in the thought and life of men.

His solitary life and spiritual experiences in the Ashram at Pondicherry cannot be better described than in his own words. He says:

> I sport with solitude in my regions,
> Of misadventure I have made me a friend.
> Who would live largely? Who could live freely?
> Here to the wind-swept uplands ascend.

I am the lord of tempest and mountain,
I am the Spirit of freedom and pride.
Stark must he be and a kinsman to danger
Who shares my kingdom and walks at my side.

When I speak of Shri Aurobindo I cannot forget the other Master Gandhiji at whose feet I sat for so long. Both these Masters were the finest living products of Aryan culture and each in his way was an architect of its modern re-integration.

Shri Aurobindo was a great artist of life. He had risen above the basic limitation, become the vehicle of Divine Will, wise and far-seeing. Gandhiji harnessed the basic limitations and worked as God's instrument, creative and uplifting.

Shri Aurobindo followed Shri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and was a Yogi—a great living adept of this supréme art. Gandhiji, nearer to Dayananda, was a Karma Yogi—'master of the perfect act'—in fact, one of the greatest Karma Yogis of all times. Both were the two greatest exponents of the Moral Order. Both were masters of the art of self-sculpture; both were dynamic forces challenging the darkness which is Westernism.

And when I met him in July last, I saw in him not my old professor but something different. It was absolute integration of personality; attachment, wrath and fear in him had been transmuted into a power which was at the same time beautiful and calm, the Central Idea in Aryan culture materialised in human shape. He seemed to say in his own language:

My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight
My body is God's happy living tool,
My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.

The sudden death of so great a master naturally leaves a great void. But his task on earth was done. He lived and had his being in Divine Consciousness as did the Great Masters of old and his shuffling off the mortal coil cannot interfere with the spiritual influence which through calmness exquisite he radiated and will continue to radiate in spirit.

And so long as the spirit of such Masters living in God walks on the earth, we need not despair of the destiny of man to rise to the dignity of a god.

(A talk on the Radio, December 5, 1950.)

IV

FACETS OF PANDIT NEHRU

A MAN is often greater than his deeds. Actual achievement is but a pale projection of his personality, often distorted by outside influence. What counts is the man himself. Panditji's achievements as the champion of Indian independence, as a redoubtable fighter in our freedom's battle, as a leader of great charm and power, as the Prime Minister who gave India a proud place in the international sphere, formidable as these are, are but inadequate facets of what he is.

The man as I see him day after day, sometimes hour after hour, is different from and, in a sense, more significant than what he does. Once, years ago, during the Home Rule League days, he looked a dandy at first impression, although to those who knew him better, he was even then a quivering flame of idealism. The erstwhile dandy now carries the burden of one of the most responsible offices in the world, and gives the impression of being a sad and lonely man, his wistful eye fixed on something distant, something unattainable.

There is a strong attachment between him and other members of the Nehru family. He permits a small circle of friends, men and women, to share his few spare moments. They extend to him an effusive warmth, natural towards a personal hero, who also happens to be a Prime Minister. He is steadfast in his loyalty to them. But I doubt whether he shares

all his worries and joys with any one of them. Once I saw him bidding good-bye to some close friends. Amidst gushing words and affectionate clingings, he stood more like a statue, his only response being a tired smile.

Panditji lives in a world of his own—a world of ideals in which his emotions act but in the abstract. He is different from the saint to whom "the world is the family"—*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. Rarefied emotions drive him to dedicate his life to great and noble causes in a manner which, to a man ignorant of the workings of his mind, often seems to be unrelated to realities. His shrewdness and perspicacity are at times only shy handmaidens who wait in silence, when his ideals impel him to a generous gesture.

Panditji cannot be strictly called a man of God. I do not know whether he ever prays. His address on the *Gita* the other day at the Birla Mandir seemed theoretical. His Western upbringing makes it difficult for him to cultivate an articulate faith in God or to view life as an endeavour to become His instrument. Shri Krishna's exhortation, "leave all and come unto Me," or "Be thou My instrument," may not attract him. But like the hero of Moliere's play who talked "prose" without knowing it, he is nevertheless a man of God without knowing it. I should not be surprised if, some day, he flowers into a God-inspired teacher of nations.

His life is true to his ancestry. Like a true Brahman he is high-souled, disciplined, treating life as a votive offering. Every minute of his is dedicated to the

great tasks before him of forcing realities into the mould of noble ideals. He exhibits a volcanic irrepressibility when obstacles confront him. He denounces; he explodes into violent fits of temper. But these ebullitions have no malice in them; they only help to let off his fiery impatience.

His dedication, though not unto Him, is at any rate to the Vision of an ideal which he finds difficult to be realised as expeditiously as he would wish. This self-dedication often makes him a stickler for proprieties even when faced with problems of power politics. His invocation of the U.N.O.'s intervention in the Kashmir affair, and his protracted indecision on the Hyderabad problem, were also the result of a spiritual conflict between what is necessary and what, according to him, is proper. His sense of international proprieties also arises from this source. That is why his colleagues sometimes blink at the prospect of what he would decide in a critical situation.

It is refreshing to see such an idealistic and so higly-placed a person respond to the arguments of his colleagues or allow himself to be converted if the opposition is genuine and well-founded. In spite of his prepossessions he can always sense the feeling in the party or Parliament or the country and can stoop to conquer. Age and experience have mellowed him. The magnitude of India's troubles has eased the tension of his inner conflict. That is why of late Sardar and he have achieved a complete understanding, not only of the head, but of the heart as well.

After October 1946, he has grown in stature. His

feeling for reality has deepened. Possibly two years hence he would be that rare thing in politics, a statesman with his feet planted on earth, his head illumined by the sunshine of moral values, his heart dedicated to redemption; provided, of course, the world, in the interval, does not drive him into the wilderness.

The most fascinating characteristic of Panditji is his sense of the beautiful. His charming smile, the flower in his buttonhole, the way he loves to surround himself with people of culture, all show his hunger for beauty—Beauty Absolute, as Plato envisaged. Gandhiji with his tremendous personality and dynamic gospel inaugurated an era of austere simplicity and the dominance of the useful over the beautiful. Panditji was perhaps one of the very few who came into intimate contact with him but remained untouched by the full implication of that philosophy. Though he dedicated himself to high endeavour under the guidance of his Master, the vision of Beauty has never left Panditji. He expresses it in tasteful surroundings, in a love for grace and harmony, in colour and form. His love for genuine art and literature remains undimmed. Even in the grim battle which he had been fighting since his young days, he has devoted himself to art and literature and his stray utterances on the subject reveal the passion for artistic perfection.

Panditji's sense of beauty is allied to his ideals. Perhaps they are counterparts of the same vision. An artist has been flung not only in the battle of freedom but in the vortex of power politics. This,

above all others, sets him off against the murky background of modern times. His notion of beauty is not, however, of the strictly artistic variety. To him beauty is justice and justice beauty— justice, international, national, social as well as personal. Only the other day, during his impassioned broadcast on food, he said: "I love flowers, but today the sight of a cluster of bananas is sweeter to my eyes than any flower."

His life is linked with India's fortunes. In the unique partnership between him and the indomitable Sardar, India has one of the greatest assets which any nation had in history. The future will largely depend upon the success or failure of this rare combination to give India a strong government, to its people an exuberant will to work, to Asia stability, and to the world peace.

(From P. T. I. Features, November 14, 1949.)

V

THE INDOMITABLE SARDAR

It is difficult for me to write about the Sardar. Of all the leading men with whom I have come into close contact, he has been nearest to me. I admire his extraordinary gifts. I cherish a deep affection for this man whom most men fear. Neither difference of views nor my leaving the Congress has interfered with our personal relations which make life sweet and worth living.

I first came into close contact with Sardar Vallabhbhai in 1928. He was then leading the Bardoli *Satyagraha* movement. I was an independent member of the Bombay Legislative Council. Sir Leslie Wilson, the then Governor, told me that there was no official high-handedness at Bardoli and that the propaganda was false. I promised to go there and see things for myself. I went, saw, and was conquered. I resigned on this issue.

There I met the Sardar of Bardoli, now of India, in active service. His leadership drew me to him. He had forged a technique of mass resistance which reconciled me to Gandhiji's policies which I had so far considered impractical.

Then came 1930 and the historic Dandi March. The universal urge for seeking martyrdom, which Gandhiji had evoked, attracted me. I placed myself at his service, joined the Congress, offered Salt *Satyagraha* and went to jail. After the Gandhi-Irwin truce, I saw the Sardar presiding over the Karachi Congress.

During 1932-33 we were in different jails. In 1934, on release, we came closer to each other. During the Assembly elections, I first declined his suggestion that I should stand for the Assembly. But when, at the last minute, Shri Nariman withdrew, he again asked me to stand for the seat. The prestige of the Congress was at stake, he said. I agreed. This laid the foundation of our friendship.

Then came the elections of 1936. I saw him arranging elections, fixing up candidates, setting up ministries, controlling them, giving to diverse centrifugal forces a harmonious direction. I saw him arranging, organising, directing men and forces all over the country; breaking through hostile combinations; aligning new forces. I was with him often, almost daily, when he was in Bombay, watching with admiring awe the working of his mind.

Few know the difficulties which the Sardar had to face in setting up a homogeneous party. He selected Shri Kher, and commissioned some of us to get the latter's consent. He piloted the activities which ended in the choice of Shri Kher as the leader. This choice was Sardar's stroke of generalship. But for it, Bombay Congress Ministry would have been a ghastly failure.

Congress was a seething mass of ambitions all throughout the country; the Sardar's genius alone brought order and discipline. Often, at night, I saw and heard him answering long-distance calls from all over India with short, decisive suggestions which were devastating in their effectiveness.

For 27 months, when I was Home Minister in the Congress Ministry, I was in the closest contact with him. There is an erroneous impression that he meddled in ministerial affairs. But he watched the ministers' work incessantly and only stepped in when they weakened in their effort to become effective centres of power against the Governors. His was a vast campaign for creating power. We were often weak; many a time we knew not how to act up to the task of reducing the Governors to mere constitutional heads. Then only the Sardar stepped in.

I was associated with some informal negotiations between the Viceroy and Gandhiji through Vallabhbhai. I was in touch with the negotiations with Rajkot which the Sardar carried out in the last stages of ministerial existence in November 1939; and with the infructuous negotiations with the Viceroy in 1940. And in them all, I saw the Sardar's penetrating insight, his profound knowledge of human strength and weakness, his unerring grasp of the essentials in the game, and behind it all I saw the Grand Rebel who, under the leadership of Gandhiji the Master, was fighting British rule, not merely by words, but by a mobilisation of human effort and ambition on the fields of open battle and unseen diplomacy.

In 1940 we were together in Yeravda Jail. I had then the occasion to see his human side. He laughed, cracked jokes, told droll stories. He became our house-keeper, prepared tea for us, looked after our food and other arrangements. For hours we walked together. He told me stories of his younger days, of

his early association with Gandhiji, of the missing links in many affairs to which I was only a partial witness. He came to acquire a strong attachment to me. And when in March 1941 I was laid up with serious illness, during which Dr. Gilder nursed me with unfailing care, I saw the Sardar watching me with a mother's tender solicitude. And when, on being released, I was taken out on a stretcher in a semi-conscious condition, I remember seeing this indomitable man's eyes follow me with humid tenderness.

But, to the world, the Sardar is a man of few words. To some, he is the silent, sinister figure who is responsible for every policy of the Congress, which they disapprove. He is denied mass popularity of the kind which, for instance, Pandit Jawaharlal commands. He hasn't the flair for it. He is too impersonal. He desires to create no personal tradition apart from Gandhiji and the Congress. And where strength is needed, he is generally selected to wield the thunderbolt. And he does it without apology; for he knows that a ruthless imperialism cannot be fought without forging a compact instrument of strength.

The Sardar is the executive arm of the Gandhian fabric of power. This fabric of power—this empire —is something wider than the Congress, and yet, the main support of the institution; for in the Congress there are indeed many who are not an integral part of this empire. All over the world, there are Gandhians. They look to Gandhiji for inspiration

and guidance. They delight in carrying out his behests; they test their conduct on the touchstone of his possible approval. They are not merely restricted to the Congress, the A.I.S.A., the Hindi Prachar, the A.I.V.I.A. or the Kasturba Trust. There are lawyers, doctors, millionaires, men in power, outside these institutions, who, when ordered, hasten to fulfil his wishes. This vast army of men and women, though it may be in more or less restricted sphere, forms the hierarchy which upholds the Gandhian "empire".

The creation of this vast edifice is one of Gandhiji's greatest achievements, unparalleled in history. A Cæsar or an Akbar built such an empire with the aid of force. Gandhiji has built it without any force at all; that is his glory.

By far the greatest section of this "empire" receives its direction from Vallabhbhai. Gandhiji plans, inspires, guides, sets the standard and the goal; Vallabhbhai sees that things are done.

The Sardar has abjured all personal life. He has no individual ambition or attachment apart from the success of Gandhian policies. He has no opinion except Gandhiji's, once his own views are overruled. He has no other standards except those prescribed by Gandhiji. Since the first day, twenty-eight years ago, when Vallabhbhai attached himself to Gandhiji, he has had no mental reservation from his leader. He has been to Gandhiji what Shri Krishna wanted Arjuna to be: *nimittamatram*—an instrument.

This surrender on the part of so strong-tempered and astute a man as Vallabhbhai borders on the

spiritual. The Sardar has strong likes and dislikes; he has a hammer-and-tongs way of dealing with men. Gandhiji's outlook is superior, his methods non-violent. Vallabhbhai's judgment of men and things is mostly unerring and realistic. Gandhiji's appreciation of men and things is generous and sometimes so detached as to appear idealistic. Vallabhbhai can play upon the ambitions and fears of men; Gandhiji will play mostly on their nobler instincts. If Vallabhbhai's judgment on power politics is invariably sound, Gandhiji's moral outlook corrects it and gives it a point and edge which are irresistible.

This surrender to Gandhiji is partly responsible for the general failure to appreciate the great work that the Sardar is doing. He never claims for himself; he does not want to be known except as an instrument of Gandhiji.

Few realize the sheer impossibility of merging one's self in another, however great. I know by personal experience, how difficult it is to make some one else's truth one's own and to be ready to die for it. Vallabhbhai has performed the impossible. The rock on which his life is founded is faith in Gandhiji.

The Sardar is a great player on the chess-board of Indian practical politics. The chess-board extends to the whole of India, to its every sphere. His eye is on every pawn, friendly or hostile. He watches the British in India with unweary eyes. He calculates moves, large and small, in Congress groups, legislatures, in public life, in *praja mandals*, in the Central Government. He can make people talk by his silence,

which is often unfathomable. Jealousies, ambitions, insinuations, complaints and scandals are laid bare before him. They are subconsciously registered, analysed, docketed. They provide the raw material for his uncanny insight into human motives to work upon and form the basis for his moves which are mostly unerring.

If the elections are on, all over India, each province, each leader, each important member has his attention. When ministries were functioning, every ministry, the internal relations of its members, their attitude towards the British, were all under his watchful care. In Congress Committees, where rival ambitions often mar team work, he watches ambitious men with a "hundred eyes" and regulates them. And through the tangled web of moves and counter-moves, his unerring finger forms combinations with but one aim: the generation of India's strength and the end of foreign rule.

As a leader, the Sardar has great qualities. He is a man of immense courage. During the Rajkot affair, several attempts were made to kill him; on one occasion, at Bhavnagar, his accidental detention by a merchant wanting to offer him a garland saved him from being smashed to pieces. Accident only prevented his being man-handled at Baroda. While we were going together in a motor car during the time of the labour disturbances staged by the Communist Party after the passage of the Industrial Disputes Act, an infuriated man slashed at the rear window pane of our car with an iron rod, cracking the pane at a

thousand places. Luckily the glass was of the unbreakable sort and there were no splinters. During such moments, the Sardar is imperturbable. He shuns no risks. He delights in them. He is a man of wonderful resources and can invent endless devices to checkmate hostile plans. He can evoke loyalties. He can be loyal to those with or through whom he works. He is never afraid of taking responsibilities for the actions of his followers.

His powers of organisation are unique. In this country, where centuries of slavery have made it impossible for men to adhere to each other in order to evolve a great organisation, the Sardar's genius is invaluable. I first saw his powers of organisation at Bardoli in 1928. A taluka of 80,000 souls was converted into a compact whole in which months of official pressure could not so much as make a crack. It is easy, as I stated, to create a great organisation by force of arms. It is very difficult to do so, as in the case of Gandhiji, by forging moral sanctions as represented by his approval, or by the sanction of collective opinion, as mobilised by the Sardar. Wholesome dread of Vallabhbhai's displeasure is often as efficacious in maintaining discipline as the great dread of Gandhiji's passing an adverse moral judgment.

We have a history of political slavery; we attach more importance to doctrines and slogans than to the art of developing effective power. If one is to struggle against the might of British Imperialism, a rival organisation which is compact and effective is

essential. That by the nature of things can only be based on the extreme power, either of collective opinion concentrated on the issue, or the fear of moral condemnation at the hands of a man who carries with him the conscience of millions. Gandhiji and the Sardar together, wield both.

