

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-  
Volume 6- Epistles - Second Series

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# Chapter 1

## I Sir

I[6]\*

(Translated from [7]Bengali)

**VRINDABAN,**

12th Aug., 1888.

DEAR SIR,

Leaving Ayodhya I have reached the holy Vrindaban, and am putting up at Kâlâ Bâbu's Kunja. In the town the mind feels contracted. Places like Râdhâ-kunda, I have heard, are delightful; but they are at some distance from the town. I have a mind to proceed very shortly to Hardwar. In case you have any acquaintance there, you would be doing me a great favour if you would kindly write him an introduction for me. What about your visiting this place? Please reply early and oblige.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 2

### II Sir

II[6]\*

(Translated from [7]Bengali)

**VRINDABAN,**

20th Aug., 1888.

DEAR SIR,

An aged brother-disciple of mine who has just come back to Vrindaban after visiting Kedarnath and Badrinath met Gangadhar. Twice did Gangadhar ascend up to Tibet and Bhutan. He is in great happiness and felt overwhelmed and wept at the meeting. He spent the winter at Kankhal. The Karoâ (waterpot) you gave him, he still keeps with him. He is coming back and is expected at Vrindaban this very month. So in the hope of meeting him, I postpone my going to Hardwar for some days. Please convey my deepest respects to the Brahmin devotee of Shiva who is with you and accept the same yourself.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 3

### III Sir

III[6]\*

(Translated from [7]Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

**THE BARANAGORE MATH,**

19th Nov., 1888.

RESPECTED SIR,

I have received the two books sent by you and am filled with joy to read your wonderfully affectionate letter which betokens your broad, generous heart. No doubt, it is due to good merit of my previous births that you show, sir, so much kindness to a mendicant like me who lives on begging. By sending your gift of the “Vedanta”, you have laid under lifelong obligation not only myself but the whole group of Shri Ramakrishna’s Sannyasins. They all bow down to you in respect. It is not for my own sake alone that I asked of you the copy of Pânini’s grammar; a good deal of study, in fact, is given to Sanskrit scriptures in this Math. The Vedas may well be said to have fallen quite out of vogue in Bengal. Many here in this Math are conversant with Sanskrit, and they have a mind to master the Samhitâ portions of the Vedas. They are of opinion that what has to be done must be done to a finish. So, believing that a full measure of proficiency in the Vedic language is impossible without first mastering Panini’s grammar, which is the best available for the purpose, a copy of the latter was felt to be a necessity. The grammatical work Mugdhabodha, which we studied in our boyhood, is superior in many respects to Laghukaumudi. You are yourself, however, a deeply learned man and, therefore, the best judge we can have in this matter. So if you consider the Ashtâdhyâyi (Panini’s) to be the most suitable in our case, you will lay us under a debt of lifelong gratitude by sending the same (provided you feel it convenient and feel so inclined). This Math is not wanting in men of perseverance, talent, and penetrative intellect. I may hope that by the grace of our Master, they will acquire in a short time Panini’s system and then succeed in restoring the Vedas to Bengal. I beg to send you two photographs of my revered Master and two parts of some of his teachings

as given in his homely style compiled, and published by a certain gentleman — hoping you will give us the pleasure of your acceptance. My health is now much improved, and I expect the blessings of meeting you within two or three months. . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 4

### IV Sir

IV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to God!

**BARANAGORE,**

4th Feb., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

For some reason I had been feeling today agitated and cramped in my mind, when your letter of invitation to the heavenly city of Varanasi reached me. I accept it as the call of Vishveshvara. (The Lord of the Universe, or Shiva, as installed in the leading temple of Varanasi or Kashi.) I am going now on a pilgrimage to the place of my Master's nativity, and after a sojourn of a few days there, I shall present myself to you. He must be made of stone whose mind does not melt at the sigh of Kashi and its Lord! I feel now much improved in health. My regards to Jnanananda. I am coming as soon as I can. It all depends ultimately on Vishveshvara's will . . . More when we meet.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 5

V M—

V

AUNTPUR,\*

7th February, 1889.

DEAR M—,

Thanks a hundred thousand times, Master! You have hit Ramakrishna in the right point.

Few, alas, few understand him!

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. My heart leaps with joy — and it is a wonder that I do not go mad when I find anybody thoroughly launched into the midst of the doctrine which is to shower peace on earth hereafter.

- A village in the Hooghly District, the birth-place of Swami Premananda. The

letter was written to Master Mahashaya.

## Chapter 6

### VI Sir

VI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Shri Durgâ be my Refuge!

**BARANAGORE,**

26th June, 1889.

DEAR SIR,

For sundry reasons I have been unable to write to you for long, for which please excuse me. I have now obtained news of Gangadhar. He met one of my brother disciples, and both are now staying in the Uttarakhanda (the sacred Himalayas). Four of us from here are in the Himalayas now, and with Gangadhar they are five. One brother-disciple named Shivananda came across Gangadhar at Srinagara on the way to holy Kedarnath, and Gangadhar has sent two letters here. During his first year in the Himalayas, he could not secure permission to enter Tibet, but he got it the next year. The Lamas love him much, and he had picked up the Tibetan language. He says the Lamas form ninety per cent of the population, but they mostly practice Tāntrika forms of worship. The country is intensely cold — eatables there are scarcely any — only dried meat; and Gangadhar had to travel and live on that food. My health is passable, but the state of mind is terrible!

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 7

## VII Sir

### VII

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to God!

BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA,

4th July, 1889.

DEAR SIR,

It pleased me highly to know all the news in your letter yesterday. You have asked me to request Gangadhar to write to you, but I see no chance thereof, for though they are sending us letters, they do not stop anywhere for more than two or three days and therefore do not receive any of ours.

Some relative of my former life<sup>[1]</sup> has purchased a bungalow at Simultala (near Baidyanath). The place being credited with a healthy climate, I stayed there for some time. But the summer heat growing excessive, I had an attack of acute diarrhoea, and I have just fled away from the place.

Words fail to describe how strong is the desire in my mind to go to Varanasi and have my soul blessed by meeting you and sojourning with you in good converse, but everything rests on His will! I wonder what linking of heart existed between us, sir, from some previous incarnation that, receiving as I do the love and affection of not a few men of wealth and position in this city of Calcutta, I am apt to feel so much bored by their society, while only through one day's interview my heart felt charmed enough to accept you as a near relative and friend in spiritual life! One reason is that you are a favoured servant of God. Another perhaps is:

तच्चेतसा स्मरतन्निनमबोधपूर्वं भावस्थरिनि  
जननान्तरसौहृदानि ।<sup>[2]</sup>

I am indebted to you for the advice which comes from you as the outcome of your experience and spiritual practice. It is very true, and I have also found it so very often, that one has to suffer at times for holding in one's brain novel views of all sorts.

But with me it is a different malady this time. I have not lost faith in a benign Providence—nor am I going ever

to lose it—my faith in the scriptures is unshaken. But by the will of God, the last six or seven years of my life have been full of constant struggles with hindrances and obstacles of all sorts. I have been vouchsafed the ideal Shâstra; I have seen the ideal man; and yet fail myself to get on with anything to the end—this is my profound misery.

And particularly, I see no chance of success while remaining near Calcutta. In Calcutta live my mother and two brothers. I am the eldest; the second is preparing for the First Arts Examination, and the third is young.

They were quite well off before, but since my father's death, it is going very hard with them—they even have to go fasting at times! To crown all, some relatives, taking advantage of their helplessness, drove them away from the ancestral residence. Though a part of it is recovered through suing at the High Court, destitution is now upon them—a matter of course in litigation.

Living near Calcutta I have to witness their adversity, and the quality of Rajas prevailing, my egotism sometimes develops into the form of a desire that rises to plunge me into action; in such moments, a fierce fighting ensues in my mind, and so I wrote that the state of my mind was terrible. Now their lawsuit has come to an end. So bless me that after a stay here in Calcutta for a few days more to settle matters, I may bid adieu to this place for ever.

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतष्ठिं समुद्रमापः प्रवशिनन्ति  
यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रवशिनन्ति सर्वे स शान्तमिप्नोति न  
कामकामी ॥<sup>[3]</sup>

Bless me that my heart may wax strong with supreme strength Divine, and that all forms of Mâyâ may drop off from me for aye: "We have taken up the Cross, Thou hast laid it upon us and grant us strength that we bear it unto death. Amen!"—*Imitation of Christ*.

I am now staying in Calcutta. My address is: c/o Balaram Babu, 57 Ramkanta Bose's Street, Baghbazār, Calcutta.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda.

[1] The life he has renounced

- [2] Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam*, Act V: "It must be the memories, unwittingly recalled, of affinities firmly established in previous incarnations through depths of heart."
- [3] The Gîtâ, II.70: "Not he that lusteth after objects of desire but he alone obtaineth peace in whom desires lose themselves like river-water flowing into the ocean but leaving it unaffected and unmodified in spite of constant accession."

# Chapter 8

## VIII Sir

### VIII<sup>[1]</sup>

(Translated from Bengali)  
*All Glory to God!*

BARANAGORE, CALCUTTA,

7th Aug., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

It is more than a week since I received your letter, but having had another attack of fever, I could not send a reply all this time, for which please excuse me. For an interval of a month and a half I kept well, but I have suffered again for the last ten days; now I am doing well.

I have certain questions to put, and you, sir, have a wide knowledge of Sanskrit; so please favour me with answers to the following:

1. Does any narrative occur about Satyakâma, son of Jabâlâ, and about Jânashruti, anywhere else in the Vedas excepting the Upanishads?<sup>[2]</sup>
2. In most cases where Shankaracharya quotes Smriti in his commentary on the *Vedânta-Sutras*, he cites the authority of the Mahâbhârata. But seeing that we find clear proofs about caste being based on qualification both in the Bhishmaparva of the Mahabharata and in the stories there of the Ajagara and of Umâ and Maheshvara, has he made any mention in his writings of this fact?
3. The doctrine of caste in the *Purusha-Sukta* of the Vedas does not make it hereditary—so what are those instances in the Vedas where caste has been made a matter of hereditary transmission?
4. The Achârya could not adduce any proof from the Vedas to the effect that the Shudra should not study the Vedas. He only quotes "यज्ञेऽनवक्लृप्तः"<sup>[3]</sup> (Tai. Samhita, VII. i. 1. 6) to maintain that when he is not entitled to perform Yajnas, he has neither any right to study the Upanishads and the like. But the same Acharya contends with reference to "अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा"<sup>[4]</sup> (*Vedânta-Sutras*, I. i. 1) that the word अथ (Ath) here does not mean "subsequent to the study of the Vedas", because it is contrary to proof that the study of the Upanishad is not permissible without the previous study of the Vedic

Mantras and *Brâhmanas* and because there is no intrinsic sequence between the Vedic Karma-kânda and Vedic Janâna-kânda. It is evident, therefore, that one may attain to the knowledge of Brahman without having studied the ceremonial parts of the Vedas. So if there is no sequence between the sacrificial practices and Jnana, why does the Acharya contradict his own statement when it is a case of the Shudras, by inserting the clause "by force of the same logic"? Why should the Shudra not study the Upanishad?

I am mailing you, sir, a book named *Imitation of Christ* written by a Christian Sannyasin. It is a wonderful book. One is astonished to find that such renunciation, Vairâgya, and Dâsya-Bhakti have existed even among the Christians. Probably you may have read this book before; if not, it will give me the greatest pleasure if you will kindly read it.

Yours etc.,  
Vivekananda.

[1] Letters i-iv, vi-xiv, xvi-xxii, xxiv-xxvi, xxix, xxxi-xxxiii and cxxiv are translated from Bengali letters written to Pramadas Mitra of Varanasi, an orthodox Hindu, for whose profound erudition and piety Swamiji had the highest regard. These letters are most interesting being written (except the last) at a time when, after his Master's passing away, Swamiji was leading a wandering monk's life. In the early days he used to sign his name as Narendranath, though his now famous name, Vivekananda, is printed in all these pages for easy comprehension.

[2] Shankarâchârya in his commentary on the *Vedânta-Sutras*, I. iii. 34-37, interprets the aphorisms to prove that Upanishadic wisdom was imparted to Janashruti and Satyakama, only because they were not Shudras, as borne out by actual texts. But as these texts are doubtful even after Shankaracharya's explanation, Swamiji wants to be referred to other similar Vedic texts.

[3] "The Shudra is not conceived of as a performer of Yajna or Vedic sacrifices."

[4] "Now then commences hence the inquiry about Brahman."

# Chapter 9

## IX Sir

IX<sup>[1]</sup>

(Translated from Bengali)

BARANAGORE,

17th Aug., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

You have expressed embarrassment in your last favour for being addressed reverentially. But the blame attaches not to me but to your own excellent qualities. I wrote in one letter before that from the way I feel attracted by your lofty virtues, it seems we had some affinity from previous births. I make no distinction as to householder or Sannyasin in this, that for all time my head shall bend low in reverence wherever I see greatness, broadness of heart, and holiness—Shântih! Shântih! Shântih! My prayer is that among the many people embracing Sannyâsa nowadays, greedy of honour, posing renunciation for the sake of a living, and fallen off from the ideal on both sides, may one in a lakh at least become high-souled like you! To you my Brahmin fellow-disciples who have heard of your noble virtues tender their best prostrations.

About one amongst my several questions to which you sent your replies, my wrong idea is corrected. For this I shall remain indebted to you for ever. Another of these questions was: Whether Acharya Shankara gives any conclusion regarding caste based on Gunas as mentioned in Purânâs like the Mahabharata. If he does, where is it to be found? I have no doubt that according to the ancient view in this country, caste was hereditary, and it cannot also be doubted that sometimes the Shudras used to be oppressed more than the helots among the Spartans and the negroes among the Americans! As for myself, I have no partiality for any party in this caste question, because I know it is a social law and is based on diversity of Guna and Karma. It also means grave harm if one bent on going beyond Guna and Karma cherishes in mind any caste distinctions. In these matters, I have got some settled ideas through the grace of my Guru but, if I come to know of your views, I may just confirm some points or rectify others in them. One doesn't have honey dripping unless one pokes at the hive—so I shall put you some more questions;

and looking upon me as ignorant and as a boy, please give proper replies without taking any offence.

1. Is the Mukti, which the *Vedanta-Sutras* speaks of, one and the same with the Nirvana of the Avadhuta-Gitâ and other texts?

2. What is really meant by Nirvana if, according to the aphorism, “Without the function of creating etc.”<sup>[2]</sup> (*ibid.*, IV. iv. 7), none can attain to the fullest Godhead?

3. Chaitanya-deva is said to have told Sârvaabhauma at Puri, “I understand the Sutras (aphorisms) of Vyasa, they are dualistic; but the commentator makes them, monistic, which I don't understand.” Is this true? Tradition says, Chaitanya-deva had a dispute with Prakashananda Sarasvati on the point, and Chaitanya-deva won. One commentary by Chaitanya-deva was rumoured to have been existing in Prakashananda's Math.

4. In the Tantra, Acharya Shankara has been called a crypto-Buddhist; views expressed in *Prajnâparamitâ*, the Buddhist Mâhâyana book, perfectly tally with the Vedantic views propounded by the Acharya. The author of *Panchadashi* also says, “What we call Brahman is the same truth as the Shunya of the Buddhist.” What does all this mean?

5. Why has no foundation for the authority of the Vedas been adduced in the *Vedanta-Satras*? First, it has been said that the Vedas are the authority for the existence of God, and then it has been argued that the authority for the Vedas is the text: “It is the breath of God.” Now, is this statement not vitiated by what in Western logic is called an argument in a circle?

6. The Vedanta requires of us faith, for conclusiveness cannot be reached by mere argumentation. Then why, has the slightest flaw, detected in the position of the schools of Sâmkhya and Nyâya, been overwhelmed with a fusillade of dialectics? In whom, moreover, are we to put our faith? Everybody seems to be mad over establishing his own view; if, according to Vyasa, even the great Muni Kapila, “the greatest among perfected souls”,<sup>[3]</sup> is himself deeply involved in error, then who would say that Vyasa may not be so involved in a greater measure? Did Kapila fail to understand the Vedas?

7. According to the Nyaya, “Shabda or Veda (the cri-

terion of truth), is the word of those who have realised the highest"; so the Rishis as such are omniscient. Then how are they proved, according to the *Surya-siddhânta*, to be ignorant of such simple astronomical truths? How can we accept their intelligence as the refuge to ferry us across the ocean of transmigratory existence, seeing that they speak of the earth as triangular, of the serpent Vâsuki as the support of the earth and so on?

8. If in His acts of creation God is dependent on good and evil Karmas, then what does it avail us to worship Him? There is a fine song of Nareshchandra, where occurs the following: "If what lies in one's destiny is to happen anyhow, O Mother, then what good all this invoking by the holy name of Durgâ?"

9. True, it is improper to hold many texts on the same subject to be contradicted by one or two. But why then are the long-continued customs of Madhuparka<sup>[4]</sup> and the like repealed by one or two such texts as, "The horse sacrifice, the cow sacrifice, Sannyasa, meat-offerings in Shrâddha", etc.? If the Vedas are eternal, then what are the meaning and justification of such specifications as "this rule of Dharma is for the age of Dvâpara," "this for the age of Kali", and so forth?

10. The same God who gives out the Vedas becomes Buddha again to annul them; which of these dispensations is to be obeyed? Which of these remains authoritative, the earlier or the later one?

11. The Tantra says, in the Kali-Yuga the Veda-Mantras are futile. So which behest of God, the Shiva, is to be followed?

12. Vyasa makes out in the *Vedanta-Sutras* that it is wrong to worship the tetrad of divine manifestation, Vâsudeva, Sankarshana, etc., and again that very Vyasa expatiates on the great merits of that worship in the Bhâgavata! Is this Vyasa a madman?

I have many doubts besides these, and, hoping to have them dispelled from my mind through your kindness, I shall lay them before you in future. Such questions cannot be all set forth except in a personal interview; neither can as much satisfaction be obtained as one expects to. So I have a mind to lay before you all these facts when presenting myself to you, which I expect will be very soon, by the grace of the Guru.

I have heard it said that without inner progress in the practice of religion, no true conclusion can be reached concerning these matters, simply by means of reasoning; but satisfaction, at least to some extent, seems to be necessary at the outset.

Yours etc.,  
Vivekananda.

[1] Letters i-iv, vi-xiv, xvi-xxii, xxiv-xxvi, xxix, xxxi-xxxiii and cxxiv are translated from Bengali letters written to Pramadas Mitra of Varanasi, an orthodox Hindu, for whose profound erudition and piety Swamiji had the high-

est regard. These letters are most interesting being written (except the last) at a time when, after his Master's passing away, Swamiji was leading a wandering monk's life. In the early days he used to sign his name as Narendranath, though his now famous name, Vivekananda, is printed in all these pages for easy comprehension.

- [2] जगद्व्यापारवर्जं प्रकरणादसंनहित्वाच्च—"Having regard to the context which ascribes the threefold function relating to the universe only to God, and because the fact of their conscious mental distinction comes between that function and their liberated state, we have to conclude that the state of final liberation or Mukti in the case of men is devoid of the capacity to create, preserve, and dissolve the universe." So if this capacity is reserved only for God, what is meant, Swamiji asks, by saying that in Nirvana the human merges completely into the Divine? We must remember that many of the questions here reflect the intellectual stages through which Swamiji was reaching out in those days towards that plenitude of Vedantic wisdom which was his in future years. We also find a glimpse of those processes through which his intellect was growing towards a fuller understanding of our ancient scriptures and customs.
- [3] Kapila is so spoken of in Shvetâshvatara Upanishad, V.2 In his commentary of *Vedanta-Sutras*, II. i. 1, Shankara doubts the identity of the Vedic Kapila with the Sankhyan Kapila.
- [4] Madhuparka was a Vedic ceremony, usually in honour of guest, in which a respectful offering was to be made consisting, among other dainties, of beef. The text which Swamiji partially quotes forbids such food. The full text means that in the Kali-Yuga the following five customs are to be forsaken: The horse sacrifice, cow-killing ceremonies, meat-offerings in Shraddha, Sannyasa, and maintaining the line of progeny through the husband's younger brother in case of failure through the husband.

## Chapter 10

### X Sir

X[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA,**

2nd Sept., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

Some days ago I received your two kind letters. I am very much pleased to find in you a wonderful harmony of Jnana and Bhakti. Your advice to me to give up arguing and disputing is very true indeed, and that is really the goal of life for the individual — “Sundered are the knots of the heart, torn off are all his doubts, and the seeds of his Karma wear off, when the sight of the Transcendent One is gained.” (Mundakonapanishad, II. ii. 8.) But then, as my Master used to say, when a pitcher is being filled (by immersion), it gurgles, but when full, it is noiseless; know my condition to be the same. Within two or three weeks perhaps, I shall be able to meet you — may God fulfil that wish!

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 11

## XI Sir

XI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**BAGHBAZAR,**

3rd Dec., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

I have not heard from you for a long time, I hope you are doing well in body and mind. Two of my brother disciples are shortly leaving for Varanasi. One is Rakhhal by name, the other is Subodh. The first-named was beloved of my Master and used to stay much with him. Please recommend them to some Satra (house of alms.) during their stay in the city, if you find it convenient. You will hear from them all my news.

With my best regards and greetings.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Gangadhar is now proceeding to Kailas. The Tibetans wanted to slash him up on the way, taking him to be a spy of the foreigners. Eventually some Lamas kindly set him free. We obtain this news from a Tibet-going trader. Gangadhar's blood won't cool down before seeing Lhasa. The gain is that his physical endurance has grown immensely — one night he passed uncovered on a bed of snow, and that without much hardship.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 12

### XII Sir

XII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**BARANAGORE, CALCUTTA,**

13th Dec., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

I have all particulars from your letter; and from Rakhal's which followed, I came to know of your meeting. I have received the pamphlet written by you. A kind of scientific Advaitism has been spreading in Europe ever since the theory of the conservation of energy was discovered, but all that is Parinâmvâda, evolution by real modification. It is good you have shown the difference between this and Shankara's Vivartavâda (progressive manifestation by unreal superimposition). I can't appreciate your citing Spencer's parody on the German transcendentalists; he himself is fed much on their doles. It is doubtful whether your opponent Gough understands his Hegel sufficiently. Anyway, your rejoinder is very pointed and thrashing.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 13

## XIII Sir

XIII<sup>[1]</sup>

*(Translated from Bengali)*

BAIDYANATH,  
26th Dec., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

After a long attempt, I think, I am now in a position to present myself before you. In a day or two I take myself to your feet at holy Kashi.

I have been putting up here for some days with a gentleman of Calcutta, but my mind is much longing for Varanasi. My idea is to remain there for some time, and to watch how Vishvanâtha and Annapurnâ<sup>[2]</sup> deal it out to my lot. And my resolve is something like “either to lay down my life or realise my ideal”<sup>[3]</sup>— so help me the Lord of Kashi.

Yours etc.,  
VIVEKANANDA.

[1] Letters i - iv, vi - xiv, xvi - xxii, xxiv - xxvi, xxix, xxxi - xxxiii and cxxiv are translated from Bengali letters written to Pramadas Mitra of Varanasi, an orthodox Hindu, for whose profound erudition and piety Swamiji had the highest regard. These letters are most interesting being written (except the last) at a time when, after his Master's passing away, Swamiji was leading a wandering monk's life. In the early days he used to sign his name as Narendranath, though his now famous name, Vivekananda, is printed in all these pages for easy comprehension.

[2] Shiva and His Divine Spouse as installed in Varanasi.

[3] "शरीरं वा पातयामि मन्त्रं वा साधयामि ।"

# Chapter 14

## XIV Sir

XIV<sup>[1]</sup>

(Translated from Bengali)

ALLAHABAD,

30th Dec., 1889.

DEAR SIR,

I wrote in a letter to you that I was to go to Varanasi in a day or two, but who can nullify the decree of Providence? News reached me that a brother-disciple, Yogen by name, had been attacked with smallpox after arriving here from a pilgrimage to Chitrakuta, Omkarnath, etc., and so I came to this place to nurse him. He has now completely recovered. Some Bengali gentlemen here are of a greatly pious and loving disposition. They are very lovingly taking care of me, and their importunate desire is that I should stay here during the month of Mâgha (Jan.-Feb.) keeping the Kalpa vow.<sup>[2]</sup> But my mind is very keenly harping on the name of Varanasi and is quite agog to see you. Yes, I am going to try my best to slip away and avoid their importunities in a day or two and betake myself to the holy realm of the Lord of Varanasi. If one of my monastic brother-disciples, Achyutananda Sarasvati by name, calls on you to enquire of me, please tell him I am soon coming to Varanasi. He is indeed a very good man and learned. I was obliged to leave him behind at Bankipore. Are Rakhal and Subodh still there in Varanasi? Please inquire and inform me whether the Kumbha fair this year is going to be held at Hardwar or not.

Many a man of wisdom, of piety, many a Sâdhu (holy man) and Pundit have I met in so many places, and I have been very much favoured by them, but "भन्निरुचिर्हिलोकाः— Men are of varying tastes" — *Raghuvamsham*. I know not what sort of soul-affinity there is between us, for nowhere else does it seem so pleasing and agreeable as with you. Let me see how the Lord of Kashi disposes.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda.

My address is:

C/o Govinda Chandra Basu, Chauk, Allahabad.

- [1] Letters i - iv, vi - xiv, xvi - xxii, xxiv - xxvi, xxix, xxxi - xxxiii and cxxiv are translated from Bengali letters written to Pramadas Mitra of Varanasi, an orthodox Hindu, for whose profound erudition and piety Swamiji had the highest regard. These letters are most interesting being written (except the last) at a time when, after his Master's passing away, Swamiji was leading a wandering monk's life. In the early days he used to sign his name as Narendranath, though his now famous name, Vivekananda, is printed in all these pages for easy comprehension.
- [2] Special ablutions and worship regularly performed in that holy confluence—a very solemn and sacred practice.

# Chapter 15

## XV Sir

XV\*

*Salutation to Shri Ramakrishna!*

ALLAHABAD,

5th January, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR, (Sj. Balaram Bose)

I am very sorry to hear of your illness from your kind note. The gist of the letter I wrote to you about your change to Baidyanath was that it would be impossible for a man of weak and extremely delicate physique like you to live in that place unless you spent a good deal of money. If change be really advisable for you, and if you have deferred it so long simply to select a cheaper place and that sort of thing, it is certainly a matter of regret. . . . Baidyanath is excellent so far as the air is concerned, but the water is not good, it upsets the stomach. I used to suffer from acidity every day. I have already written you a letter; have you got it, or finding it a bearing letter, have you left it to its fate? In my opinion, if you *have* to go away for a change, the sooner the better. But, pardon me, you have a tendency to expect that everything should fit in exactly with your requirements, but unfortunately, such a state of things is very rare in this world. "आत्मानं सततं रक्षेत्—One must save oneself under any circumstances." "Lord have mercy", is all right, but He helps him who helps himself. If you simply try to save your purse, will the Lord arrange the change for you by drawing on His ancestral capital? If you think you have so much reliance on the Lord, don't call in the doctor, please. . . . If that does not suit you, you should go to Varanasi. I would have already left this place, but the local gentlemen would not give me leave to depart! . . . But let me repeat once more, if change is actually decided upon, please do not hesitate out of miserliness. That would be suicide. And not even God can save a suicide. Please convey my compliments to Tulasi Babu and the rest.

With best regards,

Yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda.

