

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

These teachings of Swami Vivekananda, compiled from 'the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda', awaken the minds of youths, instill self-confidence and courage in them to face the problems of life, infuse love and sympathy in their hearts, inspire the youths to lead a noble virtuous life, and guide them through the troubles and turmoils of life. The great French savant and Nobel-laureate Romain Rolland wrote about Swamiji's teachings: "I cannot touch these sayings of his... without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock."



"Fill the brain with high thoughts and highest ideals, place them day and night before you and out of that will come great work."

—Swami Vivekananda



*This book is for free distribution  
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**Vivekananda Seva Samitee  
Rishikesh, Uttarakhand**



**Advaita Ashrama**

(Publication House of Ramakrishna Math)  
5 Dehi Entally Road  
Kolkata 700 014



# VIVEKANANDA

## His Call to the Nation



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Published on the occasion of  
150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda



Advaita Ashrama

(Publication House of Ramakrishna Math)  
5 dehi entally road • kolkata 700 014

*Published by*  
Swami Muktidananda  
Adhyaksha, Advaita Ashrama  
Mayavati, Champawat, Uttarakhand, Himalayas  
*from its Publication House, Kolkata*  
Email: [mail@advaitaashrama.org](mailto:mail@advaitaashrama.org)  
Website: [www.advaitaashrama.org](http://www.advaitaashrama.org)

© All Rights Reserved  
Special Edition, December 2017  
300000

ISBN 978-81-7505-018-7

*Printed in India at*  
Swapna Printing Works Private Ltd.  
Kolkata 700 009

## **PUBLISHER'S NOTE**

The Indian youths are now at the crossroads. On one side they see the pompous show of wealth, luxury, enjoyments, and on the other side they see millions of people without enough food or clothing, struggling to survive in miserable conditions. India's priceless spiritual heritage is now facing the challenge of materialistic values.

In this dire situation the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda can be of immense benefit and help to all people. They contain the distilled essence of India's spiritual treasures explained in the simplest language in the light of modern rational thought and science. They are universal in their scope and are meant for all people belonging to all strata of society, all religions and all races.

The present book is compiled from the 9-volume *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. As a part of the celebration of Swamiji's 150th Birth Anniversary (2013-2014), this book is being made available at a subsidized price.

Belur Math  
1 May 2011

Publisher

## REFERENCES

### **The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda**

Volume I	:	Twelfth Edition, 1965
Volume II	:	Eleventh Edition, 1968
Volume III	:	Ninth Edition, 1964
Volume IV	:	Ninth Edition, 1966
Volume V	:	Eighth Edition, 1964
Volume VI	:	Seventh Edition, 1963
Volume VII	:	Sixth Edition, 1964
Volume VIII	:	Fourth Edition, 1964

### **The Life of Swami Vivekananda**

by His Eastern and Western Disciples:  
Seventh Edition, 1965

### **Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda**

by His Eastern and Western Admirers:  
Second Edition, 1964

Give me a few men and women who are pure and selfless, and I shall shake the world.

\* \* \*

The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel.

— Swami Vivekananda



In London, December 1896

## A BRIEF LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

### EARLY DAYS

Swami Vivekananda, or Narendranath Datta, or simply Naren, as he was called in his pre-monastic days, was born to Vishwanath Datta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi in Calcutta on Monday, 12 January 1863. The Datta family was rich, respectable, and renowned for charity, learning, and a strong spirit of independence. Narendranath's grandfather, Durgacharan Datta, was well-versed in Persian and Sanskrit and was skilled in law. But after the birth of his son Vishwanath, he renounced the world and became a monk. He was then only twenty-five years of age.

Vishwanath Datta was an attorney-at-law in the Calcutta High Court. He was proficient in English and Persian, and took great delight in reciting to his family the poems of the Persian poet Hafiz. He also enjoyed the study of the Bible and of the Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit. Though charitable to an extravagant degree and sympathetic towards the poor, Vishwanath was rationalistic and progressive in outlook in matters religious and social, owing perhaps to the influence of western culture. Bhuvaneshwari Devi was an accomplished lady with a regal bearing. She was deeply religious. Before the birth of Narendranath, though she had daughters, she yearned for a son and asked one of her relatives at Varanasi to make religious offerings to Vireśvara Śiva. It is said that she dreamt later that Śiva promised to be born as her son. Narendranath was born some time afterwards.

In his early childhood, Narendranath was rather restless and given to much fun and frolic. But at the same time, he had a great attraction for spiritual matters and would play at worshipping or meditating on the images of Rāma-Sītā, Śiva, etc. The stories of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, which his mother told him, left an indelible impression on his mind. Traits such as courage, sympathy for the poor, and attraction towards wandering monks appeared spontaneously in him. Even in childhood, Narendranath demanded convincing arguments for every proposition. With these qualities of head and heart, he grew into a vigorous youth.

#### AT THE FEET OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

As a youth, Narendranath's leonine beauty was matched by his great courage. He had the build of an athlete, a resonant voice, and a brilliant intellect. He distinguished himself in athletics, philosophy, and music, and among his colleagues was the undisputed leader. At college, he studied and absorbed western thought, and this implanted a spirit of critical inquiry in his mind. His inborn tendency towards spirituality and his respect for ancient religious traditions and beliefs, on the one side, and his argumentative nature, coupled with his sharp intellect, on the other, were now at war with each other. In this predicament, he tried to find comfort in the Brāhma Samāj, the popular socio-religious movement of the time. The Brāhma Samāj believed in a formless God, deprecated the worship of idols, and addressed itself to various forms of social reform. Narendranath also met prominent religious leaders, but could not get a convincing answer from them to his questions about the existence of God. This only accentuated his spiritual restlessness.

At this critical juncture, he remembered the words of his Professor, William Hastie, who had mentioned that a saint lived at Dakshineswar, just outside Calcutta, who experienced the ecstasy described by Wordsworth in his

poem, *The Excursion*. His cousin Ramachandra Datta also induced him to visit the saint. Thus came about, in 1881, the historic meeting of these two great souls, the prophet of modern India and the carrier of his message. Narendranath asked: 'Sir, have you seen God?' Sri Ramakrishna answered his question in the affirmative: 'Yes, I have seen Him just as I see you here; only more intensely.' At last, here was one who could assure him from his own *experience* that God existed. His doubt was dispelled. The disciple's training had begun.

While Sri Ramakrishna tested him in so many ways, Narendranath, in turn, tested Sri Ramakrishna in order to ascertain the truth of his spiritual assertions. At one stage, after the passing away of his father in 1884, Narendranath's family suffered many troubles and privations. At the suggestion of his Master, Narendranath tried to pray to Mother Kāli at Dakshineswar for the alleviation of his family's distress. He found, however, that although his need was for wealth, he could pray only for knowledge and devotion.

Gradually, Narendranath surrendered himself to the Master. And Sri Ramakrishna, with infinite patience, calmed the rebellious spirit of his young disciple and led him forth from doubt to certainty and from anguish to spiritual bliss. But, more than Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual guidance and support, it was his love which conquered young Narendranath, love which the disciple reciprocated in full measure.

With Sri Ramakrishna's illness and his removal to Cossipore, on the outskirts of Calcutta, for treatment, began Narendranath's final training under his guru. It was a time remarkable for the intense spiritual fire which burned within him and which expressed itself through various intense practices. The Master utilized the opportunity to bring his young disciples under the leadership of Narendra. And when Narendra asked that he might be absorbed in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, ordinarily regarded as the highest spiritual experience, the Master admonished him saying: 'Shame on

you! I thought you would grow, like a huge banyan, sheltering thousands from the scorching misery of the world. But now I see you seek your own liberation.' All the same, Narendra had the much-coveted realization, after which the Master said that the key to this would thenceforth remain in his keeping and the door would not be opened till Narendra had finished the task for which he had taken birth. Three or four days before his *mahāsamādhi*, Sri Ramakrishna transmitted to Narendranath his own power and told him: 'By the force of the power transmitted by me, great things will be done by you; only after that will you go to whence you came.'

After the passing away of the Master in August 1886, many of the young disciples gathered together in an old dilapidated house at Baranagore under the leadership of Narendranath. Here, in the midst of a life of intense austerity and spiritual practices, the foundation of the Ramakrishna brotherhood was laid. It was during these days that Narendranath, along with many of his brother disciples, went to Antpur; and there on Christmas Eve (1886), sitting round a huge fire in the open, they took the vow of *sannyāsa*. The days at Baranagore were full of great joy, study, and spiritual practices. But the call of the wandering life of the *sannyāsin* was now felt by most of the monks. And Narendranath, too, towards the close of 1888, began to take temporary excursions away from the Math.

#### THE WANDERING MONK

A remarkable change of outlook came over Narendranath between the closing of 1888, when he first left on his temporary excursions, and 1890, when he parted finally from his brethren and travelled alone as an unknown mendicant. He began to assume various names in order to conceal his identity so that he might be swallowed up in the immensity of India.

Now it was that the natural desire of an Indian monk for a life of solitude gave way to the prescience that he

was to fulfil a great destiny; that his was not the life of an ordinary recluse struggling for personal salvation. Under the influence of his burning desire to know India better and the mute appeal rising all around him from oppressed India, he went first to Varanasi, the holiest city of the Hindus. After Varanasi, he visited Lucknow, Agra, Vrindaban, Hathras, and Rishikesh and then returned to Baranagore for a time. At Hathras, he met Sarat Chandra Gupta who became his first disciple (Swami Sadananda). He revealed to him the mission entrusted to him by his Master, namely, the spiritual regeneration of India and the world. Sarat, who was on the staff of the railway station at Hathras, resigned his post and followed his guru to help him in his mission.

An important event in the Swami's life at this time occurred in 1890, when he met Pavhari Baba of Gazipur, for whose saintliness he had the greatest admiration throughout his life. At this time, he was torn between the desire, on the one hand, to become absorbed in the eternal silence of the Absolute and, on the other, the desire to fulfil his Master's mission. He hoped that Pavhari Baba would appease the remorse gnawing at his heart, which was due to the fact that fervour for the highest absorption in the Divine drew him away from the work entrusted to him by his Master. For twenty-one days, Naren was on the point of yielding to this temptation, but the vision of Sri Ramakrishna always came to draw him back.

In July 1890, the Swami took leave of Sri Sarada Devi, the holy consort of Sri Ramakrishna, who was the spiritual guide of the young monks after the Master's passing away. He also took leave of his brother monks, with the firm resolve to cut himself free from all ties and to go into the solitude of the Himalayas, for he felt it essential to be alone. In the words of Romain Rolland: 'This was the great departure. Like a diver, he plunged into the Ocean of India and the Ocean of India covered his tracks. Among its flotsam and jetsam, he was nothing more than one nameless *sannyāsin* in saffron robe among a thousand others. But the

fire of genius burned in his eyes. He was a prince despite all disguise.'

His wandering took him to various places of pilgrimage and historical interest in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mysore, Kerala, Madras, and Hyderabad. Everywhere the glory of ancient India vividly came before his eyes, whether political, cultural, or spiritual. In the midst of this great education, the abject misery of the Indian masses stood out before his mind. He moved from one princely State to another, everywhere to explore avenues of mitigating their lot. Thus he came to meet many leading personalities and rulers of the princely States. Among them, Maharaja Ajit Singh of Khetri became his fast friend and ardent disciple. At Alwar, he studied the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali. At Poona, he stayed with Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the great national leader. At first, Tilak talked with the Swami somewhat ironically, but later his depth of learning and profundity of thought impressed him, and he invited the Swami to stay with him. From there, after a stay at Belgaum, he went to Bangalore and Mysore. The Maharaja of Mysore gave him the assurance of financial support to enable him to go to the West to seek help for India and to preach the eternal religion. From Mysore, he visited Trivandrum and Kanya Kumari.

Wherever he went, it was not the important places and people that impressed him most. It was the terrible poverty and misery of the masses that caused his soul to burn in agony. He had travelled through the whole of India, often on foot, for nearly three years, coming to know the country at first hand. Now he had reached the end of his journey, as it were. He prostrated himself with great feeling before the image of Mother Kumārī at the Kanyā Kumārī temple. Then he swam across the sea to a rock off the south coast, and sitting there for the whole night went into deep meditation. The vast panorama of his experiences during his travels passed before his mind's eye. He meditated on the past, the present, and the future of India, the causes of her downfall, and the means of her resurrection. He then took

the momentous decision to go to the West to seek help for the poor of India and thus give shape to his life's mission.

With this decision, he journeyed to Rameswaram and Madurai. He then went on to Madras, where a group of young men, headed by Alasinga Perumal, were eagerly awaiting his arrival. To them, he revealed his intention of visiting America to attend the Parliament of Religions that was being convened at Chicago. His young disciples forthwith raised a subscription for his passage. But the Swami was not yet certain that it was the Divine Mother's will that he should go, and so he asked them to give away the money to the poor. At this juncture, the Swami had a symbolic dream in which Sri Ramakrishna walked out into the sea and beckoned him to follow. This, coupled with the blessings and permission of Sri Sarada Devi, who also, in a dream, had received Sri Ramakrishna's consent, settled the question for him, and his young friends again set about collecting the necessary funds.

He next paid a short visit to Hyderabad. Then, while arrangements were being made for his journey to America, there came a sudden invitation from the Maharaja of Khetri to attend celebrations in connection with the birth of his son. The Swami could not refuse this invitation from his disciple. The Maharaja received him cordially and promised to help him in every possible way. And it was here, at his suggestion, that the Swami assumed the name 'Vivekananda'. True to his word, the Maharaja sent his personal secretary with the Swami to equip him for the journey and see him off at Bombay. His journey to America commenced on 31 May 1893.

#### ON THE WORLD STAGE

Swami Vivekananda travelled to America via China, Japan, and Canada, and reached Chicago about the middle of July. At Canton, he saw some Buddhist monasteries; in Japan, he noted with admiration the industrial progress and cleanliness of the people. Now, at Chicago, so daz-

zling with riches and the inventive genius of the West, he was puzzled like a child. To his disappointment, he learnt that the Parliament of Religions would not be held until September, and that no one could be a delegate without credentials. He felt lost, but resigning himself to the will of Providence, he went to Boston which was less expensive than Chicago. In the train, he happened to become acquainted with Miss Katherine Sanborn, who invited him to be her guest at Boston. Through her, he came to know Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard University, who gave him a letter of introduction to the Chairman of the Parliament of Religions. In the course of this letter, Dr. Wright said: 'Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together.'