The strength of the Sardar lies in submitting his methods to the test of Gandhian approval. Vallabhbhai knows this only too well. When Shri Nariman in 1937 complained to Gandhiji about what he characterised as Vallabhbhai's unjustifiable attempt to remove him from the leadership of the Congress Party and the legislature, Gandhiji promptly appointed a committee to enquire into the matter. He told Nariman that if he found that Vallabhbhai was guilty of such actions as Nariman complained of, he would sever connections with him. The Committee—Mr. D. N. Bahadurji was in it—held an enquiry and decided that Vallabhbhai's action was justified. But in such matters, Gandhiji's moral sense controls the stern discipline which Vallabhbhai demands and for that reason makes it much more effective.

Ordinarily the Sardar is a man of very few words. He can keep silent for hours in the midst of the most exciting conversation. He never speaks for the sake of speaking. He only becomes eloquent when action is in the air. But when he does speak, it is with unrivalled eloquence. He can attack, appeal, heap ridicule; he can make his audience weep: above all, he is a master of winged words which, like shafts, pierce the heart. His language varies with the occasion

and the audience. He can speak in the idiom of the villagers. The next minute he can turn out sentences in choice literary Gujarati. But his words never miss their mark.

The essential Sardar is a Grand Rebel, the defiant hero of the undaunted will, unbending in his fierce determination to assert Indian independence. In India, where alien rule has brought an inferiority complex, he creates, wherever he moves, an atmosphere of self-reliant strength. To an age of sweet words and hypocritical action, he brings a rugged honesty which shatters the veneer cloaking the most ambitious imperialism of all time. His fierce but dynamic will strives to represent and create a free and united India in an India afflicted with bondage and threatened with disruption.

Men of lesser strength—and I am one—often shudder at his audacity—his pugnacious refusal to compromise. The man of thought finds little that is attractive in him. The crowd, bent on admiration, misses the romantic look, the personal tradition, the flaming idealism, which collective mind worships. The imaginative mind turns away from him; but the student of history will immediately recognise him. He has stepped out of Plutarch's gallery of indomitable men. He is made of the stuff of which were made Prithviraj and Pratap of immortal glory.

(From "The Social Welfare", November 2, 1945, on the occasion of the Sardar's 70th birthday.)

VI

UPROOTER OF KINGS

It has always been difficult for me to speak about Sardar; much more so now, for my heart is full with grief.

Years ago, I heard of Sardar as a lawyer of Ahmedabad boisterously dominating the lawyers' club, building up clever defences for criminals, playing bridge and cracking jokes at every one including the newly arrived Gandhiji. Then he found in Gandhiji, the Master, and his life changed. He began his fighting career by offering civil disobedience against the practice of *Veth*—a sort of beggary—in his home district. Then for the first time, an Indian was found with the temerity to invite the white Commissioner to his own office and by that one bold stroke the battlement of white bureaucracy fell in Gujarat.

Then Sardar built up the civic life of Ahmedabad. He also became the executive arm of Gandhian fabric of power—that vast edifice which was one of Gandhiji's greatest achievements, unparalleled in history. Gandhiji planned, inspired and guided and set the standard and the goal. Sardar saw to it that things were done. In the prosecution of Gandhiji's vast plans Sardar abjured all personal life, gave up all individual ambition except the success of Gandhian policies. He was to Gandhiji what Shri Krishna wanted Arjuna to be: *nimittamatram*, an instrument.

I saw his power of organisation in 1929 in Bardoli

when for the first time I came into close contact with him. A taluka of 80,000 souls was converted into a compact whole. There I saw what Sardar could do, how he could forge out of Gandhian weapon of Satyagraha, a non-violent engine of collective coercion. His uncanny insight into the strength and weakness of human character, his resourcefulness, his capacity for evoking the loyalty of his followers by the wholesome dread of his displeasure—all gave Satyagraha a sharp edge and won for India her first battle of freedom at Bardoli. Then I first found what Gandhiji preached was *Hinayana* Gandhism; Sardar had made of it *Mahayana* Gandhism.

I saw his organisational power on an all-India plan in 1936 when he was arranging elections, fixing up candidates, setting up ministries and controlling them, giving to diverse centrifugal forces a unified direction. He organised and directed men and forces all over the country, broke through hostile combinations, aligned new forces. Congress then was a seething mass of ambitions throughout the country; Sardar's genius alone brought order and discipline.

For 27 months when I was Home Minister in the Bombay Congress Ministry, I was in the closest contact with him. His was a vast campaign for creating power. We were often weak; many a time we knew not how to act up to the task of reducing the Governors to mere constitutional heads. Then the Sardar stepped in.

From 1937 to 1940 I was in touch with the negotiations which Sardar carried on in respect of Rajkot,

with the last stages of the Ministerial existence in November, 1939, and the infructuous negotiations with the Viceroy in 1940. I admired him for his penetrating insight, his profound knowledge of human strength and weakness, his unerring grasp of the essentials in the game, and behind it all, I saw the Grand Rebel who, like Pratap, lived and moved and had his being in an atmosphere of independence self-created.

In 1940, we were together in Yeravda Jail. Then I saw the intensely human side of Sardar's nature. He laughed, cracked jokes, told droll stories. He became our house-keeper, prepared tea for us, looked after our food and other arrangements. In March 1941, when I was laid up with serious illness, he watched over me with a mother's tender solicitude. When later, I was taken out on a stretcher in a serious condition, I saw in this indomitable man's eyes what I had never seen before, humid tenderness.

Then in 1946-47, the great days of the final bid for power, came negotiations. Sardar then emerged as a great player on the chess-board of Indo-British diplomacy. His eye was on every pawn, friendly or hostile. He watched the situation with unweary eyes. He calculated moves, large and small, in Congress groups, legislatures, in public life, and in the Central Government. He made people talk by his unfathomable silence. He sub-consciously registered, analysed, docketed jealousies, ambitions, insinuations, complaints and scandals; for, they provided to him the raw material for his uncanny skill to work upon to

produce the pattern he wanted.

For months in 1946 and 1947, we were staying together at Birla House. I participated in some of the less intimate conferences too. Those were great days, with the Muslim League on one side, the Indian Princes on the other, trying to make a hostile combination, with Sardar fighting every inch of the ground. Few people know the inner history of those days—how he won the Indian Princes one by one; it is an epic. One chapter of it I will never forget. A few days before the 15th August 1948, a hostile combination of Indian Princes sprang up with a plan to project the Pakistan frontier from the border of Sindh to the borders of Bhopal on the one side and to the Surat District on the other. It was a bold and formidable move on the part of those who wanted to disrupt our new freedom. I was also vitally interested as I was then the Constitutional Adviser to the Maharana of Udaipur who had also been invited to walk into the spider's web. But the combination was broken to bits by the Sardar, each element being segregated and destroyed. The result was complete integration.

Junagadh was another brilliant feat and perhaps Hyderabad was the greatest. For nine months I worked under him as the Agent General in Hyderabad. The Laik Ali regime in Hyderabad had money, influence and powerful friends in Delhi and London. Some day I will tell the story of how Hyderabad was won; but it was the most distinguished achievement of Sardar in the whole programme of India's integration.

Samudragupta, the great Emperor, was styled "the uprooter of kings"; Parasurama, the incarnation of Vishnu, was distinguished for having destroyed kings; but no one knows whether the kings whom they destroyed prayed for the long life of their destroyer. But in the case of this "uprooter of kings," every Ruler so uprooted prayed for the destroyer's long life.

To his strength we also owe the maintenance of law and order in the land—the disorganisation of the Communist forces, the inability of hostile forces to weaken the Congress hold over the country, the suppression of the separatist tendencies among the Sikhs and the taming of the R.S.S. No greater testimony to Sardar's power could be found than in the fact that even the chief of the R.S.S., Shri Golwalkar, who had been jailed by Sardar, came to pay his last respects to Sardar, flying all the way from Nagpur. It is an undeniable fact that he had the control of the machinery of the Congress; that he guided the I.N.T.U.C.; that he was the cementing force between the different Chief Ministers; and that he was the strong man of the Indian Government to the last hour of his life. On the night of Wednesday the 13th, I met him before I left for Matheran. On his arrival in Bombay his energies seemed to have revived. For a few minutes he talked to me about an important question with almost his old vigour. In his eye was the old familiar glut of indomitableness. But it was the last flicker of the dying flame. Thirty-six hours more and the flame was extinguished.

Courageous, resourceful, powerful in his prefer-

ences and prejudices, realist to his fingertips, he built the edifice of India's strength and stability stone by stone for the last 32 years. But behind this power and strength was a peasant's simplicity which nothing would corrupt, the loyalty to those to whom he gave his affection. An untamable spirit led him to dedicate himself to the cause of the Motherland.

He lived, he worked, and he suffered for her, and he inscribed his name upon the roll of India's history among the greatest of her sons for all time.

Three men entered my life. Shri Aurobindo when I was his student in the Baroda College; Sardar when I resigned from the Bombay Council on the Bardoli issue; Gandhiji when I joined the Salt Satyagraha. Gandhiji died two years ago. Shri Aurobindo left the world a few days ago. Now Sardar is gone. My links with an older generation are snapped. And the world, for the moment, is chill, for the warmth of these men is no more.

(A Talk on the Radio, December 21, 1950.)

VII

MALAVIYAJI MAHARAJ

(1)

THE country today mourns the death of one of the greatest of its sons, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

He was one of the fathers of Indian Nationalism. Associated with the Congress almost from its birth, he remained actively associated with it right till his death. He fought by parliamentary devices; he led *Satyagraha* movements and he lived to see the Congress installed at Delhi. Three times he presided over the Congress; three times over the Hindu Mahasabha; and there was scarcely a great political cause which did not find in him an enthusiastic supporter.

But Malaviyaji was not merely a politician. He was also the father of the movement for a national language for India and brought the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the great linguistic and literary movement which is associated with Hindi into existence. He was the greatest educationist in India, having founded and conducted the Hindu University at Banaras. He was an erudite scholar and energised the Sanskritic revival which has brought to the Indian languages a new Renaissance. He was accepted as the highest authority in Hindu religious thought and action. He was, in essence, the embodiment of the spirit of Kashi, the heart of Hindu outlook throughout the ages.

His achievements were many and varied, but he himself was greater than the greatest of his achieve-

ments. Spotless and selfless in character, large-hearted and sympathetic towards all good causes, devoutly religious, he lived in a ceaseless effort to realise the ideals which ennoble life; and by every test, he was a *Maharshi*. Mahatma Gandhi once called him *Pratah Smaraniyah*—a sage whose name, if spoken in the morning, would lift one out of the mire of one's sordid self.

He died full of years and of honours which the love of India bestowed on him. He was the darling of the gods for he saw the fulfilment of his dreams with his own eyes. The glorious end of so full a career, extending over sixty years, would not, looking to the normal span of a man's life, have evoked such universal grief. But our heart is disconsolate, for he left us just at the time when his inspiration was most needed.

(A Talk on the Radio, November 11, 1946.)

VIII

MALAVIYAJI MAHARAJ

(2)

AMONG the great sons of the last century who have made us what we are, Malaviyaji, or Malaviyaji Maharaj as we used to call him latterly, has a high place.

I first came into contact with him in 1914. Since then, he took an interest in me and I came to be devoted to him. It has been my good fortune to have come into close contact with some of the noblest Indians who have contributed to the greatness of India during the last fifty years. I sat at the feet of Shri Aurobindo in my college days. I worked under Lokamanya Tilak and Mrs. Besant. I worked even with Mr. Jinnah and was in close personal relationship with him when he was the ardent champion of Indian Nationalism. Gandhiji entered my life in 1930. Of all these, the men who stirred me to my innermost depths and whose life and character shaped my outlook on life were Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Malaviyaji.

Of the men whose spirit rose in revolt in 1889 against British domination fastened on this country, Malaviyaji was one of the earliest. He was associated with the Congress, if I remember rightly, from the second session. Since then, he remained associated with it throughout his life. Even when Gandhiji obtained unquestioned mastery of the Congress in 1920, Malaviyaji, in spite of difference in outlook on

some points, stood by him throughout. He differed from Gandhiji on many points but he never dissociated himself from him; for he knew that the country's future was safe in Gandhiji's hands. Gandhiji treated him like an elder brother.

Malaviyaji was the flower of Indian Nationalism, because he was the finest embodiment of Indian culture. When the Punjab was in distress, when Assam was in difficulties, when the Congress was outlawed, Malaviyaji stood alone and fought for national freedom, for the suffering and the enslaved.

Malaviyaji was not only a politician. He was a deep and profound scholar. He was an educationist whose efforts saw full realisation in the Hindu University, one of the finest institutions reared by modern India during the worst days of her political servitude. Today that University is not just a mere University. Like Nalanda, it focuses the best talents in the country, and radiates the influence of reintegrated Indian Culture.

Malaviyaji's greatest claim to immortality is his close association with Hindi as the national language of India. Dayananda Saraswati was the first to recognise it. Keshab Chandra Sen followed. But it was Malaviyaji whose kinship with all that was best in the traditions of Indian culture recognised in Hindi the one force which, like Sanskrit of old, would keep the life and culture of our country together.

Malaviyaji, though not an apostle of neo-Hinduism like Dayananda, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda and Shri Aurobindo, was the living exponent,

by words, deeds and life, of the best in Hindu religion. He was a product of modern education and his appeal was to the educated. He was deeply learned in the Shastras and his appeal was also to the orthodox. In him, the forces of the old Hinduism of the last century met the neo-Hinduism of today, as a broad, enfranchised, progressive, cultural and spiritual world-force.

As an individual, he was greater still. Long, long before Gandhiji taught our leaders to give up worldly prospects for a life of service, Malaviyaji gave up everything for India's freedom and culture. Simple, frugal, perpetually living at a high tension of idealism, considerate, kind and sympathetic, he was the soul of refinement. His heart went out to everyone, irrespective of religion or race. He admired everything great and noble from whatever source it came. He inspired faith and devotion.

After Gandhiji, there was no other man in India during the last thirty years who has given the inspiration and commanded the personal devotion which Malaviyaji did. He came out of ancient India, as Gandhiji has come, giving validity to the unbroken continuity of life, which is India. He was the soul of eternal *Varanasi*, the home of learning and of humility which lives in eternal search of noble living; the ageless Brahmin in the context of the whirling modern life. The Hindu University was his *ashram*. And, in him lived again the spirit of the mighty *Rishis* of old whose rich legacy makes India what it is today.

India is travelling fast towards a new destiny. Our horizon is widening rapidly. Hinduism which, a few decades ago, was a religion, a philosophy and a social system, is no longer so. It is being reintegrated as a broad, enfranchised, progressive, cultural and spiritual force which the freedom of today will transmute into a world message. To this transmutation, Malaviyaji gave his whole life.

(From "The Social Welfare", December 5, 1947.)

IX

ROLLAND OF THE UNVANQUISHED SPIRIT

Amidst the blare of trumpets and the beat of war drums, almost unnoticed, died Romain Rolland who, after Mahatma Gandhi, was the greatest apostle of 'Peace on Earth.' He brought to the world a message of love and goodwill, which was denied by the world—not once but twice, during World Wars I and II. When war-madness comes to be considered as dangerous as homicidal mania, then will the world recognise Rolland who came with a mission of hope, struggled for its realisation, but was frustrated by the barbarian instincts of modern man.

Born on January 29, 1866, Rolland remained unknown for fifty years except to a small circle of admiring friends. That small circle recognised the moral energy of this man, to whom men of every country and race were as brothers. But on the whole his was a lone, heroic, unyielding fight against the fate which surrounded him with tragic failures. He fought to vindicate Drayfus. He strove for a people's theatre which did not materialise. He led a small band of literary idealists who for 15 years edited a small magazine, *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, which was scarcely known beyond a small circle of subscribers. For several years he vanished from the literary world, enveloping himself in solitary toil.

He planned a series of creative works to illustrate his ardent faith: "Our first duty is not to be great but to defend the greatness of earth." The one theme

of his earlier works was to illustrate the triumph of unyielding heroism—the heroism of the crusaders of the ideal. Most of his heroes were animated with unwavering enthusiasm for the unattainable. Deprived of the externals of success they lived and died for the triumph of their spirit. One of the heroes of his work, Aert, a Prince, heir to Holland's vanished greatness, is a typical example. His people are crushed by defeat. The future appears "a period of slow decadence." As the stage direction puts it: "The moral and political humiliations of recent years are the foundation of the struggle still in store." When his tutor wants to make of him a Marcus Aurelius, he proudly replies: "I pay due reverence to ideas, but I recognise something higher than they—Moral Grandeur." When scornful victors surround him, they call out to him: "Too late." Proudly he answers: "Not too late to be free," and seeks in death the triumph which life has denied him.

To us human beings of little enthusiasm and less faith, the message of Romain Rolland comes with a reinvigorating freshness.

Of all his works, *Jean Christophe* is the greatest. It is the living picture of a European yearning for peace, friendliness, understanding. It is the Bible of a neo-European consciousness which lies buried to-day under the débris of bombed cities. This work is as great as the panorama of life, its hero as noble as the message of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, 'hating none, friend of all'.