# Chapter 16

## XVI Sir

XVI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**C/O BABU SATISH CHANDRA MUKHERJI,**

**GORABAZAR, GHAZIPUR,**

21st Jan., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I reached Ghazipur three days ago. Here I am putting up in the house of Babu Satish Chandra Mukherji, a friend of my early age. The place is very pleasant. Close by flows the Ganga, but bathing there is troublesome, for there is no regular path, and it is hard work wading through sands. Babu Ishan Chandra Mukherji, my friend's father, that noble-hearted man of whom I spoke to you, is here. Today he is leaving for Varanasi whence he will proceed to Calcutta. I again had a great mind to go over to Kashi, but the object of my coming here, namely, an interview with the Bâbâji (Pavhâri Bâbâ, the great saint.), has not yet been realised, and hence the delay of a few days becomes necessary. Everything here appears good. The people are all gentlemen, but very much Westernised; and it is a pity I am so thoroughly against every affectation of the Western idea. Only my friend very little affects such ideals. What a frippery civilisation is it indeed that the foreigners have brought over here! What a materialistic illusion have they created! May Vishvanâtha save these weak-hearted! After seeing Babaji, I shall send you a detailed account.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Alas for the irony of our fate, that in this land of Bhagavân Shuka's birth, renunciation is looked down upon as madness and sin!

## Chapter 17

### XVII Sir

XVII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

31st Jan., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

It is so very difficult to meet the Babaji. He does not step out of his home; and, when willing to speak at all, he just comes near the door to speak from inside. I have come away with having just a view of his garden-house with chimneys tapering above and encircled by high walls — no means of admittance within! People say there are cave-like rooms within where he dwells; and he only knows what he does there, for nobody has had a peep. I had to come away one day sorely used up with waiting and waiting, but shall take my chance again. On Sunday, I leave for holy Varanasi — only the Babus here won't let me off; otherwise all my fancy to see the Babaji has flattened down. I am prepared to be off today, but anyhow, I am leaving on Sunday. What of your plan of going to Hrishikesh?

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The redeeming feature is that the place seems healthy.

# Chapter 18

## XVIII Sir

XVIII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

4th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

Received your kind note, and through supreme good fortune, I have obtained an interview with Babaji. A great sage indeed! — It is all very wonderful, and in this atheistic age, a towering representation of marvellous power born of Bhakti and Yoga! I have sought refuge in his grace; and he has given me hope — a thing very few may be fortunate enough to obtain. It is Babaji's wish that I stay on for some days here, and he would do me some good. So following this saint's bidding I shall remain here for some time. No doubt, this will give you also much pleasure. I don't mention them in a letter, but the facts are very strange indeed — to be disclosed when we meet. Unless one is face to face with the life of such men, faith in the scriptures does not grow in all its real integrity.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 19

## XIX Sir

XIX[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

7th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I feel very happy to hear from you just now. Apparently in his features, the Babaji is a Vaishnava the embodiment, so to speak, of Yoga, Bhakti, and humility. His dwelling has walls on all sides with a few doors in them. Inside these walls, there is one long underground burrow wherein he lays himself up in Samâdhi. He talks to others only when he comes out of the hole. Nobody knows what he eats, and so they call him Pavhâri (One living on air.) Bâbâ. Once he did not come out of the hole for five years, and people thought he had given up the body. But now again he is out. But this time he does not show himself to people and talks from behind the door. Such sweetness in speech I have never come across! He does not give a direct reply to questions but says, "What does this servant know?" But then fire comes out as the talking goes on. On my pressing him very much he said, "Favour me highly by staying here some days." But he never speaks in this way; so from this I understood he meant to reassure me and whenever I am importunate, he asks me to stay on. So I wait in hope. He is a learned man no doubt but nothing in the line betrays itself. He performs scriptural ceremonials, for from the full-moon day to the last day of the month, sacrificial oblations go on. So it is sure, he is not retiring into the hole during this period. How can I ask his permission, (Evidently for a proposed visit to the saint by the correspondent, Pramadas Mitra of Varanasi.) for he never gives a direct reply; he goes on multiplying such expressions as "this servant", "my fortune", and so on. If you yourself have a mind, then come sharp on receipt of this note. Or after his passing away, the keenest regret will be left in your mind. In two days you may return after an interview — I mean a talk with him ab intra. My friend Satish Babu will receive you most warmly. So, do come up directly you receive this; I shall meanwhile let Babaji know of you.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Even though one can't have his company, no trouble taken for the sake of such a great soul can ever go unrewarded.

## Chapter 20

### XX Sir

XX[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

13th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I am in anxiety to hear of your illness. I am also having some sort of a pain in the loins which, being aggravated of late, gives much trouble. For two days I could not go out to meet Babaji, and so a man came from him to inquire about me. For this reason, I go today. I shall convey your countless compliments. "Fire comes out" that is, a wonderful devotion to Guru and resignation are revealed; and such amazing endurance and humility I have never seen. Whatever good things I may come by, sure, you have your share in them.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 21

## XXI Sir

XXI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

14th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

In my note of yesterday I perhaps forgot to ask you to return brother Sharat's letter. Please send it. I have heard from brother Gangadhar. He is now in Rambag Samadhi, Srinagar, Kashmir. I am greatly suffering from lumbago.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Rakhai and Subodh have come to Vrindaban after visiting Omkar, Girnar, Abu, Bombay, and Dwarka.

## Chapter 22

### XXII Sir

XXII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to the Lord!

**GHAZIPUR,**

19th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I wrote a letter to brother Gangadhar asking him to stop his wandering and settle down somewhere and to send me an account of the various Sadhus he had come across in Tibet and their ways and customs. I enclose the reply that came from him. Brother Kali is having repeated attacks of fever at Hrishikesh. I have sent him a wire from this place. So if from the reply I find I am wanted by him, I shall be obliged to start direct for Hrishikesh from this place, otherwise I am coming to you in a day or two. Well, you may smile, sir, to see me weaving all this web of Mâyâ — and that is no doubt the fact. But then there is the chain of iron, and there is the chain of gold. Much good comes of the latter; and it drops off by itself when all the good is reaped. The sons of my Master are indeed the great objects of my service, and here alone I feel I have some duty left for me. Perhaps I shall send brother Kali down to Allahabad or somewhere else, as convenient. At your feet are laid a hundred and one faults of mine — “I am as thy son, so guide me who have taken refuge in thee.” (An adaptation from the Gitâ, II. 7.)

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 23

### XXIII Akhandananda

#### XXIII

*Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!*

GHAZIPUR,

February, 1890.

BELOVED AKHANDANANDA,

Very glad to receive your letter. What you have written about Tibet is very promising, and I shall try to go there once. In Sanskrit Tibet is called the Uttarakuruvarsha, and is not a land of Mlechchhas. Being the highest table-land in the world, it is extremely cold, but by degrees one may become accustomed to it. About the manners and customs of the Tibetans you have written nothing. If they are so hospitable, why did they not allow you to go on? Please write everything in detail, in a long letter. I am sorry to learn that you will not be able to come, for I had a great longing to see you. It seems that I love you more than all others. However, I shall try to get rid of this Maya too.

The Tāntrika rites among the Tibetans that you have spoken of arose in India itself, during the decline of Buddhism. It is my belief that the Tantras, in vogue amongst us, were the creation of the Buddhists themselves. Those Tāntrika rites are even more dreadful than our doctrine of Vāmāchāra; for in them adultery got a free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralised through immorality that they were driven away by Kumārila Bhatta. As some Sannyasins speak of Shankara, or the Bāuls of Shri Chaitanya, that he was in secret an epicure, a drunkard, and one addicted to all sorts of abominable practices—so the modern Tāntrika Buddhists speak of the Lord Buddha as a dire Vāmāchāri and give an obscene interpretation to the many beautiful precepts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, such as the *Tattvagāthā* and the like. The result of all this has been that the Buddhists are divided into two sects nowadays; the Burmese and the Sinhalese have generally set the Tantras at naught, have likewise banished the Hindu gods and goddesses, and at the same time have thrown overboard the Amitābha Buddha held in regard among the Northern School of Buddhists. The long and the short of it is that the Amitābha Buddha and the other gods whom the Northern School

worship are not mentioned in books like the *Prajñāpāramitā*, but a lot of gods and goddesses are recommended for worship. And the Southern people have wilfully transgressed the Shāstras and eschewed the gods and goddesses. The phase of Buddhism which declares “Everything for others”, and which you find spread throughout Tibet, has greatly struck modern Europe. Concerning that phase, however, I have a good deal to say—which it is impossible to do in this letter. What Buddha did was to break wide open the gates of that very religion which was confined in the Upanishads to a particular caste. What special greatness does his theory of Nirvana confer on him? His greatness lies in his unrivalled sympathy. The high orders of Samadhi etc., that lend gravity to his religion are, almost all there in the Vedas; what are absent there are his intellect and heart, which have never since been paralleled throughout the history of the world.

The Vedic doctrine of Karma is the same as in Judaism and all other religions, that is to say, the purification of the mind through sacrifices and such other external means—and Buddha was the first man who stood against it. But the inner essence of the ideas remained as of old—look at that doctrine of mental exercises which he preached, and that mandate of his to believe in the Suttas instead of the Vedas. Caste also remained as of old (caste was not wholly obsolete at the time of Buddha), but it was now determined by personal qualifications; and those that were not believers in his religion were declared as heretics, all in the old style. “Heretic” was a very ancient word with the Buddhists, but then they never had recourse to the sword (good souls!) and had great toleration. Argument blew up the Vedas. But what is the proof of your religion? Well, put faith in it!—the same procedure as in all religions. It was however an imperative necessity of the times; and that was the reason of his having incarnated himself. His doctrine is like that of Kapila. But that of Shankara, how far more grand and rational! Buddha and Kapila are always saying the world is full of grief and nothing but that—flee from it—ay, for your life, do! Is happiness altogether absent here? It is a statement of the nature of what the Brahmos say—the world is full of happiness! There is grief, forsooth, but what can be done? Perchance some will suggest that grief itself will appear as happiness when you become used to it by constant suffering. Shankara does not take this line of ar-

gument. He says: This world *is* and *is not*—*manifold* yet one; *I shall unravel its mystery—I shall know whether grief be there*, or anything else; I do not flee from it as from a bugbear. I will know all about it as to the infinite pain that attends its search, well, I am embracing it in its fullest measure. Am I a beast that you frighten me with happiness and misery, decay and death, which are but the outcome of the senses? I will know about it—will give up my life for it. There is nothing to know about in this world—therefore, if there be anything beyond this relative existence—what the Lord Buddha has designated as *Prajñâpâra*—the transcendental—if such there be, I want that alone. Whether happiness attends it or grief, I do not care. What a lofty idea! How grand! The religion of Buddha has reared itself on the Upanishads, and upon that also the philosophy of Shankara. Only, Shankara had not the slightest bit of Buddha's wonderful heart, dry intellect merely! For fear of the Tantras, for fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil, he amputated the very arm itself!<sup>[1]</sup> One has to write a big volume if one has to write about them at all—but I have neither the learning nor the leisure for it.

The Lord Buddha is my Ishta—my God. He preached no theory about Godhead—he was himself God, I fully believe it. But no one has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God Himself has the power to make Himself limited. The translation of the *Gandâra-Sutta* that you have made from the *Suttanipâta*, is excellent. In that book there is another *Sutta*—the *Dhaniya-Sutta*—which has got a similar idea. There are many passages in the *Dhammapada* too, with similar ideas. But that is at the last stage when one has got perfectly satisfied with knowledge and realisation, is the same under all circumstances and has gained mastery over his senses—"ज्ज्ञानवज्ज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो वज्रित्तिन्द्रियः" (Gita, VI. 8.). He who has not the least regard for his body as something to be taken care of—it is he who may roam about at pleasure like the mad elephant caring for naught. Whereas a puny creature like myself should practice devotion, sitting at one spot, till he attains realization; and then only should he behave like that; but it is a far-off question—very far indeed.

चन्तिताशून्यमदैन्यभैक्ष्यमशनं पानं सरद्वारषु  
स्वातन्त्र्येण नरिंकुशा स्थतिरिभीरुन्दिरा श्मशाने वने ।  
वस्त्रं क्पालनशोषणादरहितं दग्िवास्तु शय्या मही  
संचारो नगिमान्तवीथिषु वदिं क्रीडा परे ब्रह्मर्षि ॥  
वमिानमालम्ब्य शरीरमेतद्  
भुनक्त्यशेषान्वषियानुपस्थितान् ।  
परेच्छया बालवदात्मवेत्ता  
योऽव्यक्तलङ्गोऽननुषक्तबाह्यः ॥  
दगिम्बरो वापि च साम्बरो वा  
त्वगम्बरो वापि चदिम्बरस्थः ।  
उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा  
पशाचवद्वापि चरत्यवन्याम् ॥

(Vivekachudmani, 538-40)

—To a knower of Brahman food comes of itself, without effort—he drinks wherever he gets it. He roams at pleasure everywhere—he is fearless, sleeps sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a crematorium and, treads the Path which the Vedas have taken but whose end they have not seen. His body is like the sky; and he is guided, like a child, by others' wishes; he is sometimes naked, sometimes in gorgeous clothes, and at times has only Jnana as his clothing; he behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a madman, and at other times again like a ghoul, indifferent to cleanliness.

I pray to the holy feet of our Guru that you may have that state, and you may wander like the rhinoceros.

Yours etc.,  
Vivekananda.

- [1] In his anxiety to defend the purity of the Vedic religion against the excesses of Tantrikism, which as capturing the rank and file of his countrymen, Shankara neglected the problem of the latter, stigmatised as Shudras by the Vedists. This is perhaps the meaning of Swamiji. It seems he could never forgive Shankara for applying in his commentary on the Brahma-Sutras the old logic of forbidding Vedic rituals to the Shudras to the more modern question of their right to higher modes of worship (Upâsanâ) and knowledge (Jnâna) of the Jnâna-kânda.

## Chapter 24

### XXIV Sir

XXIV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to the Lord!

**GHAZIPUR,**

25th Feb., 1890.

DEAR SIR,

The lumbago is giving a good deal of trouble, or else I would have already sought to come to you. The mind does not find rest here any longer. It is three days since I came away from Babaji's place, but he inquires of me kindly almost every day. As soon as the lumbago is a little better, I bid good-bye to Babaji. Countless greetings to you.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 25

### XXV Sir

XXV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to the Lord!

**GHAZIPUR,**

3rd March, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

Your kind letter comes to hand just now. You know not, sir, I am a very soft-natured man in spite of the stern Vedantic views I hold. And this proves to be my undoing. At the slightest touch I give myself away; for howsoever I may try to think only of my own good, I slip off in spite of myself to think of other peoples' interests. This time it was with a very stern resolve that I set out to pursue my own good, but I had to run off at the news of the illness of a brother at Allahabad! And now comes this news from Hrishikesh, and my mind has run off with me there. I have wired to Sharat, but no reply yet — a nice place indeed to delay even telegrams so much! The lumbago obstinately refuses to leave me, and the pain is very great. For the last few days I haven't been able to go to see Pavhariji, but out of his kindness he sends every day for my report. But now I see the whole matter is inverted in its bearings! While I myself have come, a beggar, at his door, he turns round and wants to learn of me! This saint perhaps is not yet perfected — too much of rites, vows, observances, and too much of self-concealment. The ocean in its fullness cannot be contained within its shores, I am sure. So it is not good, I have decided not to disturb this Sādhu (holy man) for nothing, and very soon I shall ask leave of him to go. No help, you see; Providence has dealt me my death to make me so tender! Babaji does not let me off, and Gagan Babu (whom probably you know — an upright, pious, and kindhearted man) does not let me off. If the wire in reply requires my leaving this place, I go; if not, I am coming to you at Varanasi in a few days. I am not going to let you off — I must take you to Hrishikesh — no excuse or objections will do. What are you saying about

difficulties there of keeping clean? Lack of water in the hills or lack of room!! Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) and Sannyasins of the Kali-Yuga — you know what they are. Spend money and the owners of temples will fling away the installed god to make room for you; so no anxiety about a resting-place! No trouble to face there, I say; the summer heat has set in there now, I believe, though not that degree of it as you find at Varanasi — so much the better. Always the nights are quite cool there, from which good sleep is almost a certainty.

Why do you get frightened so much? I stand guarantee that you shall return home safe and that you shall have no trouble anywhere. It is my experience that in this British realm no fakir or householder gets into any trouble.

Is it a mere idle fancy of mine that between us there some connection from previous birth? Just see how one letter from you sweeps away all my resolution and, I bend my steps towards Varanasi leaving all matters behind! . . .

I have written again to brother Gangadhar and have asked him this time to return to the Math. If he comes, he will meet you. How is the climate at Varanasi now? By my stay here I have been cured of all other symptoms of malaria, only the pain in the loins makes me frantic; day and night it is aching and chafes me very much. I know not how I shall climb up the hills. I find wonderful endurance in Babaji, and that's why I am begging something of him; but no inkling of the mood to give, only receiving and receiving! So I also fly off.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. To no big person am I going any longer —

“Remain, O mind, within yourself, go not to anybody else's door; whatever you seek, you shall obtain sitting at your ease, only seek for it in the privacy of your heart. There is the supreme Treasure, the philosophers' stone and He can give whatever you ask for; for countless gems, O mind, lie strewn about the portals of His abode. He is the wishing-stone that confers boons at the mere thought.”

Thus says the poet Kamalâkânta.

So now the great conclusion is that Ramakrishna has no peer; nowhere else in this world exists that unprecedented perfection, that wonderful kindness for all that does not stop to justify itself, that intense sympathy for man in bondage. Either he must be the Avatâra as he himself used to say, or else the ever-perfected divine man whom the Vedanta speaks of as the free one who assumes a body for the good of humanity. This is my conviction sure and certain; and the worship of such a divine man has been referred to by Patanjali in the aphorism: "Or the goal may be attained by meditating on a saint." (Patanjali's aphorism has "Ishvara" in place of "saint". Nârada has an aphorism which runs thus : Bhakti (Supreme Love) is attainable chiefly through the grace of a saint, or by a bit of Divine Grace.)

Never during his life did he refuse a single prayer of mine; millions of offences has he forgiven me; such great love even my parents never had for me. There is no poetry, no exaggeration in all this. It is the bare truth and every disciple of his knows it. In times of great danger, great temptation, I wept in extreme agony with the prayer, "O God, do save me," but no response came from anybody; but this wonderful saint, or Avatara, or anything else he may be, came to know of all my affliction through his powers of insight into human hearts and lifted it off — in spite of my desire to the contrary — after getting me brought to his presence. If the soul be deathless, and so, if he still lives, I pray to trim again and again: "O Bhagavan Ramakrishna, thou infinite ocean of mercy and my only refuge, do graciously fulfil the desires of my esteemed friend, who is every inch a great man." May he impart to you all good, he whom alone I have found in this world to be like an ocean of unconditioned mercy! Shântih, Shântih, Shântih.

Please send a prompt reply.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 26

### XXVI Sir

XXVI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to God!

**GHAZIPUR,**

8th March, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

Your note duly reached met and so I too shall be off to Prayag. Please write to inform where you mean to put up while there.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. In case Abhedananda reaches your place in a day or two, I shall be much obliged if you will start him on his way to Calcutta.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 27

# XXVII Akhandananda

### XXVII

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

### GHAZIPUR,

March, 1890.

### BELOVED AKHANDANANDA,

Very glad to receive your letter yesterday. I am at present staying with the wonderful Yogi and devotee of this place, called Pavhariji. He never comes out of his room and holds conversations with people from behind the door. Inside the room there is a pit in which he lives. It is rumoured that he remains in a state of Samadhi for months together. His fortitude is most wonderful. Our Bengal is the land of Bhakti and of Jnana, where Yoga is scarcely so much as talked of even. What little there is, is but the queer breathing exercises of the Hatha-Yoga — which is nothing but a kind of gymnastics. Therefore I am staying with this wonderful Raja-Yogi — and he has given me some hopes, too. There is a beautiful bungalow in a small garden belonging to a gentleman here; I mean to stay there. The garden is quite close to Babaji's cottage. A brother of the Babaji stays there to look after the comforts of the Sadhus, and I shall have my Bhikshâ at his place. Hence, with a view to seeing to the end of this fun, I give up for the present my plan of going to the hills. For the last two months I have had an attack of lumbago in the waist, which also makes it impossible to climb the hills now. Therefore let me wait and see what Babaji will give me.

My motto is to learn whatever good things I may come across anywhere. This leads many friends to think that it will take away from my devotion to the Guru. These ideas I count as those of lunatics and bigots. For all Gurus are one and are fragments and radiations of God, the Universal Guru.

If you come to Ghazipur, you have but to inquire at Satish Babu's or Gagan Babu's at Gorabazar, and you know

my whereabouts. Or, Pavhari Baba is so well-known a person here that everyone will inform you about his Ashrama at the very mention of his name, and you have only to go there and inquire about the Paramahansa, and they will tell you of me. Near Moghul Sarai there is a station named Dildarnagar, where you have to change to a short branch railway and get down at Tarighat, opposite Ghazipur; then you have to cross the Ganga to reach Ghazipur.

For the present, I stay at Ghazipur for some days, and wait and see what the Babaji does. If you come, we shall stay together at the said bungalow for some time, and then start for the hills, or for any other place we may decide upon. Don't, please, write to anyone at Baranagore that I am staying at Ghazipur.

With blessings and best wishes,

Ever yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 28

### XXVIII Akhandananda

#### XXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

#### GHAZIPUR,

March, 1890.

#### BELOVED AKHANDANANDA,

Received another letter of yours just now, and with great difficulty deciphered the scribblings. I have written everything in detail in my last letter. You start immediately on receipt of this. I know the route to Tibet via Nepal that you have spoken of. As they don't allow anyone to enter Tibet easily, so they don't allow anybody to go anywhere in Nepal, except Katmandu, its capital, and one or two places of pilgrimage. But a friend of mine is now a tutor to His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal, and a teacher in his school, from whom I have it that when the Nepal government send their subsidy to China, they send it via Lhasa. A Sadhu contrived in that way to go to Lhasa, China, Manchuria, and even to the holy seat of Târâ Devi in north China. We, too, can visit with dignity and respect Tibet, Lhasa, China, and all, if that friend of mine tries to arrange it. You therefore start immediately for Ghazipur. After a few days' stay here with the Babaji, I shall correspond with my friend, and, everything arranged, I shall certainly go to Tibet via Nepal.

You have to get down at Dildarnagar to come to Ghazipur. It is three or four stations from Moghul Sarai I would have sent you the passage if I could have collected it here; so you get it together and come. Gagan Babu with whom I am putting up, is an exceedingly courteous, noble, and generous-minded man. No sooner did he come to know of Kali's illness than he sent him the passage at Hrishikesh; he has besides spent much on my account. Under the circumstances it would be violating a Sannyasin's duty to tax him for the passage to Kashmir, and I desist from it. You collect the fare and start as

soon as you receive this letter. Let the craze for visiting Amarnath be put back for the present.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 29

### XXIX Sir

XXIX[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

31st March, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I haven't been here for the last few days and am again going away today. I have asked brother Gangadhar to come here; and if he comes, we go over to you together. For some special reasons, I shall continue to stay in secret in a village some distance from this place, and there's no facility for writing any letter from that place, owing to which I could not reply to your letter so long. Brother Gangadhar is very likely to come, otherwise the reply to my note would have reached me. Brother Abhedananda is putting up with Doctor Priya at Varanasi. Another brother of mine had been with me, but has left for Abhedananda's place. The news of his arrival has not yet been received, and, his health being bad, I am rather anxious for his sake. I have behaved very cruelly towards him — that is, I have harassed him much to make him leave my company. There's no help, you see; I am so very weak-hearted, so much overmastered by the distractions of love! Bless me that I may harden. What shall I say to you about the condition of my mind! Oh, it is as if the hell-fire is burning there day and night! Nothing, nothing could I do yet! And this life seems muddled away in vain; I feel quite helpless as to what to do! The Babaji throws out honeyed words and keeps me from leaving. Ah, what shall I say? I am committing hundreds of offenses against you — please excuse them as so many misdoings of a man driven mad with mental agonies. Abhedananda is suffering from dysentery. I shall be very much obliged if you will kindly inquire about his condition and send him down to our Math in case he wants to go there with our brother who has come from here. My Gurubhais must be thinking me very cruel and selfish. Oh, what can I do? Who will see deep down into my mind? Who will know how much I am suffering day and night? Bless me that I may have the most unflinching patience and perseverance.

With countless greetings,

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Abhedananda is staying in Doctor Priya's house at Sonarpura. My lumbago is as before.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 30

### XXX Kali

XXX

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

**GHAZIPUR,**

2nd April, 1890.

MY DEAR KALI (ABHEDANANDA),

Glad to receive your letter as well as Pramada Babu's and Baburam's (Premananda's). I am doing pretty well here. You have expressed a desire to see me. I too have a similar longing, and it is this that makes me afraid of going. Moreover, the Babaji forbids me to do so. I shall try to go on a few days' leave from him. But there is this fear that by so doing I shall be drawn up to the hills by the attraction I have for Hrishikesh, and it will be very difficult to shake it off, specially for one weak-minded, you see, like myself. The attack of lumbago, too, will not leave me on any account — a botheration! But then I am getting used to it. Please convey my countless salutations to Pramada Babu; his is a friendship which greatly benefits both my mind and body. And I am particularly indebted to him. Things will turn up some way, anyhow.

With best wishes,

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 31

### XXXI Sir

XXXI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

2nd April, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

Where shall I get that renunciation you speak of in your advice to me? It is for the sake of that very thing that I am out a tramp through the earth. If ever I get this true renunciation, I shall let you know; and if you get anything of the kind, please remember me as a partner thereof.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 32

### XXXII Sir

XXXII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Victory to Ramakrishna!

**BARANAGORE,**

10th May, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I could not write to you because of various distractions and a relapse of fever. Glad to learn from Abhedananda's letter that you are doing well. Gangadhar (Akhandananda) has probably arrived at Varanasi by this time. King Death happens here to be casting into his jaws these days many of our friends and own people, hence I am very much taken up. Perhaps no letter for me has arrived there from Nepal. I know not how and when Vishvanâtha (the Lord of Kashi) would choose to vouchsafe some rest to me. Directly the hot weather relaxes a little, I am off from this place, but I am still at a loss where to go. Do please pray for me to Vishvanatha that He may grant me strength. You are a devotee, and I beseech you with the Lord's words coming to my mind, "Those who are the devoted ones to My devotees, are indeed considered the best of My devotees."

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 33

### XXXIII Sir

XXXIII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

57, RAMAKANTA BOSE'S STREET,  
BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA,

26th May, 1890.

DEAR SIR,

I write this to you while caught in a vortex of many untoward circumstances and great agitation of mind; with a prayer to Vishvanatha, please think of the propriety and possibility, or otherwise, of all that I set forth below and then oblige me greatly by a reply.

1. I already told you at the outset that I am Ramakrishna's slave, having laid my body at his feet "with Til and Tulasi leaves", I cannot disregard his behest. If it is in failure that that great sage laid down his life after having attained to superhuman heights of Jnana, Bhakti, Love, and powers, and after having practiced for forty years stern renunciation, non-attachment, holiness, and great austerities, then where is there anything for us to count on? So I am obliged to trust his words as the words of one identified with truth.

2. Now his behest to me was that I should devote myself to the service of the order of all-renouncing devotees founded by him, and in this I have to persevere, come what may, being ready to take heaven, hell, salvation, or anything that may happen to me.

3. His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should group themselves together, and I am entrusted with seeing to this. Of course, it matters not if any one of us goes out on visits to this place or that, but these shall be but visits, while his own opinion was that absolute homeless wandering suited him alone who was perfected to the highest point. Before that state, it is proper to settle somewhere to dive down into practice. When all the ideas of body and the like are dissolved

of themselves, a person may then pursue whatever state comes to him. Otherwise, it is baneful for a practicing aspirant to be always wandering.

4. So in pursuance of this his commandment, his group of Sannyasins are now assembled in a dilapidated house at Baranagore, and two of his lay disciples, Babu Suresh Chandra Mitra and Babu Balam Bose, so long provided for their food and house-rent.

5. For various reasons, the body of Bhagavan Ramakrishna had to be consigned to fire. There is no doubt that this act was very blamable. The remains of his ashes are now preserved, and if they be now properly enshrined somewhere on the banks of the Ganga, I presume we shall be able in some measure to expiate the sin lying on our head. These sacred remains, his seat, and his picture are every day worshipped in our Math in proper form; and it is known to you that a brother-disciple of mine, of Brahmin parentage, is occupied day and night with the task. The expenses of the worship used also to be borne by the two great souls mentioned above.