The Swami returned to Chicago a couple of days before the opening of the Parliament of Religions, but found to his dismay that he had lost the address of the committee which was providing hospitality for the oriental delegates. After a night's rest in a huge box in the railway freight-yard, the Swami set out in the morning to find somebody who could help him out of this difficulty. But help for a coloured man was not readily available. Exhausted by a fruitless search, he sat down on the roadside resigning himself to the divine will. Suddenly, a lady of regal appearance emerged from the fashionable house opposite, approached him, and offered him help. This was Mrs. George W. Hale, whose house was to become in future the permanent address of the Swami while in the United States, for the Hale family became his devoted followers.

The Parliament of Religions opened on 11 September 1893. The spacious hall of the Art Institute was packed with nearly 7000 people, representing the best culture of the country. On the platform, every organized religion from all corners of the world had its representatives. The Swami had never addressed such a huge and distinguished gathering. He felt extremely nervous. When his turn came, he mentally bowed down to Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, and then began his address with the words, 'Sisters

and Brothers of America'. Immediately, there was thunderous applause from the vast audience, and it lasted for full two minutes. 'Seven thousand people rose to their feet as a tribute to something, they knew not what.' The appeal of his simple words of burning sincerity, his great personality, his bright countenance, and his orange robes was so great that next day the newspapers described him as the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. The simple monk with a begging bowl had become the man of the hour.

All the subsequent speeches of the Swami at the Parliament were listened to with great respect and appreciation. They all had one common theme—universality. While all the delegates to the Parliament spoke of their own religion the Swami spoke of a religion that was vast as the sky and deep as the ocean. When the Parliament ended, the days of quiet had ended for the Swami. What followed were days of hectic lecturing in almost every part of the United States. Having signed a contract for a lecture tour with a bureau, the Swami had to be constantly on the move, speaking to all sorts of audiences. Though this tour provided him with opportunities of knowing the different aspects of western life at first hand, he found that the bureau exploited and embarrassed him. He felt disgusted and severed his connection with it. Now he wanted to form a group of earnest American disciples, and began classes, free of charge, for sincere students. His stay in the West, which lasted till December 1896, was packed with intense activity: besides innumerable lectures and classes at New York, he founded a Vedanta Society there; he trained a band of close disciples at the Thousand Island Park; and he wrote *Rāja-yoga* and paid two successful visits to England, where he gave the lectures which now form *Jñāna-yoga*. There he made some disciples, prominent among them being Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, Sister Nivedita, and E. T. Sturdy. Earlier, in New York, J. J. Goodwin, a young English stenographer had been accepted as his disciple. It was during these visits that he had the pleasure of meeting the great savant Max

Müller. During his tour of Europe in the summer of 1895, he also met the famous German orientalist Paul Deussen.

He had laboured hard to give to the West his message of Vedānta as the universal principle basic to all religions, and his effort had by now resulted in the establishment of the Vedānta work on a permanent basis in the United States. The London work, too, had made some progress. Now his motherland was calling him and was eager to receive his message. So, from London, he started for India at the end of 1896. Besides his American and English disciples, he left behind his brother disciples Saradananda and Abhedenanda to carry on the work.

#### TRIUMPHAL RETURN

Swami Vivekananda left London with the Seviers on 16 December 1896, and after a visit to Rome and other places in Italy, he took the boat for India at Naples on 30 December. At Naples, Mr. Goodwin joined the party. They reached Colombo on 15 January 1897. The news of the Swami's return had already reached India, and the people everywhere, throughout the country, were afire with enthusiasm to receive him. He was no more the unknown *sannyāsin*. In every city, small or big, committees had been formed to give him a fitting reception. As Romain Rolland says, the Swami 'replied to the frenzied expectancy of the people by his Message to India, a conch sounding the resurrection of the land of Rāma, of Śiva, of Kṛṣṇa, and calling the heroic Spirit, the immortal Ātman, to march to war. He was a general, explaining his *Plan of Campaign*, and calling his people to rise *en masse*: "My India, arise! Where is your vital force? In your Immortal Soul." At Madras, he delivered five public lectures, every one of which was a clarion call to throw away weakness and superstition and rise to build a new India. He emphasized that in India 'the keynote of the whole music of the national life' was religion, a religion which preached the 'spiritual oneness of the whole universe', and when that was strengthened, everything else

would take care of itself. He did not spare his criticism, however, castigating his countrymen for aping the West, for their blind adherence to old superstitions, for their caste prejudices, and so on.

From Madras the Swami sailed for Calcutta and arrived there on 20 February. His native city gave him a grand welcome, and here the Swami paid a touching tribute to his Master: 'If there has been anything achieved by me, by thoughts, or words, or deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his. ... If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally round his name.'

To establish his work on a firm basis, the Swami summoned all the monastic and lay disciples of Sri Rama-krishna to a meeting at Balaram Bose's house, and the Ramakrishna Mission was formed in May 1897. The aims and ideals of the Mission propounded by the Swami were purely spiritual and humanitarian. He had inaugurated the machinery for carrying out his ideas.

When plague broke out in Calcutta in May 1898, he organized relief work with the help of the members of the monastery and lay disciples. After the plague was under control, the Swami and his western disciples left for Nainital and Almora. This was a period of great preparation and training for his western disciples, especially Sister Nivedita. On 16 June, the Swami left for Kashmir with some of these disciples. This trip to Kashmir was an unforgettable experience both for the Swami and for the disciples. At the end of July, the Swami journeyed with Sister Nivedita to the holy shrine of Amarnāth. Observing meticulously every little practice demanded by custom, the Swami reached the cave of Amarnāth on 2 August, wearing only a loin-cloth, his body besmeared with ashes. His whole frame was trembling with emotion; a great mystical experience came over him, of which he never spoke, beyond saying that Śiva Himself had appeared before him. This was followed by a visit to Kshir Bhavani, the shrine of the Mother Goddess, a few miles away from Srinagar. This proved to

be another memorable experience for the Swami. He was full of the Mother and said, quoting from his own poem: 'It all came true, every word of it; and I have proved it, for I have hugged the form of Death.'

When he reached Calcutta on 18 October, he was pale and weak and suffering from various ailments. Despite this, he engaged himself in numerous activities. A piece of land had been acquired at Belur on the west bank of the Ganga, five miles above Calcutta, and the construction of the monastery had started. In January 1899, the monks moved to the new monastery, the now famous Belur Math. The Nivedita Girls' School had been inaugurated earlier. The Bengali monthly *Udbodhan* was also started at this time. And the Seviers fulfilled the Swami's dream of having a monastery in the Himalayas, by starting the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati (Almora) in March 1899. The English monthly *Prabuddha Bharata* had been started at Madras earlier, but on the untimely passing away of its editor in 1898, it ceased publication for a month. The monthly started again at Almora under the editorship of Swami Swarupananda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, and in 1899, it was transferred to the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati.

During this period, the Swami constantly inspired the *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* at the Math towards a life of intense spirituality and service, for one's own emancipation and the good of one's fellow men—*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagat hitāya ca*, as he put it.

But the Swami's health was failing. And his plan to revisit the West was welcomed by his brother monks, in the hope that this would improve his health.

#### ACROSS THE WORLD AGAIN

Swami Vivekananda left India on 20 June 1899, taking with him Swami Turiyananda and Sister Nivedita. The journey with the Swami was a great education to both of them. Sister Nivedita wrote: 'From the beginning to the end, a vivid flow of stories went on. One never knew what

moment would bring the flash of intuition and the ringing utterance of some fresh truth.' After touching Madras, Colombo, Aden, and Marseilles *en route*, the ship arrived at London on 31 July. The trip was beneficial to the Swami's health.

After spending two weeks in London, he sailed for New York. Arriving there, he went with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett to their beautiful country home called Ridgely Manor on the River Hudson. The Swami stayed at this country retreat until 5 November and then went to the west coast. He visited Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, and also made short trips to Chicago and Detroit. Now the conviction that the East and the West ought to be mutually helpful and must co-operate with each other grew stronger upon him. The mere material brilliance of the West could not dazzle him, nor could the emphasis on spirituality in India hide her social and economic drawbacks.

He said to Nivedita: 'Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter; but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob. ... Here in India, it is sad and gloomy on the surface, but underneath are carelessness and merriment.' The West had tried to conquer external nature, and the East had tried to conquer internal nature. Now East and West must work hand in hand for the good of each other, without destroying the special characteristics of each. The West has much to learn from the East, and the East has much to learn from the West; in fact, the future has to be shaped by a proper fusion of the two ideals. Then there will be neither East nor West, but one humanity.

The main event of this period was the starting of the Shanti Ashrama in Northern California, which he placed under the charge of Swami Turiyananda. A Vedanta centre at San Francisco was also inaugurated. He also delivered a number of lectures in the western cities during this period. But the Swami was becoming more and more aware of the approaching end. He wrote to Miss MacLeod: 'My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out.'

On 1 August 1900, he arrived in Paris to participate in the Congress of the History of Religions, held there on the occasion of the Universal Exposition. With some friends, he left Paris in October and visited Hungary, Rumania, Serbia, and Bulgaria, before arriving at Constantinople. Then they proceeded to Athens and Cairo. In Cairo, the Swami suddenly became restless to return to India; he had a premonition of Capt. Sevier's death. He took the first available boat and hurried back to India and reached the Belur Math on 9 December 1900, without any previous intimation. It was a pleasant surprise to his brother monks and disciples, who greatly rejoiced at his return.

#### THE JOURNEY'S END

At the Math, Swami Vivekananda heard that Capt. Sevier had passed away on 28 October, and he left immediately for Mayavati to console Mrs. Sevier. Arriving there on 3 January 1901, he stayed for a fortnight. The grandeur of the scenery of this Himalayan Ashrama, dedicated to Advaita, delighted him. In spite of his ill health and the severe cold, he wandered in the woods and around an artificial lake, happy and carefree.

Returning to Belur, he stayed there for seven weeks and then left for East Bengal and Assam. His mother, who had expressed an earnest desire to visit the holy places there, went with him. 'This is the one great wish of a Hindu widow,' he wrote to Mrs. Bull. 'I have brought only misery to my people. I am trying to fulfil this one wish of hers.' He returned to the Math in the second week of May 1901, after visiting Nangalbandh, Kamakhya, and Shillong during the tour, and delivering a few lectures at Dacca and Shillong.

Now the Swami tried to lead a carefree life at the monastery. He would roam about the Math grounds, sometimes clad only in his loin-cloth; or he would supervise the cooking; or sit with the monks singing devotional songs. Sometimes, he would be seen imparting spiritual

instructions to the visitors, at other times engaged in serious study in his room or explaining to the members of the Math the intricate passages of the scriptures and unfolding to them his schemes for future work. He freed himself entirely from all formal duties by executing a Deed of Trust in favour of his brother disciples, transferring to them all the properties, including the Belur Math, so far held in his name.

Towards the end of 1901, two learned Buddhists came from Japan to invite him to attend the forthcoming Congress of Religions there. The Swami could not accept their invitation, but went with them to Bodh Gaya and from there to Varanasi. At Varanasi, he was delighted to see a few young men who, under the inspiration of his message, had started nursing the poor and the needy. Their work formed the nucleus of the future Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service.

The Swami knew his end was nearing. All his actions during the last days were deliberate and significant. He said that smaller plants cannot grow under the shade of a big tree. On 4 July 1902, he meditated from 8 to 11 in the morning, rather unusually. In the afternoon, he went out for a walk with Swami Premananda and explained his plan to start a Vedic school. In the evening, he retired to his room and spent an hour in meditation. Then he lay down quietly and after some time took two deep breaths and passed into eternal rest.

He had renounced his mortal body, but his words uttered in 1896 to Mr. Eric Hammond in London remained to reassure everyone of his immortality: 'It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body—to cast it off like a worn-out garment. But I shall not cease to work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God!'

## FAITH AND STRENGTH

He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. (II.301)

The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith, death comes. (VIII.228)

Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. (III.190)

Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak. (II.308)

Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be. (III.130)

Be free; hope for nothing from anyone. I am sure if you look back upon your lives you will find that you were always vainly trying to get help from others which never came. All the help that has come was from within yourselves. (II.324)

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I cannot', for you are infinite. Even time and space are as nothing compared with your nature. You can do anything and everything, you are almighty. (II.300)

Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal. (I.11)

Never mind the struggles, the mistakes. I never heard a cow tell a lie, but it is only a cow—never a man. So never mind these failures, these little backslidings; hold the ideal a thousand times, and if you fail a thousand times, make the attempt once more. (II.152)

The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them. (II.300)

If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upaniṣads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness. (III.160)

If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upaniṣads. And of the Upaniṣads, it is only that one idea strength. The quintessence of the Vedas and Vedānta and all lies in that one word. (VIII.267)

Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gitā. These are bold words; but I have to say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience. You will understand the Gitā better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. (III.242)

This is the one question I put to every man. ... Are you strong? Do you feel strength?—for I know it is truth alone that gives strength. ... Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. (II.201)

This is the great fact: Strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery, weakness is death. (II.3)

To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean,' says the persevering soul, 'at my will mountains will crumble up.' Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal. (I.178)

Men, men, these are wanted: everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized. (III.223-24)

Are not drums made in the country? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of these effeminate forms of music, ... the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. (VII.232)

Death is better than a vegetating ignorant life; it is better to die on the battle-field than to live a life of defeat. (II.124)

Come, do something heroic! Brother, what if you do not attain mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue: 'There are some saints who, full of holiness in thought, word, and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain'? (VI.314-15)

Can anything be done unless everybody exerts himself to his utmost? 'It is the man of action, the lion-heart, that the Goddess of Wealth resorts to.' No need of looking behind. forward! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be achieved. (VI.383-84)

Be not in despair; the way is very difficult, like walking on the edge of a razor; yet despair not, arise, awake, and find the ideal, the goal. (II.124)

Why weepest thou, brother? There is neither death nor disease for thee. Why weepest thou, brother? There is neither misery nor misfortune for thee. Why weepest thou, brother? Neither change nor death was predicated of thee. Thou art Existence Absolute. ... Be your own Self. (V.275)

Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They say, 'Have faith in this fellow or that fellow', but I say, 'Have faith in yourself first', that's the way. Have faith in yourself—all power is in you—be conscious and bring it out. Say, 'I can do everything.' 'Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it.' (VI.274)

Once when I was in Varanasi, I was passing through a place where there was a large tank of water on one side and a high wall on the other. It was in the grounds where there were many monkeys. The monkeys of Varanasi are huge brutes and are sometimes surly. They now took it into their heads not to allow me to pass through their street, so they howled and shrieked and clutched at my feet as I passed. As they pressed closer, I began to run, but the faster I ran, the faster came the monkeys and they began to bite at me. It seemed impossible to escape, but just then I met a stranger who called out to me, 'Face the brutes'. I turned and faced the monkeys, and they fell back and finally fled. That is a lesson for all life—face the terrible, face it boldly. (I.338)