But the fiery ordeal of Rolland came when the war

broke out in 1914. Alone, with but a pen in his hand, he decided to fight the war-madness of Europe. In September 1914, he wrote: "We do not choose our duties, but duty forces itself upon us. Mine is, with the aid of those who share my ideas, to save from the deluge the last vestiges of European spirit." He was persecuted. He had to go and live in Switzerland. Spies were set on him. He was regarded as an enemy of all warring nations. His attitude, however, was the attitude of Olivier, his hero: "I love France, but I cannot for the sake of France kill my soul or betray my conscience. This, no doubt, would be to betray my country. How can I hate when I feel no hatred? How can I act the comedy of hate?"

He set himself to a noble task. He thought that men of literature and science were above the collective madness of hatred. He wanted to rouse them to a consciousness of duty towards the world of peace. But he was doomed to be disillusioned. Men of literature and science all over Europe had been infected with frenzied hate. His appeals fell on deaf ears. No one had sanity left to be influenced by his manifestos against hatred. But his faith was real; mere words did not satisfy him. The aristocracy of birth, as he once put it, "has its privileges with blood." But the aristocracy of intellect all the world over is cowardly. Philosophers and men of thought, literature and science have rarely offered their blood to save their faith. Rolland was an exception. "If the world cannot get on without force," he wrote to a friend, "it still behoves me to refrain from making

terms with force. I must uphold an opposing principle which will envelop the principle of force. Each must play his own part. Each must be his own inward monitor.''

That is why in Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Mahatma Gandhi, Rolland recognised kindred souls. He lived the life of an ascetic. On the Cross of persecution, he offered himself to vindicate his own Truth.

He was in the best sense of the term an Indian, a true Indian who understood and acted up to the spirit of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The world was to him a brotherhood. He could not hate; he could not be untrue to himself. He stressed that man's first duty was ''to himself, to remain himself at any cost.'' This is an echo of Shri Krishna's words: ''Better to die in the discharge of one's *swadharma* ....'' And Rolland lived up to it. ''There is no ready-made truth,'' he said, ''no rigid formula which one person can hand over to another. Each must create Truth himself, according to his own model.'' Rolland was thus the flame of Truth in a world darkened by untruth. Like Gandhiji, he struggled for the right of man to live his own Truth. Not one of his ideals, however, was fulfilled. As Zweig says: ''Might has triumphed over right, force over spirit, man over humanity.'' But Rolland rested not until the end.

Rolland's life was the life of a Titan. To the imaginative writers, he was the herald of a new dawn. He taught that the man of creative energy is not a slave. He has the freedom of the Creator. His

spirit has no concern with the collective madness of the crowd. To the man to whom is given the power of the magic tongue or pen, the force of numbers is as nought. He is the apostle of his own ideals. And for these he must be ready to die. This is the great legacy that Rolland has left to the brotherhood of the spirit.

(From "The Social Welfare", November 12, 1943.)

X

DR. ANNIE BESANT: A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

MRS. BESANT was one of the makers of modern India; the greatest foreigner and the only European who threw in her lot completely and unreservedly with India. Her work cannot be divided into water-tight compartments, such as social service or educational, religious or political uplift. One overlapped the other and each was a part of the whole. In fact, social service and social reform is not possible without educational work; educational work without religious inspiration is a mercenary affair; and in modern times, every activity has a tendency to be woven into the network of politics.

In 1879, Col. Olcott, in his first speech in India, told Indians: "Children, your Mother is not dead but only sleepeth." And Dr. Besant spent her whole life in awakening the sleeper.

She landed in India in 1893. She felt, in spite of her Irish birth, the call of the Mother. From 1893 to 1898, her activities were primarily educational. In 1903, she took up social reform, and from 1913 till the end of her life, she devoted herself to achieving freedom for India. First, she concentrated all her activities on educational and religious revival. The Central Hindu College and Theosophical schools were started in Banaras. Here she was the first to introduce a broad social outlook in educational matters. Those were the days of child marriage and she ruled that no married boy should be admitted into

the Central Hindu College.

She took up the question of the education of Indian girls. She tried to raise the status of Indian women. She also, in those early years, devoted herself to the uplift of the *Harijans* whom she called the "suppressed classes." The first school for them in the country was started by Col. Olcott and developed by her. She carried on a propaganda campaign, as she alone knew how, against child marriage, and for the education of girls, for the need for foreign travel, and for liberalising the caste system. She was one of the first who, in 1885, inaugurated the new movement for treating sin and crime as responsibilities of society. In this, she was in advance of her times. She insisted that society had certain positive duties towards the so-called criminals, as they were a product of faulty education and a brutal environment. She strongly opposed capital punishment. She said: "Against war, against capital punishment, against flogging, demanding national education instead of big guns, public libraries instead of warships! No wonder, I was denounced as an agitator, a firebrand, and that orthodox society turned up at me its most respectable nose."

She was, as is well known, a co-worker of the Webbs, Bernard Shaw and Bradlaugh in England in 1880. She was one of the earliest members of the Fabian Society, one of the founders of the Labour Party in England, and a colleague of Bradlaugh in editing the weekly, *National Reformer*. She espoused the cause of the overworked and under-paid girls working

in the match factories. In India, too, one of the first trade unions of industrial workers was started under her blessing in 1918 by Mr. B. P. Wadia.

But the greatest work that she did was to restore the national confidence in Indians, for no social progress is possible in an atmosphere of frustration. When she came, Dayananda the mighty, who was no more, was by the general masses of Indians considered an iconoclast and a revolutionary. Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was dead and his brilliant disciple Swami Vivekananda was interested in acquiring for India a reputation in foreign lands. But Mrs. Besant worked in India. She worked not from without but from within the psychological framework of the Indian mind, not as a reformer standing outside the social fold but as one speaking sympathetically from inside. In this respect, her approach to the caste system was typical. She wanted the castes to go but she was not blind to the spirit behind the caste system. The message of the *Gita* had entered her foreign-born soul. She proved the truth of the teaching in herself. By her individual nature, and the tasks enjoined by that nature, she secured the position of a *Karmayogi*. By constant endeavour, she taught India to recapture the spirit of Aryan Culture.

"Without Hinduism, India has no future. Hinduism is the soil in which India's roots are struck, and torn out of that, she will inevitably wither, as a tree torn out from its place. Her history, her literature, her art, her movements, all have Hinduism written across them. India lived before other religions came;

India could live after their passing. But let Hinduism go, Hinduism that was India's cradle, and in that passing would be India's grave."

It was this outlook which made the strongest appeal to the Indian mind.

But she was too clear-sighted not to see that the social system as it existed in her time had become an anachronism. She was a student of Shri Krishna and believed that nature, not birth, opens the path of discipleship and leads to the attainment of the perfection that is He.

She studied the Indian social system with unerring perspicuity and saw the part it had played. "Chaldea, Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome have perished, mighty as once they were, far-reaching in Empire, splendid in achievement; India, which was their contemporary, has outlived them all; and is she not lifting her proud head once more to greet the rising sun of a new dawn? And this marvellous endurance, while primarily due to her profound spirituality, is partly due also to the stability given to her by her caste system, a social stability of home, answering to the inner stability of spirit."

She said this because she had the true historical vision, not merely the zeal of the reformer. And as early as 1908 she said: "I am bound to say that I do not believe the caste system can continue in India in the changing life of the nation and with the heavy responsibilities which more and more still fall upon her sons."

And in the early days when we were suffering from

an inferiority complex with regard to everything which was Indian, she restored to us confidence in our capacity as a Nation, in the legacy that a great past had left us, and in the immortal destiny which was our due.

To her is due our national gratitude on this occasion.

(A talk on the Radio, October 24, 1947.)

XI

ACHARYA ANANDSHANKER DHRUVA

ACHARYA DHRUVA'S death has been to me a personal blow, for he was one of my most cherished friends.

Acharya Anandshanker Dhruva was one of the great professors of our time and a great educationist. For many years he was Professor of Sanskrit in the Gujarat College. When, at the call of Gandhiji, he gave several years of his aging life to the Banaras Hindu University as its Pro-Vice-Chancellor, he came to be accorded a high place among the men of learning in this country.

He was a member of the Baroda University Commission which the late Maharaja Saheb of Baroda appointed to examine the possibilities of a residential University in Baroda. It was then that, as colleagues working together, we developed a strong attachment to each other which grew with years.

When he retired from Banaras, he became the living inspiration of all the institutions of higher learning in Ahmedabad, and it was under his advice and on the promise of his help that Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan came to be founded in Bombay.

He was a deeply read and profound scholar. Sanskrit, of course, was his first love. He was recognised all over the country as a great authority on Sanskrit, even by the Pandits of Banaras. Yet though his knowledge of Sanskrit was so vast and deep, his other interests were many. A study of the literature of both the East and the West was his life's predominant

passion. He was as familiar with the latest production in English literature as with that in Gujarati and Sanskrit. He was as alive to the newest thought in America as to the latest theory in the academies of India.

He was a thinker who viewed the problems of modern life with a rare sanity of outlook. The East and the West had been harmonised in him by a life-long study of the literature and thought of both, and purified by a devotion to those ideals which Aryan culture has so beautifully enshrined in Sanskrit literature.

Anandshanker Dhruva was one of the founders of modern Gujarati prose. *Sudarshana* and *Vasant*, which he edited for many years, exercised a wholesome control over the literary output of Gujarat for over two generations. His rich vocabulary, clear thinking and dignity of expression contributed in no small degree to the development of modern Gujarati prose. And his style to-day remains the high-water-mark of balanced purity and dignity attained by our language.

He was the President of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad at Nadiad, when, but for his steadying influence, the institution would have been wrecked. His presidential address, on that occasion, was a brilliant summary of modern Gujarati literature.

Acharya Dhruva was a wonderful companion. His sense of humour was exquisite, and he enjoyed jokes even when they were at his own expense. He could see and laugh at the absurd in life without malice

or contempt. As a friend he was loyal, sympathetic and inspiring.

Despite the disparity in our ages, and other diversities, we shared a unity of outlook and purpose. In his case, the stream of thought ran with the majesty and unruffled calm of the Ganga, in mine with the bubbling rapidity of a Kashmirian stream—but in both, the waters were drawn from the unchangeable and gorgeous heights of Aryan culture. Hence it was that I dedicated to him my novel *Bhagvan Kautilya*, the first architect of Indian unity who, 2,400 years ago, gave to our culture a geographical basis and political unity.

The literary and scholastic achievements of Acharya Dhruva are, nevertheless, nothing beside his character and personality. If his style was balanced, his life was a marvel of balance, of a complete adjustment of the old and the new, of an outlook which had harmonised the ancient ideals with the most progressive modern needs. If he was an orthodox Brahmin in personal life, he had a wide vision of modern problems and a due appreciation of the methods of solving them. In him deep scholarship was attuned to a life of service, and abstract thinking did not take anything away from the deep loyalty and warm affection with which he honoured his friends. He tried to live in complete harmony with his ideals—and he succeeded in a measure given to a few men.

If purity of life and subordination of the impulses to high ideals make for a Brahmin; if a life devoted to literature and thought, with incessant efforts to

bring the wisdom of the past to the actual problems of life, makes for a Brahmin; if a constant effort to fuse what is best in the ancient with what is best in modern life is the characteristic of a Brahmin; if a continuous endeavour to acquire a wide and many-sided vision in order to co-ordinate one's functions, attitudes and impulses makes for a Brahmin; if a deep love of ancient India, an earnest effort to acquire an intimacy with the Scriptures and literatures of India and a flaming desire to recapture the secrets of Aryan culture for oneself and one's generation afresh makes for a Brahmin, Anandshankerbhai was a Brahmin in the truest sense—perhaps the last of the great race of Brahmins which Gujarat has produced in modern times.

To me his death has been a great loss. When he was in Bombay last, ailing seriously, I, with my family, went to visit him. I had almost a premonition that we would not meet him again, and when we left I could not help saying to my children: "Bow to him, for he is the last of the learned Brahmins of Gujarat."

(Presidential speech at a public meeting held in Bombay on April 12, 1942, to condole the death of Dr. A. B. Dhruva.)

XII

BHULABHAI DESAI

BHULABHAI'S death has removed an outstanding figure from the nationalist world of India, and certainly the most brilliant advocate from the Indian bar.

My association with him started in June 1913 when, as a recently enrolled advocate, I joined his chambers for what is called "devilling." He was then the counsel most in demand at the bar, and for seven years I worked for and with him, learning the elements of advocacy. For some years I was so closely attached to him professionally that day after day I had the rare privilege of seeing his agile and subtle brain at work.

Bhulabhai's strength in those days lay in a wonderful memory, a constitution that could bear any physical or intellectual strain and subtlety which could pierce through any intricacy of fact or law. His *metier* lay in a grasp of principles of law rather than precedents. His delivery at all times remained a little verbose and repetitive, but in those days his sweet persuasiveness found its way into the heart of every judge.

Often, for hours at night we sat up, I with my elaborate notes on his brief, he chewing *pan* on a sofa in front of me. It was a rare privilege to see how the facts I gave him were analysed, x-rayed, re-arranged, how the opponent's arguments first grew stronger and then were battered down one after another, till ultimately he evolved a line which looked almost

invincible when presented by him.

He was the favourite of the solicitors in those days. After 1922, his advocacy underwent a change. The extraordinary success which he had attained gave him great confidence and his advocacy assumed vehemence, his cross-examination a devastating effect. Gifted with a wonderful memory, he rarely made notes and he declined to look up a number of authorities but based his case on fundamental principles.

I was Bhulabhai's junior in many important cases in those days. One of the most extraordinary things about him was the duality of his personality. While examining his case in conference, he saw all the weak points on his own side and the strong points on the other; but while actually conducting the case, he saw no other side but his own.

He had the good fortune to have among his pupils some of the most distinguished lawyers of the Bombay bar, for instance, Mr. Motilal Setalvad, Mr. M. V. Desai, Mr. (now Justice) N. H. Bhagwati, Mr. G. N. Joshi and several others.

He drifted into politics when he became the Vice-President of the Home Rule League, but resigned from it a little later on account of differences with the members of the Committee, of which Mr. Jinnah was the President and I, if I mistake not, the Secretary.

Politics as they were shaping under Mahatma Gandhi were scarcely the field for which Bhulabhai was pre-eminently fitted. But at the time of the Bardoli Satyagraha enquiry, when Sardar Patel wanted an advocate to present the case for the farmers, Bhula-

bhai's aid was sought and given. Once at Bardoli, he came within the charmed circle of Gandhiji and a transition from that to the Congress was just a matter of time.

Bhulabhai was always the darling of Fate. His uncanny skill for presenting a case made him a valuable asset to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress High Command. In a time much shorter than it takes people to be recognised in the Congress, he was lifted into the Working Committee. In 1934, when we met at Dr. Ansari's house in Delhi to consider the question of rescuing public life from the unfortunate condition into which it had sunk, we elected him Chairman of the Swaraj Party. Gandhiji favoured the idea of restarting parliamentary activity. In one of his letters to me at the time, Gandhiji wrote that he looked to Bhulabhai for bearing the burden of the parliamentary wing, which he did when he became the leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly. His brilliant delivery and his tactful leadership made him a great parliamentary figure. He had neither Pandit Motilal Nehru's uncanny insight into human nature, nor was he inclined to enter into details of the problems before him. But he made the Assembly a first class platform for expounding the national case.

Curiously enough, I attended the Home Rule League after Bhulabhai left and resigned from the Congress along with Mr. Jinnah after the Nagpur session. I was also drawn into Gandhiji's circle at the time of the Bardoli Satyagraha as chairman of the Bardoli Inquiry Committee and I rejoined the Con-

gress a little before Bhulabhai. As things were, our lives were linked by indissoluble bonds. At Dr. Ansari's house, it was given to me to overcome his disinclination to take up parliamentary work. One night, when we sat up late to discuss the problem, he said he expected me to be with him in the Assembly. But the Bombay voters in 1934 decided that I should be denied that privilege.

In 1940, after the individual *Satyagraha*, we were together in jail along with Sardar Patel, Premier Kher, and several other friends. It was there I found that in spite of the closest association with Gandhiji, Bhulabhai was temperamentally less of a politician than a lawyer. The whole Gandhian phenomenon, in spite of his being in the midst of it, was something which he could not understand. The recurring spells of jail life, the strain of self-discipline, the demands of constructive work exasperated a mind which was essentially Westernised and affected his health.

When he came out of jail after serious illness, the vigour of his mind left him for some time, but his wonderful constitution came to the rescue. He returned to the Bar. When he led me in the Coal case at Cawnpore, I was delighted to find that his alertness, skill and powers of cross-examination had resumed their normal course. In spite of his robust health, however, his heart was playing him tricks. At that time he was carrying on the Desai-Liaqat talks and he was in high hopes of bringing about a national Centre within a few days.

In the light of what is happening today, the Desai-

Liaqat negotiations may look extraordinarily tame. But when Bhulabhai started the talks, the country was weighed down by a sense of complete frustration. Demoralisation was in the air. Something had to be done to save the situation. And Bhulabhai, even at the risk of being misunderstood, took the first step.