6. What greater regret can there be than this that no memorial could yet be raised in this land of Bengal in the very neighbourhood of the place where he lived his life of Sādhanâ — he by whose birth the race of Bengalees has been sanctified, the land of Bengal has become hallowed, he who came on earth to save the Indians from the spell of the worldly glamour of Western culture and who therefore chose most of his all-renouncing disciples from university men?

7. The two gentlemen mentioned above had a strong desire to have some land purchased on the banks of the Ganga and see the sacred remains enshrined on it, with the disciples living there together; and Suresh Babu had offered a sum of Rs. 1,000 for the purpose, promising to give more, but for some inscrutable purpose of God he left this world yesternight! And the news of Balam Babu's death is already known to you.

8. Now there is no knowing as to where his disciples will

stand with his sacred remains and his seat (and you know well, people here in Bengal are profuse in their professions, but do not stir out an inch in practice). The disciples are Sannyasins and are ready forthwith to depart anywhere their way may lie. But I, their servant, am in an agony of sufferings, and my heart is breaking to think that a small piece of land could not be had in which to install the remains of Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

9. It is impossible with a sum of Rs. 1,000 to secure land and raise a temple near Calcutta. Some such land would at least cost about five to seven thousands.

10. You remain now the only friend and patron of Shri Ramakrishna's disciples. In the NorthWestern Province great indeed is your fame, your position, and your circle of acquaintance. I request you to consider, if you feel like it, the propriety of your getting the affair through by raising subscriptions from well-to-do pious men known to you in your province. If you deem it proper to have some shelter erected on the banks of the Ganga in Bengal for Bhagavan Ramakrishna's sacred remains and for his disciples, I shall with your leave report myself to you, and I have not the slightest qualm to beg from door to door for this noble cause, for the sake of my Lord and his children. Please give this proposal your best thoughts with prayers to Vishvanatha. To my mind, if all these sincere, educated, youthful Sannyasins of good birth fail to dive up to the ideals of Shri Ramakrishna owing to want of an abode and help, then alas for our country!

11. If you ask, "You are a Sannyasin, so why do you trouble over these desires?" — I would then reply, I am Ramakrishna's servant, and I am willing even to steal and rob, if by doing so I can perpetuate his name in the land of his birth and Sādhanâ (spiritual struggle) and help even a little his disciples to practice his great ideals. I know you to be my closest in kinship, and I lay my mind bare to you. I returned to Calcutta for this reason. I had told you this before I left, and now I leave it to you to do what you think best.

12. If you argue that it is better to have the plan carried out in some place like Kashi, my point is, as I have told you, it would be the greatest pity if the memorial shrine could not be raised in the land of his birth and Sadhana! The condition of Bengal is pitiable. The people here cannot even dream what renunciation truly means — luxury and sensuality have been so much eating into the vitals of the race! May God send renunciation and unworldliness into this land! They have here nothing to speak of, while the people of the North-Western Province, specially the rich there as I believe, have great zeal in noble causes like this. Please send me such reply as you think best. Gangadhar has not yet arrived today, and may do so tomorrow. I am so eager to see him again.

Please write to the address given above.

## Chapter 34

### XXXIV Sharat

XXXIV

BAGHBAZAR, CALCUTTA,

July 6, 1890.

DEAR SHARAT (SARADANANDA) and KRIPANANDA,

Your letters have duly reached us. They say Almora is healthiest at this time of the year, yet you are taken ill! I hope it is nothing malarious. . .

I find Gangadhar the same pliant child with his turbulence moderated by his wanderings, and with a greater love for us and for our Lord. He is bold, brave, sincere, and steadfast. The only thing needed is a guiding mind to whom he would instinctively submit with reverence, and a fine man would be the result.

I had no wish to leave Ghazipur this time, and certainly not to come to Calcutta, but Kali's illness made me go to Varanasi, and Balaram's sudden death brought me to Calcutta. So Suresh Babu and Balaram Babu are both gone! G. C. Ghosh is supporting the Math. . . . I intend shortly, as soon as I can get my fare, to go up to Almora and thence to some place in Gharwal on the Ganga where I can settle down for a long meditation. Gangadhar is accompanying me. Indeed it was with this desire and intention that I brought him down from Kashmir.

I don't think you ought to be in any hurry about coming down to Calcutta. You have done with roving; that's good, but you have not yet attempted the one thing you should do, that is, be resolved to sit down and meditate. I don't think Jnana is a thing like rousing a maiden suddenly from sleep by saying, "Get up, dear girl, your marriage ceremony is waiting for you!" as we say. I am strongly of opinion that very few persons in any Yuga (age) attain Jnana, and therefore we should go on striving and striving even unto death. That's my old-fashioned way, you know. About the humbug of modern Sannyasins' Jnana I know too well. Peace be unto you and strength! Daksha, who is staying at Vrindaban with Rakhhal (Brahmananda), has learnt to make gold and has become a *pucca* Jnani, so writes Rakhhal. God bless him, and you may say, amen!

I am in fine health now, and the good I gained by my

stay in Ghazipur will last, I am sure, for some time. I am longing for a flight to the Himalayas. This time I shall not go to Pavhari Baba or any other saint—they divert one from his highest purpose. Straight up!

How do you find the climate at Almora? Neither S—nor you need come down. What is the use of so many living together in one place and doing no good to one's soul? Don't be fools always wandering from place to place; that's all very good, but be heroes.

नरिमानमोहा जतिसङ्गदोषा  
अध्यात्मनत्तिया वनिवृत्तकामाः ।  
द्वन्द्वैर्वमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै-  
र्गच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

—"Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment conquered, ever dwelling in the Self, with desires completely receded, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that Goal Eternal" (Gita, XV. 5).

Who advises you to jump into fire? If you don't find the Himalayas a place for Sadhana, go somewhere else then. So many gushing inquiries simply betray a weak mind. Arise, ye mighty one, and be strong! Work on and on, struggle on and on! Nothing more to write.

Yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda.

## Chapter 35

### XXXV Govinda Sahay

XXXV

AJMER,

14th April, 1891.

DEAR GOVINDA SAHAY,

. . . Try to be pure and unselfish — that is the whole of religion. . . .

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 36

### XXXVI Govinda Sahay

XXXVI

MOUNT ABU,

30th April, 1891.

DEAR GOVINDA SAHAY,

Have you done the Upanayana of that Brahmin boy? Are you studying Sanskrit? How far have you advanced? I think you must have finished the first part. ... Are you diligent in your Shiva Pujâ ? If not, try to be so. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all good things will be added unto you." Follow God and you shall have whatever you desire. ... To the two Commander Sahebs my best regards; they being men of high position were very kind to a poor fakir like me. My children, 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". You are a nice band of young men, you Alwaris, and I hope in no distant future many of you will be ornaments of the society and blessings to the country you are born in.

Yours with blessings,

V.

PS. Don't be ruffled if now and then you get a brush from the world; it will be over in no time, and everything will be all right.

## Chapter 37

# XXXVII Govinda Sahay

XXXVII

MOUNT ABU,

1891.

DEAR GOVINDA SAHAY,

You must go on with your Japa whatever direction the mind takes. Tell Harbux that he is to begin with the Prânâyâma in the following way.

Try hard with your Sanskrit studies.

Yours with love,

V.

## Chapter 38

### XXXVIII Doctor

XXXVIII

**KHETRI,**

27th April, 1893.

DEAR DOCTOR, (Dr. Nanjunda Rao, M.D.)

Your letter has just reached me. I am very much gratified by your love for my unworthy self. So, so sorry to learn that poor Bâlâji has lost his son. "The Lord gave and the Lord bath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." We only know that nothing is lost or can be lost. For us is only submission, calm and perfect. The soldier has no right to complain, nay murmur, if the general orders him into the cannon's mouth. May He comfort Balaji in his grief, and may it draw him closer and closer to the breast of the All-merciful Mother!

As to my taking ship from Madras, I do not think it feasible, as I have already made arrangements from Bombay. Tell Bhattacharya that the Raja (The Maharaja of Khetri, Rajputana.) or my Gurubhâis would be the last men to put any obstacles in my way. As for the Rajaji, his love for me is simply without limit.

May the Giver of all good bless you all here and hereafter, will be the constant prayer of

**SACHCHIDANANDA.**

(Swamiji uses to call himself such in those days.)

## Chapter 39

### XXXIX Mother

XXXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

**BOMBAY,**

24th May, 1893.

DEAR MOTHER, (Shrimati Indumati Mitra)

Very glad to receive your letter and that of dear Haripada. Please do not be sorry that I could not write to you very often. I am always praying to the Lord for your welfare. I cannot go to Belgaum now as arrangements are all ready for my starting for America on the 31st next. The Lord willing, I shall see you on returning from my travels in America and Europe. Always resign yourselves to the Lord Shri Krishna. Always remember that we are but puppets in the Lord's hands. Remain pure always. Please be careful not to become impure even in thought, as also in speech and action; always try to do good to others as far as in you lies. And remember that the paramount duty of a woman is to serve her husband by thought, word, and deed. Please read the Gita every day to the best of your opportunity. Why have you signed yourself as. . . Dâsi (maidservant)? The Vaishya and the Shudra should sign as Dâsa and Dâsi, but the Brahmin and Kshatriya should write Deva and Devi (goddess). Moreover, these distinctions of caste and the like have been the invention of our modern sapient Brahmins. Who is a servant, and to whom? Everyone is a servant of the Lord Hari. Hence a woman should use her patronymic, that is, the surname of her husband. This is the ancient Vedic custom, as for example, such and such Mitra, or the like. It is needless to write much, dear mother; always know that I am constantly praying for your well-being. From America I shall now and then write you letters with descriptions of the wonderful things there. I am now at Bombay, and shall stay here up to the 31st. The private Secretary to the Maharaja of Khetri has come here to see me off.

With blessings,

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 40

# XL Maharaja of Khetri

### XL

*(From a letter written to H. H. the Maharaja of Khetri)*

AMERICA,

1894.

. . . “It is not the building that makes the home, but it is the wife that makes it,”<sup>[1]</sup> says a Sanskrit poet, and how true it is! The roof that affords you shelter from heat and cold and rain is not to be judged by the pillars that support it—the finest Corinthian columns though they be—but by the real spirit-pillar who is the centre, the real support of the home—the woman. Judged by that standard, the American home will not suffer in comparison with any home in the world.

I have heard many stories about the American home: of liberty running into licence, of unwomanly women smashing under their feet all the peace and happiness of home-life in their mad liberty-dance, and much nonsense of that type. And now after a year’s experience of American homes, of American women, how utterly false and erroneous that sort of judgment appears! American women! A hundred lives would not be sufficient to pay my deep debt of gratitude to you! I have not words enough to express my gratitude to you. “The Oriental hyperbole” alone expresses the depth of Oriental gratitude—“If the Indian Ocean were an inkstand, the highest mountain of the Himalaya the pen, the earth the scroll and time itself the writer”<sup>[2]</sup> still it will not express my gratitude to you!

Last year I came to this country in summer, a wandering preacher of a far distant country, without name, fame, wealth, or learning to recommend me—friendless, helpless, almost in a state of destitution and American women befriended me, gave me shelter and food, took me to their homes and treated me as their own son, their own brother. They stood my friends even when their own priests were trying to persuade them to give up the “dangerous heathen”—even when day after day their best friends had told them not to stand by this “unknown foreigner, may be, of dangerous character”. But they are better judges of character and soul—for it is the pure mirror

that catches the reflection.

And how many beautiful homes I have seen, how many mothers whose purity of character, whose unselfish love for their children are beyond expression, how many daughters and pure maidens, “pure as the icicle on Diana’s temple”, and withal with much culture, education, and spirituality in the highest sense! Is America then full of only wingless angels in the shape of women? There is good and bad everywhere, true—but a nation is not to be judged by its weaklings called the wicked, as they are only the weeds which lag behind, but by the good, the noble, and the pure who indicate the national life-current to be flowing clear and vigorous.

Do you judge of an apple tree and the taste of its fruits by the unripe, undeveloped, worm-eaten ones that strew the ground, large even though their number be sometimes? If there is one ripe developed fruit, that one would indicate the powers, the possibility and the purpose of the apple tree and not hundreds that could not grow.

And then the modern American women—I admire their broad and liberal minds. I have seen many liberal and broad-minded men too in this country, some even in the narrowest churches, but here is the difference—there is danger with the men to become broad at the cost of religion, at the cost of spirituality—women broaden out in sympathy to everything that is good everywhere, without dosing a bit of their own religion. They intuitively know that it is a question of positivity and not negativity, a question of addition and not subtraction. They are every day becoming aware of the fact that it is the affirmative and positive side of everything that shall be stored up, and that this very act of accumulating the affirmative and positive, and therefore soul-building forces of nature, is what destroys the negative and destructive elements in the world.

What a wonderful achievement was that World’s Fair at Chicago! And that wonderful Parliament of Religions where voices from every corner of the earth expressed their religious ideas! I was also allowed to present my own ideas through the kindness of Dr. Barrows and Mr. Bonney. Mr. Bonney is such a wonderful man! Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he, no clergyman, a lawyer, presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches—the

sweet, learned, patient Mr. Bonney with all his soul  
speaking through his bright eyes. ...

Yours etc.,  
Vivekananda.

[1] "न गृहं गृहमत्तियाहुरगृहणी गृहमुच्यते ।"

[2] Adapted from the *Shiva-Mahimnah-Stotram*.

# Chapter 41

## XLI Shashi

XLI

(Translated from Bengali)  
Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

C/O GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,

541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO,  
19th March, 1894.

MY DEAR SHASHI (RAMAKRISHNANANDA),

I have not written to you since coming to this country. But Haridas Bhai's<sup>[1]</sup> letter gives me all the news. It is excellent that G. C. Ghosh<sup>[2]</sup> and all of you have treated him with due consideration.

I have no wants in this country, but mendicancy has no vogue here, and I have to labour, that is, lecture in places. It is as cold here as it is hot. The summer is not a bit less hot than in Calcutta. And how to describe the cold in winter! The whole country is covered with snow, three or four feet deep, nay, six or seven feet at places! In the southern parts there is no snow. Snow, however, is a thing of little consideration here. For it snows when the mercury stands at 32° F. In Calcutta it scarcely comes down to 60°, and it rarely approaches zero in England. But here, your mercury sinks to minus 4° or 5°. In Canada, in the north, mercury becomes condensed, when they have to use the alcohol thermometer. When it is too cold, that is, when the mercury stands even below 20°F, it does not snow. I used to think that it must be an exceedingly cold day on which the snow falls. But it is not so, it snows on comparatively warm days. Extreme cold produces a sort of intoxication. No carriages would run; only the sledge, which is without wheels, slides on the ground! Everything is frozen stiff—even an elephant can walk on rivers and canals and lakes. The massive falls of Niagara, of such tremendous velocity, are frozen to marble!! But I am doing nicely. I was a little afraid at first, but necessity makes me travel by rail to the borders of Canada one day, and the next day finds me lecturing in south U.S.A.! The carriages are kept quite warm, like your own room, by means of steam pipes, and all around are masses of snow, spotlessly white. Oh, the beauty of it!

I was mortally afraid that my nose and ears would fall off,

but to this day they are all right. I have to go out, however, dressed in a heap of warm clothing surmounted by a fur-coat, with boots encased in a woollen jacket, and so on. No sooner do you breathe out than the breath freezes among the beard and moustache! Notwithstanding all this, the fun of it is that they won't drink water indoors without putting a lump of ice into it. This is because it is warm indoors. Every room and the staircase are kept warm by steam pipes. They are first and foremost in art and appliances, foremost in enjoyment and luxury, foremost in making money, and foremost in spending it. The daily wages of a coolie are six rupees, as also are those of a servant; you cannot hire a cab for less than three rupees, nor get a cigar for less than four annas. A decent pair of shoes costs twenty-four rupees, and a suit, five hundred rupees. As they earn, so they spend. A lecture fetches from two hundred up to three thousand rupees. I have got up to five hundred.<sup>[3]</sup> Of course now I am in the very heyday of fortune. They like me, and thousands of people come to hear me speak.

As it pleased the Lord, I met here Mr. Mazoomdar. He was very cordial at first, but when the whole Chicago population began to flock to me in overwhelming numbers, then grew the canker in his mind! . . . The priests tried their utmost to snub me. But the Guru (Teacher) is with me, what could anybody do? And the whole American nation loves and respects me, pays my expenses, and reveres me as a Guru. . . . It was not in the power of your priests to do anything against me. Moreover, they are a nation of scholars. Here it would no longer do to say, "We marry our widows", "We do not worship idols", and things of that sort. What they want is philosophy, learning; and empty talk will no more do.

Dharmapala is a fine boy. He has not much of learning but is very gentle. He had a good deal of popularity in this country.

Brother, I have been brought to my senses. . . . ये नधिन्न्तर्ति नरिर्थकं परहति ते के न जानीमहे—We do not know what sort of people they are who for nothing hinder the welfare of others" (Bhartrihari). Brother, we can get rid of everything, but not of that cursed jealousy. . . . That is a national sin with us, speaking ill of others, and burning at heart at the greatness of others. Mine alone is the greatness, none else should rise to it!!

Nowhere in the world are women like those of this country. How pure, independent, self-relying, and kind-hearted! It is the women who are the life and soul of this country. All learning and culture are centred in them. The saying, "या श्रीः स्वयं सृकृतनिं भवनेषु—Who is the Goddess of Fortune Herself in the families of the meritorious" (Chandi)—holds good in this country, while that other, "अलक्ष्मीः पापात्मनां—The Goddess of ill luck in the homes of the sinful" (ibid.)—applies to ours. Just think on this. Great God! I am struck dumb with wonderment at seeing the women of America. "त्वं श्रीस्तवमीश्वरी त्वं हरीः etc. — Thou art the Goddess of Fortune, Thou art the supreme Goddess, Thou art Modesty" (ibid.), "या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता—The Goddess who resides in all beings as Power" (ibid.)—all this holds good here. There are thousands of women here whose minds are as pure and white as the snow of this country. And look at our girls, becoming mothers below their teens!! Good Lord! I now see it all. Brother, "यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः—The gods are pleased where the women are held in esteem"—says the old Manu. We are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women "despicable worms", "gateways to hell", and so forth. Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between heaven and hell!! "याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् ब्यदधात्—He adjudges gifts according to the merits of the case" (Isha, 8). Is the Lord to be hoodwinked by idle talk? The Lord has said, "त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी—Thou art the woman, Thou art the man, Thou art the boy and the girl as well." (Shvetâshvatara Upa.) And we on our part are crying, "दूरमपसर रे चण्डाल—Be off, thou outcast!" "कनैषा नर्मिता नारी मोहनि etc.—Who has made the bewitching woman?" My brother, what experiences I have had in the South, of the upper classes torturing the lower! What Bacchanalian orgies within the temples! Is it a religion that fails to remove the misery of the poor and turn men into gods! Do you think our religion is worth the name? Ours is only Don't touchism, only "Touch me not", "Touch me not." Good heavens! A country, the big leaders of which have for the last two thousand years been only discussing whether to take food with the right hand or the left, whether to take water from the right-hand side or from the left, ... if such a country does not go to ruin, what other will? "कालः सुपतेषु जागर्त्तु कालो हि दुरतकिरमः—Time keeps wide awake when all else sleeps. Time is invincible indeed!" He knows it; who is there to throw dust in His eyes, my friend?

A country where millions of people live on flowers of the Mohuâ plant, and a million or two of Sadhus and a hundred million or so of Brahmins suck the blood out of these poor people, without even the least effort for their amelioration—is that a country or hell? Is that a religion, or the devil's dance? My brother, here is one thing for you to understand fully—I have travelled all over India, and seen this country too—can there be an effect without cause? Can there be punishment without sin?

सर्वशास्त्रपुराणेषु व्यासस्य वचनं ध्रुवम् ।  
परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम् ॥

—"Amidst all the scriptures and Purânas, know this statement of Vyâsa to be true, that doing good to others conduces to merit, and doing harm to them leads to sin."

Isn't it true?

My brother, in view of all this, specially of the poverty and ignorance, I had no sleep. At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan: We are so many Sannyasins wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, "An empty stomach is no good for religion"? That those poor people are leading the life of brutes is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them underfoot.

. . . Suppose some disinterested Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the Chandâla, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes, and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time? All these plans I cannot write out in this short letter. The long and the short of it is—if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and Pâthashâlâs, and they will gain nothing by reading poetry and all that sort of thing. We, as a nation, have lost our individuality, and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and *raise the masses*. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, all have trampled them underfoot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, that is, from the orthodox Hindus. In every country the evils exist not with, but against, religion. Religion therefore is not to blame, but men.

To effect this, the first thing we need is men, and the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru I was sure to get from ten to fifteen men in every town. I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money! . . . Selfishness personified—are they to spend anything? Therefore I have come to America, to earn money myself, and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realisation of this one aim of my life.

As our country is poor in social virtues, so this country is lacking in spirituality. I give them spirituality, and they give me money. I do not know how long I shall take to realise my end. ...These people are not hypocrites, and jealousy is altogether absent in them. I depend on no one in Hindusthan. I shall try to earn the wherewithal myself to the best of my might and carry out my plans, or die in the attempt. "सन्नमित्ति वरं त्यागो वनिाशे नयिते सत्ति—When death is certain, it is best to sacrifice oneself for a good cause."

You may perhaps think what Utopian nonsense all this is! You little know what is in me. If any of you help me in my plans, all right, or Gurudeva will show me the way out. ... We cannot give up jealousy and rally together. That is our national sin!! It is not to be met with in this country, and this is what has made them so great.

Nowhere in the world have I come across such “frogs-in-the-well” as we are. Let anything new come from some foreign country, and America will be the first to accept it. But we?—oh, there are none like us in the world, we men of Aryan blood!! Where that heredity really expresses itself, I do not see. ...Yet they are descendants of the Aryans?

Ever yours,  
Vivekananda.

- [1] Ex-Dewan of Junagarh. Shortly before Swamiji left India for America, he became intimately acquainted with this gentleman, and was introduced by him to many Indian princes.
- [2] Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great actor-dramatist of Bengal, and a staunch devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.
- [3] For some time after the Chicago addresses, Swamiji lectured on behalf of a lecture bureau. He soon gave it up as curtailing his independence, and devoted most of the money thus earned to various charitable works in the U.S.A. and India.

## Chapter 42

### XLII Sir

XLII

CHICAGO,

23rd June, 1894.

DEAR SIR, (Rao Bahadur Narasimhachariar.)

Your kindness to me makes me venture to take a little advantage of it. Mrs. Potter Palmer is the chief lady of the United States. She was the lady president of the World's Fair. She is much interested in raising the women of the world and is at the head of a big organisation for women. She is a particular friend of Lady Dufferin and has been entertained by the Royalties of Europe on account of her wealth and position. She has been very kind to me in this country. Now she is going to make a tour in China, Japan, Siam, and India. Of course she will be entertained by the Governors and other high people in India. But she is particularly anxious to see our society apart from English official aid. I have on many occasions told her about your noble efforts in raising the Indian women, of your wonderful College in Mysore. I think it is our duty to show a little hospitality to such personages from America in return for their kindness to our countrymen who came here. I hope she will find a warm reception at your hands and be helped to see a little of our women as they are. And I assure you she is no missionary, nor Christian even as to that. She wants to work apart from all religions to ameliorate the conditions of women all over the world. This would also be helping me a great deal in this country. May the Lord bless you!

Yours for ever and ever,

Affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 43

### XLIII Sisters

#### XLIII

C/O GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,

541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO, 26th June,  
1894.

DEAR SISTERS, (Misses Mary and H. Hale.)

The great Hindi poet, Tulasidâsa, in his benediction to his translation of the Râmâyana, says, "I bow down to both the wicked and holy; but alas! for me, they are both equally torturers — the wicked begin to torture me as soon as they come in contact with me — the good, alas! take my life away when they leave me." I say amen to this. To me, for whom the only pleasure and love left in the world is to love the holy ones of God, it is a mortal torture to separate myself from them.

But these things must come. Thou Music of my Beloved's flute, lead on, I am following. It is impossible to express my pain, my anguish at being separated from you, noble and sweet and generous and holy ones. Oh! how I wish I had succeeded in becoming a Stoic! Hope you are enjoying the beautiful village scenery. "Where the world is awake, there the man of self-control is sleeping. Where the world sleeps, there he is waking." May even the dust of the world never touch you, for, after all the poets may say, it is only a piece of carrion covered over with garlands. Touch it not — if you can. Come up, young ones of the bird[6]\* of Paradise, before your feet touch the cesspool of corruption, this world, and fly upwards.

"O those that are awake do not go to sleep again."

"Let the world love its many, we have but one Beloved — the Lord. We care not what they say; we are only afraid when they want to paint our Beloved and give Him all sorts of monstrous qualities. Let them do whatever they please — for us He is only the beloved — my love, my love, my love, and nothing more."

"Who cares to know how much power, how much quality He has — even that of doing good! We will say once for all: We love not for the long purse, we never sell our love, we want not, we give."

"You, philosopher, come to tell us of His essences His powers, His attributes — fool! We are here dying for a kiss of His lips."

"Take your nonsense back to your own home and send me a kiss of my Love — can you?"

"Fool! whom art thou bending thy tottering knees before, in awe and fear? I took my necklace and put it round His neck; and, tying a string to it as a collar, I am dragging Him along with me, for fear He may fly away even for a moment that necklace was the collar of love; that string the ecstasy of love. Fool! you know not the secret — the Infinite One comes within my fist under the bondage of love." "Knowest thou not that the Lord of the Universe is the bond slave of love?" "Knowest thou not that the Mover of the Universe used to dance to the music of the ringing bracelets of the shepherdesses of Vrindaban?"

Excuse my mad scribbling, excuse my foolery in trying to express the inexpressible. It is to be felt only.

Ever with blessings, your brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 44

### XLIV Sisters

XLIV

GREENACRE INN,

ELLIOT, MAINE,

31st July, 1894.

DEAR SISTERS,

I have not written you long, and I have not much to write. This is a big inn and farm-house where the Christian Scientists are holding a session. Last spring in New York I was invited by the lady projector of the meeting to come here, and after all I am here. It is a beautiful and cool place, no doubt, and many of my old friends of Chicago are here. Mrs. Mills, Miss Stockham, and several other ladies and gentlemen live in tents which they have pitched on the open ground by the river. They have a lively time and sometimes all of them wear what you call your scientific dress the whole day. They have lectures almost every day. One Mr. Colville from Boston is here; he speaks every day, it is said, under spirit control. The Editor (?) of the Universal Truth has settled herself down here. She is conducting religious services and holding classes to heal all manner of diseases, and very soon I expect them to be giving eyes to the blind, and the like! After all, it is a queer gathering. They do not care much about social laws and are quite free and happy. Mrs. Mills is quite brilliant, and so are many other ladies. ... Another lady from Detroit — very cultured and with beautiful black eyes and long hair is going to take me to an island fifteen miles out at sea. I hope we shall have a nice time. ... I may go over to Annisquam from here, I suppose. This is a beautiful and nice place and the bathing is splendid. Cora Stockham has made a bathing dress for me, and I am having as good a time in the water as a duck this is delicious even for the denizens of mud Ville. I do not find anything more to write. Only I am so busy that I cannot find time enough to write to Mother Church separately. My love and respects to Miss Howe.

