

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-
Volume 4- Writings: Poems

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Chapter 1

Kali the Mother

KALI THE MOTHER

Chapter 2

Angels Unawares I-III

ANGELS UNAWARES^[1]

I

One bending low with load of life—
That meant no joy, but suffering harsh and hard—
And wending on his way through dark and dismal paths
Without a flash of light from brain or heart
To give a moment's cheer, till the line
That marks out pain from pleasure, death from life,
And good from what is evil was well-nigh wiped from
sight,
Saw, one blessed night, a faint but beautiful ray of light
Descend to him. He knew not what or wherefrom,
But called it God and worshipped.
Hope, an utter stranger, came to him and spread
Through all his parts, and life to him meant more
Than he could ever dream and covered all he knew,
Nay, peeped beyond his world. The Sages
Winked, and smiled, and called it "superstition".
But he did feel its power and peace
And gently answered back—
"O Blessed Superstition!"

II

One drunk with wine of wealth and power
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on
His maddening course, till the earth, he thought,
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden, and man,
The crawling worm, was made to find him sport,
Till the thousand lights of joy, with pleasure fed,
That flickered day and night before his eyes,
With constant change of colours, began to blur
His sight, and cloy his senses ; till selfishness,
Like a horny growth, had spread all o'er his heart ;
And pleasure meant to him no more than pain,
Bereft of feeling; and life in the sense,
So joyful, precious once, a rotting corpse between his
arms,
Which he forsooth would shun, but more he tried, the
more
It clung to him; and wished, with frenzied brain,

A thousand forms of death, but quailed before the charm,
Then sorrow came—and Wealth and Power went—
And made him kinship find with all the human race
In groans and tears, and though his friends would laugh,
His lips would speak in grateful accents—
"O Blessed Misery! "

III

One born with healthy frame — but not of will
That can resist emotions deep and strong,
Nor impulse throw, surcharged with potent strength —
And just the sort that pass as good and kind,
Beheld that *he* was safe, whilst others long
And vain did struggle 'gainst the surging waves.
Till, morbid grown, his mind could see, like flies
That seek the putrid part, but what was bad.
Then Fortune smiled on him, and his foot slipped.
That ope'd his eyes for e'er, and made him find
That stones and trees ne'er break the law,
But stones and trees remain ; that man alone
Is blest with power to fight and conquer Fate,
Transcending bounds and laws.
From him his passive nature fell, and life appeared
As broad and new, and broader, newer grew,
Till light ahead began to break, and glimpse of That
Where Peace Eternal dwells—yet one can only reach
By wading through the sea of struggles—courage-giving,
came.
Then looking back on all that made him kin
To stocks and stones, and on to what the world
Had shunned him for, his fall, he blessed the fall,
And with a joyful heart, declared it —
"Blessed Sin!"

Notes

[1] Written on 1 September, 1898.

Chapter 3

To the Awakened India

TO THE AWAKENED INDIA^[1]

Once more awake!

For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
No death for thee!

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest even of the roadside dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold, and free. Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,

Where loving hearts had brought thee up and
Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is
strong—
This is the law—all things come back to the
source
They sprung, their strength to renew.

Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-
belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song
;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,

Himala's daughter Umâ, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Opens the gate to Truth and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,

The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love!

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone
In all its glory shines—

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, and dream no more!
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

Notes

- [1] Written to *Prabuddha Bharata* or *Awakened India*, in August 1898, when the journal was transferred from Madras to Almora Himalayas, into the hands of the Brotherhood founded by Swami Vivekananda.

Chapter 4

Requiescat in Pace

REQUIESCAT IN PACE^[1]

Speed forth, O Soul! upon thy star-strewn path ;
Speed, blissful one! where thought is ever free,
Where time and space no longer mist the view,
Eternal peace and blessings be with thee!
Thy service true, complete thy sacrifice,
Thy home the heart of love transcendent find ;
Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,
Like altar roses fill thy place behind!
Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,
And one with That which comes as Death and Life ;
Thou helpful one! unselfish e'er on earth,
Ahead! still help with love this world of strife!

Notes

[1] Written in memoriam to J. J. Goodwin, August, 1898.

Chapter 5

Hold on Yet a While, Brave Heart

HOLD ON YET A WHILE, BRAVE HEART^[1]

If the sun by the cloud is hidden a bit,
If the welkin shows but gloom,
Still hold on yet a while, brave heart,
The victory is sure to come.
No winter was but summer came behind,
Each hollow crests the wave,
They push each other in light and shade ;
Be steady then and brave.
The duties of life are sore indeed,
And its pleasures fleeting, vain,
The goal so shadowy seems and dim,
Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,
With all thy might and main.
Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,
Though hopes be blighted, powers gone ;
Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,
Then hold on yet a while, brave soul,
No good is e'er undone.
Though the good and the wise in life are few,
Yet theirs are the reins to lead,
The masses know but late the worth ;
Heed none and gently guide.
With thee are those who see afar,
With thee is the Lord of might,
All blessings pour on thee, great soul,
To thee may all come right!

Notes

[1] Written to H. H. The Maharaja of Khetri, Rajputana.