Stand up and fight! Not one step back, that is the idea. Fight it out, whatever comes. Let the stars move from the sphere! Let the whole world stand against us! Death means only a change of garment. What of it? Thus fight! You gain nothing by becoming cowards. Taking a step backward, you do not avoid any misfortune. You have cried to all the gods in the world. Has misery ceased? ... The gods come to help you when you have succeeded. So what is the use? Die game. ... You are infinite, deathless, birthless. Because you are infinite spirit, it does not befit you to be a slave. Arise! Awake! Stand up and fight! (I.461)



## POWERS OF THE MIND

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success. ... If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed, we must go deeper. (I.177)

All the great prophets, saints, and seers of the world—what did they do? In one span of life they lived the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time that it takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life they perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the power of assimilation, thus shortening the time. (I.157)

The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only method of acquiring knowledge. Even the lowest shoebblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. (II.391)

How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind? The

world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret. (I.130-31)

No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore we must learn to control the grand powers that are already in our hands and by will power make them spiritual instead of merely animal. Thus it is clearly seen that chastity is the cornerstone of all morality and of all religion. (VIII.46)

Free! We who cannot, for a moment, govern our own minds, nay, cannot hold our minds on a subject, focus it on a point to the exclusion of everything else for a moment! Yet we call ourselves free. Think of it! ... The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, for ever—rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us. (VI.30)

The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. All success in any line of work is the result of this. ... The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. (VI.37)

Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake. (VI.123-24)

What work do you expect from men of little hearts? Nothing in the world! You must have an iron will if you would cross the ocean. You must be strong enough to pierce mountains. (VI.297)

Good and evil thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As vibration continues, so thought

remains in the form of thought until translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are the heirs of good and evil thought. If we make ourselves pure and the instruments of good thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul will not be receptive to evil thoughts. (VI.134)

In the history of mankind, you will find that there come these Messengers, and that from their very birth their mission is found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down; and you see them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a mission, they come with a message. ... When they speak, each word is direct, it bursts like a bomb-shell. What is in the word, unless it has the Power behind? What matters it what language you speak, and how you arrange your language? What matters it whether you speak correct grammar or with fine rhetoric? What matters it whether your language is ornamental or not? The question is: Whether or not you have anything to give? It is a question of giving and taking, and not listening. Have you anything to give?—that is the first question. If you have, then, give. (IV.122-24)

Whatever you do, devote your whole mind, heart, and soul to it. I once met a great sannyāsin, who cleansed his brass cooking utensils, making them shine like gold, with as much care and attention as he bestowed on his worship and meditation. (Life of Swami Vivekananda, p. 284)

How to attain purity living this life? Shall we all go to the forest caves? What good would it do? If the mind is not under control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will bring all disturbances there. We will find twenty devils in the cave because all the devils are in the mind. If the mind is under control, we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are.

It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light. (I.440-41)



## MAN: THE MAKER OF HIS DESTINY

What do I care if Mohammed *was* a good man, or Buddha! Does that alter *my* own goodness or evil? Let us be good for our own sake on our own responsibility! Not because somebody way back there was good! (*Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 273)

We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act. (I.31)

This human body is the greatest body in the universe, and a human being the greatest being. Man is higher than all animals, than all angels; none is greater than man. (I.142)

*Man is man so long as he is struggling to rise above nature*, and this nature is both internal and external. ... And if we read the history of nations between the lines, we shall always find that the rise of a nation comes with an increase in the number of such men; and the fall begins when this pursuit after the Infinite, however vain Utilitarians may call it, has ceased. That is to say, the mainspring of the strength of every race lies in its spirituality, and the death of that race begins the day that spirituality wanes and materialism gains ground. (II.64-65)

This world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong. (V.410)

All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the spiritual forces working within, and if these are strong and well adjusted, society will arrange itself accordingly. Each individual has to work out his own salvation; there is no other way, and so also with nations. ... It is very easy to point out the defects of institutions, all being more or less imperfect, but he is the real benefactor of humanity who helps the individual to overcome his imperfections under whatever institutions he may live. The individuals being raised, the nation and its institutions are bound to rise. (V.415-16)

You have to grow from inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul. (V.410)

Men in general lay all the blame of life upon their fellow-men, or, failing that, on God, or they conjure up a ghost, and say it is fate. Where is fate, and who is fate? We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our own fate. None else has the blame, none has the praise. The wind is blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind? (II.224)

Say, 'This misery that I am suffering is of my own doing, and that very thing proves that it will have to be undone by me alone.' That which I created, I can demolish; that which is created by someone else I shall never be able to destroy. Therefore, stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and succour you want is within yourselves. (II.225)

Make your own future. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.' The infinite future is before you, and you must always remember that each word, thought, and deed, lays up

a store for you and that as the bad thoughts and bad works are ready to spring upon you like tigers, so also there is the inspiring hope that the good thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred thousand angels to defend you always and for ever. (II.225)

'Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die.' Be of good cheer and believe that we are selected by the Lord to do great things, and we will do them. (V.23)

Unfortunately, in this life, the vast majority of persons are groping through this dark life without any ideal at all. If a man with an ideal makes a thousand mistakes, I am sure that the man without an ideal makes fifty thousand. Therefore, it is better to have an ideal. (II.152)

Man begins to struggle and fight against nature. He makes many mistakes, he suffers. But eventually he conquers nature and realizes his freedom. When he is free, nature becomes his slave. (VIII.249)

I disagree with the idea that freedom is obedience to the laws of nature. I do not understand what that means. According to the history of human progress, it is disobedience to nature that has constituted that progress. (VIII.257)

The world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect. (II.9)

What is the use of fighting and complaining? That will not help us to better things. He who grumbles at the little thing that has fallen to his lot to do will grumble at everything. Always grumbling, he will lead a miserable life, and everything will be a failure. But that man who does his duty as he goes, putting his shoulder to the wheel, will see the light, and higher and higher duties will fall to his share. (V.242)

Do not fly away from the wheels of the world-machine, but stand inside it and learn the secret of work. Through

proper work done inside, it is also possible to come out. (I.115)

Every thought that we think, every deed that we do, after a certain time becomes fine, goes into seed form, so to speak, and lives in the fine body in a potential form, and after a time it emerges again and bears its results. These results condition the life of man. Thus he moulds his own life. Man is not bound by any other laws excepting those which he makes for himself. (II.348)

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life. (VII.501)

Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all —*love*. (VI.281)

Life is ever expanding, contraction is death. The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal comforts and leading a lazy life—there is no room for him even in hell. (VI.294)

I am sure God will pardon a man who will use his reason and cannot believe, rather than a man who believes blindly instead of using the faculties He has given him. ... We must reason; and when reason proves to us the truth of these prophets and great men about whom the ancient books speak in every country, we shall believe in them. We shall believe in them when we see such prophets among ourselves. We shall then find that they were not peculiar men, but only illustrations of certain principles. (VI.12-13)

Why should you not try to hit the mark? We become wiser through failures. Time is infinite. Look at the wall. Did the wall ever tell a lie? It is always the wall. Man tells a lie—and becomes a god too. It is better to do something; never mind even if it proves to be wrong; it is better than doing nothing. The cow never tells a lie, but she remains a cow, all the time. Do something! (IV.126-27)

Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions.

Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character. ... The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. (I.208, 263)

We can overcome the difficulty by constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. (II.7)

I was once travelling in the Himalayas, and the long road stretched before us. ~~We poor monks cannot get any~~ one to carry us, so we had to make all the way on foot. There was an old man with us. ... He said, 'Oh Sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk any more; my chest will break.' I said to him, 'Look down at your feet.' He did so, and I said, 'The road that is under your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet.' The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars. (VIII.186-87)

'It is the coward and the fool who says, "This is fate"—so says the Sanskrit proverb. But it is the strong man who stands up and says, 'I will make my fate'. It is people who are getting old who talk of fate. Young men generally do not come to astrology. (VIII.184)

If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is the really great man whose character is great always, the same wherever he be. (I.29)

Every good thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return, will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals. (I.116)

If you project hatred and jealousy, they will rebound on you with compound interest. No power can avert them; when once you have put them in motion, you will have to bear them. Remembering this will prevent you from doing wicked things. (I.262)

Everything is conscious which rebels against nature: there, consciousness is manifested. Just try to kill a little ant, even it will once resist to save its life. Where there is struggle, where there is rebellion, there is the sign of life, there consciousness is manifested. (VI.453)

Isn't it man that makes money? Where did you ever hear of money making man? If you can make your thoughts and words perfectly at one, if you can, I say, make yourself one in speech and action, money will pour in at your feet of itself, like water. (VI.455)

The road to the Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles. (VIII.382)

Each work has to pass through these stages—ridicule, opposition, and then acceptance. Each man who thinks ahead of his time is sure to be misunderstood. So opposition and persecution are welcome, only I have to be steady and pure and must have immense faith in God, and all these will vanish. (V.91)

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details. (I.257)

Each one thinks his method is best. Very good! But remember, it may be good for *you*. One food which is very indigestible to one is very digestible to another. Because it is good for *you*, do not jump to the conclusion that your

method is everybody's method, that Jack's coat fits John and Mary. All the uneducated, uncultured, unthinking men and women have been put into that sort of strait jacket! Think for yourselves. Become atheists! Become materialists! That would be better. Exercise the mind! What right have you to say that this man's method is wrong? It may be wrong for you. That is to say, if you undertake the method, you will be degraded; but that does not mean that he will be degraded. Therefore, if you have knowledge and see a man weak, do not condemn him. Go to his level and help him if you can. He must grow. I can put five bucket-fuls of knowledge into his head in five hours. But what good will it do? He will be a little worse than before. (I.470)

Go and preach to all, 'Arise, awake, sleep no more; within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe this, and that power will be manifested.' ... If you can think that infinite power, infinite knowledge and indomitable energy lie within you, and if you can bring out that power, you also can become like me. (VI.454)



## EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. (IV.358)

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education. (IV.490)

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will. (VI.38-39)

The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. (VII.147-48)

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. (III.302)

Knowledge is inherent in man; no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. ... We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. (I.28)

Every one wants to command, and no one wants to obey; and this is owing to the absence of that wonderful *brahmacharya* system of yore. First, learn to obey. The command will come by itself. Always first learn to be a servant, and then you will be fit to be a master. (III.134-35)

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. (IV.483)

What we want is this *śraddhā*. Unfortunately, it has nearly vanished from India, and this is why we are in our present state. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in this *śraddhā* and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this *śraddhā*. (III.319)

Give up the awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong and have this *śraddhā*, and everything else is bound to follow. (III.320)

The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. ... Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. ... Now if the mountain does not come to Moham-

med, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. (IV.362-63)

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. (V.342)

Is that education, as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is now well-nigh killed out; under whose sway, why mention new ideas, even the old ones are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong, impelled by one's free will and intelligence, than to be good as an automaton. (IV.490)

What we want are Western science coupled with Vedānta, *brahmacarya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self. ... Vedānta says that within man is all knowledge—even in a boy it is so—and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher. ... But the root is religion. Religion is as the rice, and everything else, like the curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion, and so is the case with taking rice alone. (V.366)

Do you see, simply by the observance of strict *brahmacarya* (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time—one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. (VII.224)

My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher—*gurugṛha-vāsa*. Without the personal life of a teacher there would be no education. Take your Universities. What have they done during the fifty years [this was told at Madras in 1897] of their existence? They have not produced one original man. They are merely an examining body. The idea of the sacrifice for the common weal is not yet developed in our nation. (V.224)

*Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die.* Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society ... *That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical.* That is my opinion; and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better. (II.84-85)

I say, liberate, undo the shackles of people as much as you can. ... When you would be able to sacrifice all desire for happiness for the sake of society, then you would be the Buddha, then you would be free. (IV.491)

Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great:

1. Conviction of the powers of goodness.
2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good. (VIII.299)

If your ideal is matter, matter shalt thou be. Behold! Our ideal is the Spirit. That alone exists. Nothing else exists; and like Him, we live for ever. (VIII.72)

The Hindu man drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, marries religiously, robs religiously. ... Each nation has a mission for the world. So long as that mission is not hurt, that nation lives, despite every difficulty. But as soon as its mission is destroyed, the nation collapses. (VIII.74-75)

Do you not find in history that the first death-sign of a nation has been unchastity? When that has entered, the end of the race is in sight. (II.101)

Now we are not much more moral than the animals. We are only held down by the whips of society. If society said today, 'I will not punish you if you steal', we should just make a rush for each other's property. It is the policeman that makes us moral. It is social opinion that

makes us moral, and really we are little better than animals. (II.164)

The majority of sects will be transient, and last only as bubbles because the leaders are not usually men of character. Perfect love, the heart never reacting, this is what builds character. There is no allegiance possible where there is no character in the leader, and perfect purity ensures the most lasting allegiance and confidence. Take up an idea, devote yourself to it, struggle on in patience, and the sun will rise for you. (VI.135)

We are asked: What good is your Religion to society? Society is made a test of truth. Now this is very illogical. Society is only a stage of growth through which we are passing. ... If the social state were permanent, it would be the same as if the baby remained a baby. There can be no perfect man-baby; the words are a contradiction in terms, so there can be no perfect society. Man must and will grow out of such early stages. ... My Master used to say, 'Why don't you help your own lotus flower to bloom? The bees will then come of themselves.' (VI.144)

Do not recognize wickedness in others. Wickedness is ignorance, weakness. What is the good of telling people they are weak? Criticism and destruction are of no avail. We must give them something higher; tell them of their own glorious nature, their birthright. (VI.141-42)

What I say is not, 'Reform', but, 'Move on'. Nothing is too bad to reform. Adaptability is the whole mystery of life—the principle underneath which serves to unfold it. Adjustment or adaptation is the outcome of the Self pitted against external forces tending to suppress it. He who adjusts himself best lives the longest. Even if I do not preach this, society is changing, it must change. (VI.110)

Nothing else is necessary but these—*love, sincerity, and patience*. What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. love? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life; all selfishness is death, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life

to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are ghosts—for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. (IV.367)

On one side, new India is saying, 'If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress, and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations'; on the other, old India is saying, 'Fools! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own; nothing, unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?'