There is here Mr. Wood of Boston who is one of the great lights of your sect. But he objects to belong to the

sect of Mrs. Whirlpool. So he calls himself a mental healer of metaphysico-chemico-physico-religioso what not! Yesterday there was a tremendous cyclone which gave a good "treatment" to the tents. The big tent under which they had the lectures had developed so much spirituality, under the "treatment", that it entirely disappeared from mortal gaze, and about two hundred chairs were dancing about the grounds under spiritual ecstasy! Mrs. Figs of Mills company gives a class every morning; and Mrs. Mills is jumping all about the place; they are all in high spirits. I am especially glad for Cora, for they have suffered a good deal last winter and a little hilarity would do her good. You will be astounded with the liberty they enjoy in the camps, but they are very good and pure people there — a little erratic and that is all. I shall be here till Saturday next. ...

... The other night the camp people went to sleep beneath a pine tree under which I sit every morning a la Hindu and talk to them. Of course I went with them, and we had a nice night under the stars, sleeping on the lap of mother earth, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I cannot describe to you that night's glories — after a year of brutal life that I have led, to sleep on the ground, to meditate under the tree in the forest! The inn people are more or less well-to-do, and the camp people are healthy, young, sincere, and holy men and women. I teach them Shivo'ham, Shivo'ham, and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds. And so I am happy and glorified. Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything, hanging by their tent strings to keep them from being blown down, and standing on the majesty of their souls — these brave ones — it would have done your hearts good. I will go a hundred miles to see the like of them. Lord bless them! I hope you are enjoying your nice village life. Never be anxious for a moment. I will be taken care of, and if not, I will know my time has come and shall pass out.

"Sweet One! Many people offer to You many things, I

am poor — but I have the body, mind, and soul. I give them over to You. Deign to accept, Lord of the Universe, and refuse them not.” — So have I given over my life and soul once for all. One thing — they are a dry sort of people here — and as to that very few in the whole world are there that are not. They do not understand “Mádhava”, the Sweet One. They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table turning, witchcraft, etc., etc. Nowhere have I heard so much about “love, life, and liberty” as in this country, but nowhere is it less understood. Here God is either a terror or a healing power, vibration, and so forth. Lord bless their souls! And these parrots talk day and night of love and love and love!

Now, good dreams, good thoughts for you. You are good and noble. Instead of materialising the spirit, that is, dragging the spiritual to the material plane as these folks do, convert the matter into spirit, catch a glimpse at least, every day, of that world of infinite beauty and peace and purity — the spiritual, and try to live in it day and night. Seek not, touch not with your toes even, anything that is uncanny. Let your souls ascend day and night like an “unbroken string” unto the feet of the Beloved whose throne is in your own hearts and let the rest take care of themselves, that is the body and everything else. Life is evanescent, a fleeting dream; youth and beauty fade. Say day and night, “Thou art my father, my mother, my husband, my love, my lord, my God — I want nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Thou in me, I in Thee, I am Thee. Thou art me.” Wealth goes, beauty vanishes, life flies, powers fly — but the Lord abideth for ever, love abideth for ever. If here is glory in keeping the machine in good trim, it is more glorious to withhold the soul from suffering with the body — that is the only demonstration of your being “not matter”, by letting the matter alone.

Stick to God! Who cares what comes to the body or to anything else! Through the terrors of evil, say — my God, my love! Through the pangs of death, say — my God, my love! Through all the evils under the sun, say — my God, my love! Thou art here, I see Thee. Thou art with me, I feel Thee. I am Thine, take me. I am not of the world’s but Thine, leave not then me. Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great chance. What, seekest thou the pleasures of the world? — He is the fountain of all bliss. Seek for the highest, aim at that highest, and you shall reach the highest.

Yours with all blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 45

# XLV Brothers

XLV

*(Translated from Bengali)*

*Salutations to Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna!*

1894.

DEAR BROTHERS, (Brother-disciples of Swamiji.)

Before this I wrote to you a letter which for want of time was very incomplete. Rakhal (Brahmananda) and Hari (Turiyananda) wrote in a letter from Lucknow that Hindu newspapers were praising me, and that they were very glad that twenty thousand people had partaken of food at Shri Ramakrishna's anniversary. I could do much more work but for the Brahmos and missionaries who have been opposing me unceasingly, and the Hindus of India too did nothing for me. I mean, if the Hindus of Calcutta or Madras had held a meeting and passed a resolution recognising me as their representative, and thanking the American people for receiving me with kindness, things would have progressed appreciably. But it is over a year, and nothing done. Of course I never relied on the Bengalis, but the Madrasis couldn't do anything either. ...

There is no hope for our nation. Not one original idea crosses anyone's brains, all fighting over the same old, threadbare rug—that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was such and such—and cock-and-bull stories—stories having neither head nor tail. My God! Won't you do something to show that you are in any way removed from the common run of men!—Only indulging in madness! ... Today you have your bell, tomorrow you add a horn, and follow suit with a chowry the day after; or you introduce a cot today, and tomorrow you have its legs silver-mounted, and people help themselves to a rice-porridge, and you spin out two thousand cock-and-bull stories—in short, nothing but external ceremonials. This is called in English imbecility. Those into whose heads nothing but that sort of silliness enters are called imbecile. Those whose heads have a tendency to be troubled day and night over such questions as whether the bell should ring on the right or on the left, whether the sandal-paste mark should be put on the head or anywhere else, whether the light should be waved twice or four times—simply deserve the name of wretches, and it is owing to that sort of notion that we are the outcasts of Fortune, kicked and spurned at, while

the people of the West are masters of the whole world. ... There is an ocean of difference between idleness and renunciation.

If you want any good to come, just throw your ceremonials overboard and worship the Living God, the Man-God—every being that wears a human form—God in His universal as well as individual aspect. The universal aspect of God means this world, and worshipping it means serving it—this indeed is work, not indulging in ceremonials. Neither is it work to cogitate as to whether the rice-plate should be placed in front of the God for ten minutes or for half an hour—that is called lunacy. Millions of rupees have been spent only that the templedoors at Varanasi or Vrindaban may play at opening and shutting all day long! Now the Lord is having His toilet, now He is taking His meals, now He is busy on something else we know not what. ... And all this, while the Living God is dying for want of food, for want of education! The banias of Bombay are erecting hospitals for bugs—while they would do nothing for men even if they die! You have not the brain to understand this simple thing—that it is a plague with our country, and lunatic asylums are rife all over. ... Let some of you spread like fire, and preach this worship of the universal aspect of the Godhead—a thing that was never undertaken before in our country. No quarrelling with people, we must be friends with all. ...

Spread ideas—go from village to village, from door to door—then only there will be real work. Otherwise, lying complacently on the bed and ringing the bell now and then is a sort of disease, pure and simple. ... Be independent, learn to form independent judgments.—That such and such a chapter of such and such a Tantra has prescribed a standard length for the handle of a bell,—what matters it to me? Through the Lord's will, out of your lips shall come millions of Vedas and Tantras and Purânas. ... If now you can show this in practice, if you can make three or four hundred thousand disciples in India within a year, then only I may have some hope. ...

By the bye, you know the boy who had his head shaven and went with Brother Tarak from Bombay to Rameswaram? He calls himself a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa! Let Brother Tarak initiate him. ... He had never even met Shri Ramakrishna in his life,

and yet a disciple!—What impudence! Without an unbroken chain of discipleship—Guruparampara—nothing can be done. Is it a child's play? To have no connection whatsoever and call oneself a disciple! The idiot! If that boy refuses to go on in the right way, turn him out. Nothing, I say, can be done without the chain of discipleship, that is, the power that is transmitted from the Guru to the disciple, and from him to his disciple, and so on. Here he comes and proclaims himself a disciple of Ramakrishna—is it tomfoolery? Jagamohan told me of somebody calling himself a brother-disciple of mine. I have now a suspicion that it is that boy. To pose as a brother-disciple! He feels humiliated to call himself a disciple, I dare say, and would fain turn a Guru straightway! Turn him out if he does not follow the established procedure.

Talking of the restlessness of Tulasi (Nirmalananda) and Subodh (Subodhananda) it all means that they have got no work to do. ... Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. There is no Mukti on earth to call my own. Whenever you think of yourself, you are bound to feel restless. What business have you to do with peace, my boy? You have renounced everything. Come! Now is the turn for you to banish the desire for peace, and that for Mukti too! Don't worry in the least; heaven or hell, or Bhakti or Mukti—don't care for anything, but go, my boy, and spread the name of the Lord from door to door! It is only by doing good to others that one attains to one's own good, and it is by leading others to Bhakti and Mukti that one attains them oneself. Take that up, forget-your own self for it, be mad over the idea. As Shri Ramakrishna used to love you, as I love you, come, love the world like that. Bring all together. Where is Gunanidhi? You must have him with you. My infinite love to him. Where is Gupta (Sadananda)? Let him join if he likes. Call him in my name. Remember these few points:

1. We are Sannyasins, who have given up *everything*—Bhakti, and Mukti, and enjoyment, and all.
2. To do the highest good to the world, everyone down to the lowest—this is our vow. Welcome Mukti or hell, whichever comes of it.
3. Ramakrishna Paramahansa came for the good of the world. Call him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please. Accept him each in your own light.
4. He who will bow before him will be converted into purest gold that very moment. Go with this message from door to door, if you can, my boy, and all your disquietude will be at an end. Never fear—where's the room for fear?—Caring for nothing whatsoever is a part of your life. You have so long spread his name and your character all around, well and good. Now spread them in an organised way. The Lord is with you. Take heart!

Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, you go on spreading love, love that knows no bounds. Put Gupta too to this task. But remember one needs

weapons to overcome others. "सन्नमित्ति वरं त्यागो वनिशे वनिशे नयिते सति—When death is so certain, it is better to die for a good cause."

Yours affly.,  
Vivekananda.

PS. Remember my previous letter—we want both men and women. There is no distinction of sex in the soul. It won't do merely to call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, you must manifest power. Where are Gour-Mâ, Yogin-Mâ, and Golap-Mâ? Tell them to spread these ideas. We want thousands of men and thousands of women who will spread like wild fire from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the North Pole to the South Pole—all over the world. It is no use indulging in child's play—neither is there time for it. Let those who have come for child's play be off now, while there is time, or they will surely come to grief. We want an organisation. Off with laziness. Spread! Spread! Run like fire to all places. Do not depend upon me. Whether I live or die, go on spreading, yourselves.

## Chapter 46

# XLVI Mother Sara

XLVI

HOTEL BELLE VUE,

BEACON STREET, BOSTON

19th September, '94.

DEAR MOTHER SARA, (Mrs. Ole Bull)

I did not forget you at all. You do not think I will be ever as ungrateful as that! You did not give me your address, still I have been getting news about you from Landsberg through Miss Phillips. Perhaps you have seen the memorial and address sent to me from Madras. I sent some to be sent to you at Landsberg's.

A Hindu son never lends to his mother, but the mother has every right over the son and so the son in the mother. I am very much offended at your offering to repay me the nasty few dollars. I can never repay my debts to you.

I am at present lecturing in several places in Boston. What I want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my thoughts. I have had enough of speaking; now I want to write. I think I will have to go to New York for it. Mrs. Guernsey was so kind to me, and she is ever willing to help me. I think I will go to her and sit down and write my book.

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Kindly write me whether the Guernseys have returned to town or are still in Fishkill. — V.

## Chapter 47

# XLVII Brother disciples

XLVII

The daughter is daughter all her life.”

(Translated from Bengali)

NEW YORK

25th September, 1894.

MY DEAR—, (Meant for his brother-disciples.)

Glad to receive some letters from you. It gives me great pleasure to learn that Shashi and others are making a stir. We must create a stir, nothing short of this will do. You will be throwing the whole world into convulsion. Victory to the Guru! You know, "श्रेयांसि बहुवर्धिनानि—Great undertakings are always fraught with many obstacles." It is these obstacles which knock and shape great characters. ... Is it in the power of missionaries and people of that sort to withstand this shock? ... Should a fool succeed where scholars have failed? It is no go, my boy, set your mind at ease about that. In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party? "सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था वतितो देवयानः—Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth lies Devayâna, the path of gods" (Mundaka, III. i. 6). Everything will come about by degrees.

Here in summer they go to the seaside: I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yachting. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them every day to the sea, and return home, to eat and drink and dance—while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell you something of the Hales to whose address you direct my letters. He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces, and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living. The daughters live at home. In this country, relationship is through the girls. The son marries and no longer belongs to the family, but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-law's house. They say,

“Son is son till he gets a wife;

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here. In the first place, one must have a husband after one's heart. Secondly, he must be a moneyed man. ... They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes, that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a kindergarten school; but the daughters do not earn. Many girls of this country earn their living. Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaires' sons earn their living; but they marry and have separate establishments of their own. The daughters call me brother; and I address their mother as mother. All my things are at their place; and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the boys go in search of a living while quite young; and the girls are educated in the universities. So you will find that in a meeting there will be ninety-nine per cent of girls. The boys are nowhere in comparison with them.

There are a good many spiritualists in this country. The medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes behind a screen; and out of this come ghosts of all sizes and all colours. I have witnessed some cases; but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect me.

Next comes Christian Science. They form the most influential party, nowadays, figuring everywhere. They are spreading by leaps and bounds, and causing heart-burn to the orthodox. They are Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by proclaiming “So'ham So'ham”—“I am He! I am He!”—through strength of mind. They all admire me highly.

Nowadays the orthodox section of this country are crying for help. “Devil worship”<sup>[1]</sup> is but a thing of the past. They are mortally afraid of me and exclaim, “What a pest? Thousands of men and women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!” Well, the torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through the

grace of the Guru will not be put out. In course of time the bigots will have their breath knocked out of them. ...

The Theosophists have not much power. But they, too, are dead set against the orthodox section.

The Christian Science is exactly like our Kartâbhajâ<sup>[2]</sup> sect: Say, "I have no disease", and you are whole; and say, "I am He"—"So'ham"—and you are quits—be at large. This is a thoroughly materialistic country. The people of this Christian land will recognise religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and open up avenues to money; and they understand little of anything else. But there are honourable exceptions. ...

People here have found a new type of man in me. Even the orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that of Brahmacharya—purity, my boy?

I am now busy writing a reply to the Madras Address, which was published in all the newspapers here and created a sensation. If it be cheap, I shall send it in print, but if dear, I shall send a type-written copy. To you also I shall send a copy; have it published in the Indian Mirror. The unmarried girls of this country are very good and have a good deal of self-respect. . . . These (the people) are come of Virochana's<sup>[3]</sup> race. To them ministering to the body is a great thing: they would trim and polish and give their whole attention to that. A thousand instruments for paring nails, ten thousand for hair-cutting, and who can count the varieties of dress and toilet and perfumery? . . . They are good-natured, kind, and truthful. All is right with them, but that enjoyment is their God. It is a country where money flows like a river, with beauty as its ripple and learning its waves, and which rolls in luxury.

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।  
क्षपिर् हिमानुषे लोके सद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥

—"Longing for success in action, in this world, (men) worship the deities. For success is quickly attained through action in this world of Man." (Gita, IV.12)

Here you have a wonderful manifestation of grit and power—what strength, what practicality, and what manhood! Horses huge as elephants are drawing carriages that are as big as houses. You may take this as a specimen of the gigantic proportions in other things also. Here is a manifestation of tremendous energy. ... They look with veneration upon women, who play a most prominent part in their lives. Here this form of worship has attained its perfection—that is the long and the short of it. But to come to the point. Well, I am almost at my wit's end to see the women of this country! They take me to the shops and everywhere, Is if I were a child. They do all sorts of work—I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do. They are like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Fortune) in beauty, and like Sarasvati (the Goddess of Learning) in

virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything. Great God! Are we to be counted among men? If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas, Incarnations of the Divine Mother, in our country before I die, I shall die in peace. Then only will your countrymen become worthy of their name. . . .

I am really struck with wonder to see the women here. How gracious the Divine Mother is on them! Most wonderful women, these! They are about to corner the men, who have been nearly worsted in the competition. It is all through Thy grace, O Mother! ... I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any sex-distinction in the Atman (Self)? Out with the differentiation between man and woman—all is Atman! Give up the identification with the body, and stand up! Say, "Asti, Asti"—"Everything is!"—cherish positive thoughts. By dwelling too much upon "Nâsti, Nâsti"—"It is not! It is not!" (negativism), the whole country is going to ruin! "So'ham, So'ham, Shivo'ham"—"I am He! I am He! I am Shiva!" What a botheration! In every soul is infinite strength; and should you turn yourselves into cats and dogs by harbouring negative thoughts? Who dares to preach negativism? Whom do you call weak and powerless? "Shivo'ham, Shivo'ham"—"I am Shiva! I am Shiva!" I feel as if a thunderbolt strikes me on the head when I hear people dwell on negative thoughts. That sort of self-depreciating attitude is another name for disease—do you call that humility? It is vanity in disguise! "न लङ्घिम् धर्मकारणं, समता सर्वभूतेषु एतन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम्—The external badge does not confer spirituality. It is same-sightedness to all beings which is the test of a liberated soul." "अस्ति अस्ति" (It is, It is), "सोऽहं सोऽहं", "चदानन्दरूपः शविोऽहं शविोऽहं"—"I am He!", "I am Shiva, of the essence of Knowledge and Bliss!" "न रिग्च्छति जगज्जालात् पञ्जिरादवि केशरी—He frees himself from the meshes of this world as a lion from its cage!" "नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः— This Atman is not accessible to the weak". . . . Hurl yourselves on the world like an avalanche—let the world crack in twain under your weight! Hara! Hara! Mahâdeva! उद्धरेदात्मानात्मानम्—One must save the self by one's own self"—by personal prowess.

. . . Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of other's 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. "एवमस्तु, एवमस्तु, शविोऽहं शविोऽहं— Be it so! Be it so! I am Shiva! I am Shiva!"

It is welcome news that Madras is in a stir.

Were you not going to start a paper or something of that sort, what about that? We must mix with all, and alienate none. All the powers of good against all the powers of evil—this is what we want. Do not insist upon every-

body's believing in our Guru. . . . You shall have to edit a magazine, half Bengali and half Hindi—and if possible, another in English . . . . It won't do to be roaming aimlessly. Wherever you go, you must start a permanent preaching centre. Then only will people begin to change. I am writing a book. As soon as it is finished, I run for home! . . . Always remember that Shri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind his flame—it will spread of itself. Directly you insist on everybody's accepting your Guru, you will be creating a sect, and everything will fall to the ground—so beware! Have a kind word for all—it spoils work to show temper. 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." Beware! No saying "nay", no negative thoughts! Say, "Yea, Yea," "So'ham, So'ham"—"I am He! I am He!"

कनिनाम रोदषिसखे त्वयिसर्वशक्तारामन्त्रयस्व  
भगवन् भगदं स्वरूपम् ।  
त्रैलोक्यमेतदखलिं तव पादमूले आत्मैव हि प्रभवते न  
जडः कदाचित् ॥

—"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter."

To work, with undaunted energy! What fear! Who is powerful enough to thwart you!"कुरुमस्तारकचरुवणं  
त्रिभुवनमुत्पाटयामो बलात्, कभिो न वजिनास्यस्मान्  
रामकृष्णदासा वयम्— We shall crush the stars to atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We are the servants of Shri Ramakrishna." Fear?

Whom to fear, forsooth?

कृषीणाः स्म दीनाः सकरुणा जल्पन्ती मूढा जना  
नास्तत्क्रियन्त्वदिन्तु अहह देहात्मवादातुराः ।  
प्राताः स्म वीरा गतभया अभयं प्रतर्षितां यदा  
अस्तत्क्रियन्त्वदिन्तु चिन्मः रामकृष्णदासा वयम् ॥  
पीत्वा पीत्वा परमममृतं वीतसंसाररागाः  
हत्वा हत्वा सकलकलहप्रापणिं स्वार्थसद्धिम् ।  
ध्यात्वा ध्यात्वा गुरुवरपदं सर्वकल्याणरूपम्  
नत्वा नत्वा सकलभुवनं पातुमामन्त्रयामः ॥  
प्राप्तं यद्वै त्वनादनिधिनं वेदोदधिं मथत्वा  
दत्तं यस्य प्रकरणे हरहिरवरहमाददिवैरुबलम् ।  
पूर्णं यत्तु प्राणसारैर्भौमनारायणानां  
रामकृष्णस्तनुं धत्ते तत्पूर्णपात्रमदिं भोः ॥

—"It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies, that piteously cry, 'We are weak, we are low.' All this is atheism. Now that we have attained the state beyond fear, we shall have no more fear and become

heroes. This indeed is theism which we, the servants of Shri Ramakrishna, will choose.

"Giving up the attachment for the world and drinking constantly the supreme nectar of immortality, for ever discarding that self-seeking spirit which is the mother of all dissension, and ever meditating on the blessed feet of our Guru which are the embodiment of all well-being, with repeated salutations we invite the whole world to participate in drinking the nectar.

"That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahmâ, Vishnu, Shiva, and the other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the life-essence of the Avatars—Gods Incarnate on earth—Shri Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure!"

We must work among the English educated young men. "त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः— Through renunciation alone some (rare ones) attained immortality." Renunciation!—Renunciation!—you must preach this above everything else. There will be no spiritual strength unless one renounces the world....

Why are Baburam and Yogen suffering so much? It is owing to their negative, their self-abasing spirit. Tell them to brush aside their illness by mental strength, and in an hour it will disappear! I the Atman smitten with disease! Off with it! Tell them to meditate for an hour at a stretch, "I am the Atman, how can I be affected by disease!"—and everything will vanish. Think all of you that you are the infinitely powerful Atman, and see what strength comes out. . . . Self-depreciation! What is it for? I am the child of the Infinite, the all-powerful Divine Mother. What means disease, or fear, or want to me? Stamp out the negative spirit as if it were a pestilence, and it will conduce to your welfare in every way. No negative, all positive, affirmative. I am, God is, everything is in me. I will manifest health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want. Well, these foreign people could grasp my teachings, and you are suffering from illness owing to your negative spirit! Who says you are ill—what is disease to you? Brush it aside!वीर्यमसि वीर्य मयि धेहि, बलमसि बलं मयि धेहि, ओजोऽसि ओजो मयि धेहि, सहोऽसि सही मयि धेहि—Thou art Energy, impart energy unto me. Thou art Strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art Spirituality, impart spirituality unto me. Thou art Fortitude, impart fortitude unto me!" The ceremony of steadying the seat (Āsana-pratishthâ) that you perform every day when you sit down to worship the Lord—"आत्मानमच्छदिरं भावयेत्—One must think of oneself as strong and invulnerable," and so forth—what does it all mean? Say, "Everything is in me, and I can manifest it at will." Repeat to yourself that such and such are Atman, that they are infinite, and how can they have any disease? Repeat this an hour or so, on a few successive days, and all disease and trouble will vanish into nought.

Yours ever, Vivekananda.

- [1] The Orthodox Christians brand Hindus and people of other religions with this name and look upon them with scorn.
- [2] An offshoot of degenerate Vaishnavism, calling God "Kartâ" or Master, and noted for efficiency in faith-cure.
- [3] The King of the Asuras and son of the saintly Prahâlâda. He went to Brahma for Self-knowledge, but misunderstanding His teaching turned a materialist. (Chhândogya Upa., VIII).

## Chapter 48

### XLVIII Mrs. Bull

XLVIII

BOSTON,

26th Sept., 1894.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have received both of your kind notes. I will have to go back to Melrose on Saturday and remain there till Monday. On Tuesday I will come over to your place. But I have forgotten the exact location. If you kindly write me that, I cannot express my gratitude for your kindness. For that is exactly what I wanted, a quiet place to write. Of course, much less space will suffice me than what you have kindly proposed to put at my disposal, I can bundle myself up anywhere and feel quite comfortable.

Yours very sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 49

# IL Swami Ramakrishnananda

IL

(Translated from Bengali)

BALTIMORE, U.S.A.,

22nd October, 1894.

DEAR—, (Swami Ramakrishnananda.)

Glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. I received today a letter of Akshay Kumar Ghosh from London, which also gives me some information. . . .

Now you have come to know your own powers. Strike the iron while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field with tremendous energy; to work, in the fullness of strength! As to the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work — let this be your motto. I cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here — I am careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will find its way, there it will fructify — आद्य वा अब्दशतान्ते वा—be it today, or in a hundred years.” You must work in sympathy with all, then only it will lead to quick results . . . .

Our object is to do good to the world, and not the trumpeting of our own names. Why doesn't Niranjan (Niranjanananda) learn Pali in Ceylon, and study Buddhist books? I cannot make out what good will come of aimless rambling. Those that have come under *his* protection, have virtue, wealth, desires, and freedom lying at their feet. माभैः माभैः— Courage! Everything will come about by degrees. From all of you I want this that you must discard for ever self-aggrandisement, faction-mongering, and jealousy. You must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth. If you can achieve this, the world will be at your feet. . . .

Try to give less of material food in the anniversary celebrations, and give some food for the brain instead. . . .

.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

## Chapter 50

### L Mrs. Bull

L

C/O MRS. E. TOTTEN.

1708, 1ST STREET, WASHINGTON, D.C.

27th Oct., 1894.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the introduction to Mr. Frederic Douglas. You need not be sorry on account of the ill-treatment I received at the hands of a low class hotel-keeper at Baltimore. It was the fault of the Vrooman brothers. Why should they take me to a low hotel?

And then the American women, as everywhere, came to my rescue, and I had a very good time.

In Washington I am the guest of Mrs. E. Totten who is an influential lady here and a metaphysician. She is moreover the niece of one of my Chicago friends. So everything is going on all right. I also saw Mrs. Colville and Miss Young here.

With my eternal love and gratitude for you,

I remain, Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 51

# LI Dear and Beloved

LI

U.S.A.,

30th November, 1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED, (Dr. Nanjunda Rao.)

Your beautiful letter just came to hand. I am so glad that you have come to know Shri Ramakrishna. I am very glad at the strength of your Vairâgya. It is the one primary necessity in reaching God. I had always great hopes for Madras, and still I have the firm belief that from Madras will come the spiritual wave that will deluge India. I can only say Godspeed to your good intentions; but here, my son, are the difficulties. In the first place, no man ought to take a hasty step. In the second place, you must have some respect for the feelings of your mother and wife. True, you may say that we, the disciples of Ramakrishna, had not always shown great deference to the opinions of our parents. I know, and know for sure, that great things are done only by great sacrifices. I know for certain that India requires the sacrifice of her highest and best, and I sincerely hope that it will be your good fortune to be one of them.

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. My advice to you is to live the life of a Brahmacharin, i.e. giving up all sexual enjoyments for a certain time live in the house of your father; this is the "Kutichaka" stage. Try to bring your wife to consent to your great sacrifice for the good of the world. And if you have burning faith and all-conquering love and almighty purity, I do not doubt that you will shortly succeed. Give yourself body and soul to the work of spreading the teachings of Shri Ramakrishna, for work (Karma) is the first stage. Study Sanskrit diligently as well as practice devotion. For you are to be a great teacher of mankind, and my Guru Maharaja used to say, "A penknife is sufficient to commit suicide with, but to kill others one requires guns and swords." And in the fullness of time it will be given

unto you when to go forth out of the world and preach His sacred name. Your determination is holy and good. Godspeed to you, but do not take any hasty step. First purify yourself by work and devotion India has suffered long, the Religion Eternal has suffered long. But the Lord is merciful. Once more He has come to help His children, once more the opportunity is given to rise to fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna. His life and his teachings are to be spread far and wide, are to be made to penetrate every pore of Hindu society. Who will do it? Who are to take up the flag of Ramakrishna and march for the salvation of the world? Who are to stem the tide of degeneration at the sacrifice of name and fame, wealth and enjoyment — nay of every hope of this or other worlds? A few young men have jumped in the breach, have sacrificed themselves. They are a few; we want a few thousands of such as they, and they will come. I am glad that our Lord has put it in your mind to be one of them Glory unto him on whom falls the Lord's choice. Your determination is good, your hopes are high, your aim is the noblest in the world — to bring millions sunk in darkness to the light of the Lord.

But, my son, here are the drawbacks. Nothing shall be done in haste. Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success and, above all, love. All time is yours, there is no indecent haste. Everything will come right if you are pure and sincere. We want hundreds like you bursting upon society and bringing new life and vigour of the Spirit wherever they go. Godspeed to you.