What happened at the Simla Conference is recent history, but the omission of his name from the Congress list of nominees to the Central Government came to Bhulabhai as a blow. There was a spate of ignorant criticism about that omission. Perhaps a man shrewder than Bhulabhai would have anticipated it. In spite of his close contact with Gandhiji, Bhulabhai could not appraise the strength, the power, the superior statesmanship and moral grandeur that is Mahatma Gandhi. It was not Bhulabhai's fault. He was not made that way.

He retained through life that Western attitude of mind which was common among educated men in the first decade of this century. Not even his close contact with Sewagram could change it.

But, as I said, Bhulabhai was the darling of Fate. He was called upon to defend the accused in the I.N.A. No one dreamt that the British Government would be so stupid as to present to ignorant Indians the picturesque narrative of the I.N.A.'s heroic performance. Bhulabhai rose to the highest level of his forensic skill and eloquence in this trial.

Like a drama rising to its climax, the last act in which the hero appeared was staged in a setting of "international limelight when the privilege of revolt

had to be vindicated in a live trial of national heroes." Bhulabhai's brilliant performance in this act, followed up by the unconditional release of the accused, produced a national emotion of which he was the centre. The City of Bombay literally "mobbed" him for days.

Bhulabhai sub-consciously felt that the drama was closing. He attended the I.N.A. trial on some days only after taking oxygen to revive his collapsing lungs. He attended parties, lunches, dinners, congratulatory meetings in Bombay, even in failing health with goaded energy.

The last scene of the drama, before he lay down on what was his death-bed, was the Annual Dinner of the Bombay Bar, where he was the guest of honour. His brilliant advocacy had drawn an unusually large number of lawyers to the dinner at the Taj. It was a brilliant function, and all eyes were on him.

He came to the dinner tottering. His doctors had advised him not to attend it. But Bhulabhai said he would attend even if he came out dead. When the time for speeches arrived, he summoned the resources of his failing strength and spoke for over 45 minutes. After a little while, his sentences shaped themselves into sonorous periods. Amidst the cheers of his admiring friends of the Bar, he spoke of the right of subject people to revolt. It was his *Bharatavakyam*, the last song before the drama ends. When he finished, he was gasping for breath. Slowly he tottered home and took to bed—to die.

Two days before he died, I went to have his last

darshan as I was leaving for Delhi. I knew he would not be alive when I came back.

In the presence of that shrivelled frame and that unconscious mind, my mind went back to the hundred scenes of triumph which had been achieved by that body now so frail, and to the restless ambition, that love of life, that breath-taking brilliance, which were all now things of the past.

A curious fate had linked us for years. I was his pupil professionally. I had lived with him often, had holidays with him for months. I had learned many things at his feet.

In spite of our close association professionally, politically, and above all personally, there was an incompatibility of temperament between us which both of us found difficult to get over. His attitude to life was entirely Western. Mine could never accept Western standards. He had a robust constitution. I have been a weakling throughout life. He could enjoy life and the gaieties of Europe. I had an outlook in life which could not relish such things. He had no patience with imaginative efforts or a search for things which were not concrete. And I was devoted to fiction, drama, dance-recitals and amateur theatricals, and even the *Gita*.

These differences of outlook often made him feel—and from his point of view correctly—that I was not the right sort. But, often, we forgot our differences in views, outlook and temperament, to find that we were tied to each other by the golden thread of deep affection which never grew weak or dim.

He was my *guru* in law and to him my heart has always turned with gratitude for what I learnt in close association with him.

He was one of the strongest of my links with life. That link is now snapped. And I feel poorer and weaker without it.

(From "The Social Welfare", May 10, 1946.)

XIII

SATYAMURTI: A VALIANT FIGHTER

SHRI SATYAMURTI is dead. A valiant fighter in the cause of Indian freedom is no more.

Jamnalalji, Mahadevbhai Desai, Satyamurti—three men, three staunch patriots, all three my personal friends—have left a void both in the public life of the country and in my circle of friends. Satyamurti and I came to know each other in 1917, in the course of the Home Rule Movement which Mrs. Besant led. He was an accomplished speaker even then—an audacious young man who fought unflinchingly for the cause he loved.

At the Amritsar Congress he delivered a tremendous philippic against Lord Chelmsford from the Congress platform. We became close friends when, on our return from the Nagpur Congress in 1920, he fell seriously ill in the train and stayed with us in Bombay till he recovered. Then we were both dissatisfied with the change that was coming over the Congress. He was determined to stay in and fight from inside while I, led by Mr. Jinnah, decided to go out.

For politics he gave up his professional career. He submitted to Congress discipline, though constitutionally fighting from inside for his point of view. In 1930 our political association was revived on my rejoining the Congress. Since then, many were the occasions when we met and discussed the problems of the country and shared the misfortune of being outside the circle of those ardent men who had hitched

their wagon to a star.

Towards the end of 1933, at the suggestion of the late Rangaswami Iyengar, I came to be interested in the formation of the Swaraj Party which ultimately became the parliamentary wing of the Congress. It was Satyamurti who, when he came out of gaol, threw himself heart and soul into its activity. He was a first class parliamentarian. He never could see the wisdom of throwing parliamentary activities in the country to the tender mercies of reactionaries. If the Congress parliamentary wing in the Central Assembly flourished, it was as much due to the dynamic energy of Mr. Satyamurti as to the wise guidance of Mr. Bhulabhai Desai.

Before the Congress elections of 1937, when Satyamurti was in Bombay, we had long discussions on the question of acceptance of office. With undaunted energy, he flung himself into an active advocacy of it. He was laughed at, jeered at, called names, for being the champion of what the bulk of Congressmen then considered Luciferian heresy. He had the gift of a flamboyant word-artist, and the description he gave of Congressmen in office made him one of the most unpopular men in the A.I.C.C. In my own little way I tried to influence the great leaders of the organisation; and I remember that it was at his suggestion that I wrote a series of articles favouring acceptance of office, which naturally met the same fate as Satyamurti's orations. But the change came. At last Gandhiji came round to the view of accepting office. The Working Committee accepted the change; and

the Congress took office. Satyamurti would certainly have gone into office in Madras, had he not made room for Rajaji—for whom he always had high respect.

Mr. Satyamurti's activities in the legislatures are well known. He was temperamentally a parliamentarian, and he won laurels for his party in the Central Assembly. He was a constructive politician. He believed not only in parliamentary life but also in accepting constructive responsibilities, perhaps of a measured sort, in preference to the ideally or morally correct position. In spite of the fact that the Congress was made up differently, Satyamurti loved to remain in a minority, for he believed that his strength was all the greater for being within a powerful organisation, rather than outside.

When in 1940 I resigned from the Congress on the issue of non-violence, he was one of the first few to scold me for what he called my folly. He shared my views on non-violence to some extent, but he wanted me to remain in the Congress and fight, as he did. I was not made that way, but Satyamurti was uncompromising in the scolding he gave me.

The Congress, during the last thirty years, has been more an army than a political party, and more a band of martyrs than an army. Whoever has been in the forefront of its struggles has had to undergo the tortures of unresting political activity or the suffering of incarceration. Physique undermined, nerves constantly on edge, family life broken up, professional life unattended to: these have been the privileges of those who have followed Mahatma Gandhi. And

Satyamurti was not behind any one in the extent of martyrdom he underwent. In him the country has lost a staunch and determined fighter whose life was one of comprehensive sacrifice. He struggled to the last to assert the rights of his countrymen to freedom. He was, above everything, highly courageous. He stood up for what he thought right, and no hero could do more.

(From "The Social Welfare", April 2, 1943.)

XIV

MAHADEV DESAI : A TRIBUTE

SHRI MAHADEV DESAI'S sudden and untimely death has left a void which it is impossible to fill. He was known to millions as Gandhiji's Secretary and constant companion, and the editor of his weekly *Harijan*. For full twenty-five years, till the very end of his life, he served Gandhiji, and, through him, the nation, with devotion, ability and self-effacement all his own. There was not one cause, social or political, espoused by Gandhiji in which he did not interest himself and of which he did not make a deep study.

By his inborn humanity, sweetness of temperament and charming manners, arising from a deep human sympathy and understanding, he won the affection and regard of every one who came in contact with him. He had a large circle of friends, even outside the Congress, among all classes and communities, in India as well as abroad.

In the counsels of the Congress he occupied an important place. In recent years, Gandhiji entrusted him with a number of difficult political missions, in every one of which he acquitted himself with the greatest credit. He was a lover of books, a voracious reader, and knew several languages. His interests extended over a very wide range of subjects.

He wrote English in a style that was simple and charming as well as elegant. He was one of the finest literary stylists in Gujarati.

In him Gandhiji has lost a son, secretary and inter-

preter, the wife a devoted husband, the son a loving father, the Congress a faithful worker, and Gujarat and India one of the noblest of their sons. To me the loss is personal. He has been one of the best and most beloved of my friends. The loss to his widow and family is irreparable. But the loss to us is a gain to the country. He will live as one who loved and died for the Mother.

(From "The Social Welfare", August 20, 1942.)

XV

JAMNALALJI

I WAS shocked when I learnt that Jamnalalji was dead. When I last met him, a few months ago, he was recovering from the illness which released him from jail. Neither of us then knew that it was the last time we were destined to meet.

He was dear to me as a valued and respected friend. Our friendship began in 1930 in the Nasik Jail when we led the common life of an "A" class prison ward: living together, reading together, praying together. He had the supreme quality of attracting men's confidence and I was soon drawn into the charmed circle of his personal intimacy. We discussed many problems: our own personal lives, the country's future, Gandhiji's personality and influence, Hindi, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Since then, his family and mine have become friends too.

Jamnalalji was a business genius. Had he not fallen under the spell of Gandhiji, he would have been the premier business man of India, in the ordinary acceptance of the term. As it was, he was the real premier business man; in Gandhiji's empire, he held the portfolio of the business organisation of constructive work. His wonderful powers were utilised to organise the Charka Sangh, the Hindi Prachar and many other similar activities with their countrywide ramifications.

Many people do not know that Jamnalalji was not merely an organiser, but a politician as well. He

could both create and control political organisations. He dominated the public life of the Central Provinces, though often in a manner unseen and unfelt. He led the Jaipur Praja Mandal activities. In the deliberations of the Congress High Command, he brought to bear a sanity of outlook that was the wonder of trained politicians.

His extraordinary faculty of organisation led him to regulate even the life of those who came in contact with him. He picked up promising men and provided them with suitable careers. He settled men in life according to their aptitudes. He arranged marriages for the children of his friends. He knew the art of arranging social functions and arranged, too, the social life of those around him. His hospitality knew no bounds. But the manner of his hospitality was greater still. To every one of the large number of guests he entertained, he gave the comforts of a well-regulated life, while leaving them free to follow their own tastes.

He was the truly rich man the Hindu *Shastras* describe. He possessed money in order that he might give it to worthy men and causes. In 1930, when we exchanged confidences, his donations had already run into lakhs. Every one who needed money for a good cause found it from or through Jamnalalji. He was, however, meticulous in testing the *bona fides* of the recipient; to the *apatra* he would not give a pie—to a deserving man there was nothing he would stint. He gave in the spirit of *aparigraha,* non-possession.

In spite of his business heredity, training and

habits, he was a man of great idealism and stern moral sense. Even under the hard conditions of jail life, when the best of us were tempted to break or ignore the jail rules, he was scrupulous in observing them and getting them observed. In matters political, he never forgot their moral aspect, which was perhaps the greatest bond between him and Gandhiji.

The miraculous part of Gandhiji's personality is the self-surrender that he evokes in men who, but for him, would have been worldly in the worldliest sense of the term. The surrender of Jamnalalji to Gandhiji was complete, absolute. Through Jamnalalji's devotion to Gandhiji, one could study the mighty charm of the man who could inspire it.

I do not know the exact number of years in all during which Jamnalalji was in jail or underwent the hundred and one privations which unstinted devotion to Gandhiji implies. He performed his *tapascharya* with a morale that never tired, with a confidence that never wavered.

(From "The Social Welfare", February 19, 1942.)

XVI

PROFESSOR BHANSALI'S FAST

(1)

A MAN of forty-eight, dark, with a mane of hair like Christ's; trustful eyes; a temperament as simple as a babe's; a harmlessness which disarms every one; a body that stands hunger and toil, the fierce sun of the Wardha summer and the freezing waters of Himalayan streams; a faith in God that is rock-like: that is Professor Bhansali.

He is a Master of Arts of the Bombay University, and an ex-professor of a Bombay college. He travelled all over Europe and then gave up the world, walked to the Himalayas barefoot, sojourned in the forest of Gir; lived on *nim* leaves; ringed his lips together and was fed through a tube for years; spun endlessly and believed in Bapu. He is a man of religion, who knows not polities and does not care for them; a saint who loves man but is indifferent to the world; an ascetic with the innocence of a child; an angel with the body of a *Hatha Yogi;* a *Muni* to whom silence is joy.

The communiqué of the Central Provinces Government and the statement of Dr. Moonje as regards the alleged treatment of women in the village of Chimur (C.P.) stirred this man to his depths. He found in the honour of Indian women a fundamental article of faith. Its sanctity was to him an inalienable part of Hindu culture. So he went to Sjt. Aney at New Delhi and begged him to come to Chimur to inquire into the allegation.

The world knows what happened. He started a fast at Sjt. Aney's, desiring, as he said, "to die at his feet", was arrested, brought back to Sevagram on November 7, and set free. He took a vow to fast unto death unless he secured an inquiry. He simply could not live, he said, if women were molested with impunity—the daughters of the race whose womenfolk have preferred fire to dishonour—and if such acts were allowed to pass unnoticed, without inquiry, without redress.

He went to Chimur and started a fast in the temple of Balaji there. An order was served on him to leave Chimur within three hours. He was then arrested, brought to Sevagram, and again released on November 15.

Professor Bhansali decided to go back to Chimur. He started from Sevagram on foot on November 19. That wonderful body of his, under this urge, carried him ninety miles, in spite of his fast without water for days. The police arrested him and brought him back on a stretcher to Sevagram.

He started for Chimur again on the morning of November 25. For fifteen days, he had touched neither food nor water. I drove from Wardha to meet him; for I had known him for some years and I wanted to bring him back if I could. I found him in a wayside field where, after having walked twelve miles, he was resting. A pathetic tenderness was in his eyes. His body was shrunken. The sublime faith of his brought tears to my eyes. He said: "I am giving up my life so that no woman may suffer dishonour in

this land of *Rishis.*" He did me the honour of accepting my advice to take water on the way. But I did realise then that man being what he is in the modern world, the only sanction behind a woman's honour is the will of the victim and her champions to court death.

As I stood there on the Wardha Road, I saw the golden rays of the setting sun light up Bhansali's Jesus-like mane; saw him walking slowly away from me, leaning on his staff, bent on vindicating a moral right; a lonely traveller on a journey few have trodden before him.

On my way back to Bombay from Nagpur on November 29, I learned that the authorities had again brought him from Chimur Road back to Wardha. I could not restrain a tear as I thought of our land, this ancient Mother of men, who still lives in her *sadhus.* In silent prayer, I offered thanks to the Almighty who has favoured her with such sons, age after age.

Professor Bhansali may still secure an inquiry or melt the heart of Sjt. Aney into accompanying him to Chimur—or he may die. But I cannot understand why Government persists in denying to itself, on such a grave allegation as the one in this case, the elementary duty of holding an inquiry by a member of the Government like Sjt. Aney on whose strength, according to Mr. Churchill, British rule in India rests for the moment. Whatever the crimes that were committed by the people in hapless Chimur, they are being expiated by the flower of its manhood. Many

have been arrested and tried. Subject to the review of Sir Frederick Pollock of the Nagpur High Court, twenty of them are sentenced to death; twenty-five to transportation for life; several others to heavy terms of imprisonment and fine. Many more cases are still pending against residents of the village, and a heavy collective fine has also been exacted. I will not refer to what was done to the village after these men were arrested. Even now Chimur is not normal. Is not this sufficient—too sufficient a vindication of Law and Order on that little village? Is it too much to ask the Government of India and the Government of the Central Provinces and Berar to reconsider the position that they have taken up, and grant Professor Bhansali's request—which would strengthen the moral position of the Government?

Few have grieved at the happenings of the last four months more than I have been. I was and am still a believer in happy Indo-British relations. I cannot think of India's progress at present as apart from that of Britain. I have felt that unless the Axis is defeated Democracy cannot flourish either in India or anywhere else. I therefore feel that, humble though I am, I have a right to tell the British and their representatives here, both British and Indian, that in neglecting the moral aspect of their attempt to restore order in India, they are introducing elements which will harm Indo-British relations and convert India into a super-Eire. "It is excellent to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it as a giant." It is suicidal to neglect the moral aspect.

This is the fifth time in my life that I have seen such a mood on the part of British authorities in India. During the partition movement, during the Jallianwalla Bagh, during the Bardoli *Satyagraha*, and during the year 1932-33, the British authorities and Indian patriots saw red. But times changed and Britishers and Indians on every occasion worked together in this country not only as masters and mercenaries, but as friends and colleagues. I know many of my British friends have got into a war mood against Indians as a whole, and Congressmen in particular. I invite them to pause and think of the bitterness which incidents are likely to cause in future, if Professor Bhansali dies for a cause which is sacred to every Indian heart.