On one side, new India is saying, 'What the Western nations do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?' On the other side, old India is saying, 'The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!' (IV.477)

Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter; but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity are all on the surface: really it is full of tragic intensity. Now here, it is sad and gloomy on the outside, but underneath are carelessness and merriment. (VIII.261-62)

As far back as the days of the Upaniṣads, we have thrown the challenge to the world: 'Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached.' Race after race has taken the challenge up and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the plane of desires. They have all failed in the past—the old ones have become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery, which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago. ... Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation. (IV.314-15)

## SERVE MAN AS GOD

One of the greatest lessons I have learnt in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. ... I have been always learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there: to pay as much attention to the means as to the end. (II.1)

Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently to help the world, but really to help ourselves. ... Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, 'Here, my poor man,' but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect. (I.75-76)

It is the level-headed man, the calm man, of good judgment and cool nerves, of great sympathy and love, who does good work and so does good to himself. (I.79)

Great work requires great and persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. (VIII.383)

In doing evil we injure ourselves and others also. In doing good we do good to ourselves and to others as well. ... According to *Karma-Yoga*, the action one has done cannot be destroyed until it has borne its fruit; no power in nature can stop it from yielding its results. If I do an evil action, I must suffer for it; there is no power in this universe to stop or stay it. Similarly, if I do a good action, there is no power in the universe which can stop its bearing good results. (I.82)

The watchword of all well-being, of all moral good is not 'I' but 'Thou'. Who cares whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares if there is a soul or not, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not? Here is the world, and it is full of misery. Go out into it as Buddha did, and struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt. Forget yourselves; this is the first lesson to be learnt, whether you are a theist or an atheist, whether you are an agnostic or a Vedāntist, a Christian or a Mohammedan. (II.353)

Buddha is the only prophet who said, 'I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is.' ... He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. (I.117-18)

Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. 'He who thinks, 'I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything,' he who thinks, 'I will get to heaven before others, I will get *mukti* before others', is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, 'I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will even go to hell if by doing so I can help my brothers.' This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to Śiva. (III.143)

You cannot help anyone, you can only serve: serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help any one of His children, blessed you are; do not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship. (III.246)

Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word 'help' from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help Him? You worship. When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is the dog. He is all and in all. (V.246)

After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth—God is present in every *jīva*; there is no other God besides that. 'Who serves *jīva*, serves God indeed.' (VII.247)

If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt after suffering all my life; all else is mere moonshine. (V.177)

One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by *ignorance* and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity. (VII.501)

Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work, instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings. I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from anyone anything he really deserves. The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still. (IV.366)

Behold, how men are already in the jaws of the shark of infatuation! Oh, listen to their piteous heart-rending wails. Advance, forward, O ye brave souls, to set free those that are in fetters, to lessen the burden of woe of the miserable, and to illumine the abysmal darkness of ignorant hearts! Look, how the *Vedānta* proclaims by beat of drums, 'Be fearless!' (VII.504)

The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by helping others to do the same. If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong. In other words, a Brāhmaṇa is not so much in need of education as a Caṇḍāla. If the son of a Brāhmaṇa needs one teacher, that of a Caṇḍāla needs ten. For greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth. It is a madman who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the down-trodden, the ignorant—let these be your God. (VI.319)

This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees Śiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Śiva; and if he sees Śiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. (III.141-42)

The life of Buddha shows that even a man who does not believe in God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can attain to the highest. ... He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king: 'If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better; so sacrifice me.' The king was astonished. (IV.136)

'The good live for others alone. The wise man should sacrifice himself for others'. I can secure my own good only by doing you good. There is no other way, none whatsoever. (VI.317)

Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for

others. ... 'When death is so certain, it is better to die for a good cause.' (VI 265-67)

Throughout the history of the world you find great men make great sacrifices and the mass of mankind enjoy the benefit. If you want to give up everything for your own salvation, it is nothing. Do you want to forgo even your own salvation for the good of the world? You are God, think of that. (VI.280)

This world is not for cowards. Do not try to fly. Look not for success or failure. Join yourself to the perfectly unselfish will and work on. Know that the mind which is born to succeed joins itself to a determined will and perseveres. ... Live in the midst of the battle of life. Anyone can keep calm in a cave or when asleep. Stand in the whirl and madness of action and reach the Centre. If you have found the centre, you cannot be moved. (VI.83-84)

A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising-up—the gospel of equality. (V.15)

My boy, if you have any respect for my words, the first thing I will advise you to do is to throw open all the doors and windows of your room. In your quarter there are lots of poor people sunk in degradation and misery. You will have to go to them and serve them with your zeal and enthusiasm. Arrange to distribute medicines to those who are sick, and nurse them with all care, supply food to him who is starving, teach with as much as lies in you the ignorant; and if you begin to serve your brethren in this way, I tell you, my child, you will surely get peace and consolation. (*Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, p.330)

Where is that martial spirit which, at the very outset, requires one to know how to serve and obey and to prac-

tise self-restraint! The martial spirit is not self-assertion but self-sacrifice. One must be ready to advance and lay down one's life at the word of command, before he can command the hearts and lives of others. One must sacrifice himself first. (VII.270)

It is fear alone that is death. You have to go beyond all fear. So from this day be fearless. Off at once, to lay down your life for your own liberation and for the good of others. What good is it carrying along a load of bones and flesh! (VI.473)

Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it *shall* come. ... I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. ... Vow, then, to devote your whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred millions, going down and down every day. (V.16-17)

The history of the world is that of six men of faith, six men of deep pure character. We need to have three things: the heart to feel, the brain to conceive, the hand to work. Make yourself a dynamo. *Feel* first for the world. ... Ask yourself, does your mind react in hatred or jealousy? Good works are continually being undone by the tons of hatred and anger which are being poured out on the world. If you are pure, if you are strong, *you, one man*, are equal to the whole world. (VI.144-45)

Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of others' good? The world is not a child's play—and great men are those who build highways for others with their heart's blood. This has been taking place through eternity, that one builds a bridge by laying down his own body, and thousands of others cross the river through its help. Be it so! Be it so! (VI.273-74)

## RELIGION AND ETHICS

Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man, and man unto God. (V.409)

The definition of God and man: Man is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. (II.33)

The difference between God and the devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and selfishness. The devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God; only he has no holiness—that makes him a devil. Apply the same idea to the modern world: excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes human beings devils. (I.425)

Virtue is that which tends to our improvement, and vice to our degeneration. Man is made up of three qualities—brutal, human, and godly. That which tends to increase the divinity in you is virtue, and that which tends to increase brutality in you is vice. You must kill the brutal nature and become human, that is, loving and charitable. You must transcend that too and become pure bliss, Sachchidananda, fire without burning, wonderfully loving, but without the weakness of human love, without the feeling of misery. (VI.112)

*Unselfishness is God.* One may live on a throne, in a golden palace, and be perfectly unselfish; and then he is in God. Another may live in a hut and wear rags, and have

nothing in the world; yet, if he is selfish, he is intensely merged in the world. (I.87)

The first sign that you are becoming religious is that you are becoming cheerful. When a man is gloomy, that may be dyspepsia, but it is not religion. ... Misery is caused by sin, and by no other cause. What business have you with clouded faces? It is terrible. If you have a clouded face, do not go out that day, shut yourself up in your room. What right have you to carry this disease out into the world? (I.264-65)

Do you not know from the history of the world where the power of the prophets lay? Where was it? In the intellect? Did any of them write a fine book on philosophy, on the most intricate ratiocinations of logic? Not one of them. They only spoke a few words. Feel like Christ and you will be a Christ; feel like Buddha and you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God. (II.307)

In one word, the ideal of Vedānta is to know man as he really is, and this is its message, that if you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how can you worship a God who is unmanifested? (II.325-26)

If you are really pure, how do you see the impure? For what is within, is without. We cannot see impurity without having it inside ourselves. This is one of the practical sides of Vedānta, and I hope that we shall all try to carry it into our lives. (II.327)

Your godhead is the proof of God Himself. If you are not a prophet, there never has been anything true of God. If you are not God, there never was any God, and never will be. This, says the Vedānta, is the ideal to follow. Every one of us will have to become a prophet, and you are that already. Only *know* it. Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak. (II.308)

The Vedānta says, there is nothing that is not God. ... The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage. (II.321)

The secret of religion lies not in theories but in practice. To be good and to do good—that is the whole of religion. 'Not he that crieth "Lord", "Lord", but he that doeth the will of the Father'. (VI.245)

Anything that brings spiritual, mental, or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet. Religion is the manifestation of the natural strength that is in man. A spring of infinite power is coiled up and is inside this little body, and that spring is spreading itself. ... This is the history of man, of religion, civilization, or progress. (VIII.185)

The basic aim of religion is to bring peace to man. It is not a wise thing for one to suffer in this life so that one can be happy in the next. One must be happy here and now. Any religion that can bring that about is the true religion for humanity. (*Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, p.45-46)

Whenever any religion succeeds, it must have economic value. Thousands of similar sects will be struggling for power, but only those who meet the real economic problem will have it. Man is guided by the stomach. He walks and the stomach goes first and the head afterwards. Have you not seen that? It will take ages for the head to go first. ... When children's dreams begin to vanish and you begin to look at things the way they are, the head goes. Just when the head goes first, you go out. (I.454-55)

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with

the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book—the book without. (VI.81)

You will find many persons in this world who will say: 'I wanted to become religious, I wanted to realize these things, but I have not been able, so I do not believe anything.' Even among the educated you will find these. Large numbers of people will tell you, 'I have tried to be religious all my life, but there is nothing in it.' At the same time you will find this phenomenon: Suppose a man is a chemist, a great scientific man. He comes and tells you this. If you say to him, 'I do not believe anything about chemistry, because I have all my life tried to become a chemist and do not find anything in it', he will ask, 'When did you try?' 'When I went to bed, I repeated "O chemistry, come to me", and it never came.' That is the very same thing. The chemist laughs at you and says: 'Oh, that is not the way. Why did you not go to the laboratory and get all the acids and alkalis and burn your hands from time to time? That alone would have taught you.' Do you take the same trouble with religion? Every science has its own method of learning, and religion is to be learnt the same way. (VI.14-15)

Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life. And what will save Europe is the religion of the Upaniṣads. [Uttered by Swamiji in 1897] (III.159)

We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is One-

ness, so that each may choose that path that suits him best. (VI.416)

Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man—strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind. (V.3)

The only definition that can be given of morality is this: *That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral.* (I.110)

One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful thoughts, but they do not impress people; another man speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of *Ojas*. ... It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the *Ojas* rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants you will always find absolute chastity insisted upon. (I.169-70)

Ethics always says, 'Not I, but thou.' Its motto is: 'Not self, but non-self.' The vain ideas of individualism, to which man clings when he is trying to find that Infinite Power or that Infinite Pleasure through the senses, have to be given up—say the laws of ethics. You have to put *yourself* last, and others before you. The senses say, 'Myself first.' Ethics says, 'I must hold myself last.' Thus, all codes of ethics are based upon this renunciation; destruction, not construction, of the individual on the material plane. That Infinite will never find expression upon the material plane, nor is it possible or thinkable. (II.62-63)

Utilitarian standards cannot explain the ethical relations of men, for, in the first place, we cannot derive any ethical laws from considerations of utility. ... The utilitarian wants us to give up the struggle after the Infinite, the

reaching-out for the Supersensuous, as impracticable and absurd, and, in the same breath, asks us to take up ethics and do good to society. Why should we do good? Doing good is a secondary consideration. We must have an ideal. Ethics itself is not the end, but the means to the end. If the end is not there, why should we be ethical? Why should I do good to other men, and not injure them? If happiness is the goal of mankind, why should I not make myself happy and others unhappy? What prevents me? In the second place, the basis of utility is too narrow. ... Utilitarian theories can only work under present social conditions. Beyond that they have no value. But a morality, an ethical code, derived from religion and spirituality, has the whole of infinite man for its scope. It takes up the individual, but its relations are to the Infinite, and it takes up society also—because society is nothing but numbers of these individuals grouped together. (II.63-64)



## INDIA: OUR MOTHERLAND

Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be. ... Will she die? This old Mother of all that is noble or moral or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which Godlike men still live and breathe? I will borrow the lantern of the Athenian sage and follow you, my brother, through the cities and villages, plains and forests, of this broad world—show me such men in other lands if you can. (IV.347-48)

The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. ... Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it. (III.105-106)

Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations? Is she inferior in intellect? Is she inferior in dexterity? Can you look at her art, at her mathematics, at her philosophy, and answer 'yes'? All that is needed is that she should de-hypnotize herself and wake up from her age-long sleep to take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations. ... The national ideals of India are RENUNCIATION and SERVICE. Intensify her in those channels, and the rest will take care of itself. (V.226-27)

This national ship of ours, ye children of the Immortals, my countrymen, has been plying for ages, carrying civilization and enriching the whole world with its inestimable treasures. For scores of shining centuries this national ship of ours has been ferrying across the ocean of life, and has taken millions of souls to the other shore, beyond all misery. But today it may have sprung a leak and got damaged, through your own fault or whatever cause it matters not. What would you, who have placed yourselves in it, do now? Would you go about cursing it and quarrelling among yourselves! Would you not all unite together and put your best efforts to stop the holes? Let us all gladly give our hearts' blood to do this; and if we fail in the attempt, let us all sink and die together, with blessings and not curses on our lips. (III.461)

Now you understand clearly where the soul of this ogress is—it is in religion. Because no one was able to destroy that, therefore the Hindu nation is still living, having survived so many troubles and tribulations. Well, one Indian scholar asks, 'What is the use of keeping the soul of the nation in religion? Why not keep it in social or political independence, as is the case with other nations?' It is very easy to talk like that. ... The fact is, that the river has come down a thousand miles from its source in the mountains; does it, or can it go back to its source? If it ever tries to trace back its course, it will simply dry up by being dissipated in all directions. Anyhow the river is sure to fall into the ocean, sooner or later, either by passing through

open and beautiful plains or struggling through grimy soil. If our national life of these ten thousand years has been a mistake, then there is no help for it; and if we try now to form a new character, the inevitable result will be that we shall die. (V.459-60)

Hidden under the ashes of apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering and that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-prevention work, and famine-relief work—all these things will be done as they have been done all along here, viz. only through religion; otherwise all your frantic yelling and bewailing will end in nothing, my friend! (V.461)

In every country, the means is the same after all, that is, whatever only a handful of powerful men dictate becomes the *fait accompli*; the rest of the men only follow like a flock of sheep, that's all. I have seen your Parliament, your Senate, your vote, majority, ballot; it is the same thing everywhere, my friend. ... Now the question is this, who are these men of power in India?—they who are giants in religion. It is they who lead our society; and it is they again who change our social laws and usages when necessity demands; and we listen to them silently and do what they command. (V.461)