Yours with all blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 52

# LII Govinda Sahay

LII

C/O G. W. HALE, ESQ.,

CHICAGO, U.S.A.

DEAR GOVINDA SAHAY,

Do you keep any correspondence with my Gurubhâis of Calcutta? Are you progressing morally, spiritually, and in your worldly affairs? . . . Perhaps you have heard how for more than a year I have been preaching Hindu religion in America. I am doing very well here. Write to me as soon as you can and as often as you like.

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 53

# LIII Govinda Sahay

LIII

U.S.A.,

1894.

DEAR GOVINDA SAHAY,

. . . Honesty is the best policy, and a virtuous man must gain in the end. . . . You must always bear in mind, my son, that however busy or however distant, or living with men however high in position I may be, I am always praying, blessing, and remembering everyone of my friends, even the humblest.

Yours, with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 54

# LIV Swami Ramakrishnanda

LIV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O GEORGE W. HALE, ESQ.,

541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO, (Beginning of?) 1894.

My Dear—, (Swami Ramakrishnananda.)

Very glad to receive your letter. I am very sorry to hear of Mazoomdar's doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push oneself before all others. I am not much to blame. M— came here ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is childishness on M—'s part to be annoyed at this. Never mind, उपेक्षित्वयं तद्वचनं भवत्सट्टशानां महात्मनाम्। अपि कीटदंशनभीरुका वयं रामकृष्ण तनयासतद्दहृदयरुधरिपोषिताः। "अलोकसामान्यमचनित्यहेतुकं हनिदन्तमिन्दाशचरति महात्मनाम्" — Great men like you should pay no heed to what he says. Shall we, children of Shri Ramakrishna, nourished with his heart's blood, be afraid of worm-bites? "The wicked criticise the conduct of the magnanimous, which is extraordinary and whose motives are difficult to fathom" (Kalidasa's Kumârasambhavam.) — remember all this and forgive this fool. It is the will of the Lord that people of this land have their power of introspection roused, and does it lie in anybody to check His progress? I want no name — I want to be a voice without a form. I do not require anybody to defend me —

— who am I to check or to help the course of His march? And who are others also? Still, my heartfelt gratitude to them.

— "Established in which state a man is not moved even by great misfortune" (Gita) — that state he has not reached; think of this and look upon him with pity. Through the Lord's will, the desire for name and fame has not yet crept into my heart, and I dare say never will. I am an instrument, and He is the operator. Through this instrument He is rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off country. Thousands of

men and women here love and revere me. . . . " the lame cross mountains." I am amazed at His grace. Whichever town I visit, it is in an uproar. They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu". Remember, it is His will — I am a voice without a form.

The Lord knows whether I shall go to England or any other blessed place. He will arrange everything. Here a cigar costs one rupee. Once you get into a cab, you have to pay three rupees, a coat costs a hundred rupees; the hotel charge is nine rupees a day. The Lord provides everything. . . . The Lord be praised, I know nothing. " [054\_swami\_ramakrishnananda\_05.jpg] — Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth alone lies the path of Devayâna." You must be fearless. It is the coward who fears and defends himself. Let no one amongst us come forward to defend me. I get all news of Madras and Rajputana from time to time. . . . There are eyes that can see at a distance of fourteen thousand miles. It is quite true. Keep quiet now, everything will see the light in time, as far as He wills it. Not one word of His proves untrue. My brother, do men grieve over the fight of cats and dogs? So the jealousy, envy, and elbowing of common men should make no impression on your mind. For the last six months I have been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising. Yes, the curtain is lifting by degrees, slow but sure; you will come to know it in time. He knows. One cannot speak out one's mind. These are things not for writing. . . . Never let go your hold of the rudder, grasp it firm. We are steering all right, no mistaking that, but landing on the other shore is only a question of time. That's all. Can a leader be made my brother? A leader is born. Do you understand? And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader. — One must be accommodate a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth, and secondly, unselfish — that's a leader. Everything is going all right, everything will come round. He casts the net all right, and winds it up likewise best instrument. Love conquers in the long run. It won't do to become impatient — wait, wait — patience is bound to give success. . . .

I tell you brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care that no form becomes necessary — unity in variety

— see that universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, universality. Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, remember this specially, that universality — perfect acceptance, not tolerance only — we preach and perform. Take care how you trample on the least rights of others. Many a huge ship has foundered in that whirlpool. Remember, perfect devotion minus its bigotry — this is what we have got to show. Through His grace everything will go all right. . . . Everybody wants to be a leader, but it is the failure to grasp that he is born, that causes all this mischief. . . .

Our matrons are all hale and hearty, I hope? Where is Gour-Mâ? We want a thousand such Mothers with that noble stirring spirit. . . . We want all. It is not at all necessary that all should have the same faith in our Lord as we have, but we want to unite all the powers of goodness against all the powers of evil. . . . A besetting sin with Sannyasins is the taking pride in their monastic order. That may have its utility during the first stages, but when they are full-grown, they need it no more. One must make no distinction between householders and Sannyasins — then only one is a true Sannyasin. . . .

A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot and which now bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion — is it a humbug or the Lord's will? If it is, then let all give up party-spirit and jealousy, and unite in action. A universal religion cannot be set up through party faction. . . .

If all understand one day for one minute that one cannot become great by the mere wish, that he only rises whom He raises, and he falls whom He brings down then all trouble is at an end. But there is that egotism — hollow in itself, and without the power to move a finger: how ludicrous of it to say, "I won't let anyone rise!" That jealousy, that absence of conjoint action is the very nature of enslaved nations. But we must try to shake it off. The terrible jealousy is characteristic of us. . . . You will be convinced of this if you visit some other countries. Our fellows in this respect are the enfranchised negroes of this country — if but one amongst them rises to greatness, all the others would at once set themselves against him and try to level him down by making a common cause with the whites. . . .

At any cost, any price, any sacrifice, we must never allow that to creep in among ourselves. Whether we be ten or two, do not care, but those few must be perfect characters. . . . "It is not good to ask of one's father if the Lord keeps His promise (to look after His devotees)." And the Lord will do so, get your minds easy on that score. . . . We must spread his name in Rajputana, Punjab, U.P., Madras, and such other provinces — yes, in Raiputana, where still there are people who can say,

"Such has ever been the custom with Raghu's line that they keep their word even at the cost of life."

A bird, in the course of its flight, reaches a spot whence it looks on the ground below with supreme calmness, Have you reached that spot? He who has not reached there has no right to teach others. Relax your limbs and float with the current, and you are sure to reach your destination.

Cold is making itself scarce by degrees, and I have been almost through the winter. Here in winter the whole body becomes charged with electricity. In shaking hands one feels a shock, accompanied by a sound. You can light the gas with your finger. And about the cold I have written to you already. I am coursing through the length and breadth of the country, but Chicago is my "Math" (monastery), where I always return after my wanderings. I am now making for the east. He knows where the bark will reach the shore. . . .

Has Dashu the same sort of love for you. Does he see you frequently? How is Bhavanath, and what is he doing. Do you visit him, and look upon him with an eye of regard? Yes, brother, the distinction between Sannyasin and layman is a fiction. " [054\_swami\_ramakrishnananda\_08.jpg] etc. — "He makes the dumb fluent," etc. My friend it is difficult to judge what is in a particular individual. Shri Ramakrishna has spoken highly of him; and he deserves our respect. Fie upon you if you have no faith even after so much experience. Does he love you? Please convey to him my hearty love and esteem. My love to Kalikrishna Babu, he is a very noble soul. How is Ramlal (Nephew of Shri Ramakrishna.)? He has got a little faith and devotion? My love and greetings to him. Sanyal is moving all right with the mill, I suppose? Ask him to have patience, and the mill will go on all right.

My heart's love to all.

Ever yours in love,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 55

# LV Akhandananda

LV

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

(March or April?) 1894.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is a great pleasure to me to learn that you have regained your health to a great extent by your stay at Khetri.

Brother Tarak (Shivananda) has done a good deal of work in Madras. Very agreeable news indeed! I heard much praise of him from the people of Madras. . . .

Try to develop spirituality and philanthropy amongst the Thakurs in the different places of Rajputana. We must work, and this cannot be done by merely sitting idle. Make a trip now and then to Malsisar, Alsisar, and all the other "sars" that are there. And carefully learn Sanskrit and English. Gunanidhi is in the Punjab, I presume. Convey my special love to him and bring him to Khetri. Learn Sanskrit with his help, and teach him English. Let me have his address by all means. ...

Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes, and saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!" — unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other villages from time to time, and teach the people the arts of life as well as religion. Work, worship, and Jnana (knowledge) — first work, and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the sacred fire. When Gunanidhi comes, move from door to door of the poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana. If people object to the kind of food you take, give it up immediately. It is preferable to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The Geruâ robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must give your body, mind, and speech to "the welfare of the world". You have

read— "मातृदेवो भव, पितृदेवो भव — Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God" — but I say "दरिद्रदेवो भव, मूर्खदेवो भव — The poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted — let these be your God." Know that service to these alone is the highest religion.

Ever yours, with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 56

# LVI Dear and Beloved

LVI[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

(Summer?) 1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED, (The brother-disciples at Alambazar monastery.)

Your letter gives me all the news over there. I am grieved to hear of the bereavement Balaram Babu's wife has sustained. Such is the Lord's will. This is a place for action, not enjoyment, and everyone will go home when his task is done — some earlier, and some later, that is all. Fakir has gone — well, such is the will of the Lord!

It is a welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival has come off with great éclat; the more his name is spread, the better it is. But there is one thing to know: Great sages come with special messages for the world, and not for name; but their followers throw their teachings overboard and fight over their names — this is verily the history of the world. I do not take into any consideration whether people accept his name or not, but I am ready to lay down my life to help his teachings, his life, and his message spread all over the world. What I am most afraid of is the worship-room. It is not bad in itself, but there is a tendency in some to make this all in all and set up that old-fashioned nonsense over again — this is what makes me nervous. I know why they busy themselves with those old, effete ceremonials. Their spirit craves for work, but having no outlet they waste their energy in ringing bells and all that.

I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out, then I shall know you are men and will be of service. . . . Make an organised plan. A few cameras, some maps, globes, and some chemicals, etc., are needed. The next thing you want is a big hut. Then you must get together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all this, show them pictures to teach them astronomy, geography, etc., and preach Shri Ramakrishna to them. Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like and, so forth.

You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time and open their eyes. Books etc., won't do — give them oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this? Or only bell-ringing?

I have heard everything about Brother Tarak from Madras. They are highly pleased with him. Dear Brother Tarak, if you go to Madras and live there for some time, a lot of work will be done. But before you go, start this work there first. Can't the lady devotees convert some widows; into disciples? And can't you put a bit of learning into their heads? And can't you then send them out to preach Sari Ramakrishna from door to door, and impart education along with it? . . .

Come! Apply yourselves heart and soul to it. The day of gossip and ceremonials is gone, my boy, you must work now. Now, let me see how far a Bengali's religion will go. Niranjana writes that Lata (Adbhutananda) wants some warm clothing. The people here import winter clothing from Europe and India. You will get a woollen wrap in Calcutta at one-fourth of the price at which I might buy it here. . . . I don't know when I shall go to Europe, everything is uncertain with me — I am getting on somehow in this country, that is all.

This is a very funny country. It is now summer; this morning it was as hot as April in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours! The hotels of this country beggar description. For instance there is a hotel in New York where a room can be hired for up to Rs. 5,000 a day, excluding boarding charges. Not even in Europe is there a country like this in point of luxury. It is indeed the richest country in the world, where money is drained off like water. I seldom live in hotels, but am mostly the guest of big people here. To them I am a widely known man. The whole country knows me now; so wherever I go they receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. Hale's home is my centre in Chicago. I call his wife mother, and his daughters call me brother. I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind. Or why should God shower His blessings on them in such abundance, my brother? Oh, how wonder-

fully kind they are! If they chance to learn that a poor man is in a strait at such and such a place, there they will go ladies and gentlemen, to give him food and clothing and find him some job! And what do we do!

In summer they leave their homes to go to foreign lands, or to the seaside. I, too, shall go somewhere, but have not yet fixed a place. In other points, they are just as you see Englishmen. They have got books and things of that sort, but very dear. You can have five times those things In Calcutta for the same price. In other words, these people will not let foreign goods be imported into the country. They set a heavy tax on them, and as a result, the market goes up enormously. Besides, they are not much in the way of manufacturing clothing etc. They construct tools and machinery, and grow wheat, rice, cotton, etc., which are fairly cheap.

By the bye, nowadays we have plenty of Hilsâ fish here. Eat your fill, but everything digests. There are many kinds of fruits; plantain, lemon, guava, apple, almond, raisin, and grape are in abundance; besides many other fruits come from California. There are plenty of pineapples but there are no mangoes or lichis, or things of that sort.

There is a kind of spinach, which, when cooked, tastes just like our Noté of Bengal, and another class, which they call asparagus, tastes exactly like the tender Dengo herb, but you can't have our Charchari made of it here. There is no Kalâi or any other pulse; they do not even know of them. There is rice, and bread, and numerous varieties of fish and meat, of all descriptions. Their menu is like that of the French. There is your milk, rarely curd, but plenty of whey. Cream is an article of everyday use. In tea and coffee and everything there is that cream — not the hardened crust of boiled milk, mind you — and there is your butter, too, and ice-water — no matter whether it is summer or winter, day or night, whether you have got a bad cold or fever — you have ice-water in abundance. These are scientific people and laugh when they are told that ice-water aggravates cold. The more you take, the better. And there is plenty of ice-cream, of all sorts of shapes. I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times, the Lord be praised! Very grand no doubt, but not quite as you have heard them spoken of. One day, in winter, we had the aurora borealis.

. . . Only childish prattle! I have not much time to listen to that sort of thing in this life; it will be time enough to see if I can do that in the next. Yogen has completely rallied by this time, I hope? The vagabond spirit of Sarada (Trigunâtita) is not yet at an end, I see. What is wanted is a power of organisation — do you understand me? Have any of you got that much brain in your head? If you do, let your mind work. Brother Tarak, Sharat, and Hari will be able to do it. — has got very little originality, but is a very good workman and persevering — which is an essential necessity, and

Shashi (Ramakrishnananda) is executive to a degree. ... We want some disciples — fiery young men — do you see? — intelligent and brave, who dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are ready to swim the ocean across. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men and women. Try your utmost for that end alone. Make converts right and left, and put them into our purity-drilling machine.

. . . What made you communicate to the Indian Mirror that Paramahansa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all sorts of nonsense? — As if he had nothing else to do but that! Only thought-reading and nonsensical mystery-mongering! . . . It is excellent that Sanyal is visiting you often. Do you write letters to Gupta? Convey to him my love, and take kind care of him. Everything will come right by degrees. I don't find much time to write heaps of letters. As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare them beforehand. Only one I wrote out, which you have printed. The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips — Gurudeva backs me up. I have nothing to do with pen and paper. Once at Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch. Sometimes I myself wonder at my own achievement — to think that there was such stuff in this pate! They ask me here to write a book. Well, I think I must do something that way, this time. But that's the botheration; who will take the trouble of putting things in black and white and all that! . . . We must electrify society, electrify the world. Idle gossip and barren ceremonials won't do. Ceremonials are meant for householders, your work is the distribution and propagation of thought-currents. If you can do that, then it is all right. . . .

Let character be formed and then I shall be in your midst. Do you see? We want two thousand Sannyasins, nay ten, or even twenty thousand — men and women, both. What are our matrons doing? We want converts at any risk. Go and tell them, and try yourselves, heart and soul. Not householder disciples, mind you, we want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads tonsured — young educated men, not fools. Then you are heroes. We must make a sensation. Give up your passive attitude, gird your loins and stand up. Let me see you make some electric circuits between Calcutta and Madras. Start centres at places, go on always making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order whoever seeks for it, irrespective of sex, and then I shall be in your midst. A huge spiritual tidal wave is coming — he who is low shall become noble, and he who is ignorant shall become the teacher of great scholars — through HIS grace. " [056\_dear\_and\_beloved\_01.jpg] — Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached." 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. He alone is a child of Shri Ramakrishna who is

moved to pity for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of incurring personal damnation, [056\_dear\_and\_beloved\_02.jpg] — others are vulgar people. Whoever, at this great spiritual juncture, will stand up with a courageous heart and go on spreading from door to door, from village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of his. This is the test, he who is Ramakrishna's child does not seek his personal good. " the point of death." Those that care for their personal comforts and seek a lazy life, who are ready to sacrifice all before their personal whims, are none of us; let them pack off, while yet there is time. Propagate his character, his teaching, his religion. This is the only spiritual practice, the only worship, this verily is the means, and this the goal. Arise! Arise! A tidal wave is coming! Onward! Men and women, down to the Chandála (Pariah) — all are pure in his eyes. Onward! Onward! There is no time to care for name, or fame, or Mukti, or Bhakti! We shall look to these some other time. Now in this life let us infinitely spread his lofty character, his sublime life, his infinite soul. This is the only work — there is nothing else to do. Wherever his name will reach, the veriest worm will attain divinity, nay, is actually attaining it; you have got eyes, and don't you see it? Is it a child's play? Is it silly prattle? Is it foolery? " back. I cannot write any more. — Onward! I only tell you this, that whoever reads this letter will imbibe my spirit! Have faith! Onward! Great Lord! . . . I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to write in this way. Onward! Great Lord! Everyone will be swept away! Take care, he is coming! Whoever will be ready to serve him — no, not him but his children — the poor and the downtrodden, the sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm — who will be ready to serve these, in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue the Goddess of Learning Herself will speak, and the Divine Mother — the Embodiment of all Power — will enthrone Herself in their hearts. Those that are atheists, unbelievers, worthless, and foppish, why do they call themselves as belonging to his fold. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. . . . The term organisation means division of labour. Each does his own part, and all the parts taken together express an ideal of harmony. . . .

## Chapter 57

### LVII Mrs. Bull

LVII

**BROOKLYN,**

28th Dec., 1894.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I arrived safely in New York where Landsberg met me at the depot. I proceeded at once to Brooklyn where I arrived in time.

We had a nice evening. Several gentlemen belonging to the Ethical Culture Society came to see me.

Next Sunday we shall have a lecture. Dr. Janes was as usual very kind and good, and Mr. Higgins is as practical as ever. Here alone in New York I find more men interested in religion than in any other city, and do not know why here the interest is more amongst men than women.

. . .

Herewith I send a copy of that pamphlet Mr. Higgins has published about me. Hope to send more in the future.

With my love to Miss Farmer and all the holy family,

I remain yours obediently,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 58

### LVIII Sarada

#### LVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

228 W.39, NEW YORK,

17th Jan., 1895.

DEAR SARADA,

Your two letters are to hand, as also the two of Ramdayal Babu. I have got the bill of lading; but it will be long before the goods arrive. Unless one arranges for the prompt despatch of goods they take about six months to come. It is four months since Haramohan wrote that the Rudrâksha beads and Kusha mats had been despatched, but there is no news of their whereabouts yet. The thing is, when the goods reach England, the agent of the company here gives me notice; and about a month later, the goods arrive. I received your bill of lading about three weeks ago, but no sign of the notice! Only the goods sent by Raja of Khetri arrive quickly. Most probably he spends a lot of money for them. However it is a matter of congratulation that goods do arrive without fail in this region of Pâtâla, at the other end of the globe. I shall let you know as soon as the goods come. Now keep quiet for at least three months.

Now is the time for you to apply yourself to start the magazine. Tell Ramdayal Babu that though the gentleman of whom he speaks be a competent person, I am not in a position to have anybody in America at present. . . . What about your article on Tibet? When it is published in the Mirror, send me a copy. . . . Come, here is a task for you, conduct that magazine. Thrust it on people and make them subscribe to it, and don't be afraid. 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. I am coming next winter. We shall set the world on fire — let those who will, join us and be blessed, and those that won't come, will lag behind for ever and ever; let them do so. You gird up your loins and keep yourself ready. . . . Never mind anything! In your lips and hands the Goddess of Learning will make

Her seat; the Lord of infinite power will be seated on your chest; you will do works that will strike the world with wonder. By the bye, can't you shorten your name a bit, my boy? What a long, long name — a single name enough to fill a volume! Well, you hear people say that the Lord's name keeps away death! It is not the simple name Hari, mind you. It is those deep and sonorous names, such as [058\_sarada\_01.jpg] (Destroyer of Agha, Bhaga, and Naraka) [058\_sarada\_02.jpg] (Subduer of the pride of Tripura, demon of the “three cities”), and [058\_sarada\_03.jpg] (Giver of infinite and endless blessings), and so forth — that put to rout King Death and his whole party. Won't it look nice if you simplify yours a little? But it is too late, I am afraid as it has already been abroad. But, believe me, it is a world-entrancing, death-defying name that you have got! (The full name which Swami Trigunatita, to whom this letter was addressed, bore at first was “Swami Trigunatitananda”— hence Swamiji's pleasantry about it.)

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Throw the whole of Bengal and, for the matter of that, the whole of India into convulsion! Start centres at different places.

The Bhâgavata has reached me — a very nice edition indeed; but people of this country have not the least inclination for studying Sanskrit; hence there is very little hope for its sale. There may be a little in England, for there many are interested in the study of Sanskrit. Give my special thanks to the editor. I hope his noble attempt will meet with complete success. I shall try my best to push his book here. I have sent his prospectus to different places. Tell Ramdayal Babu that a flourishing trade can be set on foot with England and America in Mung Dâl, Arhar Dâl, etc. Dâl soup will have a go if properly introduced. There will be a good demand for these things if they be sent from house to house, in small packets, with directions for cooking on them and a depot started for storing a quantity of them. Similarly Badis (Pellets made of Dal, pounded and beaten.) too will have a good market. We want an enterprising spirit. Nothing is done by leading idle lives. If anyone forms a company

and exports Indian goods here and into England, it will be a good trade. But they are a lazy set, enamoured of child marriage and nothing else.

## Chapter 59

# LIX Sanyal

LIX[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

54 W. 33rd ST., NEW YORK, 9th February, 1895.

DEAR SANYAL,

. . . Paramahansa Deva was my Guru, and whatever I may think of him in point of greatness, why should the world think like me? And if you press the point hard, you will spoil everything. The idea of worshipping the Guru as God is nowhere to be met with outside Bengal, for other people are not yet ready to take up that ideal. . . . Many would fain associate my name with themselves — "I belong to them!" But when it comes to doing something I want, they are nowhere. So selfish is the whole world!

I shall consider myself absolved from a debt of obligation when I succeed in purchasing some land for Mother. I don't care for anything after that.

In this dire winter I have travelled across mountains and over snows at dead of night and collected a little fund; and I shall have peace of mind when a plot is secured for Mother.

Henceforth address my letters as above, which is to be my permanent seat from now. Try to send me an English translation of the Yogavâsishtha Râmâyana. . . . Don't forget those books I asked for before, viz Sanskrit Nârada and Shândilya Sutras.

" [059\_sanyal\_01.jpg] — Hope is the greatest of miseries, the highest bliss lies in giving up hope."

Yours affectionately,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 60

### LX Mrs. Bull

LX

54 W. 33rd ST., NEW YORK, 14th Feb., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Accept my heartfelt gratitude for your motherly advice. I hope I will be able to carry out them in life.

How can I express my gratitude to you for what you have already done for me and my work, and my eternal gratitude to you for your offering to do something more this year. But I sincerely believe that you ought to turn all your help to Miss Farmer's Greenacre work this year. India can wait as she is waiting centuries and an immediate work at hand should always have the preference.

Again, according to Manu, collecting funds even for a good work is not good for a Sannyasin, and I have begun to feel that the old sages were right. "Hope is the greatest misery, despair is the greatest happiness." It appears like a hallucination. I am getting out of them. I was in these childish ideas of doing this and doing that.

"Give up all desire and be at peace. Have neither friends nor foes, and live alone. Thus shall we travel having neither friends nor foes, neither pleasure nor pain, neither desire nor jealousy, injuring no creatures, being the cause of injury to no creatures — from mountain to mountain, from village to village, preaching the name of the Lord."

"Seek no help from high or low, from above or below. Desire nothing — and look upon this vanishing panorama as a witness and let it pass."

Perhaps these mad desires were necessary to bring me over to this country. And I thank the Lord for the experience.

I am very happy now. Between Mr. Landsberg and me, we cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to learn something, and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I ever was in America.

"In wealth is the fear of poverty, in knowledge the fear of ignorance, in beauty the fear of age, in fame the fear of backbiters, in success the fear of jealousy, even in body is the fear of death. Everything in this earth is fraught with fear. He alone is fearless who has given up everything" (Vairāgya-Shatakam, 31).

I went to see Miss Corbin the other day, and Miss Farmer and Miss Thursby were also there. We had a nice half-hour and she wants me to hold some classes in her home from next Sunday.

I am no more seeking for these things. If they come, the Lord be blessed, if not, blessed more be He.

Again accept my eternal gratitude.

Your devoted son,  
VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 61

## LXI Mrs. Bull

LXI

54 W. 33rd ST., NEW YORK, 21st March, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I am astonished to hear the scandals the Ramabai circles are indulging in about me. Don't you see, Mrs. Bull, that however a man may conduct himself, there will always be persons who invent the blackest lies about him? At Chicago I had such things every day against me. And these women are invariably the very Christian of Christians! . . . I am going to have a series of paid lectures in my rooms (downstairs), which will seat about a hundred persons, and that will cover the expenses. I am in no great hurry about the money to be sent to India. I will wait. Is Miss Farmer with you? Is Mrs. Peake at Chicago? Have you seen Josephine Locke? Miss Hamlin has been very kind to me and does all she can to help me.

My master used to say that these names, as Hindu, Christian, etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed.

That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organisation has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done. And here, I am afraid, I will have to differ from you — that no one ever succeeded in keeping society in good humour and at the same time did great works. One must work as the dictate comes from within, and then if it is light and good, society is bound to veer round, perhaps centuries after one is dead and gone. We must plunge heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to sacrifice everything else to one Idea and to one alone, we never, never will see the light.

Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come to the Lord. This is what all the Masters said and did.

I went to Miss Corbin's last Saturday and told her that I should not be able to come to hold classes any more. Was it ever in the history of the world that any great work was done by the rich? It is the heart and the brain that do it ever and ever and not the purse.

My idea and all my life with it — and to God for help; to none else! This is the only secret of success. I am sure you are one with me here. My love to Mrs. Thursby and Mrs. Adams.

Ever yours in grateful affection,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 62

### LXII Mrs. Bull

#### LXII

54 W. 33rd ST., NEW YORK, 11th April, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . I am going away to the country tomorrow to see Mr. Leggett for a few days. A little fresh air will do me good, I hope.

I have given up the project of removing from this house just now, as it will be too expensive, and moreover it is not advisable to change just now. I am working it up slowly.

. . . I send you herewith the letter from H. H. the Maharaja of Khetri; also enclose the slip on Gurjan oil for leprosy. Miss Hamlin has been helping me a good deal. I am very grateful to her. She is very kind and, I hope, sincere. She wants me to be introduced to the "right kind of people". This is the second edition of the "Hold yourself steady" business, I am afraid. The only "right sort of people" are those whom the Lord sends — that is what I understand in my life's experience. They alone can and will help me. As for the rest, Lord help them in a mass and save me from them.

Every one of my friends thought it would end in nothing, this my getting up quarters all by myself, and that no ladies would ever come here. Miss Hamlin especially thought that "she" or "her right sort of people" were way up from such things as to go and listen to a man who lives by himself in a poor lodging. But the "right kind" came for all that, day and night, and she too. Lord! how hard it is for man to believe in Thee and Thy mercies! Shiva! Shiva! Where is the right kind and where is the bad, mother? It is all He! In the tiger and in the lamb, in the saint and sinner all He! In Him I have taken my refuge, body, soul, and Atman. Will He leave me now after carrying me in His arms all my life? Not a drop will be in the ocean, not a twig in the deepest forest, not a crumb in the house of the god of wealth, if the Lord is not merciful. Streams will be in the desert and the beggar will have plenty, if He wills it. He seeth the sparrow's fall. Are these but words, mother, or literal, actual life?