Chapter 6

Nirvanashatkam, or Six Stanzas on Nirvana

NIRVANASHATKAM, OR SIX STANZAS ON NIRVANA^[1]

I am neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the mind-stuff ;
I am neither the body, nor the changes of the body ;
I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell, or sight,
Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire, the air ;
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
I am neither the Prâna, nor the five vital airs ;
I am neither the materials of the body, nor the five sheaths ;
Neither am I the organs of action, nor object of the senses ;
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
I have neither aversion nor attachment, neither greed nor delusion;
Neither egotism nor envy, neither Dharma nor Moksha;
I am neither desire nor objects of desire ;
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
I am neither sin nor virtue, neither pleasure nor pain ;
Nor temple nor worship, nor pilgrimage nor scriptures,
Neither the act of enjoying, the enjoyable nor the enjoyer ;
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
I have neither death nor fear of death, nor caste ;
Nor was I ever born, nor had I parents, friends, and relations ;
I have neither Guru, nor disciple ;
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
I am untouched by the senses, I am neither Mukti nor knowable ;
I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond

time ;

I am in everything ; I am the basis of the universe ; everywhere am I.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—

I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).

Notes

[1] Translation of a poem by Shankarâchârya.

Chapter 7

The Song of The Sannyasin

THE SONG OF THE SANNYÂSIN^[1]

Wake up the note! the song that had its birth
Far off, where worldly taint could never reach,
In mountain caves and glades of forest deep,
Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame
Could ever dare to break; where rolled the stream
Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that follows both.
Sing high that note, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore ;
Love, hate—good, bad—and all the dual throng,
Know, slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free ;
For fetters, though of gold, are not less strong to bind ;
Then off with them, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Let darkness go; the will-o'-the-wisp that leads
With blinking light to pile more gloom on gloom.
This thirst for life, for ever quench ; it drags
From birth to death, and death to birth, the soul.
He conquers all who conquers self. Know this
And never yield, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
“Who sows must reap,” they say, “and cause must bring
The sure effect ; good, good ; bad, bad ; and none
Escape the law. But whoso wears a form
Must wear the chain.” Too true ; but far beyond
Both name and form is Âtman, ever free.
Know thou art That, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
They know not truth who dream such vacant dreams
As father, mother, children, wife, and friend.
The sexless Self! whose father He? whose child?
Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?
The Self is all in all, none else exists ;
And thou art That, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
There is but One—The Free—The Knower—Self!
Without a name, without a form or stain.
In Him is Mâyâ dreaming all this dream.
The witness, He appears as nature, soul.
Know thou art That, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Where seekest thou? That freedom, friend, this world

Nor that can give. In books and temples vain
Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds
The rope that drags thee on. Then cease lament,
Let go thy hold, Sannyâsin bold! Say —
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Say, “Peace to all: From me no danger be
To aught that lives. In those that dwell on high,
In those that lowly creep, I am the Self in all!
All life both here and there, do I renounce,
All heavens and earths and hells, all hopes and fears.”
Thus cut thy bonds, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Heed then no more how body lives or goes,
Its task is done. Let Karma float it down ;
Let one put garlands on, another kick
This frame ; say naught. No praise or blame can be
Where praiser praised, and blamer blamed are one.
Thus be thou calm, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed
Of gain reside. No man who thinks of woman
As his wife can ever perfect be ;
Nor he who owns the least of things, nor he
Whom anger chains, can ever pass thro' Maya's gates.
So, give these up, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Have thou no home. What home can hold thee, friend?
The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed; and food
What chance may bring, well cooked or ill, judge not.
No food or drink can taint that noble Self
Which knows Itself. Like rolling river free
Thou ever be, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Few only know the truth. The rest will hate
And laugh at thee, great one ; but pay no heed.
Go thou, the free, from place to place, and help
Them out of darkness, Maya's veil. Without
The fear of pain or search for pleasure, go
Beyond them both, Sannyâsin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”
Thus, day by day, till Karma's powers spent
Release the soul for ever. No more is birth,
Nor I, nor thou, nor God, nor man. The “I”
Has All become, the All is “I” and Bliss.
Know thou art That, Sannyâsin bold! Say —

“Om Tat Sat, Om!”

Notes

- [1] Composed at the Thousand Island Park, New York, in July, 1895.

Chapter 8

Peace

PEACE^[1]

Behold, it comes in might,
The power that is not power,
The light that is in darkness,
The shade in dazzling light.
It is joy that never spoke,
And grief unfelt, profound,
Immortal life unlived,
Eternal death unmourned.
It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between,
It is not night nor morrow,
But that which joins them in.
It is sweet rest in music ;
And pause in sacred art ;
The silence between speaking ;
Between two fits of passion—
It is the calm of heart.
It is beauty never seen,
And love that stands alone,
It is song that lives un-sung,
And knowledge never known.
It is death between two lives,
And lull between two storms,
The void whence rose creation,
And that where it returns.
To it the tear-drop goes,
To spread the smiling form
It is the Goal of Life,
And Peace—its only home!

Notes

[1] Composed at Ridgely Manor, New York, 1899.

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