First of all, try to understand this: Does man make laws, or do laws make man? Does man make money, or does money make man? Does man make name and fame, or name and fame make man? Be a man first, my friend, and you will see how all those things and the rest will follow of themselves after you. Give up that hateful malice, that dog-like bickering and barking at one another, and take your stand on good purpose, right means, righteous courage, and be brave. When you are born a man, leave some indelible mark behind you. (V.462)

None will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity. Are you sincere? unselfish even unto death? and loving? Then fear not, not even death. Onward, my lads! The

whole world requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in magic, mummery, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come. Have faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things! Let not the barks of puppies frighten you—no, not even the thunderbolts of heaven—but stand up and work! (V.43)

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love. ... One vision I see clear as life before me: that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne—rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction. (IV.352-53)

Let New India arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough; out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from markets. Let her emerge from groves and forests; from hills and mountains. (VII.327)

We Indians suffer from a great defect, viz. we cannot make a permanent organization—and the reason is that we never like to share power with others and never think of what will come after we are gone. (VIII.456-57)

An English friend of mine, named General Strong, was in India during the Sepoy Mutiny. He used to tell many stories about it. One day, in the course of conversation, I asked him how it was that the sepoys who had enough of guns, ammunition, and provisions at their disposal, and were also trained veterans, came to suffer such a defeat. He replied that the leaders among them, instead of advancing forward, only kept shouting from a safe position in the rear, 'Fight on, brave lads', and so forth; but unless the commanding officer goes ahead and

faces death, the rank and file will never fight with heart. 'A captain must sacrifice his head.' If you can lay down your life for a cause, then only you can be a leader. But we all want to be leaders without making the necessary sacrifice. And the result is zero—nobody listens to us! (VII.325-26)

Learn obedience first. Among these Western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important, which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless courage, tremendous energy, and, above all, perfect obedience—these are the only traits that lead to individual and national regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us. (VI.349)

Jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to slaves. Even the Lord with all His power could do nothing on account of this jealousy. Think of me as one who has done all his duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders. Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this. Put yourselves to the task. (IV.359-60)

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others. ... Give and take is the law; and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races; and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life. (IV.365-66)

I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our tem-

ples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them. (V.222-23)

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions. (IV.324)

There are many things to be done, but means are wanting in this country. We have brains, but no hands. We have the doctrine of Vedānta, but we have not the power to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached; but in practice we are awfully cruel, awfully heartless—unable to think of anything besides our own mass-of-flesh bodies. ... I too believe that India will awake again if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the country—bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, their discretion totally lost, downtrodden, ever-starved, quarrelsome, and envious. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance. (V.126-27)

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared to them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. (IV.362)

For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling over with reform societies and reformers. But,

alas, every one of them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. They had not learnt the great lesson to be learnt. In their haste, they laid all the evils in our society at the door of religion; and like the man in the story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's forehead, they were trying to deal such heavy blows as would have killed man and mosquito together. But in this case, fortunately, they only dashed themselves against immovable rocks and were crushed out of existence in the shock of recoil. Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping Leviathan. But they were entirely destructive, and not constructive, and as such they were mortal, and therefore died. Let us bless them and profit by their experience. ... Until all the Hindu race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land, such a thing can never be—try East or West, India can never be Europe until she dies. (IV.347)

But mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materializing civilization of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round. (III.153)

Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours. (III.154)

Utter no words of condemnation. Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of this land and of the whole world, each of you thinking that the entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the light and the life of the Vedānta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. (III.199)

Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. (III.224)

Be steady, and, above all, be pure and sincere to the backbone. Have faith in your destiny. ... It depends upon you who have no money; because you are poor, therefore you will work. Because you have nothing, therefore you will be sincere. Because you are sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just now telling you. (III.445)

Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the down-trodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad—then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord, and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle, was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark, I used to say, struggle; when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. (IV.367)

Have fire and spread all over. Work, work. Be the servant while leading. Be unselfish, and *never listen to one friend in private accusing another*. Have infinite patience, and success is yours. ... Take care! Beware of everything that is untrue; stick to truth and we shall succeed, maybe slowly, but surely. Work on as if I never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on. (IV.369-70)

My faith is in the younger generation, the modern generation, out of them will come my workers. They will work out the whole problem, like lions. I have formulated the idea and have given my life to it. ... They will spread from centre to centre, until we have covered the whole of India. (V.223)

What we want are some young men who will renounce everything and sacrifice their lives for their country's sake.

We should first form their lives and then some real work can be expected. (V.352)

Even the least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking the least good of others gradually instils into the heart the strength of a lion, I love you all ever so much, but I wish you all to die working for others—I should rather be glad to see you do that! ... Get-up, and put your shoulders to the wheel—how long is this life for? As you have come into this world, leave some mark behind. Otherwise, where is the difference between you and the trees and stones? (V.382-83)

We now mostly need the ideal of a hero with the tremendous spirit of *rajas* thrilling through his veins from head to foot—the hero who will dare and die to know the Truth—the hero whose armour is renunciation, whose sword is wisdom. We want now the spirit of the brave warrior in the battlefield of life, and not of the wooing lover who looks upon life as a pleasure-garden! (V.388)

Have faith in yourself. You people were once the Vedic *r̄sis*. Only, you have come in different forms, that's all. I see it clear as daylight that you all have infinite power in you. Rouse that up; arise, arise—apply yourselves heart and soul, gird up your loins. What will you do with wealth and fame that are so transitory? Do you know what I think? I don't care for *mukti* and all that. My mission is to arouse within you all such ideas; I am ready to undergo a hundred thousand rebirths to train up a single man. (VII.176)

My boy, when death is inevitable, is it not better to die like heroes than as stocks and stones? And what is the use of living a day or two more in this transitory world? It is better to wear out than to rust out—specially for the sake of doing the least good to others. (VII.176)

With no strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and no originality in the brain, what will they do—these lumps of dead matter! By stimulating them I want to bring life into them—to this I have dedicated my life. I will rouse

them through the infallible power of Vedic mantras. I am born to proclaim to them that fearless message—'Arise! Awake!' Be you my helpers in this work! (VII.182)

Numbers do not count, nor does wealth or poverty; a handful of men can throw the world off its hinges, provided they are united in thought, word, and deed—never forget this conviction. The more opposition there is, the better. Does a river acquire velocity unless there is resistance? The newer and better a thing is, the more opposition it will meet with at the outset. It is opposition which foretells success. (VII.372)

But appreciation or no appreciation, I am born to organize these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden. And this I will do or die. (VIII.298)

If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse India and the whole world. ... My children must be ready to jump into fire, if needed, to accomplish their work. (V.61-62)

O India! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayanti; forget not that the God thou worshipest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sāṅkara, the Lord of Umā; forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; ... forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. (IV.479-80)

Go, all of you, wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you may die in the attempt—what of that? How many like you are being born

and dying like worms every day? What difference does that make to the world at large? Die you must, but have a great ideal to die for, and it is better to die with a great ideal in life. (V.383-84)

You must not depend on any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait. (V.109)

Work unto death—I am with you, and when I am gone, my spirit will work with you. This life comes and goes—wealth, fame, enjoyments are only of a few days. It is better, far better to die on the field of duty, preaching the truth, than to die like a worldly worm. Advance! (V.114)



## OTHER EXHORTATIONS

Be not anxious. It is against the big tree that the great wind strikes. 'Poking a fire makes it burn better'; 'A snake struck on the head raises its hood'—and so on. When there comes affliction in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all around, and it seems light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light of Brahman within gleams. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has ever become great, who has ever unfolded the Brahman within? (IV.492)

When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed; because intellect has only one state, reason, and within that, intellect works, and cannot get beyond. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach; it goes beyond intellect, and reaches to what is called inspiration. ... Men of heart get the 'butter', and the 'buttermilk' is left for the intellectual. (I.412.13)

Let us all be honest. If we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not degrade it; let not any try to pull it down. (IV.145)

You must remember that humanity travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth; it may be, if you like it better, from lower truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth. (IV.147)

The lower the organization, the greater the pleasure in the senses. Very few men can eat a meal with the same gusto as a dog or a wolf. But all the pleasures of the dog or the wolf have gone, as it were into the senses. The lower types of humanity in all nations find pleasure in the senses, while the cultured and the educated find it in thought, in philosophy, in arts and sciences. Spirituality is a still higher plane. (II.66)

The history of the world is the history of persons like Buddha and Jesus. The passionless and unattached do most for the world. (VIII.226)

Every successful man must have behind him somewhere tremendous integrity, tremendous sincerity, and that is the cause of his signal success in life. He may not have been perfectly unselfish; yet he was tending towards it. If he had been perfectly unselfish, his would have been as great a success as that of the Buddha or of the Christ. The degree of unselfishness marks the degree of success everywhere. (V.240)

Truth, purity, and unselfishness—wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition. (IV.279)

Go on! Do not look back if you think you have done something that is not right. Now, do you believe you could be what you are today, had you not made those mistakes before? Bless your mistakes, then. They have been angels unawares. Blessed be torture! Blessed be happiness! Do not care what be your lot. Hold on to the ideal. March on! (V.253)

Doing good to others is virtue (*dharma*); injuring others is sin. Strength and manliness are virtue; weakness and cowardice are sin. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving others is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one's own Self is virtue; doubt is sin. Know-

ledge of oneness is virtue; seeing diversity is sin. (V.419)

In modern times, if a man quotes a Moses or a Buddha or a Christ, he is laughed at; but let him give the name of a Huxley, a Tyndall, or a Darwin, and it is swallowed without salt. 'Huxley has said it', that is enough for many. We are free from superstitions indeed! That was a religious superstition, and this is a scientific superstition; only, in and through that superstition came life-giving ideas of spirituality; in and through this modern superstition come lust and greed. That superstition was worship of God, and this superstition is worship of filthy lucre, of fame or power. That is the difference. (II.74)

True equality has never been and never can be on earth. How can we all be equal here? This impossible kind of equality implies total death. ... What makes the difference between man and man? It is largely the difference in the brain. Nowadays no one but a lunatic will say that we are all born with the same brain power. (I.113-14)

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady. ... Keep the motto before you—Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion. (V.29)

Let people praise you or blame you, let fortune smile or frown upon you, let your body fall today or after a yuga, see that you do not deviate from the path of Truth. How much of tempests and waves one has to weather, before one reaches the haven of Peace! The greater a man has become, the fiercer ordeal he has had to pass through. (VII.126)

It is my firm conviction that no great work is accomplished in this world by low cunning. (VII.125)

This I have seen in life—he who is overcautious about himself falls into dangers at every step; he who is afraid of losing honour and respect, gets only disgrace; he who is always afraid of loss always loses. (VIII.433)

I know my mission in life, and no chauvinism about me; I belong as much to India as to the world. ... Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic cowards that you find only amongst the educated Hindus? I hate cowardice; I will have nothing to do with cowards or political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash. (V.95-96)

If I do not find bliss in the life of the Spirit, shall I seek satisfaction in the life of the senses? If I cannot get nectar; shall I fall back upon ditch water? (V.417)

You are the Pure One; awake and arise, O mighty one, this sleep does not become you. Awake and arise; it does not befit you. Think not that you are weak and miserable. Almighty, arise and awake, and manifest your own nature. It is not fitting that you think yourself a sinner. It is not fitting that you think yourself weak. Say that to the world, say it to yourselves, and see what a practical result comes, see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how everything is changed. Tell that to mankind, and show them their power. (II.304)

My hope and faith rest in men like you. Understand my words in their true spirit, and apply yourselves to work in their light. ... I have given you advice enough; now put at least something in practice. Let the world see that your listening to me has been a success. (VII.175)



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# KARMA - YOGA

THE YOGA OF ACTION

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



Advaita Ashrama

(Publication House of Ramakrishna Math)  
5 Dehi Entally Road • Kolkata 700 014

*Published by*

Swami Tattwavidananda

Adhyaksha, Advaita Ashrama

Mayavati, Champawat, Uttarakhand, Himalayas

*from its Publication Department, Kolkata*

Email: mail@advaitaashrama.org

Website: www.advaitaashrama.org

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Fifty-first Reprint, May 2017

6M6C

ISBN 978-81-85301-89-1

*Printed in India at*

Trio Process

Kolkata 700 014

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## KARMA IN ITS EFFECT ON CHARACTER

THE word Karma is derived from the Sanskrit Kri, to do; all action is Karma. Technically, this word also means the effects of actions. In connection with metaphysics, it sometimes means the effects, of which our past actions were the causes. But in Karma-Yoga we have simply to do with the word Karma as meaning work. The goal of mankind is knowledge. That is the one ideal placed before us by Eastern philosophy. Pleasure is not the goal of man, but knowledge. Pleasure and happiness come to an end. It is a mistake to suppose that pleasure is the goal. The cause of all the miseries we have in the world is that men foolishly think pleasure to be the ideal to strive for. After a time man finds that it is not happiness, but knowledge, towards which he is going, and that both pleasure and pain are great teachers; and that he learns as much from evil as from good. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called man's "character". If you take the character of any man, it really is but the aggregate of tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind; you will find that misery and

happiness are equal factors in the formation of that character. Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character, and in some instances misery is a greater teacher than happiness. In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise.

Now this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or "unveils", what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links

of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth. All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off we say, "We are learning", and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. There have been omniscient men, and, I believe, there will be yet; and that there will be myriads of them in the cycles to come. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out. So with all our feelings and actions—our tears and our smiles, our joys and our griefs, our weeping and our laughter, our curses and our blessings, our praises and our blames—every one of these we may find, if we calmly study our own selves, to have been brought out from within ourselves by so many blows. The result is what we are. All these blows taken together are called Karma—work, action. Every mental and physical blow that is given to the soul, by which, as it were, fire is

struck from it, and by which its own power and knowledge are discovered, is Karma, this word being used in its widest sense; thus we are all doing Karma all the time. I am talking to you: that is Karma. You are listening: that is Karma. We breathe: that is Karma. We walk: Karma. Everything we do, physical or mental, is Karma, and it leaves its marks on us.

There are certain works which are, as it were, the aggregate, the sum total, of a large number of smaller works. If we stand near the seashore and hear the waves dashing against the shingle, we think it is such a great noise; and yet we know that one wave is really composed of millions and millions of minute waves. Each one of these is making a noise, and yet we do not catch it; it is only when they become the big aggregate that we hear. Similarly, every pulsation of the heart is work; certain kinds of work we feel and they become tangible to us; they are, at the same time, the aggregate of a number of small works. If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he

alone is the really great man whose character is great always, the same wherever he be.