All that Professor Bhansali wants is a simple thing which every decent man should be proud to concede: namely, an inquiry as to whether the agents of Government at Chimur have overstepped the limits, not of law but of human decency. Save the life of this wonderful man, I appeal to every one! I appeal particularly to Britons in this country whose sense of justice is not blurred by panic or vindictiveness; and to my Indian friends like Sjt. Aney with whose moral support the Government of India claims to carry on these activities.

(From "The Social Welfare", December 4, 1944.)

XVII

PROFESSOR BHANSALI'S FAST

(2)

IT was at about 1-30 P.M. on December 12 when Shrimati Anasuyabai Kale, Acharya Valunjkar, some friends and myself motored down to Wardha with the terms of settlement which His Excellency Sir Henry Twynam, Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, had approved and which Professor Bhansali, known in Sevagram as Bavaji, had still to accept. The general outlines of the proposals had already been approved by him on Sunday, December 10, when I had seen him.

It was sheer good fortune that a professional engagement took me to Nagpur on December 8. It was also good fortune that, thanks to the interest taken by Smt. Kale, Dr. Khare had gone to Wardha and come away considerably impressed by the fast of Professor Bhansali on the same day. Good fortune, likewise, that His Excellency was not unwilling to settle this outstanding issue.

We went to the guest house of Seth Jamnalalji and I rushed to the place where Professor Bhansali was lying. Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj and his mother Shrimati Jankidevi, following the high tradition of service bequeathed to them by Seth Jamnalalji, had surrounded him with every care affectionate solicitude could bestow.

During the last three months that I came into contact with Professor Bhansali, I acquired an affec-

tion for him. Very funny but there it is; not the sort of affection one has for a friend, but a kind of mother's love for a baby. For in spite of his forty odd years and his tremendous will, he has in many ways the innocence and simplicity of a child. If I could, I would have taken him in my arms!

There he lay on the 63rd day of his fast; his body all but a skeleton, concealed under a cover; his face beaming with a cheerful smile; his hands stretched out in welcome. I told him about the negotiations and the terms we had brought. His mind was clear as crystal, the whole vitality of his body being drawn up to his brain.

He discussed every word of the letters to be exchanged between Dr. Khare and himself and which are now before the public. He weighed every word from three points of view: first, whether the vow he had taken was fulfilled; second, whether he was doing anything to injure the dignity of Bapu; third, whether, in any little measure, a recurrence of the outrages that had taken place in Chimur would be prevented.

Professor Bhansali is modest and from the very beginning had put forward his claim most reasonably. He wanted a public inquiry into the outrages of Chimur but would be quite content if the Hon'ble Shri Aney accompanied him to Chimur and both of them together heard the tale of woe which the women there had to tell them. To his mind, this part of his vow was essential. He wanted to establish that even under foreign rule, every suffering Indian had a right to

tell the tale of his woe to his leaders and that in denying to the victims of the present repression the right to be heard by Indian public men of tried worth, the bureaucracy was perpetuating the worst feature of a foreign rule. Professor Bhansali was therefore satisfied by the assurance which Dr. Khare had given: that the Hon'ble Shri Aney would go with him to Chimur.

It may look a small thing now, but the fact remains that under the existing British rule in India, a public man—Shri Aney—who comes from a village next to Chimur and who now forms part of the Government of India and who could never be charged with want of will, could not go near his people and mingle his tears with theirs at the tortures inflicted upon them at the behest of our foreign rulers. This ban was lifted; this point, therefore, was won.

On the next point, there was no doubt that the settlement became possible only because His Excellency the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar intervened—I have no doubt with the consent of the Viceroy—not as a matter of generosity but as a clear recognition that it was high time that public indignation that had been roused about Chimur might be allayed by a penitent gesture, however belated.

In the two Notifications issued, the C.P. Government, carried away by the fury into which the British Government had lashed themselves since August 9, 1942, said things which should not have been stated in a responsible State document. The Government pooh-poohed those who approached them for justice.

They charged the women of Chimur with having concocted the story of rape on themselves.

A sense of proportion had now returned. The Government was prepared to make some amends by stating that there was no intention of attributing any ulterior motives to the women of Chimur generally. It also emphasised, no doubt only in words, what should have been done in action at the end of August last—that the pre-requisite of a civilised agency for maintaining law and order is that it should respect both law and morals.

Professor Bhansali was happy to see that the C. P. Government had at last pledged itself to see that the honour of women shall be safe in the hands of the Police and the Military. He felt, and I also agreed with him, that if it were possible to obtain Bapu's approval to this settlement, it would have been forthcoming; that in any case he would not have found fault with us. It was a great moral gain that there was a change of heart, however slight, which led the Government to impose some restrictions on the methods of enforcing law and order with which we have been familiar during the last three months.

The third point was also gained. Public inquiry, when Professor Bhansali went to the Hon'ble Shri Aney, would have been of some use. About 75 days after the incident, it was worse than useless; identification was not possible. Personally I was averse to an inquiry at this late stage, when our sisters of Chimur would have had to be put to the mental torture of re-living the horrors of the ugliest moments

of their lives, and of trying to re-enact them in words before a cold-blooded tribunal. Over the shame of those moments, a curtain had to be dropped. Both the Government and Professor Bhansali have now happily decided to do so.

Professor Bhansali then signed the letter. The Police party which had encamped in front of Seth Jamnalalji's Guest House, in order to see that the Professor did not die except under their supervision, disappeared. The news spread like wild fire in Wardha. Crowds began to pour in. Just about that time, several women from Chimur arrived—the mothers, daughters and wives of men who, in their irrepressible enthusiasm for freedom, did gruesome deeds and over whom hangs the extreme penalty of death. Their personal grief had been forgotten in adoration of Professor Bhansali who was wooing death so that their wounds might be healed. To the chanting of prayers, Professor Bhansali broke his fast.

A heavy load was off my chest for, during the last three months, the Professor had honoured me with his confidence. Tears were in my eyes, for in that moment—in front of that little outhouse of Seth Jamnalalji's guest house—I saw that the mighty spirit of Bapu was there: the spirit of the Master who has fashioned saints out of stones, martyrs out of mere men and heroes out of clay.

As I left that gathering, the helplessness of my countrymen came back to me with blinding poignancy. On August 19, Government had done a wrong. Public men sought justice; the Press clamoured for it. The

whole country was shaken to its depths. But nothing was done. Professor Bhansali met an Indian member of the Viceroy's Council and friends, and urged them to intervene. Nothing was done. He went on a fast unto death. The news travelled throughout the country. Every heart was stirred. The result was a universal press blackout on Chimur and Bhansali. The Indian Press took up the question, and a battle royal began between the Press and some Provincial Governments.

Sixty days of Professor Bhansali's fast went unheeded; but for his seasoned constitution he would have collapsed long ago. The bureaucracy was faced with a grim prospect. Professor Bhansali's death would have led to another all-India wave of indignation; possibly to a chain of such fasts. Then the bureaucracy woke up, and Professor Bhansali was rescued from the jaws of death by a last minute act of duty which any Indian Government would have performed on August 20, 1942, the day after the incident. The measure of our bondage is unbounded. Lord Curzon, for a single outrage by a white soldier in Burma, brought down his Viceregal fist upon the offender. But we are in 1943.

This Chimur settlement, to my mind, is a healthy sign, however. It shows the return of a sense of proportion among the British in this country. I hope I am not mistaken. It fell to my lot in the middle of August last to draw the attention of a distinguished English friend to the fact that struggles like this between English bureaucracy in India and the Indian

people are temporary phases through which Indo-British relations must pass before achieving partnership and that nothing should be done during these phases which would further the existing embitterment between the two people. A detached point of view is essential. The War of Democracy has to be won; Britain and India have to march hand in hand towards a World Federation of Freedom; but it must be a self-respecting India, not an India in bondage. Every day that passes by without that confidence restored, which ought to exist between Britain and Free India, delays a consummation which the world devoutly wishes. This Chimur settlement, therefore, indicates a retracing step back to friendship. His Excellency Sir Henry Twynam acted well and wisely.

Bavaji is penniless. With worldliness forsworn, his sole wealth and instrument is his body. With it, he resisted almost until the last gasp. Two months back, Bavaji was unknown. To-day he has vindicated the honour of Indian women. His name will go down to posterity as the man who, single-handed, vindicated the principle which he has spoken of several times during the last sixty days—that molestation of even a single woman is a crime not only against society but against God. India is the land of the *satis*. Millions of women, through the ages, have lived and died for their honour in this holy land. Bavaji in his generation has fought for it with his life and won.

(From "The Social Welfare", January 20, 1943.)

XVIII

SOME REMARKABLE LAWYERS I HAVE KNOWN

I HAVE to thank the Principal and the Professors of the Law College for inviting me to speak here to-day. I have a horror of addressing any person unless there is the provocation of an attractive fee. But on this occasion I could not resist the temptation of coming into your midst, for nothing else than reviving old memories of this venerable institution.

To-night I am going to tell you about a few remarkable lawyers whom I have known and whose association I have prized as among the most valuable assets of my life.

The first remarkable lawyer whom I came to know was my uncle, my father's elder brother. He died when I was a little boy, but I have a vivid memory of this grand old man, stiff with gout and stone-deaf. He had made some money and had a great reputation for winning cases which nobody else could win. Every morning he sat on his verandah; and his clients came and sat before him, shouting at the top of their voices. I never knew him to use pen and ink, though I have seen in his house an inkstand which had no ink and a pen the point of which was broken.

You who are appearing for examinations will easily recognise the degeneracy of our times if I tell you how he became a High Court pleader. About 1852, he studied in the Elphinstone Institute which is now split up into the College and the High School. Hav-

ing learnt a little English, he thought that consistently with the dignity of his family he must become a lawyer; for in those glorious days of old, every second adult Munshi claimed to be a lawyer of some sort.

This uncle of mine, one fine morning, fared forth from his home in Broach on his prancing steed to seek a lawyer's diploma. He travelled by easy stages, fêted and feasted by his father's friends, and reached Bombay in about a month's time. He put up with Mr. Dhirajlal Mathuradas, then the Government Pleader, and a friend of my grandfather. Next day, when the Government Pleader got into his palanquin to attend the Court, my uncle accompanied him on his horse.

They came to the High Court, where the Chief Justice sat, majestic in wig and gown; the Government Pleader stood in front with folded hands, the candidate at a little distance, trembling in his shoes. The examination began; the learned Chief Justice asked in English the question: "What is equity of redemption?" The Government Pleader bowed low, turned to the candidate and in solemn accents asked in Gujarati: "What was served at your marriage feast?" Fully equipped with this part of law my uncle unhesitatingly gave a long list of the spicy and delicious dishes served at his marriage festivities. Dhirajlal Mathuradas, with a smile of satisfaction on his lips, turned to the Chief Justice, made a bow, and in respectful tones, said: "My Lord, it is but natural that his answer should be correct. For generations, they have been lawyers. Law flows in their veins!"

The clerk offered the diploma; the Chief Justice put his august scrawl on it; my uncle received it almost on bended knees—and rode proudly back to his native town, flushed with victory. I was sorry I was born so late, when I heard this story from my uncle's own lips; and I dare say you all feel sorry too—for the days when one could describe a dinner and obtain a diploma have gone, no more to return!

From the first known lawyer, I now go to the best lawyer I have known. A veritable mythology has grown up around John Duncan Inverarity in the Bar Library. He was the leader of the Bar long before many present leaders of the Bar were born, though he died only a few years ago.

Inverarity was scarcely human; he was only a lawyer, or a bridge player, or a lion hunter; and he lived in a dirty old room in the Byculla Club. In any walk of life, Inverarity would have risen to the highest rank; but he preferred to be a lawyer in Bombay six months in the year, and the remaining six a landlord in Scotland.

He was the most uncanny lawyer I have ever seen. He had a stupendous memory, and a skill of presentation which made facts look exactly as he wished. In one case, in which I was led by Sir Thomas Strangman, prospects looked very bad indeed; with everything dead against us, till the next day, when Inverarity was briefed to conduct the case. When he came to the Court and re-stated the facts, our case, to everyone's astonishment, suddenly became the simplest of simple ones, with all points entirely in our favour.

Law was the passion of his life. He was always up-to-date with his law-reports—a feat few seniors can manage—and he had an unerring grasp of principles. He always spotted the only authority needed. His cross-examination was not characterised by any pyrotechnics and he rarely raised his voice. He had not the mannerism generally associated with clever cross-examination, but his eyes were keen and piercing, and his short questions always elicited damaging replies.

Inverarity's superiority over every one else lay in his wonderful equipment, his thorough grasp of facts and his genius for selecting the only point in the case which could win a case. One day, bubbling with a junior's enthusiasm for newly discovered points, I went to him with authorities and told him that there were at least half a dozen good points on which we could win the suit. In his strange manner, he said: "Young man, there are always ten good points in a case. Keep only one for yourself and leave the other side to discover the rest."

It is impossible to dissociate the memory of Inverarity from the Bombay High Court. He created most of the traditions of our Bar. He continued to practise till fatal illness laid its hand on him in the corridor of the Court. And when we laid him down in his grave, all of us felt that the High Court was no longer the same.

The next great lawyer, with whom I can claim years of respectful friendship, is Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. Starting life very humbly, he became in succession,

a leading pleader on the Appellate Side, the most brilliant advocate on the Original Side, a distinguished Judge, and the capable Law Member of the Government of Bombay.

Of all the lawyers I have known, he alone has the true forensic dignity and eloquence. During the last twenty-five years of my contact with the High Court, I found the high-water-mark of forensic eloquence touched only when Sir Chimanlal argued the appeal in Surajmal *v.* Horniman, reported in 20 *Bombay Law Reporter,* page 184. Poise combined with perfect accuracy of expression went to produce that masterly address.

The greatness of Sir Chimanlal lies in the fact that he never stoops to conquer, never indulges in the cheap devices which many of us are often led into adopting, consciously or unconsciously. He never appeals to the gallery, never panders to the weakness of the Bench. He dominates the tribunal by the sheer force of his intellectual power. Towards the other side he is invariably polite; and I have never known him to take advantage of a junior, however raw the latter may be.

I have had the good fortune to be led by him in many heavy cases and I have scarcely come across a more loyal, trustful or encouraging senior. But as a junior you have to be very careful, for he insists on realising the dream of a socialist worker. He never works for more than five days in the week, or five hours in a day. If you expect him to get ready with his briefs without a conference with

you, you will be very much mistaken. You must meet him in a conference which very often begins at 10 P.M and place before him all the facts of the case. But as you state your case, he will absorb it, not as you state it, but as his wonderfully trained mind will accept it. He will then re-state it, take up his pen and make elaborate notes; and from these notes, rarely tarnished by materials from the brief, he will argue your case as he alone can do.

Often he turns his sentences with a precision which might be the envy of eminent judges in any part of the world. His robust common sense, his large experience, and his grasp of the fundamental principles of law supply the rest. He has the art of making every point of view but his own look untenable.

Though over seventy, Sir Chimanlal has the spirit of a young man. He can sit down at a table in the Bar Library and gossip with the gusto of a fresher. He enjoys a joke even at his own expense. He is one of the "household gods" of the Bar Library; admired, respected, beloved.

The next remarkable lawyer to whom I propose to refer is Sir Thomas Strangman. At one time, he was the terror of the junior Bar. In the beginning, I used to feel like collapsing when I heard him criticising any case of mine. A few days after I became an advocate—I think in April 1913—I was invited to appear in an election petition before the District Judge at Surat. Proud of my first important brief, I got into my compartment at the Grant Road Station

dreaming of the triumph I was going to secure the next day. But as the train was about to start, I heard a familiar voice shouting: "Boy, put the luggage in this compartment," and I saw Sir Thomas move into the next compartment to mine. My heart sank; the dreams of glory vanished; and I could not sleep a wink, thinking over the prospect of facing Sir Thomas the next day. I do not want to complete the story of my discomfiture by narrating how, the next day, the District Judge accepted every word of his as correct, both in fact and law—and every word of mine as incorrect, nor how my client's petition stood dismissed with costs!

But later I outgrew my dread of Sir Thomas and found him one of the most genial of men, without any seniority complex; and even if he had any racial complex, he concealed it well. It was one of the pleasantest experiences of the Bar to be told a spicy story by Sir Thomas at the end of a trying conference.

His mastery over Indian statute law was great. He never relied upon memory; he never appealed to general principles of English Law. No sooner did you give him the facts of a case, than he would take the Civil Court Manual, turn up the appropriate section of the appropriate Act, and within a few minutes you had your facts reshaped according to law. In a very heavy case in which I was concerned, the plaint, drawn by me, was settled by Sir Thomas in a conference. I thought the case good. I had looked up all the authorities and had laboured on it for days. In five minutes Sir Thomas took out his Civil Court

Manual and the whole case fell to pieces. We did not know what to do, for the point, as he put it, was so devastatingly simple and it struck at the very root of our case. Sir Thomas then left for England and my client launched the suit. Very eminent counsels were briefed against us. We argued the case for days but ultimately we got a consent decree, which more or less conceded what we wanted. At every sentence of my learned opponents, I trembled lest they might get near the point which Sir Thomas had spotted. But luck was with us. Though they went round and round the point, they never came to it, and until the consent decree was taken, the point, actually so simple, remained undiscovered.