Truce to this "right sort of presentation". Thou art my right, Thou my wrong, my Shiva. Lord, since a child I have taken refuge in Thee. Thou wilt be with me in the tropics or at the poles, on the tops of mountains or in the depth of oceans. My stay — my guide in life — my refuge — my friend — my teacher — my God — my real Self, Thou wilt never leave me, never. I know it for sure. Sometimes I become weak, being alone and struggling against odds, my God; and I think of human help. Save Thou me for ever from these weaknesses, and may I never, never seek for help from any being but Thee. If a man puts his trust in another good man, he is never betrayed, never forsaken. Wilt Thou forsake me, Father of all good, Thou who knowest that all my life I am Thy servant and Thine alone? Wilt Thou give me over to be played upon by others, or dragged down by evil? He will never leave me, I am sure, mother.

Your ever obedient son,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 63

### LXIII Shashi

LXIII

(Translated from Bengali)

U.S.A.,

11th April, 1895.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

. . . You write that you have recovered from your illness; but you must henceforth be very careful. Late dinners or unwholesome food, or living in a stinking place may bring on a relapse, and make it hard to escape the clutches of malaria. First of all you should hire a small garden-house — you may get one for thirty or forty rupees. Secondly, see that cooking and drinking water be filtered — a bamboo filter of a big size will do. Water is the cause of all sorts of disease. It is not the clearness or dirtiness of water, but its being full of disease germs, that causes disease. Let the water be boiled and filtered. You must all pay attention to your health first. A cook, a servant, clean beds, and timely meals — these are absolutely necessary. Please see that all these suggestions be carried out in toto. . . . The success of your undertakings depends wholly upon your mutual love. There is no good in store so long as malice and jealousy and egotism will prevail. ... Kali's pamphlet is very well written and has no exaggerations. Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a molehill if you try to express them. Everything is ended if you forgive and forget. It is welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival was celebrated with great éclat. You must try so that there is a muster of a hundred thousand people next year. Put your energies together to start a magazine. Shyness won't do any more.... He who has infinite patience and infinite energy at his back, will alone succeed. You must pay special attention to study. Do you understand? You must not huddle together too many fools. I shall be glad if you bring together a few real men. Why, I don't hear even a single one opening his lips. You distributed sweets at the festival, and there was singing by some parties, mostly idlers. True, but I

don't hear what spiritual food you have given. So long as that nil admirari attitude is not gone, you will not be able to do anything, and none of you will have courage. Bullies are always cowards.

Take up everyone with sympathy, whether he believes in Shri Ramakrishna or not. If anybody comes to you for vain dispute, politely withdraw yourselves. ... You must express your sympathy with people of all sects. When these cardinal virtues will be manifested in you, then only you will be able to work with great energy. Otherwise, mere taking the name of the Guru will not do. However, there is no doubt that this year's festival has been a great success, and you deserve special thanks for it; but you must push forward, do you see? What is Sharat doing? Never shall you be able to know anything if you persist in pleading ignorance. ... We want something of a higher tone — that will appeal to the intellect of the learned. It won't do merely to get up musical parties and all that. Not only will this festival be his memorial, but also the central union of an intense propaganda of his doctrines. ... All will come in good time. But at times I fret and stamp like a leashed hound. Onward and forward, my old watchword. I am doing well. No use going back to India in a hurry. Summon all your energies and set yourselves to work heart and soul; that will really be heroic.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 64

### LXIV Mrs. Bull

#### LXIV

54 W. 33rd STREET, NEW YORK, 25th April, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

The day before yesterday I received a kind note from Miss Farmer including a cheque for a hundred dollars for the Barbar House lectures. She is coming to New York next Saturday. I will of course tell her to put my name in her circulars; and what is more, I cannot go to Greenacre now; I have arranged to go to the Thousand Islands, wherever that may be. There is a cottage belonging to Miss Dutcher, one of my students, and a few of us will be there in rest and peace and seclusion. I want to manufacture a few “Yogis” out of the materials of the classes, and a busy farm like Greenacre is the last place for that, while the other is quite out of the way, and none of the curiosity-seekers will dare go there.

I am very glad that Miss Hamlin took down the names of the 130 persons who come to the Jnana-Yoga class. There are 50 more who come to the Wednesday Yoga class and about 50 more to the Monday class. Mr. Landsberg had all the names; and they will come anyhow, names or no names.... If they do not, others will, and so it will go on — the Lord be praised.

Taking down names and giving notices is a big task, no doubt, and I am very thankful to both of them for doing that for me. But I am thoroughly persuaded that it is laziness on my part, and therefore immoral, to depend on others, and always evil comes out of laziness. So henceforth I will do it all myself. ...

However, I will be only too glad to take in any one of Miss Hamlin’s “right sort of persons”, but unfortunately for me, not one such has as yet turned up. It is the duty of the teacher always to turn the “right sort” out of the most “unrighteous sort” of persons. After all, though I am very, very grateful to the young lady, Miss Hamlin, for the great hope and encouragement she gave me of introducing me to the “right sort of New Yorkers” and for the practical help she has given me, I think I had better do my little work with my own hands. . . .

I am only glad that you have such a great opinion about Miss Hamlin. I for one am glad to know that you will help her, for she requires it. But, mother, through the mercy of Ramakrishna, my instinct “sizes up” almost infallibly a human face as soon as I see it, and the result is this: you may do anything you please with my affairs, I will not even murmur; — I will be only too glad to take Miss Farmer’s advice, in spite of ghosts and spooks. Behind the spooks I see a heart of immense love, only covered with a thin film of laudable ambition — even that is bound to vanish in a few years. Even I will allow Landsberg to “monkey” with my affairs from time to time; but here I put a full stop. Help from any other persons besides these frightens me. That is all I can say. Not only for the help you have given me, but from my instinct (or, as I call it, inspiration of my Master), I regard you as my mother and will always abide by any advice you may have for me — but only personally. When you select a medium, I will beg leave to exercise my choice. That is all.

Herewith I send the English gentleman’s letter. I have made a few notes on the margin to explain Hindustani words.

Your obedient son,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 65

# LXV Mrs. Bull

LXV

54 W. 33, NEW YORK,

7th May, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

...I had a newspaper from India with a publication in it of Dr. Barrows' short reply to the thanks sent over from India. Miss Thursby will send it to you. Yesterday I received another letter from India from the President of Madras meeting to thank the Americans and to send me an Address.... This gentleman is the chief citizen of Madras and a Judge of the Supreme Court, a very high position in India.

I am going to have two public lectures more in New York in the upper hall of the Mott's Memorial Building. The first one will be on Monday next, on the Science of Religion. The next, on the Rationale of Yoga.... Has Miss Hamlin sent you the book on the financial condition of India? I wish your brother will read it and then find out for himself what the English rule in India means.

Ever gratefully your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 66

### LXVI Mrs. Bull

LXVI

54 WEST 33rd STREET, NEW YORK, May, 1895,  
Thursday.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

The classes are going on; but I am sorry to say, though the attendance is large, it does not even pay enough to cover the rent. I will try this week and then give up.

I am going this summer to the Thousand Islands to Miss Dutcher's, one of my students. The different books on Vedanta are now being sent over to me from India. I expect to write a book in English on the Vedanta Philosophy in its three stages when I am at Thousand Islands, and I may go to Greenacre later on. Miss Farmer wants me to lecture there this summer.

I am rather busy just now in writing a promised article for the Press Association on Immortality.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 67

# LXVII Mrs. Bull

LXVII

PERCY, NEW HAMPSHIRE,

7th June, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I am here at last with Mr. Leggett. This is one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. Imagine a lake, surrounded with hills covered with a huge forest, with nobody but ourselves. So lovely, so quiet, so restful! And you may imagine how glad I am to be here after the bustle of cities.

It gives me a new lease of life to be here. I go into the forest alone and read my Gita and am quite happy. I will leave this place in about ten days and go to the Thousand Island Park. I will meditate by the hour there and be all alone to myself. The very idea is ennobling.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 68

# LXVIII Mrs. Bull

### LXVIII

54 WEST 33rd STREET, NEW YORK, June, 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have just arrived home. The trip did me good, and I enjoyed the country and the hills, and especially Mr. Leggett's country-house in New York State. Poor Landsberg has gone from this house. Neither has he left one his address. May the Lord bless Landsberg wherever he goes! He is one of the few sincere souls I have had the privilege in this life to come across.

All is for good. All conjunctions are for subsequent disjunction. I hope I shall be perfectly able to work alone. The less help from men, the more from the Lord! Just now I received a letter from an Englishman in London who had lived in India in the Himalayas with two of my brethren. He asks me to come to London.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 69

### LXIX Shashi

#### LXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

1895.

DEAR SHASHI,

. . . I am quite in agreement with what Sarada is doing, but it is not necessary to preach that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. He came to do good to the world; not to trumpet his own name — you must always remember this. Disciples pay their whole attention to the preservation of their master's name and throw overboard his teachings; and sectarianism etc., are the result. Alasinga writes of Charu; but I do not recollect him. Write all about him and convey him my thanks. Write in detail about all; I have no time to spare for idle gossip .... Try to give up ceremonials. They are not meant for Sannyasins; and one must work only so long as one does not attain to illumination .... I have nothing to do with sectarianism. Or party-forming and playing the frog-in-the-well, whatever else I may do.... It is impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and form sects at the same time.... Only one kind of work I understand, and that is doing good to others; all else is doing evil. I therefore prostrate myself before the Lord Buddha.... I am a Vedantist; Sachchidananda — Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute — is my God. I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of my own Self. By the word "Incarnation" are meant those who have attained that Brahmanhood, in other words, the Jivanmuktas — those who have realised this freedom in this very life. I do not find any speciality in Incarnations: all beings from Brahmâ down to a clump of grass will attain to liberation-in-life in course of time, and our duty lies in helping all to reach that state. This help is called religion; the rest is irreligion. This help is work; the rest is evil-doing — I see nothing else. Other kinds of work, for example, the Vaidika or the Tântrika, may produce results; but resorting to them is simply waste of life, for that purity which is the goal of work is realisable only through doing good to others. Through works such as sacrifices etc., one may get enjoyments, but it

is impossible to have the purity of soul.... Everything exists already in the Self of all beings. He who asserts he is free, shall be free. He who says he is bound, bound he shall remain. To me, the thought of oneself as low and humble is a sin and ignorance. " [069\_shashi\_01.jpg] — This Atman is not to be attained by one who is weak."

" [069\_shashi\_02.jpg]

— If you say Brahman is, existence will be the result; if you say Brahman is not, non-existent It shall verily become." He who always thinks of himself as weak will never become strong, but he who knows himself to be a lion,

" [069\_shashi\_03.jpg]

— rushes out from the world's meshes, as a lion from its cage." Another point, it was no new truth that Ramakrishna Paramahansa came to preach, though his advent brought the old truths to light. In other words, he was the embodiment of all the past religious thoughts of India. His life alone made me understand what the Shâstras really meant, and the whole plan and scope of the old Shastras.

Missionaries and others could not do much against me in this country. Through the Lord's grace the people here like me greatly and are not to be tricked by the opinions of any particular class. They appreciate my ideas in a manner my own countrymen cannot do, and are not selfish. I mean, when it comes to practical work they will give up jealousy and all those ideas of self-sufficiency. Then all of them agree and act under the direction of a capable man. That is what makes them so great. But then they are a nation of Mammon-worshippers. Money comes before everything. People of our country are very liberal in pecuniary matters, but not so much these people. Every home has a miser. It is almost a religion here. But they fall into the clutches of the priests when they do something bad, and then buy their passage to heaven with money. These things are the same in every country — priestcraft. I can say nothing as to whether I shall go back to India and when. There also I shall have to lead a wandering life as

I do here; but here thousands of people listen to and understand my lectures, and these thousands are benefited. But can you say the same thing about India? . . . I am perfectly at one with what Sarada is doing. A thousand thanks to him.... In Madras and Bombay I have lots of men who are after my heart. They are learned and understand everything. Moreover they are kind-hearted and can therefore appreciate the philanthropic spirit.... I have printed neither books nor anything of the kind. I simply go on lecturing tours.... When I take a retrospective view of my past life, I feel no remorse. From country to country I have travelled teaching something, however little, to people, and in exchange for that have partaken of their slices of bread. If I had found I had done no work, but simply supported myself by imposing upon people, I would have committed suicide today. Why do those who think themselves unfit to teach their fellow-beings, wear the teacher's garb and earn their bread by cheating them? Is not that a deadly sin? ...

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 70

### LXX Alberta

LXX

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

19 W. 38, NEW YORK,

8th July, 1895.

DEAR ALBERTA, (Miss Alberta Sturges.)

I am sure you are engrossed in your musical studies now. Hope you have found out all about the scales by this time. I will be so happy to take a lesson on the scales from you next time we meet.

We had such jolly good time up there at Percy with Mr. Leggett — isn't he a saint?

Hollister is also enjoying Germany greatly, I am sure, and I hope none of you have injured your tongues in trying to pronounce German words — especially those beginning with sch, tz, tsz, and other sweet things.

I read your letter to your mother from on board. Most possibly I am going over to Europe next September. I have never been to Europe yet. It will not be very much different from the United States after all. And I am already well drilled in the manners and customs of this country.

We had a good deal of rowing at Percy and I learnt a point or two in rowing. Aunt Joe Joe had to pay for her sweetness, for the flies and mosquitoes would not leave her for a moment. They rather gave me a wide berth, I think because they were very orthodox sabbatarian flies and would not touch a heathen. Again, I think, I used to sing a good deal at Percy, and that must have frightened them away. We had such fine birch trees. I got up an idea of making books out of the bark, as was used to be done in ancient times in our country, and wrote Sanskrit verses for your mother and aunt.

I am sure, Alberta, you are going to be a tremendously learned lady very soon.

With love and blessings for both of you,

Ever your affectionate,

## Chapter 71

### LXXI Rakhhal

LXXI

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1895.

DEAR RAKHAL,

I have now got lots of newspapers etc., and you need not send any more. Let the movement now confine itself to India....

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rife all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all quarters. In other words, try to start branches at different places. Let it not be an empty sound merely. You must join the Madras and start associations etc., at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? ... 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" (Bhartrihari, Nitishataka).

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle! Lord! They say even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, "I know nothing!" "I am nothing!" This is pseudo-renunciation and mock modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! "If I do not know, who on earth does!" What have you been doing so long if you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist — the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. A saint writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called him a man if he could build a house and call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I

am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me. I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions.... There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools — there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organise and work, while our undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness — miscalled "renunciation," — and jealousy, etc. — writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description — that in such and such a place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is — "

An organised society is wanted. Let Shashi look to the household management, Sanyal take charge of money matters and marketing, and Sharat act as secretary, that is, carry on correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre — it is no use making random efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Shri Ramakrishna festival with such éclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you distribute Prasâda in earthen cups to the devotees standing in rows....

I am going to write a very short sketch of Shri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the festival — people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the festival done with great pomp. . . .

You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In any towns or villages you may visit, start an association

wherever you find a number of people revering Shri Ramakrishna. Have you travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly absorb the Hari Sabhâs and such other associations. Well, I cannot tell you all — if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will supply me everything in time.... If one has got power, one must manifest it in action. ... Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti! There is only one way in the world,

— “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.... You are God, I am God, and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high up somewhere? To work, therefore!

Bimala has sent me a book written by Shashi (Sanyal). ... From a perusal of that work Bimala has come to know that all the people of this world are impure and that they are by their very nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful of Brahmins that are in India have the sole right to it, and among these again, Shashi (Sanyal) and Bimala are the sun and moon, so to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal specially, that sort of religion is very easy to practice. There is no easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach religion here, why then ask their help? . . . What can remedy such a disease? Well, tell Shashi (Sanyal) to go to Malabar. The Raja there has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brahmins. There are big monasteries in every village where sumptuous dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. ... There is no harm in touching the non-Brahmin classes when it serves one's purpose; and when you have done with it, you bathe, for the non-Brahmins are as a class unholy and must never be touched on other occasions! Monks and Sannyasins and Brahmins of a certain type have thrown the country into ruin. Intent all the while on theft and wickedness, these pose as preachers of religion! They will take gifts from the people and at the same time cry, “Don't touch me!” And what great things they have been doing! — “If a potato happens to touch a brinjal, how long will the universe last before it is deluged?” “If they do not apply earth a dozen times to clean their hands, will fourteen generations of ancestors go to hell, or twenty-four?” — For intricate problems like these they have been finding out scientific explanations for the last two thousand years — while one fourth of the people are starving. A girl of eight is married to a man of thirty, and the parents are jubilant over it.... And if anyone protests against it, the plea is put forward, “Our religion is being overturned.” What sort of religion have

they who want to see their girls becoming mothers before they attain puberty even and offer scientific explanations for it? Many, again, lay the blame at the door of the Mohammedans. They are to blame, indeed! Just read the Grihya-Sutras through and see what is given as the marriageable age of a girl. ... There it is expressly stated that a girl must be married before attaining puberty. The entire Grihya-Sutras enjoin this. And in the Vedic Ashvamedha sacrifice worse things would be done.... All the Brâhmanas mention them, and all the commentators admit them to be true. How can you deny them?

What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India. must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Shri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!

Hence, when you call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation and in the same breath plead your ignorance unhesitatingly, I say, “You are false to the backbone!” If Ramakrishna Paramahansa be true, you also are true. But you must show it. ... In you all there is tremendous power. The atheist has nothing but rubbish in him. Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous power. The world will be swept before them. “Sympathy and help to the poor”; “Man is God, he is Nârâyana”; “In Atman there is no distinction of male or female, of Brahmin or Kshatriya, and the like”; “All is Narayana from the Creator down to a clump of grass.” The worm is less manifested, the Creator more manifested. Every action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more is good, every action that retards it is evil.

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 Brahmin is not so much in need of education as a Chandâla. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher, that of a Chandala 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 downtrodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

A dreadful slough is in front of you — take care; many fall into it and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti — religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of knowledge nor that of reason — it is “Don't-

touchism". "Don't touch me!" "Don't touch me!" — that exhausts its description. See that you do not lose your lives in this dire irreligion of "Don't-touchism". Must the teaching, " [071\_rakhal\_04.jpg] — Looking upon all beings as your own self" — be confined to books alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others purify others? Don't-touchism is a form of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life, all contraction is death. All love is expansions all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of life, just as you breathe to live. This is the secret of selfless love, selfless action and the rest. ... Try to help Shashi (Sanyal) if you can, in any ways He is a very good and pious man, but of a narrow heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others. Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Lord Chaitanya was the greatest, but he was comparatively lacking in knowledge; in the Ramakrishna Incarnation there is knowledge, devotion and love — infinite knowledge, infinite love, infinite work, infinite compassion for all beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. " [071\_rakhal\_05.jpg] — Even after hearing about Him, most people do not understand Him." What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he lived in one life. His life is the living commentary to the Vedas of all nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old watchword — struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

Yours in service,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 72

# LXXII Akhandananada

LXXII

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,

1895.

BELOVED AKHANDANANDA,

I am glad to go through the contents of your letter. Your idea is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of organisation. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of evil. We are altogether averse to making a common cause for anything. The first requisite for organisation is obedience. I do a little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the dogs — this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding industry and perseverance. Keep a regular correspondence, I mean, make it a point to write to me every month, or twice a month, what work you are doing and what has been its outcome. We want here (in England) a Sannyasin well-versed in English and Sanskrit. I shall soon go to America again, and he is to work here in my absence. Except Sharat and Shashi — I find no one else for this task. I have sent money to Sharat and written to him to start at once. I have requested Rajaji that his Bombay agent may help Sharat in embarking. I forgot to write — but if you can take the trouble to do it, please send through Sharat a bag of Mung, gram, and Arhar Dâl, also a little of the spice called Methi. Please convey my love to Pundit Narayan Das, Mr. Shankar Lal, Ojhaji, Doctor, and all. Do you think you can get the medicine for Gopi's eyes here? — Everywhere you find patent medicines, which are all humbug. Please give my blessings to him and to the other boys. Yajneswar has founded a certain society at Meerut and wants to work conjointly with us. By the bye, he has got a certain paper too; send Kali there, and let him start a Meerut centre, if he can and, try to have a paper in Hindi. I shall help a little now and then. I shall send some money when Kali goes to Meerut and reports to me exactly how matters stand. Try to open a centre at

Ajmer. ... Pundit Agnihotri has started some society at Saharanpur. They wrote my a letter. Please keep in correspondence with them. Live on friendly terms with all. Work! Work! Go on opening centres in this way. We have them already in Calcutta and Madras, and it will be excellent if you can start new ones at Meerut and Ajmer. Go on slowly starting centres at different places like that. Here all my letters etc., are to be addressed in care of E. T. Sturdy, Esq., High View, Caversham, Reading, England, and those for America, C/o Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Street, New York. By degrees we must spread the world over. The first thing needed is obedience. You must be ready to plunge into fire — then will work be done. ... Form societies like that at different villages in Rajputana. There you have a hint.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 73

# LXXIII Brother Disciples

LXXIII[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

U.S.A.,

(Summer of?) 1895.

MY DEAR—, (Brother-disciples at the Math.)

The books that Sanyal sent have arrived. I forgot to mention this. Please inform him about it.

Let me write down something for you all:

1. Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil. That is to say, if you show towards any one more love than towards somebody else, rest assured, you will be sowing the seeds of future troubles.

2. If anybody comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers, refuse to listen to him in toto. It is a great sin to listen even. In that lies the germ of future troubles.

3. Moreover, bear with everyone's shortcomings. Forgive offences by the million. And if you love all unselfishly, all will by degrees come to love one another. As soon as they fully understand that the interests of one depend upon those of others, everyone of them will give up jealousy. To do something conjointly is not in our very national character. Therefore you must try to inaugurate that spirit with the utmost care, and wait patiently. To tell you the truth, I do not find among you any distinction of great or small: everyone has the capacity to manifest, in times of need, the highest energy. I see it. Look for instance how Shashi will remain always constant to his spot; his steadfastness is a great foundation-rock. How successfully Kali and Jogen brought about the Town Hall meeting; it was indeed a momentous task! Niranjan has done much work in Ceylon and elsewhere. How extensively has Sarada travelled and sown seeds of gigantic future works! Whenever I think of the wonderful renunciation of Hari,

about his steadiness of intellect and forbearance, I get a new access of strength! In Tulasi, Gupta, Baburam, Sharat, to mention a few, in every one of you there is tremendous energy. If you still entertain any doubt as to Shri Ramakrishna's being a jewel-expert, what then is the difference between you and a madman! Behold, hundreds of men and women of this country are beginning to worship our Lord as the greatest of all Avataras! Steady! Every great work is done slowly. ...

He is at the helm, what fear! You are all of infinite strength — how long does it take you to keep off petty jealousy or egoistic ideas! The moment such propensity comes, resign yourselves to the Lord! Just make over your body and mind to His work, and all troubles will be at an end for ever.

There will not be room enough, I see, in the house where you are at present living. A commodious building is needed. That is to say, you need not huddle together in one room. If possible, not more than two should live in the same room. There should be a big hall, where the books may be kept.

Every morning there should be a little reading from the scriptures, which Kali and others may superintend by turns. In the evening there should be another class, with a little practice in meditation and Sankirtanas etc. You may divide the work, and set apart one day for Yoga, a day for Bhakti, another for Jnâna, and so forth: It will be excellent if you fix a routine like this, so that outside people also may join in the evening classes. And every Sunday, from ten in the morning up till night, there should be a continuous succession of classes and Sankirtanas etc. That is for the public. If you take the trouble to continue this kind of routine work for some time, it will gradually make itself easy and smooth. There should be no smoking in that hall, for which another place must be set apart. If you can take trouble to bring about this state of things by degrees, I shall think a great advance is made.

What about a certain magazine that Haramohan was trying to publish? If you can manage to start one, it will indeed be nice.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 74

### LXXIV Rakhal

LXXIV

U.S.A.

(End of?) 1895.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Just now I got your letter and was glad to go through it. No matter whether there is any work done in India or not, the real work lies here. I do not want anybody to come over now. On my return to India I shall train a few men, and after that there will be no danger for them in the West. Yes, it was of Gunanidhi that I wrote. Give my special love and blessings to Hari Singh and others. Never take part in quarrels and disputes. Who on earth possesses the power to put the Raja of Khetri down? — The Divine Mother is at his elbow! I have received Kali's letter too. It will be very good indeed if you can start a centre in Kashmir. Wherever you can, open a centre.... Now I have laid the foundations firm here and in England, and nobody has the power to shake them. New York is in a commotion this year. Next year will come the turn of London. Even big giants will give way, who counts your pigmies! Gird up your loins and set yourselves to work! We must throw the world into convulsions with our triumphal shouts. This is but the beginning, my boy. Do you think there are men in our country, it is a Golgotha! There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses. Is there a greater strength than that of Knowledge? Can you give them education? Name me the country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works. How long will it take to raise the money? Where are the men? Are there any in our country? Our countrymen are boys, and even must treat them as such.... There are some few religious and philosophical books left — the remnants of the mansion that has been burnt down; take them with you, quick and come over to this country. ...

Never fear! The Divine Mother is helping me! This year such work is going to be turned out that you will be struck dumb to hear of it!

What fear! Whom to fear! Steel your hearts and set yourselves to work!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Sarada is talking of bringing out a Bengali magazine. Help it with all your might. It is not a bad idea. You must not throw cold water on anybody's project. Give up criticism altogether. Help all as long as you find they are doing all right, and in cases where they seem to be going wrong, show them their mistakes gently. It is criticising each other that is at the root of all mischief. That is the chief factor in breaking down organizations. ...

## Chapter 75

### LXXV Shashi

LXXV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

U.S.A.,

(Beginning of?) 1895.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

Yesterday I received a letter from you in which there was a smattering of news, but nothing in detail. I am much better now. Through the grace of the Lord I am proof against the severe cold for this year. Oh, the terrible cold! But these people keep all down through scientific knowledge. Every house has its cellar underground, in which there is a big boiler whence steam is made to course day and night through every room. This keeps all the rooms warm, but it has one defect, that while it is summer indoors, it is 30 to 40 degrees below zero outside! Most of the rich people of this country make for Europe during the winter, which is comparatively warm.

Now, let me give you some instructions. This letter is meant for you. Please go through these instructions once a day and act up to them. I have got Sarada's letter — he is doing good work — but now we want organization. To him, Brother Tarak, and others please give my special love and blessings. The reason why I give you these few instructions is that there is an organising power in you — the Lord has made this known to me — but it is not yet fully developed. Through His blessings it will soon be. That you never lose your centre of gravity is an evidence of this, but it must be both intensive and extensive.

1. All the Shâstras hold that the threefold misery that there is in this world is not natural, hence it is removable.
2. In the Buddha Incarnation the Lord says that the root of the Âdhibhautika misery or, misery arising from other terrestrial beings, is the formation of classes (Jâti); in other words, every form of class-distinction, whether based on birth, or acquirements, or wealth is at the bottom of this misery. In the Atman there is no distinction of sex, or Varna[7]\* or Ashrama,[8]\* or anything of the

kind, and as mud cannot be washed away by mud, it is likewise impossible to bring about oneness by means of separative ideas.

3. In the Krishna Incarnation He says that the root of all sorts of misery is Avidyâ (Nescience) and that selfless work purifies the mind. But " what is no-work" (Gita).

4. Only that kind of work which develops our spirituality is work. Whatever fosters materiality is no-work.

5. Therefore work and no-work must be regulated by a person's aptitude, his country, and his age.

6. Works such as sacrifices were suited to the olden times but are not for the modern times.

7. From the date that the Ramakrishna Incarnation was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age) . . . .

8. In this Incarnation atheistic ideas ... will be destroyed by the sword of Jnana (knowledge), and the whole world will be unified by means of Bhakti (devotion) and Prema (Divine Love). Moreover, in this Incarnation, Rajas, or the desire for name and fame etc., is altogether absent. In other words, blessed is he who acts up to His teachings; whether he accepts Him or not, does not matter.