Karma in its effect on character is the most tremendous power that man has to deal with. Man is, as it were, a centre, and is attracting all the powers of the universe towards himself, and in this centre is fusing them all and again sending them off in a big current. Such a centre is the *real* man, the almighty, the omniscient, and he draws the whole universe towards him. Good and bad, misery and happiness, all are running towards him and clinging round him; and out of them he fashions the mighty stream of tendency called character and throws it outwards. As he has the power of drawing in anything, so has he the power of throwing it out.

All the actions that we see in the world, all the movements in human society, all the works that we have around us, are simply the display of thought, the manifestation of the will of man. Machines or instruments, cities, ships or men-of-war, all these are simply the manifestation of the will of man; and this will is caused by character and character is manufactured by Karma. As is Karma, so is the manifestation of the will. The men of mighty will the world has produced have all been tremendous workers—gigantic souls with wills powerful enough to overturn worlds; wills they got by persistent

work through ages and ages. Such a gigantic will as that of a Buddha or a Jesus could not be obtained in one life, for we know who their fathers were. It is not known that their fathers ever spoke a word for the good of mankind. Millions and millions of carpenters like Joseph had gone; millions are still living. Millions and millions of petty kings like Buddha's father had been in the world. If it was only a case of hereditary transmission, how do you account for this petty prince who was not, perhaps, obeyed by his own servants, producing this son whom half a world worships? How do you explain the gulf between the carpenter and his son whom millions of human beings worship as God? It cannot be solved by the theory of heredity. The gigantic will which Buddha and Jesus threw over the world, whence did it come? Whence came this accumulation of power? It must have been there through ages and ages, continually growing bigger and bigger, until it burst on society in a Buddha or a Jesus, even rolling down to the present day.

All this is determined by Karma, work. No one can get anything unless he earns it; this is an eternal law. We may sometimes think it is not so, but in the long run we become convinced of it. A man may struggle all his life for riches; he may cheat thousands, but he finds

at last that he did not deserve to become rich, and his life becomes a trouble and a nuisance to him. We may go on accumulating things for our physical enjoyment, but only what we earn is really ours. A fool may buy all the books in the world, and they will be in his library, but he will be able to read only those that he deserves to; and this deserving is produced by Karma. Our Karma determines what we deserve and what we can assimilate. We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act. You will say, "What is the use of learning how to work? Everyone works in some way or other in this world." But there is such a thing as frittering away our energies. With regard to Karma-Yoga, the Gita says that it is doing work with cleverness and as a science: by knowing how to work, one can obtain the greatest results. You must remember that all work is simply to bring out the power of the mind which is already there, to wake up the soul. The power is inside every man, so is knowledge; the different works are like blows to bring them out, to cause these giants to wake up.

Man works with various motives; there cannot be work without motive. Some people want to get fame, and they work for fame. Others want money, and they work for money. Others want to have power, and they work for power. Others want to get to heaven, and they work for the same. Others want to leave a name when they die, as they do in China where no man gets a title until he is dead, and that is a better way, after all, than with us. When a man does something very good there, they give a title of nobility to his father who is dead, or to his grandfather. Some people work for that. Some of the followers of certain Mohammedan sects work all their lives to have a big tomb built for them when they die. I know sects among whom, as soon as a child is born, a tomb is prepared for it; that is among them the most important work a man has to do, and the bigger and the finer the tomb, the better off the man is supposed to be. Others work as a penance; do all sorts of wicked things, then erect a temple, or give something to the priests to buy them off and obtain from them a passport to heaven. They think that this kind of beneficence will clear them and they will go scot-free in spite of their sinfulness. Such are some of the various motives for work.

Work for work's sake. There are some who are really the salt of the earth in every country

and who work for work's sake, who do not care for name, or fame, or even to go to heaven. They work just because good will come of it. There are others who do good to the poor and help mankind from still higher motives, because they believe in doing good and love good. The motive for name and fame seldom brings immediate results as a rule; they come to us when we are old and have almost done with life. If a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth, and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. In the first place, a man who can work for five days or even for five minutes without any selfish motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of punishment, or anything of the kind, has in him the capacity to become a powerful moral giant. It is hard to do it, but in the heart of our hearts we know its value, and the good it brings. It is the greatest manifestation of power—this tremendous restraint; self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill unrestrained, or the coach-

man may curb the horses. Which is the greater manifestation of power, to let them go or to hold them? A cannon-ball flying through the air goes a long distance and falls. Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall, and the impact generates intense heat. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power. This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha. Foolish men do not know this secret; they nevertheless want to rule mankind. Even a fool may rule the whole world if he works and waits. Let him wait a few years, restrain that foolish idea of governing; and when that idea is wholly gone, he will be a power in the world. The majority of us cannot see beyond a few years, just as some animals cannot see beyond a few steps. Just a little narrow circle—that is our world. We have not the patience to look beyond, and thus become immoral and wicked. This is our weakness, our powerlessness.

Even the lowest forms of work are not to be despised. Let the man who knows no better, work for selfish ends, for name and fame; but everyone should always try to get towards higher and higher motives and to understand them. "To work we have the right, but not to the fruits

thereof." Leave the fruits alone. Why care for results? If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or a good work, do not trouble to think what the result will be.

There arises a difficult question in this ideal of work. Intense activity is necessary; we must always work. We cannot live a minute without work. What then becomes of rest? Here is one side of the life-struggle—work, in which we are whirled rapidly round. And here is the other, that of calm, retiring renunciation; everything is peaceful around, there is very little of noise and show, only nature with her animals and flowers and mountains. Neither of them is a perfect picture. A man used to solitude, if brought in contact with the surging whirlpool of the world, will be crushed by it; just as the fish that lives in the deep sea water, as soon as it is brought to the surface, breaks into pieces, deprived of the weight of water on it that had kept it together. Can a man who has been used to the turmoil and the rush of life live at ease if he comes to a quiet place? He suffers and perchance may lose his mind. The ideal man is he who in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude finds the intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert. He has

learnt the secret of restraint, he has controlled himself. He goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic, and his mind is as calm as if he were in a cave where not a sound could reach him; and he is intensely working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma-Yoga; and if you have attained to that, you have really learnt the secret of work.

But we have to begin from the beginning, to take up the works as they come to us and slowly make ourselves more unselfish every day. We must do the work and find out the motive power that prompts us; and, almost without exception, in the first years we shall find that our motives are always selfish; but gradually this selfishness will melt by persistence, till at last will come the time when we shall be able to do really unselfish work. We may all hope that some day or other, as we struggle through the paths of life, there will come a time when we shall become perfectly unselfish; and the moment we attain to that, all our powers will be concentrated, and the knowledge which is ours will be manifest.

### EACH IS GREAT IN HIS OWN PLACE

ACCORDING to the Sâṅkhyâ philosophy, nature is composed of three forces called, in Sanskrit, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These as manifested in the physical world are what we may call equilibrium, activity, and inertness. Tamas is typified as darkness or inactivity; Rajas is activity, expressed as attraction or repulsion; and Sattva is the equilibrium of the two.

In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes Tamas prevails. We become lazy, we cannot move, we are inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times activity prevails, and at still other times that calm balancing of both. Again, in different men, one of these forces is generally predominant. The characteristic of one man is inactivity, dullness, and laziness; that of another, activity, power, manifestation of energy; and in still another we find the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness which are due to the balancing of both action and inaction. So in all creation—in animals, plants, and men—we find the more or less typical manifestation of all these different forces.

Karma-Yoga has specially to deal with these three factors. By teaching what they are and

how to employ them, it helps us to do our work better. Human society is a graded organisation. We all know about morality, and we all know about duty, but at the same time we find that in different countries the significance of morality varies greatly. What is regarded as moral in one country, may in another be considered perfectly immoral. For instance, in one country cousins may marry; in another, it is thought to be very immoral; in one, men may marry their sisters-in-law; in another, it is regarded as immoral; in one country people may marry only once; in another, many times; and so forth. Similarly, in all other departments of morality, we find the standard varies greatly; yet we have the idea that there must be a universal standard of morality.

So it is with duty. The idea of duty varies much among different nations. In one country, if a man does not do certain things, people will say he has acted wrongly; while if he does those very things in another country, people will say that he did not act rightly—and yet we know that there must be some universal idea of duty. In the same way, one class of society thinks that certain things are among its duty, while another class thinks quite the opposite and would be horrified if it had to do those things. Two ways are left open to us—the way of the ignorant who think that there is only one way to truth

and that all the rest are wrong, and the way of the wise who admit that, according to our mental constitution or the different planes of existence in which we are, duty and morality may vary. The important thing is to know that there are gradations of duty and of morality—that the duty of one state of life, in one set of circumstances, will not and cannot be that of another.

To illustrate: All great teachers have taught, "Resist not evil", that non-resistance is the highest moral ideal. We all know that if a certain number of us attempted to put that maxim fully into practice, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, the wicked would take possession of our properties and our lives, and would do whatever they liked with us. Even if for only one day such non-resistance were practised, it would lead to disaster. Yet, intuitively, in our heart of hearts we feel the truth of the teaching, "Resist not evil". This seems to us to be the highest ideal; yet to teach this doctrine only would be equivalent to condemning a vast portion of mankind. Not only so, it would be making men feel that they were always doing wrong, and cause in them scruples of conscience in all their actions; it would weaken them, and that constant self-disapproval would breed more vice than any other weakness would. To the man

who has begun to hate himself the gate to degeneration has already opened; and the same is true of a nation.

Our first duty is not to hate ourselves; because to advance we must have faith in ourselves first and then in God. He who has no faith in himself can never have faith in God. Therefore the only alternative remaining to us is to recognise that duty and morality vary under different circumstances; not that the man who resists evil is doing what is always and in itself wrong, but that in the different circumstances in which he is placed it may become even his duty to resist evil.

In reading the Bhagavad-Gita, many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished at the second chapter, wherein Shri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight or offer resistance on account of his adversaries being his friends and relatives, making the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love. This is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike; the extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar; when the vibrations of light are too slow we do not see them, nor do we see them when they are too rapid. So with sound; when very low in pitch we do not hear it, when very high we do not

hear it either. Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance. One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot, not because he will not; the other man knows that he can strike an irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance. Buddha gave up his throne and renounced his position; that was true renunciation. But there cannot be any question of renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce. So we must always be careful about what we really mean when we speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. We must first take care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then, having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist, and yet, at the same time, try to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact opposite. Arjuna became a coward at the sight of the mighty array against him; his "love" made him forget his duty towards his country and king. That is why Shri Krishna told him that he was a hypocrite: Thou talkest like

a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight!

Such is the central idea of Karma-Yoga. The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue.

I once met a man in my country whom I had known before as a very stupid, dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire to know anything, and was living the life of a brute. He asked me what he should do to know God, how he was to get free. "Can you tell a lie?" I asked him. "No," he replied. "Then you must learn to do so. It is better to tell a lie than to be a brute or a log of wood. You are inactive; you have not certainly reached the highest state, which is beyond all actions, calm and serene; you are too dull even to do something wicked." That was an extreme case, of course, and I was joking with him; but what I meant was that a man

must be active in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness.

Inactivity should be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical; and when you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come. It is very easy to say, "Hate nobody, resist not evil", but we know what that kind of thing generally means in practice. When the eyes of society are turned towards us, we may make a show of non-resistance, but in our hearts it is canker all the time. We feel the utter want of the calm of non-resistance; we feel that it would be better for us to resist. If you desire wealth, and know at the same time that the whole world regards him who aims at wealth as a very wicked man, you, perhaps, will not dare to plunge into the struggle for wealth, yet your mind will be running day and night after money. This is hypocrisy and will serve no purpose. Plunge into the world, and then, after a time, when you have suffered and enjoyed all that is in it, will renunciation come; then will calmness come. So fulfil your desire for power and everything else, and after you have fulfilled the desire, will come the time when you will know that they are all very little things; but until you have fulfilled this desire, until you have passed through that activity, it is impossible for you to come to the state

of calmness, serenity, and self-surrender. These ideas of serenity and renunciation have been preached for thousands of years; everybody has heard of them from childhood, and yet we see very few in the world who have really reached that stage. I do not know if I have seen twenty persons in my life who are really calm and non-resisting, and I have travelled over half the world.

Every man should take up his own ideal and endeavour to accomplish it; that is a surer way of progress than taking up other men's ideals which he can never hope to accomplish. For instance, we take a child and at once give him the task of walking twenty miles. Either the little one dies, or one in a thousand crawls the twenty miles to reach the end exhausted and half-dead. That is like what we generally try to do with the world. All the men and women in any society are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no right to sneer at any ideal. Let everyone do the best he can for realising his own ideal. Nor is it right that I should be judged by your standard or you by mine. The apple tree should not be judged by the standard of the oak, nor the oak by that of the apple. To judge the apple tree you must

take the apple standard, and for the oak its own standard.

Unity in variety is the plan of creation. However men and women may vary individually, there is unity in the background. The different individual characters and classes of men and women are natural variations in creation. Hence we ought not to judge them by the same standard or put the same ideal before them. Such a course creates only an unnatural struggle, and the result is that man begins to hate himself and is hindered from becoming religious and good. Our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth.

In the Hindu system of morality we find that this fact has been recognised from very ancient times and in their scriptures and books on ethics different rules are laid down for the different classes of men—the householder, the Sannyāsin (the man who has renounced the world), and the student.

The life of every individual, according to the Hindu scriptures, has its peculiar duties apart from what belongs in common to universal humanity. The Hindu begins life as a student; then he marries and becomes a householder; in old age he retires, and lastly he gives up the

world and becomes a Sannyasin. To each of these stages of life certain duties are attached. No one of these stages is intrinsically superior to another. The life of the married man is quite as great as that of the celibate who has devoted himself to religious work. The scavenger in the street is quite as great and glorious as the king on his throne. Take him off his throne, make him do the work of the scavenger, and see how he fares. Take up the scavenger and see how he will rule. It is useless to say that the man who lives out of the world is a greater man than he who lives in the world; it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and easy life. The four stages of life in India have in later times been reduced to two—that of the householder and of the monk. The householder marries and carries on his duties as a citizen, and the duty of the other is to devote his energies wholly to religion, to preach and to worship God. I shall read to you a few passages from the *Mahā-Nirvāna-Tantra*, which treats of this subject, and you will see that it is a very difficult task for a man to be a householder, and perform all his duties perfectly.