Sir Dinsha Mulla, whose recent death we still lament, was another very remarkable man. When I was struggling in obscurity and poverty, when none at the Bar extended a helping hand to me, Sir Dinsha was the first senior who, by a well-turned compliment regarding a plaint drawn by me, revived my sinking faith in myself. For that little act of kindness I have always remained grateful to him.

He was great as a judge rather than as an advocate, and he was greater as jurist than as judge. Temperamentally, he preferred drafting to conducting a case. He loved to sit in his chamber, surrounded by his admiring "devils" and a pile of Indian Appeals, delving into the intricacies of law. As a judge, he had few peers, and hardly any superior. In commercial cases, it was a delight to argue fine points of law before him.

Sir Dinsha had the gift of being immensely popular wherever he went. His speeches at the Bar dinners were listened to with avidity. I remember one day, how, amid roars of laughter, he told us that he had been an epic poet, and that having written an epic on Rustom and Sohrab, he had forwarded it to Lord Tennyson, and that Lord Tennyson had replied very courteously but firmly that the ambitious poet had better stick to law.

If judged by solid work left behind, I think Sir Dinsha was the greatest commentator on Indian Law. He wrote authoritative text-books on many subjects, such as the Procedure, Contract, Transfer of Property, Sale of Goods, Partnership, Stamp Act and Insolvency. He was mainly responsible for the Sale of Goods Act and the Law of Partnership which now govern India; and one of his last acts was to enfranchise the Hindu widow by giving her the right of adopting without the consent of the surviving coparceners—a right which, perhaps, may or may not be strictly consistent with the *Shastras,* but which will alleviate the lot of the helpless Hindu widow more than any other thing.

Among the judges I have known, there have been many remarkable men. There was Sir Basil Scott, stern, formal, of little speech, whose frown was the terror of the Bar. There was Sir Norman MacLeod, with his uncanny trick of placing his finger on the real and only difficult point in a case within the first few minutes of the trial—and who massacred cases with an alacrity equal to that with which the King of

Judea massacred infants. He never seemed to realise that he was there not to dispose of cases but to adjudge them. He believed expedition to be the soul of justice, and the profession which fretted at his dispatch, thanked him for letting it make more money than it had ever made before. Then there was Sir Amberson Marten, a lawyer who could never reconcile himself to what he called "witness actions". But in the appeal court, with a proper Chancery suit, he was a great judge. He loved Law Reports and delighted in writing elaborate judgments which formed the most valuable part of the reports during his régime.

In my practice I have had to do with numerous judges, great and small, but of them all, Sir Lallubhai Shah stands on a pedestal alone. Slow, cautious, just, he was the most judicial-minded judge I ever came across. He hated flashy advocacy. He never took a decision until, in all conscience, he was sure that his judgment was right. Above all, his independence was marvellous. Neither Government nor riches, neither colleagues nor counsel, could deflect him a hair's breadth from the stern sense of judicial duty with which he performed his work on the Bench as well as in all other domains of life.

I will tell you of an incident which took place a few days before he died. I was serving on the Baroda University Commission and he appeared before us as a witness. As guests of the State, we were feasted by the Dewan of Baroda, and late at night we were taken to a *garba* party. Sir Lallubhai's contact with

the world was very limited and he was transported with joy at seeing the dance. He turned to me solemnly and said: "Munshi, these are wonderful things. Do women in Bombay sing and dance such *garbas?*" I was indignant, having had some little share—as many of you know—in the making of the modern amateur theatre in Gujarat. "What?" I exclaimed—"The *garbas* of Bombay are infinitely better." Sir Lallubhai was aghast. "Infinitely better", he repeated, quite shocked at my remark, and sank into silence.

Past midnight, as we were motoring down to our guest-house, and I was feeling sleepy, Sir Lallubhai asked me with judicial dignity—"But, Munshi, are you sure that when you said that the *garbas* of Bombay were infinitely better, you used those words advisedly?" Dear old Lallubhai Shah!—after a heavy dinner and an interesting entertainment, at one o'clock in the morning still every inch an eminent High Court judge! I retorted—"Certainly, I have first-hand knowledge." "Ah;" murmured Sir Lallubhai, tranquillized, "if you say that from your personal knowledge, it is another thing."

A few days later he was dead—the noblest character after Mahatma Gandhi whom I have had the good fortune to know.

(Address delivered to the students of the Government Law College, Bombay.)

XIX

ALLAH BAKSH

Mr. Allah Baksh was killed in the streets of Shikarpur in the most tragic circumstances. Sind has added to its reprehensible reputation by this dastardly crime which took place in open daylight.

Whether this deed was inspired by a political motive or was the result of personal vendetta remains to be seen. Mr. Allah Baksh is the third M.L.A. to fall a victim to the savage instincts which appear to prevail in several parts of Sind.

Law and order, in the modern sense of the term, simply do not exist in many parts of Sind. Murderous instinct has been openly harnessed to political or religious motives. Even Martial Law and the execution of Pir Pagaro do not seem to have had a salutary effect on the province.

It is wrong to attribute this to the instinct of the *people* of Sind. Before 1937, they did not exhibit this lack of restraint. It was only after the new reforms brought in political considerations that the law began to be so easily taken in hand for personal or party motives. This only shows that responsible government in Sind has been accompanied by a reversion to the law of barbarism!

The same police which functions in the province of Bombay functions in the province of Sind. The Inspector General of Police of Sind is a senior officer of the province of Bombay. And yet the police force of Sind has neither discipline nor efficiency to its

credit. The reason for this can only be one of two: either the criminals are covered by a cloak of protection by politicians; or the police force has been corrupted by party or communal bias. In either case, it is a most lamentable state of affairs.

The Government of India is a very curious machine. The Governor of United Provinces compelled Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant to resign, because the release of a few persons convicted of dacoity could not be permitted in the interests of law and order. But now the Governors of Bengal and Sind have no fault to find with their ministries for deeds for which princes have been unseated from their *gadis* and high officers discharged from service. Maintenance of law and order is no longer a sacred trust with the Government of India; it is a political manœuvre.

In Mr. Allah Baksh, the country has lost a staunch nationalist Muslim. For years he struggled single-handed against the forces of the Muslim League and its reaction and retained his office. He was a Congressman in all but name. He was the principal organiser and the President of the Azad Muslim Conference.

Sind has lost one of her most notable sons, the Muslim community one of its greatest messengers of peace, India a representative of Hindu-Muslim unity.

(From "The Social Welfare", May 21, 1943.)

PART III

I

A LEAF FROM A JAIL DIARY: FEAR

Of all the forces which dominate life, Fear is the most powerful, the ugliest, the most subtle.

Under the influence of Fear the mind expects the loss of something which it prizes as an essential, before the loss arises. The loss is also exaggerated, distorted and made to look more devastating than it actually is. The mind also suffers misery for the loss long before it actually arises. It is driven to panicky action to prevent the expected loss.

The essentials, the loss of which is feared by the mind, are generally approbation of our world, possessions such as wealth, position or health, and affection or love.

We fear to lose the approbation of our world, and so shape our conduct as to deserve it. But love of approbation is in reality lack of confidence in one's own judgment.

Approbation, or its denial, by our set, which we call 'the world', is not based on sound judgment; it is merely the reaction of our particular group to our conduct with reference to a standard of conduct set up by that group.

This standard conduct is different with different groups; it changes also with the same group from time to time.

When we shape our conduct out of fear of disapproval of our group, we are considering the standard of that group as better than the standard

we have set up ourselves—which means that we are surrendering our judgment to the passing whims of our group.

If, therefore, we lay down our own standard and adhere to it, as being something more real to us, the lure of approval will disappear and with it the fear of forfeiting it.

The essential next in order, the expected loss of which causes fear, may be comprehensively called 'possessions', that is to say wealth, position, health etc. These are acquired or retained by effective and disciplined effort, and only when opportunity arises—which is generally beyond one's control—does the effort bear fruit.

Fear, by causing misery and urging a man to panicky work, in reality weakens effective and planned effort and destroys the sense of discovering opportunity.

If systematic and effective work is planned and carried out, the worker seeking only its perfection, possessions will follow, but—be it noted—only if opportunity arises, not otherwise.

Affection is another person's reaction to our systematic understanding of his needs. Love is the other person's reaction to our self-surrender to him.

Fear of losing affection or love will distort the understanding or weaken the completeness of self-surrender. It will therefore destroy the foundation of the very thing it expects to lose.

But if we establish a standard of conduct of our own, if we carefully plan an effective effort according to that standard and no other, waiting for opportu-

nity, if we try to understand the needs of those whose affection we seek, and if we surrender ourselves more completely to those whose love we cherish, Fear will disappear.

That is the path which all men who have conquered fear have trodden.

And the conquest of fear has been easy only to those who have surrendered themselves to the Supreme Will.

(From "The Social Welfare", April 10, 1941.)

II

A PILGRIMAGE TO NANKANA SAHEB

I HAVE been to Nankana Saheb, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, a little town about two hours' motor run from Lahore. On November 3, 1941, the Khalsa had gathered there to celebrate the anniversary day of their great Guru. The whole town was full of Sikhs —men, women and children. The Gurudwara was thronged with the devout.

This Gurudwara has a gruesome tale to tell, a tale to which the Sikhs look back with pride. During the agitation launched by the Akalis for vindicating the community's ownership of the Gurudwara eighteen years ago, the Mahanta of this shrine resisted the entry of the Akalis. He claimed the Gurudwara as his. One morning, over a hundred Akalis entered the sanctum and sat down where the *Granth Saheb* was being recited. It was a deliberate act of the most unparalleled heroism. The Mahanta's men were ready with their rifles, and emptied them into these heroes of non-violent resistance. The walls still bear traces of this insensate butchery. And underneath the monument erected at the place where their corpses were burnt, I saw in the vault the bones and ashes of the immortal Akalis. For a long while, I was touched by the sight of these sacred relics of undying heroism.

The Sikhs are few; 46 lakhs in this country of 40 crores. But they form the best organised group in the country, with a well-knit life, a simple faith and a heroic tradition.

Out of a religious sect, Guru Govind Singh created a hereditary military camp. It has not forgotten Guru Nanak. It lives on the glories of Guru Govind Singh. Its proudest achievement has been the destruction of Moghul rule in the North. And as I lived among them for a day and a half, there was no doubt left in my mind that the Khalsa is destined once again to play a great part in the moulding of the future of this country. For their life is one long training for concentrated and organised resistance.

One of the greatest tragedies of modern India is the mutual distrust between the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab. Why it should be so was difficult for a stranger like me to understand. I did not find the Sikhs different from the Punjabi Hindus, except in externals. The *Granth Saheb* is Hindu to the core. The Khalsa was the bulwark of Hinduism in the North. Its veneration for the cow is greater than that of any sect of Hindus. There are intermarriages between Hindus and Sikhs. Their fortunes are flung together to-day and will remain so in the future. The fundamental identity of the two would lead to a permanent understanding, if a determined attempt were made.

There is no doubt that there is a separatist tendency among the Sikhs themselves. But closer contact with the leading Sikhs who follow Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader—whose strength of character and clarity of outlook I came to respect even during the short time we were together—convinced me that this consummation is not difficult to accomplish, if

the Hindu leaders of the Punjab treat the Sikhs with the consideration to which their position in the Punjab entitles them.

In my reply to Mr. Jinnah, I described the Khalsa as the spearhead of the movement of *Akhand Hindustan*. No Sikh has any illusions about the issue of Pakistan. He will fight and fight bravely against it, if there is any attempt to enforce it. And out of that struggle, I have no doubt, will emerge a glorious future for him, as in days gone by.

I considered it one of the great moments of my life when I was invited to offer my humble tribute to Guru Nanak Saheb on his anniversary at Nankana Saheb.

One of the most wonderful phenomena in the history of the human race is the tenacity and resilience with which India and her culture have persisted through the ages. Older than Egypt, much older than Greece and Rome, she still lives on, her culture intact. Her message is as inspiring to-day as it was centuries ago. This heritage India owes to the unbroken series of great Masters whom she has produced age after age. They have given her fresh youth with every generation. They have given her message fresh inspiration with every new situation.

Truly has the *Gita* sung the Lord's message:

> Whenever *Dharma* declines,
> And unrighteousness, Oh Bharata, uprises,
> Do I body Myself forth.

And when India was laid low in the fifteenth century, when her culture was in danger, when her

men were sold as slaves and her women dishonoured, there arose many Masters who gave her the strength to endure and the will to resist. Of them, Guru Nanak was one of the greatest. With burning feelings, he described the conditions surrounding him:

No longer do the beauteous maids
Of the fragrant locks and foreheads *kumkum*-marked
Live in the sheltered chambers of the palaces
Where once they lived.
The sword of Babar has cut their tresses,
On their tonsured heads, dust is thrown;
No rest they find in homeless wanderings.
What a change!
How strange is Thy dispensation, Lord!
How inscrutable Thy ways!
Captive, they are led,
With halters round their graceful necks
Where once gleamed the beauty of pearls,
Their wealth and charm
Which once brought slaves to their feet.

* * * *

For orders have gone round to the armed retinue:
Take them as you will:
Dishonour them as you like:
Send them away in disgrace if you please.

* * * *

Babar's armies march over the land;
The captive's lot is hard;
None dare worship or pray.

Again Guru Saheb says, by way of prophecy, of the same woes which distressed his heart:

With a mighty host, terror-striking,
Does he hasten from Kabul, like unto a bridegroom.
Sin and untruth follow him in procession,
By force he will demand the bride,
The Hindu's treasured wealth, Oh! Lalo.

Woe will disfigure the luckless land;
Modesty, honour and *dharma* will go;
Shameless vice and evil unquenchable
Will flourish, O Lalo dear.

Terrible times when other peoples might have sunk into irretrievable degradation. But not so the Indians, for they possessed the life-giving trust in God.

Let me sing the songs of blood, Oh Nanak.
Let on my forehead be the *kumkum*-marks of blood, Lalo!

* * * *

The Lord's Will be done, Oh Nanak!
How dare mortal stand against His Will?

It is this unalterable faith in God which has saved India time and again.

Guru Nanak Saheb had completely surrendered himself to the Lord. He sang:

Surrender unto the Lord
At His feet do thou lie.
Happy and at peace are those
Who link their souls
To His feet.

Surrender unto God was the life's inspiration of Nanak, as it has been of all true prophets since the beginning of time.

Let thy mind be filled with Me,
Give thy love to Me, even thy offerings and thy homage,
Then wilt thou come to Me,
That is My troth I pledge thee here,
For thou art dear to Me.

Such lines are not a poetic fancy, but an eternal truth which saves the man who sees it. He who realises it is a Master.

Guru Nanak Saheb was such a Master. Friendly to all, compassionate, he knew no self. Egotism held him in no bondage. Unattached to pleasure or pain, contented and self-controlled, he surrendered himself to the will of God and went his way with irresistible resolve. This is what made the Guru Saheb the great alchemist. He transmuted weakness into strength, cowardice into courage, the vanquished of to-day into the victors of to-morrow.

He reached the noblest heights of resistance. Every moment he pursued the path of duty. He backed his every act with his life.

> Dost thou desire to play Love's arduous game?
> Cut off thy head, first;
> Put it on the palm of thy hand;
> And with heart indomitable and at peace
> Follow me on the path I tread.
> Waver not, tremble not,
> But prepare, Oh dear,
> To lose thy head with joy serene.

This is the message which Guru Nanak Saheb delivered to this country in her worst days. Resist evil. Back your effort with your life. It was this message of unwavering resistance which created a new spirit in the land. It inspired the venerable Guru Teg Bahadur cheerfully to offer the supreme non-violent *Satyagraha* by surrendering his life to the intolerance of Aurangzeb. It enabled Guru Govind Singh to create the Khalsa, the sword-arm of

old India. It produced the will and the energy to destroy the Moghul empire in the North.

Let me try to understand this message, this taking one's head in one's hand before pursuing one's God-given task.

Take our modern life. If the West offers us attractive things, we succumb; we become denationalised apes of European habits and outlook. If alien rulers offer us hopes, we cannot resist; we must delude ourselves. If our enemies threaten us, we begin to tremble and count the cost of a failure. Four hundred million human beings, like sheep in a pen, lured by promises, and frightened by the future.

Gandhiji taught us *Satyagraha.* Back your truth with your life, he said. It is the old, old message of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

> Better one's thankless *dharma*
> Than alien task, tho' well performed;
> Better to die
> Doing one's task;
> Another's task is fraught with danger.

It is the self-same message for which Guru Nanak Saheb lived, and which Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Govind Singh vindicated.

But how have we understood the message? We do not find our own truth, much less do we back it with our life. We may do some act out of a herd-feeling. We may do it to win applause or to retain our seat in power. We may do it in order not to lose caste. But that is not 'placing the head on the palm of one's hand.'

The message of Guru Nanak Saheb—this message of eternal life—can be heard by all who choose to hear. We live in strange times, as bad as, if not worse than, the times of which the Guru Saheb sang. We are an unarmed and helpless people, the plaything of a foreign master. Our frontiers may any day be attacked. Our country's integrity is threatened by the Disruptionists.