9. The founders of different sects, in the ancient or modern times, have not been in the wrong. They have done well, but they must do better. Well — better — best.

10. Therefore we must take all up where they are, that is, we must lead them on to higher and higher ideals, without upsetting their own chosen attitude. As to social conditions, those that prevail now are good, but they shall be better — best.

11. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.

12. Hence, in the Ramakrishna Incarnation the accep-

tance of a woman as the Guru, hence His practicing in the woman's garb and frame of mind,[9]\* hence too His preaching the motherhood of women as representations of the Divine Mother.

13. Hence it is that my first endeavour is to start a Math for women. This Math shall be the origin of Gârgis and Maitreyis, and women of even higher attainments than these. . . .

14. No great work can be achieved by humbug. It is through love, a passion for truth, and tremendous energy, that all undertakings are accomplished.

15. There is no need for quarrel or dispute with anybody. Give your message and leave others to their own thoughts. "[075\_shashi\_03.jpg] — Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood." [075\_shashi\_04.jpg] — Why then fight?

. . . Combine seriousness with childlike naïveté. Live in harmony with all. Give up all idea of egoism, and entertain no sectarian views. Useless wrangling is a great sin.

. . . From Sarada's letter I came to know that N— Ghosh has compared me with Jesus Christ, and the like. That kind of thing may pass muster in our country, but if you send such comments here in print, there is a chance of my being insulted! I mean, I do not like to hamper anybody's freedom of thought — am I a missionary? If Kali has not sent those papers to this country, tell him not to do it. Only the Address will do, I do not want the proceedings. Now many respectable ladies and gentlemen of this country hold me in reverence. The missionaries and others of that ilk have tried their utmost to put me down, but finding it useless have now become quiet. Every undertaking must pass through a lot of obstacles. Truth triumphs if only one pursues a peaceful course. I have no need to reply to what a Mr. Hudson has spoken against me. In the first place, it is Unnecessary, and secondly, I shall be bringing myself down to the level of people of Mr. Hudson's type. Are you mad? Shall I fight from here with one Mr. Hudson? Through the Lord's grace, people who are far above Mr. Hudson in rank listen to me with veneration. Please do not send any more papers. Let all that go on in India, it will do no harm. For the Lord's work at one time there was need for that kind of newspaper blazoning. When that is done, there is no more need for it. . . . It is one of the attendant evils of name and fame that you can't have anything private. . . . Before you begin any undertaking, pray to Shri Ramakrishna, and he will show you the right way. We want a big plot of land to begin with, then building and all will come. Slowly our Math is going to raise itself, don't worry about it. . . .

Kali and all others have done good work. Give my love and best wishes to all. Work in unison with the people of

Madras, and let someone or other amongst you go there at intervals. Give up for ever the desire for name and fame and power. While I am on earth, Shri Ramakrishna is working through me. So long as you believe in this there is no danger of any evil for you.

The Ramakrishna Punthi (Life of Shri Ramakrishna in Bengali verse) that Akshaya has sent is very good, but there is no glorification of the Shakti at the opening which is a great defect. Tell him to remedy it in the second edition. Always bear this in mind that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that people are watching every one of our actions and utterances. Remember this and work.

. . . Be on the look-out for a site for our Math. . . . If it be at some little distance from Calcutta, no harm. Wherever we shall build our Math, there we shall have a stir made. Very glad to learn about Mahim Chakravarty. The Andes have turned into the holy Gaya, I see! Where is he? Please give him, S. J. Bijoy Goswami, and our other friends my cordial greetings. . . . To beat an opponent one needs a sword and buckler, so carefully learn English and Sanskrit. Kali's English is getting nicer every day, while that of Sarada is deteriorating. Tell Sarada to give up the flowery style. It is extremely difficult to write a flowery style in a foreign tongue. Please convey to him a hundred thousand bravos from me! There's a hero indeed. . . . Well done, all of you! Bravo, lads! The beginning is excellent. Go on in that way. If the adder of jealousy foes not come in, there is no fear!

— Those who serve My devotees are My best devotees." Have all of you a little grave bearing. I am not writing any book on Hinduism at present. But I am jotting down my thoughts. Every religion is an expression, a language to express the same truth, and we must speak to each in his own language. That Sarada has grasped this, is all right. It will be time enough to look to Hinduism later on. Do you think people in this country would be much attracted if I talk of Hinduism? — The very name of narrowness in ideas will scare them away! The real thing is — the Religion taught by Shri Ramakrishna, let the Hindus call it Hinduism — and others call it in their own way. Only you must proceed slowly. "[075\_shashi\_07.jpg] — One must make journeys slowly." Give my blessings to Dinanath, the new recruit. I have very little time to write — always lecture, lecture, lecture. Purity, Patience, Perseverance.... You must ask those numerous people who are now paying heed to Shri Ramakrishna's teachings, to help you pecuniarily to a certain extent. How can the Math be maintained unless they help you? You must not be shy of making this plain to all. . . .

There is no gain in hastening my return from this country. In the first place, a little sound made here will resound there a great deal. Then, the people of this country are immensely rich and are bold enough to pay. While the people of our country have neither money nor the least

bit of boldness.

You will know everything by degrees. Was Shri Ramakrishna the Saviour of India merely? It is this narrow idea that has brought about India's ruin, and her welfare is an impossibility so long as this is not rooted out. Had I the money I would send each one of you to travel all over the world. No great idea can have a place in the heart unless one steps out of his little corner. It will be verified in time. Every great achievement is done slowly. Such is the Lord's will. ...

Why didn't any of you write about Daksha and Harish? I shall be glad to know if you watch their whereabouts. That Sanyal is feeling miserable is because his mind is not yet pure like the water of the Ganga. It is not yet selfless, but will be in time. He will have no misery if he can give up the little crookedness and be straightforward. My special loving greetings to Rakhil and Hari. Take great care of them. ... Never forget that Rakhil was the special object of Shri Ramakrishna's love. Let nothing daunt you. Who on earth has the power to snub us so long as the Lord favours us? Even if you are at your last breath, be not afraid. Work on with the intrepidity of a lion but, at the same time with the tenderness of a flower. Let this year's Shri Ramakrishna festival be celebrated in great pomp. Let the feeding be quite ordinary — Prasâda being distributed in earthen plates among the devotees standing in rows. There should be readings from Shri Ramakrishna's Life. Place books like the Vedas and the Vedanta together and perform Ârati before them. . . . Avoid issuing invitation cards of the old style.

" [075\_shashi\_08.jpg]

— With Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna's blessings and our great esteem we have the pleasure to invite you." Write some such line, and then write that to defray the expenses of Shri Ramakrishna's Birthday Festival and those of the maintenance of the Math, you want his assistance. That if he likes, he may kindly send the money to such and such, at such and such address, and so on. Also add a page in English. The term "Lord Ramakrishna" has no meaning. You must give it up. Write "Bhagavan" in English characters, and add a line or two in English:

#### THE ANNIVERSARY OF BHAGAVAN SHRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sir, we have great pleasure in inviting you to join us in celebrating the ———th anniversary of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa. For the celebration of this great occasion and for the maintenance of the Alambazar Math funds are absolutely necessary. If you think that the cause is worthy of your sympathy, we shall be very grateful to receive your contribution to the great work.

Yours obediently,

(Name)

If you get more than enough money, spend only a little of it and keep the surplus as a reserve fund to defray your expenses. On the plea of offering the food to the Lord, do not make everybody wait till he is sick, to have a stale and unsavoury dinner. Have two filters made and use that filtered water for both cooking and drinking purposes. Boil the water before filtering. If you do this, you will never more hear of malaria. Keep a strict eye on everybody's health. If you can give up lying on the floor — in other words, if you can get the money to do it, it will be excellent indeed. Dirty clothes are the chief cause of disease. ... About the food offering, let me tell you that only a little Payasâna (milk-rice with sugar) will do. He used to love that alone. It is true that the worship-room is a help to many, but it is no use indulging in Râjasika and Tâmasika food. Let the ceremonials give place to a certain extent to a little study of the Gita or the Upanishads or other sacred books. What I mean is this — let there be as little materialism as possible, with the maximum of spirituality. . . . Did Shri Ramakrishna come for this or that particular individual, or for the world at large? If the latter, then you must present him in such a light that the whole world may understand him. . . . You must not identify yourselves with any life of his written by anybody nor give your sanction to any. There is no danger so long as such books do not come out associated with our name. . . . "Say yea, yea, to all and stick to your own."

. . . A thousand thanks to Mahendra Babu for his kindly helping us. He is a very liberal-hearted man. ... About Sanyal, he will attain the highest good by doing his bit of work attentively, that is, by simply serving Shri Ramakrishna's children. . . . Brother Tarak is doing very good work. Bravo! Well done! That is what we want. Let me see all of you shoot like so many meteors! What is Gangadhar doing? Some Zemindars in Rajputana respect him. Tell him to get some money from them as Bhikshâ; then he is a man. ...

Just now I read Akshaya's book. Give him a hundred thousand hearty embraces from me. Through his pen Shri Ramakrishna is manifesting himself. Blessed is Akshaya! Let him recite that Punthi before all. He must recite it before all in the Festival. If the work be too large, let him read extracts of it. Well, I do not find a single irrelevant word in it. I cannot tell in words the joy I have experienced by reading his book. Try all of you to give the book an extensive sale. Then ask Akshaya to go from village to village to preach. Well done Akshaya! He is doing his work. Go from village to village and proclaim to all Shri Ramakrishna's teachings, can there be a more blessed lot than this? I tell you, Akshaya's book and Akshaya himself must electrify the masses. Dear, dear, Akshaya, I bless you with all my heart, my dear brother. May the Lord sit

in your tongue! Go and spread his teachings from door to door. There is no need whatever of your becoming a Sannyasin. . . . Akshaya is the future apostle for the masses of Bengal. Take great care of Akshaya; his faith and devotion have borne fruit.

Ask Akshaya to write these few points in the third section of his book, "The Propagation of the Faith".

1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other Incarnations have done in the past, Shri Ramakrishna lived to practice in the course of a single life.

2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Incarnations, and so forth, without understanding his life. For he was the explanation.

3. From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age). Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of distinctions, and everyone down to the Chandâla will be a sharer in the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate, Brahmins and Chandalas — he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of Peace — the separation between Hindus and Mohammedans, between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That fight about distinctions that there was, belonged to another era. In this Satya-Yuga the tidal wave of Shri Ramakrishna's Love has unified all.

Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own style.

Whoever — man or woman — will worship Shri Ramakrishna, be he or she ever so low, will be then and there converted into the very highest. Another thing, the Motherhood of God is prominent in this Incarnation. He used to dress himself as a woman — he was, as it were, our Mother — and we must likewise look upon all women as the reflections of the Mother. In India there are two great evils. Trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste restrictions. He was the Saviour of women, Saviour of the masses, Saviour of all, high and low. And let Akshaya introduce his worship in every home — Brahmin or Chandala, man or woman — everyone has the right to worship him. Whoever will worship him only with devotion shall be blessed for ever.

Tell him to write in this strain. Never mind anything — the Lord will be at his side.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. ... Ask Sanyal to send me a copy each of the Nârada and Shândilya Sutras, and one of the Yogavâsishtha, that has been translated in Calcutta. I want the English translation of the last, not a Bengali edition....

## Chapter 76

### LXXVI Rakhāl

LXXVI

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

READING, CAVERSHAM, ENGLAND,

1895.

DEAR RAKHAL,

Glad to receive your letters. There are two defects in the letters which you all write, specially in yours. The first is that very few of the important points I ask are answered. Secondly, there is unusual delay in replying. . . . I have to work day and night, and am always whirling from place to place besides.... These are countries where the people are most luxurious, fashionable folk, and nobody would touch a man who has but a speck of dirt on his body. ... I hoped that somebody would come while I was still here, but as yet nothing has been settled I see. ... Business is business, that is, you must do everything promptly; delay and shuffling won't do. By the end of next week I shall go to America, so there is no chance of my meeting him who is coming. . . . These are countries of gigantic scholars. Is it a joke to make disciples of such people? You are but children and talk like children. Only this much is needed that there should be someone to teach a little Sanskrit, or translate a bit in my absence, that's all. Why not let Girish Babu visit these lands? It is a good idea. It will cost him but 3000 rupees to visit England and America, and go back. The more people come to these countries, the better. But then it sets my nerves on edge to look at those who don hats and pose as Sahibs!

Black as chimney sweeps, and calling themselves Europeans! Why not wear one's country-dress, as befits gentlemen? — Instead of that, to add to that frightfulness of appearance! Good heavens! . . . Here, as in our country one has to spend from one's own pocket to give lectures, but one can make good the expenses if one lives long enough and makes a reputation. Another thing, my incessant lecturing tours are making my constitution very nervous, causing insomnia and other troubles. Over and

above that, I have to work single-handed. It is no use depending on my countrymen. No one (in Bengal) has hitherto helped me with a penny, nor has a single soul stepped forward to my assistance. Everybody in this world seeks help, and the more you help him, the more he wants. And if you can do no further, he will call you a cheat.... I love — and trust him.... He will be free from disease through the Lord's grace. I take all his responsibility. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 77

# LXXVII Shashi

LXXVII

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, ENGLAND,

1895.

DEAR SHASHI,

. . . I am in receipt of Rakhal's letter today. I am sorry to hear that — has suffered from gravel. Most probably it was due to indigestion. Gopal's debts have been cleared; now ask him to join the monastic order. The worldly-wise instinct is most difficult to root out. . . . Let him come and work in the Math. One is apt to imbibe a lot of mischievous ideas by concerning oneself too long in worldly affairs. If he refuses to take the monastic vow, please tell him to clear out. I don't want amphibious type of men who will be half monks and half householders. . . . Haramohan has coined a Lord Ramakrishna Paramahansa, I see. What does he mean? English Lord, or Duke? Tell Rakhal, let people say whatever they will — "Men (who wrongly criticise) are to be treated as worms!" as Shri Ramakrishna used to say. Let there be no disparity between what you profess and what you do, also eschew the very name of Jesuitism. Was I ever an orthodox, Paurânika Hindu, an adherent of social usages? I do not pose as one. You will not have to say things that will be pleasant to any section of people. You must not so much as notice what the Bengalis say for or against us. . . . They could not do a penny-worth of service to him whose birth has sanctified their country where the primary laws of health and sanitation are trampled, and yet they would talk big! What matters is, my brother, what such men have got to say! . . . It is for you to go on doing your own work. Why look up to men for approbation, look up to God! I hope Sharat will be able to teach them the Gita and the Upanishads and their commentaries somehow, with the help of the dictionary. — Or, is it an empty Vairâgya that you have? The days of such Vairâgya are gone! It is not for everyone, my boy, to become Ramakrishna

Paramahansa! I hope Sharat has started by this time. Please send a copy of the Panchadashi, a copy of the Gita (with as many commentaries as possible), a copy each of the Nârada and Shândilya Sutras (published in Varanasi), a translation (good, not worthless) of the Panchadashi — if it is available — and the translation by Kâlîvara Vedântavâgîsha of Shankara's Commentary. And if there be any translation, Bengali or English (by Shrish Babu of Allahabad), of Pânini's Sutras, or the Kâshikâ-Vritti, or the Phani-Bhâshya, please send a copy of each. ... Now, just tell your Bengalis to send me a copy of the Vâchaspatya Dictionary, and that will be a good test for those tall-talking people. In England, religious movements make very slow progress. These people here are either bigots or atheists. And the former again have only a bit of formal religion. They say, "Patriotism is our religion." That is all.

Send the books to America, c/o Miss Mary Phillips, 19 West 38th Street, New York, U.S.A. That is my American address. By the end of November I shall go to America. So send my books etc., there. If Sharat has started immediately on your receipt of my letter, then only I may meet him, otherwise not. Business is business, no child's play. Mr. Sturdy will see to him and accommodate him. This time I have come to England just to probe a little. Next summer I shall try to make some stir. The winter after that, I shall go to India. . . . Correspond regularly with those who are interested in us, so as to keep up their interest. Try to open centres in places all over Bengal.... This much for the present. In my next I shall give you more details. Mr. Sturdy is a very nice gentleman, a staunch Vedantist, and understands a smattering of Sanskrit. It is with a good deal of labour that you can do a little bit of work in these countries; a sheer uphill task, with cold and rain into the bargain. Moreover, here you must support yourself and do your labour of love. Englishmen won't spend a penny on lectures or things of that sort. If they do come to listen to you, well, thank your stars — as is the case in our country. Besides, the common people here do not even know of me now. In addition to all this, they will give you a wide berth if you preach God and such things to them. They think this must be another clergyman! Well, you just patiently do one thing — set about collecting everything that books, beginning with

the Rig-Veda down to the most insignificant of Puranas and Tantras, have got to say about creation and annihilation of the universe, about race, heaven, and hell, the soul, consciousness, and intellect, etc., the sense-organs, Mukti, transmigration, and suchlike things. No child's play would do, I want real scholarly work. The most important thing is to collect the materials. My love to you all.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 78

### LXXVIII Rakhhal

#### LXXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

1895.

DEAR RAKHAL,

. . . Your suggestion to me to go back to India is no doubt right, but a seed has been sown in this country, and there is the possibility of its being nipped in the bud if I go away all on a sudden. Hence I have to wait some time. Moreover it will be possible to manage everything nicely from here. Everybody requests me to return to India. It is all right, but don't you see it is not wise to depend upon others. A wise man should stand firm on his own legs and act. Everything will come about slowly. For the present don't forget to be on the look-out for a site. We want a big plot — of about ten to twenty thousand rupees — it must be right on the Ganga. Though my capital is small, I am exceedingly bold. Have an eye on securing the land. At present we shall have to work three centres, one in New York, another in Calcutta and a third in Madras. Then, by degrees, as the Lord will arrange. ... You must keep a strict eye on your health; let everything else be subordinated to that. ...

Brother Tarak is eager for travel. Well, it is good, but these are very expensive countries; a preacher needs here at least a thousand rupees a month. But Brother Tarak has boldness, and it is God who provides every thing. Quite true, but he must have to improve his English a little. The thing is, one has to snatch one's bread from the jaws of the missionary scholars. That is, one must prevail over these people by dint of learning, or one will be blown off at a puff. They understand neither Sâdhus nor your Sânniyasins, nor the spirit of renunciation. What they do understand is the vastness of learning, the display of eloquence and tremendous activity. Over and above that, the whole country will be searching for flaws, the clergy will day and night try to snub you, through force or guile. You must get rid of these obstructions to preach your doctrines. Through the mercy of the Divine Mother everything is possible. But in my opinion if Brother Tarak goes on starting some societies in the Punjab and

Madras, and you become organised, it will be the best thing. It is indeed a great thing to discover a new path, but it is as difficult a task to cleanse that path and make it spacious and nice. If you live for some time in places where I have sown the seeds of our Master's ideals and succeed in developing the seeds into plants, you will be doing much greater work than I did. What will they who cannot manage some ready-made thing do with regard to things that are yet to come? If you cannot add a little salt to a dish almost done, how am I to believe that you will collect all the ingredients? Let Brother Tarak, as an alternative, start a Himalayan Math at Almora and have a library there, so that we may spend some of our spare time in a cool place and practice spiritual exercises. However, I have nothing to say against any particular course which any one may be led to adopt; on the contrary, God-speed — " bit. What's the good of being in a hurry? You shall all travel the whole world. Courage! Brother Tarak has a great capacity for work within him. Hence I expect much of him. . . . You remember, I suppose, how after Shri Ramakrishna's passing away, all forsook us as so many worthless, ragged boys. Only people like Balaram, Suresh, Master, and Chuni Babu were our friends at that hour of need. And we shall never be able to repay our debts to them. ... Tell Chuni Babu in private that he has nothing to fear, that those who are protected by the Lord must be above fear. I am a puny man, but the glories of the Lord are infinite. [078\_rakhal\_02.jpg] — Discard fear. Let not your faith be shaken. ...Has danger any power over one whom the Lord has taken into His fold?

Ever yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 79

### LXXIX Mrs. Bull

LXXIX

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, READING,  
ENGLAND,

17th Sept., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Mr. Sturdy and I want to get hold of a few of the best, say, strong and intelligent men in England to form a society, and therefore we must proceed slowly. We must take care not to be run over with “fads” from the first. This you will know has been my policy in America too. Mr. Sturdy has been in India living with our Sannyasins in their manner for some time. He is an exceedingly energetic man, educated and well versed in Sanskrit. ... So far so good. ... Purity, perseverance, and energy — these three I want, and if I get only half a dozen here, my work will go on. I have a great chance of such a few.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 80

# LXXX Mrs. Bull

LXXX

READING, ENGLAND,

24th Sept., '95.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have not done any visible work as yet except helping Mr. Sturdy in studying Sanskrit. ... Mr. Sturdy wants me to bring over a monk from India from amongst my brethren to help him when I am away in America. I have written to India for one. . . . So far it is all right. I am waiting for the next wave. "Avoid not and seek not — wait for what the Lord sends", is my motto. . . . I am a slow writer, but the heart is full of gratitude.

Yours with best wishes,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 81

## LXXXI Mother

LXXXI

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, READING,

ENGLAND,

October, 1895.

DEAR MOTHER, (Mrs. F. H. Leggett)

You have not forgotten your son? Where are you now? And Tante and the babies? What about our saintly worshipper at your shrine? Joe Joe is not entering "Nirvana" so soon, but her deep silence almost seems to be a big "Samadhi".

Are you on the move? I am enjoying England very much. I am living with my friend on philosophy, leaving a little margin for eating and smoking. We are getting nothing else but Dualism and Monism and all the rest of them.

Hollister has become very manly, I suppose, in his long trousers; and Alberta is studying German.

The Englishmen here are very friendly. Except a few Anglo-Indians, they do not hate black men at all. Not even do they hoot at me in the streets. Sometimes I wonder whether my face has turned white, but the mirror tells the truth. Yet they are all so friendly here.

Again, the English men and women who love India are more Hindu than the Hindus themselves. I am getting plenty of vegetables cooked, you will be surprised to hear, à la Indienne perfectly. When an Englishman takes up a thing, he goes to its very depths. Yesterday I met a Prof. Fraser, a high official here. He has been half his life in India; and he has lived so much in ancient thought and wisdom that he does not care a fig for anything out of India!! You will be astonished to hear that many of the thoughtful English men and women think that the Hindu caste is the only solution of the social problem. With that idea in their head you may imagine how they hate

the socialists and other social democrats!! Again, here the men — and the most highly educated — take the greatest interest in Indian thought, and very few women. The woman's sphere is narrower here than in America. So far everything is going very well with me. I shall let you know any further developments.

With my love to paterfamilias, to the Queen Mother, to Joe Joe (no title), and to the babies,

Ever yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 82

### LXXXII Dear—

LXXXII

READING, ENGLAND,

4th Oct., 1895.

DEAR—,

. . . Purity, patience, and perseverance overcome all obstacles. All great things must of necessity be slow. . . .

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 83

# LXXXIII Rakhhal

LXXXIII

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T. STURDY,

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, READING,

4th October, 1895.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

You know that I am now in England. I shall stay here for about a month and go back to America. Next summer I shall again come to England. At present there is not much prospect in England, but the Lord is omnipotent. Let us wait and see. . . .

It is impossible for — to come now. The thing is, the money belongs to Mr. Sturdy, and we must have the kind of man he likes. Mr. Sturdy has taken initiation from me, and is a very enterprising and good man.

In the first place we want a man who has a thorough mastery of English and Sanskrit. It is true that will be able to pick up English soon should he come here but I am as yet unable to bring men here to learn. We want them, first, who will be able to teach. In the second place, I trust those that will not desert me in prosperity and adversity alike. . . . The most trustworthy men are needed. Then, after the foundation is laid, let him who will, come and make a noise, there is no fear. — gave no proof of wisdom in being carried away by a hubbub and joining the party of those charlatans. Sir, granted that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a sham, granted that it has been a very serious mistake, indeed, to take refuge in him, but what is the way out now? What if one life is spent in vain, but shall a man eat his own words? Can there be such a thing as having a dozen husbands? Any of you may join any party you like, I have no objection, no, not in the least, but travelling this world over I find that save and except his circle alone, everywhere else thought and act are at variance. For those that belong to him, I have the utmost love, the utmost confidence. I have no alternative in the matter. Call me one-sided if you will, but there you have

my bona fide avowal. If but a thorn pricks the foot of one who has surrendered himself to Shri Ramakrishna, it makes my bones ache. All others I love; you will find very few men so unsectarian as I am; but you must excuse me, I have that bit of bigotry. If I do not appeal to his name, whose else shall I? It will be time enough to seek for a big Guru in our next birth; but in this, it is that unlearned Brahmin who has bought this body of mine for ever.

I give you a bit of my mind; don't be angry, pray. I am your slave so long as you are his — step a hair's breadth outside that, and you and I are on a par. All the sects and societies that you see, the whole host of them, inside the country or out, he has already swallowed them all, my brother.

" [083\_rakhal\_01.jpg]

— These have verily been killed by Myself long ago, be only the instrument, O Arjuna." Today or tomorrow they will be merged in your own body. O man of little faith! Through his grace, " [083\_rakhal\_02.jpg] — The whole universe becomes a hoof-mark of the cow." Be not traitors, that is a sin past atonement. Name, fame, good deeds, " [083\_rakhal\_03.jpg] — Whatever sacrifices you perform, whatever penances you undergo, whatever you eat" — surrender everything to his feet. What on earth do we want? He has given us refuge, what more do we want? Bhakti is verily its own reward — what else is needed? My brother, he who made men of us by feeding and clothing and imparting wisdom and knowledge, who opened the eyes of our self, whom day and night we found the living God — must we be traitors to him!!! And you forget the mercy of such a Lord! The lives of Buddha and Krishna and Jesus are matters of ancient history, and doubts are entertained about their historicity, and you in spite of seeing the greatness of Shri Ramakrishna's life in flesh and blood sometimes lose your head! Fie upon you! I have nothing to say. His likeness is being worshipped in and out of your country, by godless and heartless men, and you are stranded at times on disbelief !! In a breath he will create for himself hundreds of thousands of such as you are. Blessed is your birth, blessed your lineage, and blessed your country that you were allowed to take the dust of his feet. Well I can't help. He is protecting us, forsooth — I see it before my eyes. Insane that you are, is

it through my own strength that beauty like that of fairies, and hundreds of thousands of rupees, lose their attraction and appear as nothing to me? Or is it he who is protecting me? He who has no faith in him and no reverence for the Holy Mother will be a downright loser, I tell you plainly.

. . . Haramohan has written about his troubled circumstances, and says he will be dislodged from his home soon. He has asked for some lectures; but I have none at present, but have still some money left in my purse, which I shall send him. So he need not be afraid. I could send him at once, but I suspect that the money I last sent was miscarried, therefore I postpone sending it. Secondly, I know, besides, of no address to send it to. I see the Madras people have failed to start the paper. Practical wisdom is altogether wanting in the Hindu race, I see. Whenever you promise to do any work, you must do it exactly at the appointed time, or people lose their faith in you. Money matters require a speedy reply. . . . If Master Mahashaya be willing, tell him to be my Calcutta agent, for I have an implicit faith in him, and he understands a good deal of these things; it is not for a childish and noisy rabble to do it. Tell him to fix upon a centre, an address that will not change every hour, and to which I shall direct all my Calcutta correspondence. . . . Business is business. . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 84

### LXXXIV Mrs. Bull

LXXXIV

READING,

6th Oct., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . I am translating a little book on Bhakti with Mr. Sturdy with copious commentaries, which is to be published soon. This month I am to give two lectures in London and one in Maidenhead. This will open up the way to some classes and parlour lectures. We do not wish to make any noise but to go quietly. . .