The householder should be devoted to God; the knowledge of God should be his goal of life. Yet he must work constantly, perform all his

duties; he must give up the fruits of his actions to God.

It is the most difficult thing in this world, to work and not care for the result, to help a man and never think that he ought to be grateful, to do some good work and at the same time never look to see whether it brings you name or fame, or nothing at all. Even the most arrant coward becomes brave when the world praises him. A fool can do heroic deeds when the approbation of society is upon him, but for a man to constantly do good without caring for the approbation of his fellowmen is indeed the highest sacrifice man can perform. The great duty of the householder is to earn a living, but he must take care that he does not do it by telling lies, or by cheating, or by robbing others; and he must remember that his life is for the service of God and the poor.

Knowing that mother and father are the visible representatives of God, the householder, always and by all means, must please them. If the mother is pleased, and the father, God is pleased with the man. That child is really a good child who never speaks harsh words to his parents:

Before parents one must not utter jokes, must not show restlessness, must not show anger or temper. Before mother or father, a child must

bow down low, and stand up in their presence, and must not take a seat until they order him to sit.

If the householder has food and drink and clothes without first seeing that his mother and his father, his children, his wife, and the poor are supplied, he is committing a sin. The mother and the father are the causes of this body, so a man must undergo a thousand troubles in order to do good to them.

Even so is his duty to his wife; no man should scold his wife, and he must always maintain her as if she were his own mother. And even when he is in the greatest difficulties and troubles, he must not show anger to his wife.

He who thinks of another woman besides his wife, if he touches her even with his mind—that man goes to dark hell.

Before women he must not talk improper language, and never brag of his powers. He must not say, "I have done this, and I have done that."

The householder must always please his wife with money, clothes, love, faith, and words like nectar, and never do anything to disturb her. That man who has succeeded in getting the love of a chaste wife has succeeded in his religion and has all the virtues.

The following are duties towards children: A son should be lovingly reared up to his

fourth year; he should be educated till he is sixteen. When he is twenty years of age he should be employed in some work; he should then be treated affectionately by his father as his equal. Exactly in the same manner the daughter should be brought up, and should be educated with the greatest care. And when she marries, the father ought to give her jewels and wealth.

Then the duty of the man is towards his brothers and sisters, and towards the children of his brothers and sisters, if they are poor, and towards his other relatives, his friends, and his servants. Then his duties are towards the people of the same village, and the poor, and anyone that comes to him for help. Having sufficient means, if the householder does not take care to give to his relatives and to the poor, know him to be only a brute; he is not a human being.

Excessive attachment to food, clothes, and the tending of the body, and dressing of the hair should be avoided. The householder must be pure in heart and clean in body, always active and always ready for work.

To his enemies the householder must be a hero. Them he must resist. That is the duty of the householder. He must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance. If he does not show himself a hero to

his enemies he has not done his duty. And to his friends and relatives he must be as gentle as a lamb.

It is the duty of the householder not to pay reverence to the wicked; because, if he reverences the wicked people of the world, he patronises wickedness; and it will be a great mistake if he disregards those who are worthy of respect, the good people. He must not be gushing in his friendship; he must not go out of the way making friends everywhere; he must watch the actions of the men he wants to make friends with, and their dealings with other men, reason upon them, and then make friends.

These three things he must not talk of. He must not talk in public of his own fame; he must not preach his own name or his own powers; he must not talk of his wealth, or of anything that has been told to him privately.

A man must not say he is poor, or that he is wealthy—he must not brag of his wealth. Let him keep his own counsel; this is his religious duty. This is not mere worldly wisdom; if a man does not do so, he may be held to be immoral.

The householder is the basis, the prop of the whole society; he is the principal earner. The poor, the weak, the children, and the women who do not work—all live upon the householder; so there must be certain duties that he has to

perform, and these duties must make him feel strong to perform them, and not make him think that he is doing things beneath his ideal. Therefore, if he has done something weak or has made some mistake, he must not say so in public; and if he is engaged in some enterprise and knows he is sure to fail in it, he must not speak of it. Such self-exposure is not only uncalled for, but also unmerves the man and makes him unfit for the performance of his legitimate duties in life. At the same time, he must struggle hard to acquire these things—first, knowledge, and secondly, wealth. It is his duty; and if he does not do his duty, he is nobody. A householder who does not struggle to get wealth is immoral. If he is lazy and content to lead an idle life, he is immoral, because upon him depend hundreds. If he gets riches, hundreds of others will be thereby supported.

If there were not in this city hundreds who had striven to become rich, and who had acquired wealth, where would all this civilisation, and these alms-houses and great houses be?

Going after wealth in such a case is not bad, because that wealth is for distribution. The householder is the centre of life and society. It is a worship for him to acquire and spend wealth nobly, for the householder who struggles

to become rich by *good* means and for *good* purposes is doing practically the same thing for the attainment of salvation as the anchorite does in his cell when he is praying, for in them we see only the different aspects of the same virtue of self-surrender and self-sacrifice prompted by the feeling of devotion to God and to all that is His.

He must struggle to acquire a good name by all means. He must not gamble, he must not move in the company of the wicked, he must not tell lies, and must not be the cause of trouble to others.

Often people enter into things they have not the means to accomplish, with the result that they cheat others to attain their own ends. Then there is in all things the time factor to be taken into consideration; what at one time might be a failure, would perhaps at another time be a very great success.

The householder must speak the truth and speak gently, using words which people like, which will do good to others; nor should he talk of the business of other men.

The householder by digging tanks, by planting trees on the roadsides, by establishing rest-houses for men and animals, by making roads and building bridges, goes towards the same goal as the greatest Yogi.

This is one part of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga—activity, the duty of the householder. There is a passage later on, where it says that “if the householder dies in battle fighting for his country or his religion, he comes to the same goal as the Yogi by meditation”, showing thereby that what is duty for one is not duty for another. At the same time, it does not say that this duty is lowering and the other elevating. Each duty has its own place, and according to the circumstances in which we are placed, must we perform our duties.

One idea comes out of all this, the condemnation of all weakness. This is a particular idea in all our teachings which I like, either in philosophy, or in religion, or in work. If you read the Vedas, you will find this word always repeated—“fearlessness”—fear nothing. Fear is a sign of weakness. A man must go about his duties without taking notice of the sneers and the ridicule of the world.

If a man retires from the world to worship God, he must not think that those who live in the world and work for the good of the world are not worshipping God; neither must those who live in the world for wife and children think that those who give up the world are low vagabonds. Each is great in his own place. This thought I will illustrate by a story.

A certain king used to inquire of all the Sannyasins that came to his country, "Which is the greater man—he who gives up the world and becomes a Sannyasin, or he who lives in the world and performs his duties as a householder?" Many wise men sought to solve the problem. Some asserted that the Sannyasin was the greater, upon which the king demanded that they should prove their assertion. When they could not, he ordered them to marry and become householders. Then others came and said, "The householder who performs his duties is the greater man." Of them, too, the king demanded proofs. When they could not give them, he made them also settle down as householders.

At last there came a young Sannyasin, and the king similarly inquired of him also. He answered, "Each, O king, is equally great in his place." "Prove this to me", asked the king. "I will prove it to you", said the Sannyasin, "but you must first come and live as I do for a few days, that I may be able to prove to you what I say." The king consented and followed the Sannyasin out of his own territory and passed through many other countries until they came to a great kingdom. In the capital of that kingdom a great ceremony was going on. The king and the Sannyasin heard the noise of drums and music, and heard also the criers; the people

were assembled in the streets in gala dress, and a great proclamation was being made. The king and the Sannyasin stood there to see what was going on. The crier was proclaiming loudly that the princess, daughter of the king of that country, was about to choose a husband from among those assembled before her.

It was an old custom in India for princesses to choose husbands in this way. Each princess had certain ideas of the sort of man she wanted for a husband; some would have the handsomest man; others would have only the most learned; others again the richest, and so on. All the princes of the neighbourhood put on their bravest attire and presented themselves before her. Sometimes they too had their own criers to enumerate their advantages and the reasons why they hoped the princess would choose them. The princess was taken round on a throne in the most splendid array and looked at and heard about them. If she was not pleased with what she saw and heard, she said to her bearers, "Move on", and no more notice was taken of the rejected suitors. If, however, the princess was pleased with any one of them, she threw a garland of flowers over him, and he became her husband.

The princess of the country to which our king and the Sannyasin had come was having one of

these interesting ceremonies. She was the most beautiful princess in the world, and the husband of the princess would be ruler of the kingdom after her father's death. The idea of this princess was to marry the handsomest man, but she could not find the right one to please her. Several times these meetings had taken place, but the princess could not select a husband. This meeting was the most splendid of all; more people than ever had come to it. The princess came in on a throne, and the bearers carried her from place to place. She did not seem to care for anyone, and everyone became disappointed that this meeting also was going to be a failure. Just then came a young man, a Sannyasin, handsome as if the sun had come down to the earth, and stood in one corner of the assembly watching what was going on. The throne with the princess came near him, and as soon as she saw the beautiful Sannyasin, she stopped and threw the garland over him. The young Sannyasin seized the garland and threw it off, exclaiming, "What nonsense is this? I am a Sannyasin. What is marriage to me?" The king of that country thought that perhaps this man was poor and so dared not marry the princess, and said to him, "With my daughter goes half my kingdom now, and the whole kingdom after my death!" and put the garland again on the Sannyasin. The

young man threw it off once more, saying, "Nonsense! I do not want to marry", and walked quickly away from the assembly.

Now the princess had fallen so much in love with this young man that she said, "I must marry this man or I shall die". And she went after him to bring him back. Then our other Sannyasin, who had brought the king there said to him, "King, let us follow this pair". So they walked after them but at a good distance behind. The young Sannyasin who had refused to marry the princess walked out into the country for several miles. When he came to a forest and entered into it, the princess followed him, and the other two followed them. Now this young Sannyasin was well acquainted with that forest and knew all the intricate paths in it. He suddenly passed into one of these and disappeared, and the princess could not discover him. After trying for a long time to find him, she sat down under a tree and began to weep, for she did not know the way out. Then our king and the other Sannyasin came up to her and said, "Do not weep; we will show you the way out of this forest, but it is too dark for us to find it now. Here is a big tree; let us rest under it, and in the morning we will go early and show you the road."

Now a little bird and his wife and their three

little ones lived on that tree in a nest. This little bird looked down and saw the three people under the tree and said to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? Here are some guests in the house, and it is winter, and we have no fire." So he flew away and got a bit of burning firewood in his beak and dropped it before the guests, to which they added fuel and made a blazing fire. But the little bird was not satisfied. He said again to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? There is nothing to give these people to eat, and they are hungry. We are householders; it is our duty to feed anyone who comes to the house. I must do what I can, I will give them my body." So he plunged into the midst of the fire and perished. The guests saw him falling and tried to save him, but he was too quick for them.

The little bird's wife saw what her husband did, and she said, "Here are three persons and only one little bird for them to eat. It is not enough; it is my duty as a wife not to let my husband's effort go in vain; let them have my body also." Then she fell into the fire and was burned to death.

Then the three baby-birds, when they saw what was done and that there was still not enough food for the three guests, said, "Our parents have done what they could and still it is not enough. It is our duty to carry on the

work of our parents; let our bodies go too." And they all dashed down into the fire also.

Amazed at what they saw, the three people could not of course eat these birds. They passed the night without food, and in the morning the king and the Sannyasin showed the princess the way, and she went back to her father.

Then the Sannyasin said to the king, "King, you have seen that each is great in his own place. If you want to live in the world, live like those birds, ready at any moment to sacrifice yourself for others. If you want to renounce the world, be like that young man to whom the most beautiful woman and a kingdom were as nothing. If you want to be householder, hold your life a sacrifice for the welfare of others; and if you choose the life of renunciation, do not even look at beauty, and money, and power. Each is great in his own place, but the duty of the one is not the duty of the other."

## THE SECRET OF WORK

HELPING others physically, by removing their physical needs, is indeed great; but the help is greater according as the need is greater and according as the help is far-reaching. If a man's wants can be removed for an hour, it is helping him indeed; if his wants can be removed for a year, it will be more help to him; but if his wants can be removed for ever, it is surely the greatest help that can be given him. Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our miseries for ever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a time. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of want is annihilated for ever; so helping man spiritually is the highest help that can be given him. He who gives man spiritual knowledge is the greatest benefactor of mankind, and as such we always find that those were the most powerful of men who helped man in his spiritual needs, because spirituality is the true basis of all our activities in life. A spiritually strong and sound man will be strong in every other respect, if he so wishes; until there is spiritual strength in man even physical needs cannot be well satisfied. Next to spiritual comes intellectual help; the gift of knowledge is a far higher gift than

that of food and clothes; it is even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of knowledge. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life. Life is of very little value, if it is a life in the dark, groping through ignorance and misery. Next in order comes, of course, helping a man physically. Therefore, in considering the question of helping others, we must always strive not to commit the mistake of thinking that physical help is the only help that can be given. It is not only the last but the least, because it cannot bring about permanent satisfaction. The misery that I feel when I am hungry is satisfied by eating, but hunger returns; my misery can cease only when I am satisfied beyond all want. Then hunger will not make me miserable; no distress, no sorrow will be able to move me. So that help which tends to make us strong spiritually is the highest, next to it comes intellectual help, and after that physical help.

The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and edu-

cated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum; we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.

We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not cause some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is, that if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this "non-attachment" to work.

This is the one central idea in the Gita: Work incessantly, but be not attached to it. "Samskâra" can be translated very nearly by inherent tendency. Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the

mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that wave coming out again. This mark, with the possibility of the wave reappearing, is what is called Samskara. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum total of all the impressions of my past life. This is really what is meant by character; each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions; and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working, and their resultant must be evil; and that man will be a bad man, he cannot help it. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions, and they will force

him to do evil. Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good; and they, in a similar manner, will force him to do good even in spite of himself. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts that there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good, in spite of himself and even if he wishes to do evil, his mind, as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so; the tendencies will turn him back; he is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man's good character is said to be established.

As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out, even so the character of that man who has control over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thoughts; good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs, the nerve-centres). Thus alone will character be established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any

company, there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation. You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnani; Christ was a Bhakta. But the same goal was reached by both of them. The difficulty is here. Liberation means entire freedom—freedom from the bondage of good, as well as from the bondage of evil. A golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one. There is a thorn in my finger, and I use another to take the first one out; and when I have taken it out, I throw both of them aside; I have no necessity for keeping the second thorn, because both are thorns after all. So the bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and held in control in a corner of the mind; but after that, the good tendencies have also to be conquered. Thus the "attached" becomes the "unattached". Work, but let not the action or the thought produce a deep impression on the mind; let the ripples come and go; let huge actions proceed from the muscles and

the brain, but let them not make any deep impression on the soul.