Unwavering resistance to all evil things is our only hope. Resistance will have to be on many fronts, but of them all, the most important is that of the integrity of the country. If by a supreme effort of resistance, we keep India one and indivisible in the midst of this international crisis, and despite the movement which threatens internal disruption, she will emerge great and free, the mistress of her destiny. We shall have then lived the message, for we shall have learnt 'to carry our head in our hand.'

(From "The Social Welfare", November 20, 1941.)

III

GUARDIAN DEITY OF VANA-MAHOTSAVA

I AM overwhelmed with emotion in planting this tree at Dehotsarga, at the spot where Shri Krishna 'shuffled off His mortal coil.' These few feet of earth are the holiest in the entire world, for here He reclined, in the last few moments of His earthly existence. The cow and the tree styled 'Go-sakha'—the cow's companion—were His companions too. Vrindavana is His forest. Giri-Puja is His cult. Both in Govardhana near Mathura and Raivataka here, He worshipped the hills and the forests. He brought the Parijata and the Vaijayanti Tulsi and planted them here. He is the guardian deity of the Vana-Mahotsava; and so we meet to offer Him homage.

This spot awakens wonderful memories of Prabhasa Tirtha. I see before me Balarama, his hands on the shoulders of his wives, revelling in the sensuous breezes from the Western Sea. I see Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas, coming here on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Somnath, I see here the glamorous glances of Subhadra, as she lovingly gazed on Arjuna walking hand in hand with Shri Krishna on this very bank of Hiranya. More sombrely, I see here the fratricidal war of the Yadavas who in the plenitude of their power massacred one another. At Bhalaka Tirth I see the Lord Himself sleeping under a tree. I see the speeding arrow of the hunter. It enters His feet; He awakens with a shudder but He smiles with superhuman understanding, for His work on earth is done.

He has left behind Him unfading memories; of the divine Child on whom everyone doted; of the loyal Friend who never forsook those who sought Him with self-surrender; of the fascinating Lover who could love and be loved with undying ardour; of the Rebel who led His people out of bondage; the Yogeshwara who in an age of conflicts and rivalries could rise to such a stature that men saw in Him, not only their chief, the embodiment of Indian unity, not merely the World Teacher who stood for Moral Order, but 'God Himself.'

He was great in life; not merely great,—His personality was harmonious, perfect, beautiful. More than three thousand years have passed by and yet He continues to live in our hearts. No mother can think of a wonderful child except in terms of 'Balgopal'. No one can sing or dance except in His Name and to the memory of His Rasa. No teacher ever taught the Truths He did. No higher secret was given to man than what He gave, by which man, weak as he is, can become merged in Him in this very life. The message which He gave in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is the message of Life Eternal. From Arjuna to Mahatma Gandhi, Indians, great and small, have found life's fulfilment in living up to this message, in becoming His instrument—*Nimitta matra*. No human being can realise himself and be true to himself in the highest measure without becoming His instrument in life.

I came to this spot 27 years ago. It was then lying bleak and forlorn. In the early light of the dawn,

it grieved me greatly to see this spot neglected by ungrateful posterity. His will, however, was supreme. India became free. The leaders of Free India decided to invest this spot with a dignity and beauty in keeping with its sacred association. I can only thank Him for giving me the opportunity to see this day. In all humility, I thank Him for giving me an occasion to pay my humble tribute by planting this tree at the place where He spent the last moments of His mortal life.

(Speech delivered at Dehotsarga during the 'Vana Mahotsava' celebrations, July 4, 1950.)

IV

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ : AN APPROACH

(1)

The Will To Resist

Of books, a few only attain to the position of classics. Of them, not more than half a dozen have come to be accepted as Scriptures. Of such Scriptures, the pre-eminent is the *Bhagavad-Gītā*—this incomparable converse between God and Man. Edwin Arnold called it *The Song Celestial;* Humboldt characterized it as "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song in any known tongue." The reasons for its pre-eminence are many.

It is the message of Shri Krishna—World Teacher, the embodiment of triumphant manhood.

It is composed by Vyāsa Dvaipāyana, the author of the *Mahābhārata,* the poet of poets and the first and foremost prophet of the human race.

This gospel has given more than human power to countless men for the last twenty-five hundred years; to Shankara and Rāmānuja; to Vivekānanda, Lokamanya Tilak and Gandhiji among the moderns.

It has also provided the inspiration to immortal works like the Bhāgavata and Tulsidāsa's *Rāmacharita Mānasa* which have shaped and strengthened the eternal edifice of Indian culture.

And it has a universality which embraces every aspect of human action, suits and elevates every stage of human development.

Yet the modern educated mind in India is a timid mind. It has a subconscious feeling that if it is found relying too often on the *Gītā*, the possessor—the arrogant modern—will be classed with the superstitious, the weak, the outworn.

It is a real fear amongst us. But if India is to continue its triumphant march to world influence, the fear must be cast out.

St. Paul in his letter to the Romans said: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Why should any one be ashamed of the Gospel which Shri Krishna taught to mankind? No man is ashamed of his learning, of his artistic gifts, or of displaying power, however little it be. Why should he be ashamed of openly confessing the real source of power, the power which strengthens every one when he is feeble, inspires him when he is weak, upholds him when he is strong?

When all resources fail, then through the words of the *Gītā*, God speaks:

> Yield not to impotence, Pārtha.
> It befits thee not.
> Shake off this wretched faint-heartedness.
> Stand up, Oh, harasser of foes.

Then fear flees. Then we recover 'ourselves', and like unto Arjuna each of us can say, inspired:

> Here I stand firm; my doubts are fled;
> I shall act as Thou biddest.

The more desperate the situation, the greater is the power which the *Gītā* reveals. This has been the experience of the strong. Why should it not be the inspiration of us, the weak?

The strength which the *Gītā* gives does not lie on the surface. It lies in real personal power; not like the power of the worldly, in apparent glitter and domination. It is the power that makes every one to whom it comes a little more of himself. By and through it, the weak become strong; the shallow, deep; the voluble, silent; the insolent, humble; the wasted, effective. It gives the power of God to every one that believeth; the power 'to arise and win glory, to overcome foes and to enjoy Kingship'; a power higher than which no man can covet or gain.

The power which the *Gītā* gives comes not merely to individuals but to communities and nations as well, if they could translate its message into action.

The message of the *Gītā* can be summed up in the words "Creative Resistance." This has two aspects: Creative Concentration and the Will to Resist. The latter aspect is given in one verse of immortal value:

> Thy every deed dedicated unto Me,
> Thy heart in self-hood rested,
> All 'My-ness', all hope foresworn,
> With thy Self from fever cursed,
> Resist thou, Oh, Arjuna.

Resist non-self with self, wherever it is, by whatever means; resist it with all the might of your body and soul, not as a matter of calculation, but as a matter of offering unto Him; that is the message of the *Gītā*.

When in the past, foreign hordes overran India, the power of the State and the frenzy of religious fanaticism were allied against her. Her freedom, her faith, her culture, her very existence were in peril.

Then the message of the *Gītā* gave her power and endurance, and the *will to resist.*

We then resisted in the social sphere and turned guilds into castes, and families into the fortressed strength of joint families. We resisted in the religious sphere and produced *bhakti,* the *bhakti* of Chaitanya, Kabir and Guru Nanak, which swept away the angularities of religious intolerance. We resisted in the intellectual sphere and enshrined Sanskrit as the Goddess of Learning, as the mother of everlasting inspiration. We resisted in the political sphere and reduced the power of kings to a mere liberty to quarrel with each other without seriously affecting society and culture.

Pax Britannica, the hypnotic phrase, made us see things as they were not. It weakened India's Will to Resist. And a new situation found us in difficulties. But the Will to Resist was expressed through Dayananda and Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Tilak and Gandhi.

A man more ferocious than Atilla overspread the world, bringing carnage and slavery to country after country, coming nearer to India with every stride. An irresponsible bureaucracy declined our free association and armed itself with powers, which can stifle the breath of freedom in the country. An ambition to dominate the country or divide it fired a few, making life and property insecure. Western culture—the teeming womb of tanks and dive-bombers —insidiously sapped our spirit. It created dangers we never knew before. We felt helpless; we whined

for alien help. We looked in vain on all sides for sympathy. In those days, the spirit of *Gītā* spoke through Gandhiji and the end of the war saw the end of slavery. But the end of foreign slavery did not bring the era of self-fulfilment. Urge to disintegration, lack of will to work, unrighteous race for power, Communism—the church of human regimentation—are still our foes. The message of the *Gītā* is the country's only hope. India must dedicate itself to God. It should give up illusory hopes of cheaply earned millennium of Ramrajya. It should listen to the voice of God and develop the Will to Resist all evil, in whatever form it faces us.

(2)

To Be Or To Do: That's The Question

Resistance is the essence of growth, individual or corporate. If one did not resist, one would become worse than a weed.

Resistance to non-self is the first step towards the growth of a man's personality. Every minute, when a personality is growing, it becomes something different from what it has been. This incessant development of one's personality, however, is simply the process of being oneself more and more. This 'becoming' therefore is a fuller 'being.'

I want to be 'myself' (*ātmavān*); that is the supreme desire of every man. It is not a desire to be one's own nude, caveman self. It is the desire to live in a more co-ordinated manner; to develop one's

capacities with corresponding enlargement of opportunities. This desire seeks to emphasize, expand and realize all that is in us. It also drives us to admire others who possess striking personalities, who are 'themselves' in a larger measure.

Unfortunately, most of us try to develop our personality from without, rather than from within. Some dress their hair; others study and modify their voice, manner and appearance; yet others acquire equipment, physical or mental; all, with the object of being something more notable and effective. But personality is not the result of possessions; it is the outcome of a man becoming more of a *person* than others, in being a source of inner power.

The greatness of a man is not in what he does, but in what he was and has since become. To 'be', then, is infinitely higher than to 'do'. To be thoroughly 'oneself' is higher service than serving others. "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect," said Christ in his Sermon on the Mount. To become 'perfect'—to realize every minute the highest in oneself—is the noblest service to fellowmen.

> The Yogi is higher than the Ascetic;
> He soars above the seers who know.
> Higher than those who work, too, is he,
> Therefore, Arjuna, be thou a Yogi.

The greatness of a truly great man lies in his life, not in his deeds. Every man who had met Gandhiji felt that there was something nobler, greater in the

man than in anything that he said or did. Every time I met him, I found that he was bigger than his biggest deeds.

"It is true," writes Mr. Morley, "that what interests the world in Mr. Gladstone is even more what he was than what he did; his brilliance, charm and power, the endless surprises; his dualism and more than dualism."

Was it not Milton who said that in order to write well the author ought himself to be a true poem; that he should not 'presume to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he has in himself the experience or practice of all that is praiseworthy'?

What did Socrates do, except impress with his tremendous personality every man he came in contact with? Thus does Alcibiades, the magnificent wastrel, testify:

"When I hear him speak, my heart leaps up far more than the hearts of those who celebrated the Corybantic mysteries; my tears are poured out as he talks, a thing I have often seen happen to many others besides myself. I have heard Pericles and other excellent orators, and have been pleased with their discourses, but I suffered nothing of this kind; nor was any soul ever on those occasions disturbed and filled with self-reproach, as if it were slavishly laid prostrate. But this Marsyas here had often affected me in the way I describe, until the life which I lived seemed hardly worth living. * * * I escape, therefore, and hide myself from him, and when I see him I am overwhelmed with humiliation because I have neglected to do what I confessed to him ought to be done; and often and often have I wished that he were no longer to be seen among men. But if that were to happen I well know that I should suffer far greater pain; so that there I can turn, or what I can do with this man I know not. All this have I and many others suffered from the pipings of this satyr."

In the life of every great man we observe the effort with which he struggled against his limitations. We trace the steps by which he rose to become himself: by which he gained freedom which led to fuller expression of his powers.

Thus men who seek achievements without corresponding to inner growth do not know the joys of 'Becoming.' They find no real greatness. The *Gītā* condemns them unequivocally:

In quenchless longing lost,
By fraud, conceit and lust inspired,
They strive,

Bound by vows impure, with ignorance blind,
Holding on to lies in place of truth,
Engrossed in boundless, anxious designs
Extending to the ends of time.

On sating their desires such men are bent,
Believing, that alone is Truth.
Enmeshed by a hundred bonds of hope
Steeped in just and wrath
Amassing wealth by lawless means
They strive to get their hearts' desires.

"See what I have secured today?" they say
"On this my mind is now set, next,
This wealth is mine; this much more
Shall be mine again.

This enemy have I slain today;
Those others I will slay anon.
I am the lord; I enjoy as I like;
Successful, happy and strong am I.
Who can rival my wealth, my birth?

I alone will offer sacrifice,
Scatter gifts and rejoice
As none before me ever did."

Enveloped in ignorance, these,
Maddened by countless thoughts,
Caught fast in illusion,
Held in thrall by sensual pleasures
Rush headlong into Hell.

Exclusive devotion to the outward in one shape or the other endangers the inner side of a man, which alone gives him strength, beauty and distinction.

"What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" asked the Prophet of Nazareth.

Many gain the world they seek. They also then find to their cost that they have no power to make it their own.

(3)

Surrender To God

When the Gītā enjoins resistance as an essential to the growth of personality in a man or a group, emphasis is laid on 'Dedication of all actions to me.'

This Dedication—*Ishvara Pranidhāna*—in other words, Surrender to God—baffled me for a long time. The intellectual background of my college days was provided by Spencer and Mill. I, therefore, could not understand why Vyasa and Patanjali, Christ, St. Augustine and Chaitanya, Narasimha and Mira, all persons of the highest intellect and honesty, possessing the most powerful personality, laid emphasis on this surrender as a necessary step to 'Becoming.' The *Gītā* enjoins it again and again:

> To Him do thou surrender with thy whole being.
> His grace shall then bear thee safe. Oh Bhārata;
> Across to Peace, supreme and changeless.
> And,
> Give up all duties:
> Surrender thyself unto Me.
> Grieve not; for from all bounds of sin
> I'll set thee free.

How was it that this message has soothed aching hearts through centuries?

I understand this surrender a little now, but it is not easy to achieve this "surrender" as it is to understand it. Many *bhaktas* have spent their whole life in vain attempts to realize. It is the most difficult and yet the most exquisite of the ways which lead to the growth of a great personality. Without it, God—Perfection—never dwells in us. Without it, 'Becoming' remains unreal, for there is nothing to reach forward to.

To the modern unbelieving mind which has no patience with things religious, this may be difficult if not impossible to grasp. But personality cannot grow in stark isolation. Nothing develops personality as the influence of another personality, maybe of a father, a teacher, a friend, or a beloved. The stronger this personality, the greater is its potency.

Certain persons draw us out. In their presence, we grow better and bigger. One word from them, and we acquire the strength we never had before. If such a one were with us day and night or he dwelt with us in our imagination, his inspiration would never fail us. We would then grow from strength to strength. This 'indwelling' of a great personality becomes a powerful force, making us more and more of 'ourselves.'

When we are near a great personality we not only hear him speak of men and things but also note those chance remarks which let us into its secrets. We are then possessed by it. It haunts us when we leave him.

Our word and deed unconsciously come to be tested on the touchstone of his personality. We are influenced, not so much by what he says, but by what he is.

We are all familiar with the conscious indwelling of our favourite author. Dumas and Hugo were my favourite authors when I was young. I read and re-read their works. Their characters were more to me than my friends and relatives. I unconsciously adopted their attitudes and verbal tricks. I grew through these masters indwelling in me. If the one abiding in us is living, the influence is still more remarkable. Who has not been shaped and moulded by the beloved's indwelling in one's heart?

Literary creativeness is not possible without the characters indwelling in an author, though temporarily. The stories of Puranic Rishis strongly influenced me in my boyhood. Some of the characters in my novels and dramas like Kautilya, Usanas, Aurva, Agastya, Visvāmitra, Vasistha and Parasurama are only faint, crude portraits of those who at one time or the other were living realities to me.

Apart from literary creations, Vyāsa, for instance, has had a curious attraction for me. The *Mahābhārata* is his work; *Gītā* is his gospel. He is Vishnu and Vishnu is He, according to a well-known hymn. He is "Brahmā, but without four faces; Vishnu but with two hands; Shambhu, but without the third eye." I have always come to regard him as the first among men, who by his conquest of self, his vision of the eternal in life, his literary production, laid the foundation of an immortal culture, which, though

characteristically Indian, embraces humanity for all time.

The continuity of India's culture and tradition—the main source of its strength—is due to the spirit of Vyāsa, enshrined in the *Mahābhārata* having indwelt Indians for centuries. For countless generations its heroes have lived in men's imagination; its approach to life has been the approach of millions; its idioms, sentiments and ideals have refreshed and invigorated them. If India is worth living and dying for, it is because of the beauty and power which India has acquired by centuries of its surrender to Vyāsa.

But his attraction for me has been fitful, intellectual, not spiritual. I think of him often. More than once his momentary 'indwelling' has led me to decisions of far-reaching consequence. But in the ordinary affairs of life, I am just my erring self. He does not abide in me; nor I in him. I would be able to integrate my personality only if this happened.

The place of 'indwelling' in the scheme of life must be realized.

The growth of personality—both of individuals and groups—is the result of Creative Resistance. Resistance to be creative must be inspired by an effort of imagination to realize an object which has a living existence in one's mind.

Yearning is the driving force behind this effort, behind all growth. It has to be maintained at a white heat whenever the process of Becoming has to be shortened and perfected. "Yoga only comes to him

who possesses *samvega*—intense yearning," says Patanjali. This indwelling of the Supreme comes by intensifying the *samvega*—yearning, which ceaselessly seeks self-surrender. Intellect, in this matter, is barren; emotion quivering with powerful effort of the imagination only can help one towards it.

A man may be ceaselessly active; he may also accomplish results; but he may be lost all the same, for efforts may be unaccompanied by a persistent yearning to Become. When he loses the power of experiencing this *samvega*, his condition becomes appalling. He becomes a fossil; he is self-complacent, satisfied with himself; or, a failure, a wreck. Life, for him, loses its vitality; becomes routine. He makes efforts to recover himself, but cannot. The old enthusiasms have no chance for him. His personality then fades away. He is in "impure hell."

We throw away opportunities of strengthening the faculty to Become. Life for us is either a bewildering struggle or a soulless acquiescence. We have not even the faculty Arjuna had "of being filled with wonderment, his body thrilled with awe," for the humanity which drove him to fold his hands and bow his head before the grandeur which God vouchsafed him. We are denied the grace which makes life worth living.

'Indwelling' of the Supreme comes to him who ceaselessly meditates upon Him; who with high-strung emotion yearns to see Him, touch Him, love Him.

The imagination, then, vividly conjures up His picture in living colours. The attention fondly dwells on His life and teachings. He ceases to be a thought,

becomes a person. When yearning gives place to prayers, tears and heartache, He is no longer a Person to be worshipped externally but a Presence seen, felt, in oneself. The devotee then becoms 'My-minded' (*man-manāh*) and 'My-souled' (*madgataprānah*). His personality merges in Him, attains 'My-hood' (*madbhāvam yāti*). The limitations of the aspirant's personality then fade off. He casts forth desires woven into his mind.

> With self alone content with self, he becomes
> A *Sthitaprajna.*
> Undistressed amidst sorrows,
> Amidst pleasures desire-free, he lives;
> All attachment, fear and anger past, he is a Muni,
> Of mind firmly poised,
> With heart unattached in luck whether fair or foul,
> He neither rejoices nor hates, his mind abiding
> In perfect poise.

Through intellect, I now know, God cannot be known, much less realized. God abides in the man who not only reads his gospel, but reads and repeats it till his attitude towards life is imperceptibly shaped through it. Western education taught me that if I read and understand a book, I need do no more. It is a convenient formula of the age, created by the printing press with its miles of transient literature turned out day after day, baffling men's minds, drowning their personality.

Svādhyāya—one's own study—is different. It is the repeated reading or reciting of a great book as a gospel till phrases and paragraphs come to be woven into the texture of a man's mind, stirring thoughts,

stimulating aspirations, till a great personality comes to live in him.

We are of the earth, earthy. Our life is spent in a lifelong struggle for money and position. And yet as we recite *Gītā* day by day, some of the sayings of the Master stand out in the mind and we recognise their power. If the whole of the teaching possessed our mind, God would come and dwell in us. 'They abide in Me; I abide in them'—is not a metaphor. *Yogīs* and *Bhaktas* of India, the mystics of all ages and climes, were possessed by God in the same way. They had no choice; they obeyed Him; they lived but to be His instruments.

> Listen to My final word, the secret of all secrets.
> I speak to thee of what is for thy good, for,
> I love thee steadfastly.
> Let thy mind be filled with Me.
> Give thy love to Me, even your offerings and your homage;
> Then wilt thou come to Me.
> That's My troth, I pledge thee here.
> For thou art dear to Me.

This is no verbal consolation. It is a fact capable of actual experience. And the fortunate one who has had it will grow in personality till its dimensions coincide with the Divine.

This is Surrender unto God—*Ishvara Pranidhāna*, the final message of the *Gītā*. Not of *Gītā* alone, but of all religions. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me" was the admission of Christian saints. "Doubtless thou shalt live in Me," says Krishna.

For many, God is too far away, intangible, to be

brought to indwell them. For them, as Patanjali points out, the path of Becoming can equally be trodden by constant efforts to surrender themselves to great personalities, real or imaginary, who had been known to have transcended attachment and its brood, fear and anger; to men like Vyāsa, Buddha, Christ, whom we revere as prophets.

(4)

Truth Which Is Unity

The modern mind has confounded knowledge with personality. This confusion has been the 'direful spring of outnumbered woes.' In India it has turned the university graduates into waste paper baskets of odd bits of information, unshaped in character, dwarfed in personality, devoid of faith which alone can convert knowledge into power.

Education in these days is not 'leading forth' of the inmost personality, but imposing fetters of cast-iron alien thoughts on him. We are mechanised by it, regimented; not led forth to the freedom of ceaseless Becoming. Our curiosity is satisfied; we have been given wide attachments and intense dislikes; but the motive power of our personality remains unkindled. We are walking frauds. We have intellect divorced from will, belief in ideals which are belied in life. The search after knowledge in some cases leads up to ideals; but in most cases they remain dreams, ineffective and unrelated to life. As a result the modern man does not feel humiliated at his mind being divorced from speech, his speech from action. This twofold

divergence is accepted as inevitable, often as a sign of modernity.

The mind, thought and deed become one dynamic unit in a growing personality. But it is difficult to produce this harmony between forces, all of which generally tend to fly away from each other. When these three forces in a man become one, he serves Truth; then only he becomes effective.

"What is truth?" asked Pilate, and Truth still vexes us with its elusiveness. It is not consistency; growth of vision or fuller knowledge of facts often makes consistency an untruth. It is not even one's view of things; for, two people trying to see truth may honestly come to two entirely conflicting views. Yet Truth is universal,—sought after, held in reverence by all; the guiding light of all high-souled efforts. This Truth is the inseparable unity of thought, word and deed in a man at a given moment; and in order to be really effective it has to be backed by the very life of the man, who thereby earnestly pursues 'Becoming.'

Patanjali has given the test of what is truthful. 'Truth, when realized, yields the fruits of action.' One has to be truthful—that is, one's thought, word and deed have to be compact, before results will follow. If I want to do things, therefore, the three forces in me have to be welded into a dynamic unity. This is Truth—this supreme unity of the three forces of life: when it is reached, the personality is tuned to receive the commandment of Him, Whose instrument one hopes to be.

The path which leads to this 'turning' is called the way of Brahman. The word *brahmacharya* is ordinarily restricted to sexual continence or suppression. This narrow meaning is misleading. Its real meaning is 'Non-Waste'; non-waste of mental, verbal and bodily powers. In that sense alone, the aspirant is asked to be *yatavākkāyamānasa*—controlled in word, body and mind.

We waste our powers, at every moment of our life, in small things and big. We speak inaccurately; it is a waste. We waste our energy in fidgeting, when we ought to be sitting still. We waste time in gossip, in fruitless efforts, in an unmethodical distribution of our time, calling it freedom. How many moderns waste the best part of life, say in golf or bridge, when they should be achieving the same physical vigour or mental relaxation in a hundred useful ways?

And so with the mind. We splash about our mental energy, like urchins dancing in the sea. Very little examination is necessary to convince one of the criminal waste of our mental powers. We feel we are busy when all we are doing is to waste our mental powers in an unregulated, diffused manner. If we want to 'Become,' we dare not waste the energies of our machine wherewith we have to attain results. If a man has to approach God, if he has to be His instrument, he cannot offer to Him something which leaks at every point.

In India, for want of enough men of calibre, a man is drawn to do many things. But it is all wrong, hopelessly wrong; every one must keep to his business.

He should do it for all he is worth. He should not dissipate his energies in things outside his *svadharma.*

> Better one's own thankless *dharma*
> Then alien task, tho' well-performed.
> Better to die
> Doing one's own task;
> Another's task is fraught with danger.

We forsake our vocation, our *svadharma,* this unity of purpose, for position, power or wealth which accident may bring. The result is fraught with danger. It is failure or worse; it stunts the personality. Position, when so occupied, instead of giving scope to one's personality, proves that the personality is not big enough for the position.

Personality therefore presupposes a unity of mind, a power of concentration, a fixed determination, which pursues its objects steadily, without wavering or tiring.

> The Will of those that strive
> Knows but one Aim, Kuru's Delight.
> Many-branched and endless is the will of Him
> Who knows no real effort.

This purposeful concentration of all one's power is what distinguishes the growing personality from the sterile one. Most of us suffer from an incapacity to separate one duty, one ambition, one resolve, from all others which to him is Truth and give it a pre-eminent place in our life. We dare not become what Krishna asks Arjuna to do: "Be thou but an instrument."

This distinguishes a man from a yogi. A yogi may be a very ordinary, imperfect man, but he recognises but one Truth as his guide. He would rather do the

will of God than any one else's. He consecrates himself to Truth, which is unity between thought, word and deed.

No one can be his true self, unless he consecrates himself thus. Most of us try to feed our personality on activities which have no organic relations with ourselves. One is in a profession when he ought to be in office; another is in business when he ought to be a professor; a third may be in a profession, in politics, in literature when he ought to be consecrated to the salvage of culture, maybe through these very activities. How many of us have a definite and divine purpose of life? If so, how many have the readiness to become but an instrument? But life is not long; our capacities are not large. We tread the path of death when we seek to pursue all paths that appear open. Our aims, our friends, our interests are of those of a dilettante. They do not look one way—*ekāgra*—as they should, if we were but His instruments.

What is true of a man is again true of a country. A country has its own *svadharma* pre-destined by its history, its culture, its inner strength. Any attempt to achieve a result inconsistent wih its *svadharma* unsupported by a unified control of its thought, word and deed will land it in a position of danger.

India has lived so long because it has lived by its truth, its culture, moulded and shaped by influences of diverse patterns tuned to harmony. Her unity in the past was the inter-dependence of its major corporations, the representatives of culture, of strength, wealth and service. Her unity at present is represent-

ed by the educated classes; by her economic unity; by the Congress and other organizations which have raised a fabric of national unity; by the impulse to preserve her integrity and attain freedom. And as a man struggles towards Truth, she also has to struggle towards it; to overcome centrifugal forces; to control waste; to eliminate weaknesses. And the one weakness which she has to conquer is untruth, the habit of keeping aspiration and its expression divorced from harmonious action.

(5)

The Spirit Of Silence And Solitude

Among the qualities which lead to 'Becoming,' the *Gītā* gives a prominent place to Silence and Solitude. It is the *viviktasevī*—the man who serves Solitude, and *mounī*—the Silent, who attains Becoming.

Expression is bound up with personality. The man who speaks comes into contact with the world, influences it, dominates it. He grows as he expresses; and as he grows he becomes a power.

The struggle for expression, as the famous instance of Demosthenes proves, is long and arduous. On some rare occasions one can wrest admiration by powers of expression. He may carry the passions of men with him sometimes. But, the most perfect eloquence has no power to touch hearts unless the whole personality is behind it; unless Silence, Solitude and Prayer teach one of the secret of surrender, making the expression larger than the speaker. Carlyle was not wrong when

he said: 'Were this an altar-building time, altars might still be raised to silence and secrecy.'

'Silence', he again stated, 'is the element in which great things fashion themselves that at length they may emerge full-formed and majestic into the daylight which thenceforth they are to rule.'

Real action is in silent moments. The epochs of our life are not in the visible facts of existence like calling, marriage, acquisition of office, but in a silent thought by the wayside, in a lonely thought which reshapes our entire outlook on life with freshness, as never in society.

If one is a man of God, surrender will come to him easy, and he will be able to live in God, easily, effortlessly. His communion with Him will be filled with a placid ethereal wildness, which will fertilise his personality. When he returns, he will have been well-armed to resist the bondage of worldly contact.

Solitude is the twin sister of Silence. It is the greatest stimulant to the growth of personaliy, if it does not lead to vegetation.

Rishis grew in personality in forests and on mountain tops. Buddha meditated alone under the Bodhi tree. Moses, Christ and Mahomed communed with God on the heights of hills. Aurobindo Ghosh lives in perpetual solitude. Gandhiji creates solitude in a distant village. Saint Bernard cried: *Oh Solitude, sola beatitude.* Every creative artist repeatedly resorts to solitude to replenish the depleted storehouse of his personality.

It is a mistake to think that we can only grow in

society. I thought so once; I have found by experience that I was wrong. Frequent resort to solitude is necessary, particularly when one feels tired, wounded, deprived of inspiration.

The modern believes and maintains that society is the be-all and end-all of life. This is false. One may be human enough to want society, but he must not be so sub-human as to want it all the time. The world of perpetual change, defeat, conflict and imperfection is never enough for a man of intelligence. *Aratirjana-samsadi*—aversion to crowds—is not a negative quality but a positive one. Solitude is never solitary even for the man who does not want to be himself.

Solitude is essential to give us the confidence which society denies us. Confidence creates the atmosphere in which yearning—but not the greed of the covetous—becomes keener. But it must be the unalterable confidence of the man who is convinced that a Higher Power shapes his destiny; of the man who has brushed aside all other duties, and sought shelter in Him. For has He not declared to him: "I shall set thee free from all bonds of sin. Grieve not."

Without such confidence none can hope to inspire others. Without it, all other qualities are ineffective. Without it, nothing great can be accomplished. With it only we come to the stage of no longer living according to our own plans, but seeing before us the eternal purpose of God. Solitude thus deepens the personality of every one who, in humility, yearns for Becoming and seeks it.

To the man struggling to 'Become,' the world of

solitude is peopled with the wonderful beauty and greatness of his own yearning. Then *samvega* comes to him in great waves, washing away the imperfections which thwart his growth; healing the scars which the moral failure of society has inflicted. If he has a *svādhyāya*—his favourite study—its truths will surround him with their creative vigour. He will be able to live. Becoming, then, will not look like a luminous height of snows, but a Reality.

* * *

By silence and solitude is not meant the time spent with book or pen ; it means the quiet moment when, in harmony with ourselves and God, we try to receive the message of 'Becoming.' Such silent uplifting moments, I experienced on mountain tops.

As I sat gazing at the eternal snows of the Trisul, Nandādevī and Dhavalagiri at Kosani in the Himalayas, as a wide sweep of peaks, hills and valleys lay stretched at my feet, I grew large with the greatness of the Himalayas which enwrapped me; and realized, for a stray brief moment, what it means to be above and beyond attachment, fear and anger, to be *nistraigunya*. My eyes fastened on the overhanging majesty of the Trisul, I listened to a far off mighty voice in the midst of the silence around me. I settled myself tuned to it. I was passive. I let the spirit of the Himalayas fill me. One earthly thought after another left me. I was resting on the bosom of changeless immensity. And in that silence I felt the Presence of

The Infinite, The Lord of gods,
Of the World's final resting place
Him who is beyond what is
And what is not. Transcendent!

Do not cowards make a *svadharma* of their fright? My *svadharma* lies far, far below—in heat, in disappointments, in struggles. The world is too much with me.

Perhaps, duty is calling me back. Perhaps this call is God's, for, who knows, the raptures which such feelings give me are denied to the *Sādhu* who shivers in cold amidst snow and pines, unwashed and unprovided. He has attained in this vast solitude perhaps the elemental quiet of a protoplasm which knows no *samvega* and has no personality left. Perhaps to him the Trisula and Nandādevī are not sources of inspiration, but familiar spectres of a long and devastating winter.

For me, for the moment, is my own worldly task. Has not the *Gītā* given me the solace?

> Better one's thankless task, far,
> Than an alien's duty, tho' well-performed.
> Who acts as his own nature bids
> Incurs thereby no taint of sin.
> One's innate duty, though tainted.
> Let no man desert;
> For, all efforts are wrapped in imperfection
> Like fire by smoke.

If I could but catch this mood, isolate it, weave it in myself, I could wrest the spirit of silence and solitude from the Himalayas.

In such solitude I felt like the eagle, spontaneous, fearless, intoxicated with power which knew no guilt, which left no shadow of misery. Sometimes I sang in tune with the voices of the morning heralding the dawn of day.

I then but sought life but not remembered it; I felt like living always for 'the mad sake of living' on some distant hill-top, surrounded by majestic snows. I would have then attained the end, which a life's labours have nursed. Living would then be something ultimate—and in itself—like beautiful poetry, like a perfect statue, like *ānanda*, like a beautiful flower offered before a shrine. If I could only forget things and live in thought, if this narrow wisdom of worldliness were not mine, if I were not a slave—a coward!

Again, at such moments, I have felt the summons to action. I am an heir to the Aryan culture. It is for the present but a dream of forty million slaves. I have not power to express what I felt about it, how as a supreme effort of the human mind, it stands above all contemporary struggles as the only source of human pride, as the only hope of man. I am tied to the earth with fetters of delusion and cannot live or die for it. I cannot communicate to my helpless countrymen what they are and what they have been. If I tell them, they will not hearken to me. Much less can I liberate them from slavery; weld them into a great people; help them find their soul, which they call *Dharma* but know it not.

I am but an ordinary man to whom is denied the inspiration of Silence and Solitude in daily life.

Dust I am and unto the dust I must return.

(Completed at Kosani in the Himalayas in May 1941.)

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