How can this be done? We see that the impression of any action to which we attach ourselves, remains. I may meet hundreds of persons during the day, and among them meet also one whom I love; and when I retire at night, I may try to think of all the faces I saw, but only that face comes before the mind—the face which I met perhaps only for one minute, and which I loved; all the others have vanished. My attachment to this particular person caused a deeper impression on my mind than all the other faces. Physiologically, the impressions have all been the same; every one of the faces that I saw pictured itself on the retina, and the brain took the pictures in; and yet there was no similarity of effect upon the mind. Most of the faces, perhaps, were entirely new faces, about which I had never thought before; but that one face of which I got only a glimpse, found associations inside. Perhaps I had pictured him in my mind for years, knew hundreds of things about him, and this one new vision of him awakened hundreds of sleeping memories in my mind; and this one impression having been repeated perhaps a hundred times more than those of the different faces together, will produce a great effect on the mind.

Therefore, be "unattached", let things work; let brain centres work; work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly, but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we are passing. Remember that great saying of the Sankhya, "The whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature." The very reason of nature's existence is for the education of the soul; it has no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have knowledge and through knowledge free itself. If we remember this always, we shall never be attached to nature; we shall know that nature is a book in which we are to read, and that when we have gained the required knowledge, the book is of no more value to us. Instead of that, however, we are identifying ourselves with nature; we are thinking that the soul is for nature, that the spirit is for the flesh, and, as the common saying has it, we think that man "lives to eat" and not "eats to live". We are continually making this mistake; we are regarding nature as ourselves and are becoming attached to it; and as soon as this attachment comes, there is the deep impression on the soul, which binds us down and makes us work not from freedom but like slaves.

The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a *master* and not as a *slave*; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be altogether at rest; ninety-nine per cent of mankind work like slaves, and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is very difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and here is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the three in one: where one of them is, the others also must be; they are the three aspects of the One without a second—the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. When that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world; that knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the

knowledge of the things of the world; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love, because it is painful; if she does not do what he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction; love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

Krishna says, "Look at Me, Arjuna! If I stop from work for one moment, the whole universe will die. I have nothing to gain from work; I am the one Lord, but why do I work? Because I love the world." God is unattached because He loves; that real love makes us unattached. Wherever there is attachment, the clinging to

the things of the world, you must know that it is all physical attraction between sets of particles of matter; something that attracts two bodies nearer and nearer all the time and, if they cannot get near enough, produces pain; but where there is *real* love, it does not rest on physical attachment at all. Such lovers may be a thousand miles away from one another, but their love will be all the same; it does not die, and will never produce any painful reaction.

To attain this non-attachment is almost a life-work. But as soon as we have reached this point, we have attained the goal of love and become free; the bondage of nature falls from us, and we see nature as she is; she forges no more chains for us; we stand entirely free and take not the results of work into consideration; who then cares for what the results may be?

Do you ask anything from your children in return for what you have given them? It is your duty to work for them, and there the matter ends. In whatever you do for a particular person, a city, or a state, assume the same attitude towards it as you have towards your children—expect nothing in return. If you can invariably take the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free offering to the world without any thought of return, then will your

work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we expect a return.

If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment, working as masters of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. We often talk of right and justice, but we find that in the world right and justice are mere baby's talk. There are two things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good we have all to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thought of obtaining return for the work we do hinders our spiritual progress; nay, in the end it brings misery. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and selfless charity can be put into practice; that is, by looking upon work as "worship" in case we believe in a Personal God. Here we give up all the fruits of our work unto the Lord, and worshipping Him thus, we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The Lord Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of a

crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.

This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story: After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pāndava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose; half his body was golden, and the other half was brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars; this is no sacrifice." "What!" they exclaimed, "you say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and everyone became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said, "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin with his wife, his son, and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to

obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat there was a knock at the door. The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, 'Come in, sir, you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, 'Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her husband, 'Give him my share'; but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied, so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, and when I rolled

my body on them, half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice."

This idea of charity is going out of India; great men are becoming fewer and fewer. When I was first learning English, I read an English story book in which there was a story about a dutiful boy who had gone out to work and had given some of his money to his old mother; and this was praised in three or four pages. What was that? No Hindu boy can ever understand the moral of that story. Now I understand it when I hear the Western idea—every man for himself. And some men take everything for themselves, and fathers and mothers and wives and children go to the wall. That should never and nowhere be the ideal of the householder.

Now you see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of death to help anyone, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practising charity to them. Thus it is plain

that to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal Sannyasin; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.

## WHAT IS DUTY?

It is necessary in the study of Karma-Yoga to know what duty is. If I have to do something I must first know that it is my duty, and then I can do it. The idea of duty, again, is different in different nations. The Mohammedan says what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says what is in the Vedas is his duty; and the Christian says what is in the Bible is his duty. We find that there are varied ideas of duty, differing according to different states in life, different historical periods and different nations. The term "duty" like every other universal abstract term, is impossible clearly to define; we can only get an idea of it by knowing its practical operations and results. When certain things occur before us we have all a natural or trained impulse to act in a certain manner towards them; when this impulse comes, the mind begins to think about the situation. Sometimes it thinks that it is good to act in a particular manner under the given conditions, at other times it thinks that it is wrong to act in the same manner even in the very same circumstances. The ordinary idea of duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience. But what is it that

makes an act a duty? If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save his own life or will not give it to save the life of another man, he is sure to feel that he has not done his duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty; the Hindu's training and education make him feel that way. In the last century there were notorious bands of robbers in India called *thugs*; they thought it their duty to kill any man they could and take away his money; the larger the number of men they killed, the better they thought they were. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkably well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennable us, while certain other acts

have a tendency to degrade and to brutalise us. But it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons of all sorts and conditions. There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind of all ages and sects and countries, and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus: "Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin."

The Bhagavad-Gita frequently alludes to duties dependent upon birth and position in life. Birth and position in life and in society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of individuals towards the various activities of life. It is therefore our duty to do that work which will exalt and ennable us in accordance with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born. But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries; our ignorance of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another. An American thinks that whatever an American does in accordance with the custom of his country is the best thing to do, and that whoever does not follow his custom must be a very wicked man. A Hindu thinks that his customs are the only right ones and are the best in the world, and

that whosoever does not obey them must be the most wicked man living. This is quite a natural mistake which all of us are apt to make. But it is very harmful; it is the cause of half the uncharitableness found in the world. When I came to this country and was going through the Chicago Fair, a man from behind pulled at my turban. I looked back and saw that he was a very gentlemanly-looking man, neatly dressed. I spoke to him, and when he found that I knew English, he became very much abashed. On another occasion in the same Fair another man gave me a push. When I asked him the reason, he also was ashamed and stammered out an apology saying, "Why do you dress that way!" The sympathies of these men were limited within the range of their own language and their own fashion of dress. Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellow-men. That very man who asked me why I did not dress as he did and wanted to ill-treat me because of my dress, may have been a very good man, a good father, and a good citizen; but the kindness of his nature died out as soon as he saw a man in a different dress. Strangers are exploited in all countries, because they do not know how to defend themselves; thus they carry home false impressions

of the peoples they have seen. Sailors, soldiers, and traders behave in foreign lands in very queer ways, although they would not dream of doing so in their own country; perhaps this is why the Chinese call Europeans and Americans "foreign devils". They could not have done this if they had met the good, the kindly sides of Western life.

Therefore the one point we ought to remember is that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standard. I am not the standard of the universe. I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me. So we see that environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in this world. Let us do that duty which is ours by birth; and when we have done that, let us do the duty which is ours by our position in life and in society. There is, however, one great danger in human nature, viz that man never examines himself. He thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position; and then higher duties will come to him. When we begin to work earnestly in the world, nature gives us blows right and left and soon enables us to find

out our position. No man can long occupy satisfactorily a position for which he is not fit. There is no use in grumbling against nature's adjustment. He who does the lower work is not therefore a lower man. No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties, but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they perform them.

Later on we shall find that even this idea of duty undergoes change, and that the greatest work is done only when there is no selfish motive to prompt it. Yet it is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship—nay, something higher—then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga—the object being the attenuating of the lower self so that the real higher Self may shine forth, the lessening of the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of society has thus been developed consciously or unconsciously in the realms of action and experience where, by limit-

ing selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.

Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly; it is a continuous friction otherwise. How else could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their wives and vice versa? Do we not meet with cases of friction every day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines in freedom alone. Yet is it freedom to be a slave to the senses, to anger, to jealousies, and a hundred other petty things that must occur every day in human life? In all these little roughnesses that we meet with in life, the highest expression of freedom is to forbear. Women, slaves to their own irritable, jealous tempers, are apt to blame their husbands and assert their own "freedom", as they think, not knowing that thereby they only prove that they are slaves. So it is with husbands who eternally find fault with their wives.

Chastity is the first virtue in man or woman, and the man who, however he may have strayed away, cannot be brought to the right path by a gentle and loving and chaste wife, is indeed very rare. The world is not yet as bad as that. We hear much about brutal husbands all over the world and about the impurity of men, but is it not true that there are quite as many brutal

and impure women as men? If all women were as good and pure as their own constant assertions would lead one to believe, I am perfectly satisfied that there would not be one impure man in the world. What brutality is there which purity and chastity cannot conquer? A good, chaste wife, who thinks of every other man except her own husband as her child and has the attitude of a mother towards all men, will grow so great in the power of her purity that there cannot be a single man, however brutal, who will not breathe an atmosphere of holiness in her presence. Similarly every husband must look upon all women, except his own wife, in the light of his own mother or daughter or sister. That man, again, who wants to be a teacher of religion must look upon every woman as his mother and always behave towards her as such.

The position of the mother is the highest in the world, as it is the one place in which to learn and exercise the greatest unselfishness. The love of God is the only love that is higher than a mother's love; all others are lower. It is the duty of the mother to think of her children first and then of herself. But, instead of that, if the parents are always thinking of themselves first, the result is that the relation between parents and children becomes the same as that between birds and their offspring which, as soon

as they are fledged, do not recognise any parents. Blessed indeed is the man who is able to look upon woman as the representative of the motherhood of God. Blessed indeed is the woman to whom man represents the fatherhood of God. Blessed are the children who look upon their parents as Divinity manifested on earth.

The only way to rise is by doing the duty next to us, and thus we go on gathering strength until we reach the highest state. A young Sannyasin went to a forest; there he meditated, worshipped, and practised Yoga for a long time. After years of hard work and practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some dry leaves fell upon his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said, "What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" As with these words he angrily glanced at them, a flash of fire went out of his head—such was the Yogi's power—and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad, almost overjoyed at this development of power—he could burn the crow and the crane by a look. After a time he had to go to the town to beg his bread. He went, stood at a door, and said, "Mother, give me food." A voice came from inside the house: "Wait a little, my son." The young man thought: "You wretched woman,

how dare you make me wait! You do not know my power yet." While he was thinking thus the voice came again: "Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane." He was astonished, still he had to wait. At last woman came, and he fell at her feet and said, "Mother, how did you know that?" She said, "My boy, I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a common everyday woman. I made you wait because my husband was ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. When I was unmarried, I did my duty to my parents; now that I am married, I do my duty to my husband; that is all the Yoga I practise. But by doing my duty I have become illumined; thus I could read your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest. If you want to know something higher than this, go to the market of such and such a town where you will find a Vyâdha<sup>1</sup> who will tell you something that you will be very glad to learn." The Sannyasin thought: "Why should I go to that town and to a Vyadha!" But after what he had seen, his mind opened a little, so he went. When he came near the town, he found that market and there saw at a distance a big fat Vyadha cutting meat with big knives, talking and bargaining

<sup>1</sup> The lowest class of people in India, who used to live as hunters and butchers.

with different people. The young man said, "Lord help me! Is this the man from whom I am going to learn? He is the incarnation of a demon, if he is anything." In the meantime this man looked up and said, "O Swami, did that lady send you here? Take a seat until I have done my business." The Sannyasin thought, "What comes to me here?" He took his seat; the man went on with his work, and after he had finished, he took his money and said to the Sannyasin, "Come, sir, come to my home." On reaching home the Vyadha gave him a seat, saying "Wait here", and went into the house. He then washed his old father and mother, fed them, and did all he could to please them, after which he came to the Sannyasin and said, "Now, sir, you have come here to see me; what can I do for you?" The Sannyasin asked him a few questions about soul and about God, and the Vyadha gave him a lecture which forms a part of the *Mahâbhârata*, called the *Vyâdha-Gita*. It contains one of the highest flights of the *Vedanta*. When the Vyadha finished his teaching, the Sannyasin felt astonished. He said, "Why are you in that body? With such knowledge as yours why are you in a Vyadha's body, and doing such filthy, ugly work?" "My son," replied the Vyadha, "no duty is ugly, no duty is impure. My birth placed me in these circumstances and environ-

ments. In my boyhood I learnt the trade; I am unattached and I try to do my duty well. I try to do my duty as a householder, and I try to do all I can to make my father and mother happy. I neither know your Yoga, nor have I become a Sannyasin, nor did I go out of the world into a forest; nevertheless, all that you have heard and seen has come to me through the unattached doing of the duty which belongs to my position."

There is a sage in India, a great Yogi, one of the most wonderful men I have ever seen in my life. He is a peculiar man, he will not teach anyone; if you ask him a question, he will not answer. It is too much for him to take up the position of a teacher, he will not do it. If you ask a question, and wait for some days, in the course of conversation he will bring up the subject, and wonderful light will he throw on it. He told me once the secret of work, "Let the end and the means be joined into one." When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being. Thus, in the story, the Vyadha and the woman did their duty with cheerfulness and whole-heartedness; and the result was that they became illuminated; clearly showing that the right performance of the duties of any station in life, without attachment to results, leads

us to the highest realisation of the perfection of the soul.

It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached worker all duties are equally good and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed and the freedom of the soul secured. We are all apt to think too highly of ourselves. Our duties are determined by our deserts to a much larger extent than we are willing to grant. Competition rouses envy, and it kills the kindness of the heart. To the grumbler all duties are distasteful; nothing will ever satisfy him, and his whole life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on, doing as we go whatever happens to be our duty and being ever ready to put our shoulders to the wheel. Then surely shall we see the Light!