Yours with best wishes,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 85

# LXXXV Akhandananda

LXXXV

(Translated from Bengali)

LONDON,

13th Nov., 1895.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter. It is excellent work that you are doing. R— is very liberal and openhanded, but no advantage should be taken over him for that reason. About the raising of funds by Shrimân —, well, it is a fair enterprise; but my boy, this is a very queer world, where even the World-Gods Brahmâ and Vishnu find it difficult to evade the clutches of lust and gold. Wherever there is any the least concern with money, there is the chance for misunderstanding. Let therefore nobody undertake such work as raising money on behalf of the Math. ... Whenever you hear of any householder collecting funds in my or our name on the plea of erecting a Math, or some such thing, the first thing you should do is to distrust him, and never set your hand to it. The more so, as householders of poor means take to various tricks to supply their wants. Therefore, if ever a trusty devotee or a householder with a heart, being of affluent circumstances, undertakes such works as the founding of a Math, or if the funds raised be kept in the custody of a trusty householder of wealth — well and good, otherwise never have a hand in it. On the contrary, you must dissuade others from such a thing. You are but a boy and are ignorant of the snare of gold. Opportunities will turn even a staunch moralist into a cheat. This is the way of the world.

It is not at all in our nature to do a work conjointly. It is to this that our miserable condition is due. He who knows how to obey knows how to command. 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.

Go on with the work as you are doing it, but then you must pay particular attention to study. J— Babu has sent a Hindi magazine, in which Pundit R— of Alwar has published a translation of my Chicago Address. Please convey my special indebtedness and thanks to both.

Let me now address myself to you — take particular care to start a centre in Rajputana. It must be in some central place like Jaipur or Ajmer. Then branches must be established in towns like Alwar and Khetri. You must mix with all, we do not want to quarrel with any. Give my loving embrace to Pundit N—; the man is very energetic, and will be a very practical man in time. Tender my loving regards to Mr. M— and —ji too. A Religious Association or something of the kind has been afoot at Ajmer — what is it? Let me know all about it. M— Babu writes that he and others have written me letters; but I have not received any up till now. . . . About Maths, or centres, or anything of the kind, it is no use starting them in Calcutta; Varanasi is the place for them. I have many plans like that, but all depends on funds. You will know of them by degrees. You might have noticed from the papers that our movement is steadily gaining ground in England. Every enterprise in this country takes some time to have a go. But once John Bull sets his hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are quick, but they are somewhat like straw on fire, ready to be extinguished. Do not preach to the public that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. I have some followers at — look after them. . . . Infinite power will come unto you — never fear. Be pure, have faith, be obedient.

Teach against the marriage of boys. No scripture ever sanctions it. But for the present say nothing against little girls being married. Directly you stop the marriage of boys, that of girls will stop of itself. Girls surely are not going to marry among themselves! Write to the Secretary, Arya Samaj, Lahore, asking the whereabouts of a Sannyasin named Achyutananda who used to live with them. Make special inquiry of the man. . . . Never fear.

Yours affectionately,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 86

# LXXXVI Mrs. Bull

LXXXVI

LONDON,

21st Nov., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I sail by the Britannic on Wednesday, the 27th. My work so far has been very satisfactory here and I am sure to do splendid work here next summer. . . .

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 87

# LXXXVII Alberta

LXXXVII

R.M.S. "Britannic", Thursday morning, Dec. 5, 1895.

DEAR ALBERTA,

Received your nice letter last evening. Very kind of you to remember me. I am going soon to see the "Heavenly Pair". Mr. Leggett is a saint as I have told you already, and your mother is a born empress, every inch of her, with a saint's heart inside.

I am so glad you are enjoying the Alps so much They must be wonderful. It is always in such places that the human soul aspires for freedom. Even if the nation is spiritually poor, it aspires for physical freedom. I met a young Swiss in London. He used to come to my classes. I was very successful in London, and though I did not care for the noisy city, I was very much pleased with the people. In your country, Alberta, the Vedantic thought was introduced in the beginning by ignorant "cranks", and one has to work his way through the difficulties created by such introductions. You may have noticed that only a few men or women of the upper classes ever joined my classes in America. Again in America the upper classes being the rich, their whole time is spent in enjoying their wealth and imitating (aping?) the Europeans. On the other hand in England the Vedantic ideas have been introduced by the most learned men in the country, and there are a large number among the upper classes in England who are very thoughtful. So you will be astonished to hear that I found my grounds all prepared, and I am convinced that my work will have more hold on England than America. Add to this the tremendous tenacity of the English character, and judge for yourself. By this you will find that I have changed a good deal of my opinion about England, and I am glad to confess it. I am perfectly sure that we will do still better in Germany. I am coming back to England next summer. In the meanwhile my work is in very able hands. Joe Joe has been the same kind good pure friend to me here as in America, and my debt to your family is simply immense. My love and blessings to Hollister and you. The steamer is standing at anchor on account of fog. The purser has very kindly given me a whole cabin by myself. Every

Hindu is a Raja, they think, and are very polite — and the charm will break, of course, when they find that the Raja is penniless!!

Yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 88

# LXXXVIII Mrs. Bull

LXXXVIII

228 WEST 39TH STREET, NEW YORK,

8th Dec., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Many thanks for your kind note of welcome. I arrived last Friday after ten days of a very tedious voyage. It was awfully rough and for the first time in my life I was very badly seasick. . . . I have left some strong friends in England who will work in my absence expecting my arrival next summer. My plans are not settled yet about the work here. Only I have an idea to run to Detroit and Chicago meanwhile, and then come back to New York. The public lecture plan I intend to give up entirely, as I find the best thing for me to do is to step entirely out of the money question — either in public lectures or private classes. In the long run it does harm and sets a bad example.

In England I worked on this principle and refused even the voluntary collections they made. Mr. Sturdy, being a rich man, bore the major part of the expenses of lecturing in big halls — the rest I bore. It worked well. Again, to use rather a vulgar illustration, even in religion there is no use overstocking the market. The supply must follow the demand, and the demand alone. If people want me, they will get up lectures. I need not bother myself about these things. If you think after consultation with Mrs. Adams and Miss Locke that it would be practicable for me to come to Chicago for a course of lectures, write to me. Of course the money question should be left entirely out.

My idea is for autonomic, independent groups in different places. Let them work on their own account and do the best they can. As for myself, I do not want to entangle myself in any organisation. Hoping you are enjoying good health both physically and mentally,

I am yours, in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 89

### LXXXIX Mrs. Bull

LXXXIX

228 W. 39TH STREET, NEW YORK,

10th Dec., 1895.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have received the Secretary's letter and will be glad to lecture before the Harvard Philosophical Club as requested. The difficulty in the way is: I have begun to write in earnest, as I want to finish some text-books to form the basis of work when I am gone. I have to hurry through four little books before I go.

This month, notices are out for the four Sunday lectures. The lectures for the first week of February in Brooklyn are being arranged by Dr. Janes and others.

Yours, with best wishes,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 90

### XC Sister

XC

NEW YORK,

29th Dec., 1895.

DEAR SISTER, (Miss S. Farmer)

In this universe where nothing is lost, where we live in the midst of death in life, every thought that is thought, in public or in private, in crowded thoroughfares or in the deep recesses of primeval forests, lives. They are continuously trying to become self-embodied, and until they have embodied themselves, they will struggle for expression, and any amount of repression cannot kill them. Nothing can be destroyed — those thoughts that caused evil in the past are also seeking embodiment, to be filtered through repeated expression and, at last, transfigured into perfect good.

As such, there is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. This new thought is telling us to give up our dreams of dualism, of good and evil in essence, and the still wilder dream of suppression. It teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better — and still better. It stops short of nothing but acceptance. It teaches that no situation is hopeless, and as such accepts every form of mental, moral, or spiritual thought where it already stands, and without a word of condemnation tells it that so far it has done good, now is the time to do better. What in old times was thought of as the elimination of bad, it teaches as the transfiguration of evil and the doing of better. It, above all, teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.

The Greenacre meetings last summer were so wonderful, simply because you opened yourself fully to that thought which has found in you so competent a medium of expression, and because you took your stand on the highest teaching of this thought that the kingdom of heaven already exists.

You have been consecrated and chosen by the Lord as a channel for converting this thought into life, and every

one that helps you in this wonderful work is serving the Lord.

Our scripture teaches that he who serves the servants of the Lord is His highest worshipper. You are a servant of the Lord, and as a disciple of Krishna I will always consider it a privilege and worship to render you any service in the carrying out of your inspired mission wherever I be.

Ever your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 91

## XCI Sarada

XCI

(Translated from Bengali)

Jan., 1896.

DEAR SARADA,

. . . Your idea of the paper is very good indeed. Apply yourself to it heart and soul. . . . Never mind the funds. . . . There are many to preach Christianity and Mohammedanism — you just go through the preaching of your own country's religion. But then if you can get hold of a Mohammedan who is versed in Arabic and have old Arabic books translated, it will be a good plan. There is much of Indian history in the Persian language. If you can have the books translated bit by bit, it will be a good regular item. We want quite a number of writers, then there is the difficult task of getting subscribers. The way out is this: You lead a wandering life; wherever you find Bengali language spoken, thrust the paper on whomsoever you can lay your hands on. Enlist them by vehemence! — they would always turn tail the moment they have to spend something. Never mind anything! Push it on! Begin to contribute articles, all of you who can. It won't do merely to sit idle. You have done a heroic deed! Bravo! Those who falter and vacillate will lag behind, and you will jump straight on top of all! Those that are working for their own salvation will neither have their own nor that of others. Let the commotion that you make be such as to resound to the world's end. There are people who are ready to pick holes in everything, but when it comes to the question of work, not a scent of them can be had! To work! — as far as in you lies! Then I shall go to India and move the whole country. What fear! "Even a snake loses its venom if it is insisted that it has none." These people will go on the negative track, till they are actually reduced to nothing! . . .

Gangadhar has done right heroic work! Well done! Kali has joined him in work — thrice well done!! Let one go to Madras, and another to Bombay, let the world shake on its hinges! Oh, the grief! If I could get two or three like me, I could have left the world convulsed. As it is, I have to proceed gently. Move the world to its

foundations! Send one to China, another to Japan! What will the poor householders do, with their little bits of life? It is for the Sannyasins, Shiva's demons, to rend the skies with their shouts of "Hara! Hara! Shambho!"

Yours affectionately

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 92

# XCII Yogen

### XCII

(Translated from Bengali)

228 W. 39, NEW YORK.

24th Jan., 1896.

DEAR YOGEN,

. . . I am very sorry to hear that your health is not yet all right. Can you go to a very cold climate where there is plenty of snowfall in the winter, Darjeeling, for instance? The severity of the cold will set your stomach right, as it has done in my case. And can you give up altogether the habit of using ghee and spices? Butter digests more quickly than ghee. ...

Three months more and I go to England, to try once more to make some stir; the following winter to India — and after that, it depends on the Lord.

Put forth all nerve for the magazine that Sarada is wanting to publish. Ask Shashi to look to it. One thing, neither Kali nor anybody else has any need of coming to England at present. I shall train them first when I go to India, and then they may go wherever they please.

We would do nothing ourselves and would scoff at others who try to do something — this is the bane that has brought about our downfall as a nation. Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at the root of all misery, and you must therefore give these two up. Who but the Lord knows what potentialities there are in particular individuals — let all have opportunities, and leave the rest to the Lord. It is indeed very difficult to have an equal love for all, but without it there is no Mukti.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 93

### XCIII Mrs. Bull

XCIII

NEW YORK,

25th Jan., 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Your letter to Sturdy has been sent over to me. It was very kind of you to write that note. This year, I am afraid, I am getting overworked, as I feel the strain. I want a rest badly. So it is very good, as you say, that the Boston work be taken up in the end of March. By the end of April I will start for England.

Land can be had in large plots in the Catskills for very little money. There is a plot of 101 acres for \$200. The money I have ready, only I cannot buy the land in my name. You are the only friend in this country in whom I have perfect trust. If you consent, I will buy the land in your name. The students will go there in summer and build cottages or camps as they like and practice meditation. Later on, if they can collect funds, they may build something up. I am sorry, you cannot come just now. Tomorrow will be the last Sunday lecture of this month. The first Sunday of next month there will be a lecture in Brooklyn; the rest, three in New York, with which I will close this year's New York lectures.

I have worked my best. If there is any seed of truth in it, it will come to life. So I have no anxiety about anything. I am also getting tired of lecturing and having classes. After a few months' work in England I will go to India and hide myself absolutely for some years or for ever. I am satisfied in my conscience that I did not remain an idle Swami. I have a note-book which has travelled with me all over the world. I find these words written seven years ago — "Now to seek a corner and lay myself there to die!" Yet all this Karma remained. I hope I have worked it out. I hope the Lord will give me freedom from this preaching and adding good bondages.

"If you have known the Âtman as the one existence and that nothing else exists, for whom, for what desire, do you trouble yourself?" Through Maya all this doing

good etc. came into my brain — now they are leaving me. I get more and more convinced that there is no other object in work except the purification of the soul — to make it fit for knowledge. This world with its good and evil will go on in various forms. Only the evil and good will take new names and new seats. My soul is hankering after peace and rest eternal undisturbed.

"Live alone, live alone. He who is alone never comes into conflict with others — never disturbs others, is never disturbed by others." I long, oh! I long for my rags, my shaven head, my sleep under the trees, and my food from begging! India is the only place where, with all its faults, the soul finds its freedom, its God. All this Western pomp is only vanity, only bondage of the soul. Never more in my life I realised more forcibly the vanity of the world. May the Lord break the bondage of all — may all come out of Maya — is the constant prayer of

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 94

### XCIV Sarada

#### XCIV

(Translated from Bengali)

#### BOSTON,

2nd March, 1896.

DEAR SARADA,

Your letter informed me of everything; but I note that you do not so much as refer to the cable I sent about the celebration. The dictionary that Shashi sent a few months ago has not arrived so far. ... I am going to England soon. Sharat need not come now at all; for I am myself going to England. I do not want people who take such a long time to make up their minds. I did not invite him for a European tour, and I do not have the money either. So ask him not to come, and none else need.

On perusal of your letter on Tibet, I came to lose all regard for your common sense. In the first place, it is nonsense to say that Notovitch's book is genuine. Did you see any original copy, or bring it to India? Secondly, you say you saw in the Kailas Math the portrait of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. How do you know that it was Jesus' portrait, and not that of a man in the street? Even taking it for granted, how do you know that it was not put up in the said Math by someone who was a Christian? And your opinions on the Tibetans too are unsound; you did not certainly see the heart of Tibet, but only a fringe of the trade route. In places like those only the dregs of a nation are to be met. If on seeing the Chinabazar and Barabazar quarters of Calcutta, anybody called every Bengali a liar, would that be correct?

Consult Shashi properly when writing any article. ...  
What you need is only obedience. ...

Yours affectionately

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 95

# XCV Mrs. Bull

XCV

INDIANA AVE., CHICAGO, ILL.,

6th April, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Your kind note was duly received. I had beautiful visits with my friends and have already held several classes. I shall have a few more and then start on Thursday.

Everything has been well arranged here, thanks to the kindness of Miss Adams. She is so, so good and kind.

I am suffering from slight fever the last two days; so I can't write a long letter.

My love to all in Boston.

Yours with kind regards,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 96

### XCVI Mrs. Bull

XCVI

124 E. 44TH STREET, NEW YORK,

14th April, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

... Here is a curious person who comes to me with a letter from Bombay. He is a practical mechanic and his one idea is to see cutlery and other iron manufactories in this country.... I do not know anything about him, but even if he be a rogue, I like very much to foster this sort of adventurous spirit among my countrymen. He has money enough to pay his way.

Now, if with all caution testing of his genuineness of spirit, you feel satisfied, all he wants is to get some opportunities of seeing these manufactories. I hope he is true and that you can manage to help him in this.

Yours with kind regards,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 97

# XCVII Sarada

### XCVII

(Translated from Bengali)

#### NEW YORK,

14th April, 1896.

DEAR SARADA,

Glad to hear everything in your letter. I have got news that Sharat arrived safe. I am in receipt of your letter and the copy of the Indian Mirror. Your contribution is good, go on writing regularly. ... It is very easy to search for faults, but the characteristic of a saint lies in looking for merits — never forget this. ... You need a little business faculty. ... Now what you want is organisation — that requires strict obedience and division of labour. I shall write out everything in every particular from England, for which I start tomorrow. I am determined to make you decent workers thoroughly organised. ...

The term "Friend" can be used with all. In the English language you have not that sort of cringing politeness common in Bengali, and such Bengali terms translated into English become ridiculous. That Ramakrishna Paramahansa was God — and all that sort of thing — has no go in countries like this. M— has a tendency to put that stuff down everybody's throat, but that will make our movement a little sect. You keep aloof from such attempts; at the same time, if people worship him as God, no harm. Neither encourage nor discourage. The masses will always have the person, the higher ones the principle; we want both. But principles are universal, not persons. Therefore stick to the principles he taught, let people think whatever they like of his person. ... Truce to all quarrels and jealousies and bigotry! These will spoil everything. "But many that are first shall be last; and the last first." " devotees."

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 98

# XCVIII Mrs. Bull

XCVIII

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON,

30th May, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . Day before yesterday I had a fine visit with Prof. Max Müller. He is a saintly man and looks like a young man in spite of his seventy years, and his face is without a wrinkle. I wish I had half his love for India and Vedanta. At the same time he is a friend of Yoga too and believes in it. Only he has no patience with humbugs.

Above all, his reverence for Ramakrishna Paramahansa is extreme, and he has written an article on him for the Nineteenth Century. He asked me, "What are you doing to make him known to the world?" Ramakrishna has charmed him for years. Is it not good news? . . .

Things are going on here slowly but steadily. I am to begin from next Sunday my public lectures.

Yours ever in grateful affection,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 99

### XCIX Mrs. Bull

XCIX

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON S.W.,

5th June, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

The Raja-Yoga book is going on splendidly. Saradananda goes to the States soon.

I do not like any one whom I love to become a lawyer, although my father was one. My Master was against it, and I believe that that family is sure to come to grief where there are several lawyers. Our country is full of them; the universities turn them out by the hundreds. What my nation wants is pluck and scientific genius. So I want Mohin to be an electrician. Even if he fails in life, still I will have the satisfaction that he strove to become great and really useful to his country. ... In America alone there is that something in the air which brings out whatever is best in every one. ... I want him to be daring, bold, and to struggle to cut a new path for himself and his nation. An electrical engineer can make a living in India.

Yours with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Goodwin is writing to you this mail with reference to a magazine in America. I think something of the sort is necessary to keep the work together, and shall of course do all that I can to help it on in the line he suggests. . . . I think it very probable that he will come over with Saradananda.

# Chapter 100

## C Shashi

C

(Translated from Bengali)

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON S.W.,

24th June, 1896.

DEAR SHASHI,

Max Müller wants all the sayings of Shri Ramakrishna classified, that is, all on Karma in one place, on Vairagya in another place, so on Bhakti, Jnana, etc., etc. You must undertake to do this forthwith. ... We must take care to present only the universal aspect of his teachings. . . .

Sharat starts for America tomorrow. The work here is coming to a head. We have already got funds to start a London Centre. Next month I go to Switzerland to pass a month or two there, then I shall return to London. What will be the good of my going home? — This London is the hub of the world. The heart of India is here. How can I leave without laying a sure foundation here? Nonsense! For the present, I shall have Kali here, tell him to be ready. ...

We want great spirit, tremendous energy, and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do. Try to go on exactly as I wrote to you in my last. We want organisation. Organisation is power, and the secret of this is obedience.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 101

## CI Shashi

CI

(Translated from Bengali)

**HIGH VIEW,CAVERSHAM, READING,**

3rd July, 1896.

DEAR SHASHI,

Send Kali to England as soon as you get this letter.  
. . . He will have to bring some books for me. I  
have only got Rig-Veda Samhitâ. Ask him to bring  
the Yajur-Veda, Sâma-Veda, Atharva-Samhita, as  
many of the Brâhmanas as he can get, beginning with the  
Shatapatha, some of the Sutras, and Yâska's Nirukta. . . .

Let there be no delay as in Sharat's case, but let Kali come  
at once. Sharat has gone to America, as he had no work  
to do here. That is to say, he was late by six months, and  
then when he came, I was here. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 102

# CII Frankincense

CII

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON S.W.,

6th July, 1896.

DEAR FRANKINCENSE, (Mr. Francis H. Leggett whom Swamiji addressed thus.)

. . . Things are going on with me very well on this side of the Atlantic.

The Sunday lectures were quite successful; so were the classes. The season has ended and I too am thoroughly exhausted. I am going to make a tour in Switzerland with Miss Müller. The Galsworthys have been very very kind. Joe (Miss Josephine MacLeod, also referred to as Joe Joe.) brought them round splendidly. I simply admire Joe in her tact and quiet way. She is a feminine statesman or woman. She can wield a kingdom. I have seldom seen such strong yet good common sense in a human being. I will return next autumn and take up the work in America.

The night before last I was at a party at Mrs. Martin's, about whom you must already know a good deal from Joe.

Well, the work is growing silently yet surely in England. Almost every other man or woman came to me and talked about the work. This British Empire with all its drawbacks is the greatest machine that ever existed for the dissemination of ideas. I mean to put my ideas in the centre of this machine, and they will spread all over the world. Of course, all great work is slow, and the difficulties are too many, especially as we Hindus are the conquered race. Yet, that is the very reason why it is bound to work, for spiritual ideals have always come from the downtrodden. Jews overwhelmed the Roman Empire with their spiritual ideals. You will be pleased to know that I am also learning my lessons every day in patience and, above all, in sympathy. I think I am beginning to see the Divine, even inside the high and mighty Anglo-Indians. I think I am slowly approaching to that state when I should be able to love the very "Devil" himself, if there were any.

At twenty years of age I was the most unsympathetic, uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta. At

thirty-three, I can live in the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a word of reproach to them. Is it degenerate? Or is it that I am broadening out into the Universal Love which is the Lord Himself? Again I have heard that if one does not see the evil round him he cannot do good work — he lapses into a sort of fatalism. I do not see that. On the other hand, my power of work is immensely increasing and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of ecstasy. I feel that I must bless every one, everything, love and embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I am in one of these moods now, dear Francis, and am actually shedding tears of joy at the thought of you and Mrs. Leggett's love and kindness to me. I bless the day I was born. I have had so much of kindness and love here, and that Love Infinite that brought me into being has guarded every one of my actions, good or bad, (don't be frightened), for what am I, what was I ever, but a tool in His hands, for whose service I have given up everything, my beloved ones, my joys, my life? He is my playful darling, I am His playfellow. There is neither rhyme nor reason in the universe! What reason binds Him? He the playful one is playing these tears and laughers over all parts of the play! Great fun, great fun, as Joe says.

It is a funny world, and the funniest chap you ever saw is He — the Beloved Infinite! Fun, is it not? Brotherhood or playmatehood — a school of romping children let out to play in this playground of the world! Isn't it? Whom to praise, whom to blame, it is all His play. They want explanations, but how can you explain Him? He is brainless, nor has He any reason. He is fooling us with little brains and reason, but this time He won't find me napping.

I have learnt a thing or two: Beyond, beyond reason and learning and talking is the feeling, the "Love", the "Beloved". Ay, saké, fill up the cup and we will be mad.

Yours ever in madness,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 103

### CIII Mrs. Bull

CIII

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON S.W.,

8th July, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

The English people are very generous. In three minutes' time the other evening, my class raised £150 for the new quarters for next autumn's work. They would have given £500 on the spot if wanted, but we want to go slow, and not rush into expense. There will be many hands here to carry on the work, and they understand a bit of renunciation, here — the deep English character.

Yours with best wishes,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 104

# CIV Mrs. Bull

CIV

SAAS-GRUND, SWITZERLAND,

25th July, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I want to forget the world entirely at least for the next two months and practice hard. That is my rest. ... The mountains and snow have a beautifully quieting influence on me, and I am getting better sleep here than for a long time.

My love to all friends.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 105

### CV Sahji

CV

C/O. E. T. STURDY, ESQ.,

High View, Caversham, Reading, 5th August, 1896.

DEAR SAHJI, (Lala Badri Sah. The letter was actually written from Switzerland.)

Many thanks for your kind greetings. I have an inquiry to make; if you kindly forward me the information I seek, I would be much obliged.

I want to start a Math at Almora or near Almora rather. I have heard that there was a certain Mr. Ramsay who lived in a bungalow near Almora and that he had a garden round his bungalow. Can't it be bought? What is the price? If not to be bought, can it be rented?

Do you know of any suitable place near Almora where I can build my monastery with a garden etc.? I would rather like to have a hill all to myself.

Hoping to get an early reply, I remain, with blessings and love to you and all the rest of my friends in Almora,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 106

### CVI Shashi

CVI

(Translated from Bengali)

#### LAKE LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND,

23rd August, 1896.

MY DEAR SHASHI,

Today I received a letter from Ramdayal Babu, in which he writes that many public women attend the Ramakrishna anniversary festival at Dakshineswar, which makes many less inclined to go there. Moreover, in his opinion one day should be appointed for men and another for women. My decision on the point is this:

1. If public women are not allowed to go to such a great place of pilgrimage as Dakshineswar, where else shall they go to? It is for the sinful that the Lord manifests Himself specially, not so much for the virtuous.
2. Let distinctions of sex, caste, wealth, learning, and the whole host of them, which are so many gateways to hell, be confined to the world alone. If such distinctions persist in holy places of pilgrimage, where then lies the difference between them and hell itself?
3. Ours is a gigantic City of Jagannâtha, where those who have sinned and those who have not, the saintly and the vicious, men and women and children irrespective of age, all have equal right. That for one day at least in the year thousand of men and women get rid of the sense of sin and ideas of distinction and sing and hear the name of the Lord, is in itself a supreme good.
4. If even in a place of pilgrimage people's tendency to evil be not curbed for one day, the fault lies with you, not them. Create such a huge tidal wave of spirituality that whatever people come near will be swept away.
5. Those who, even in a chapel, would think this is a public woman, that man is of a low caste, a third is poor, and yet another belongs to the masses — the less be the number of such people (that is, whom you call gentlemen) the

better. Will they who look to the caste, sex, or profession of Bhaktas appreciate our Lord? I pray to the Lord that hundreds of public women may come and bow their heads at His feet; it does not matter if not one gentleman comes. Come public women, come drunkards, come thieves and all — His Gate is open to all. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Never let such cruel, demoniacal ideas have a place in your mind.

6. But then some social vigilance is needed. How are we to do that? A few men (old men, preferably) should take charge as the warders for the day. They will make circuits round the scene of the festival, and in case they find any man or woman showing impropriety of speech or conduct, they will at once expel them from the garden. But so long as they behave like good men and women, they are Bhaktas and are to be respected — be they men or women, honest citizens or unchaste.

I am at present travelling in Switzerland, and shall soon go to Germany, to see Professor Deussen. I shall return to England from there about the 23rd or 24th September, and the next winter will find me back in my country.

My love to you and all.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 107

### CVII Mrs. Bull

CVII

LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND,

23rd August, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I received your last today. By this time you must have received my receipt for £5 you sent. I do not know what membership you mean. I have no objection to have my name to be put on the list of membership of any society. As for Sturdy, I do not know what his opinions are. I am now travelling in Switzerland; from hence I go to Germany, then to England, and next winter to India. I am very glad to hear that Saradananda and Goodwin are doing good work in the U.S. As for me, I do not lay any claim to that £500 for any work. I think I have worked enough. I am now going to retire. I have sent for another man from India who will join me next month. I have begun the work, let others work it out. So you see, to set the work going I had to touch money and property, for a time. Now I am sure my part of the work is done, and I have no more interest in Vedanta or any philosophy in the world or the work itself. I am getting ready to depart to return no more to this hell, this world. Even its religious utility is beginning to pall me. May Mother gather me soon to Herself never to come back any more! These works, and doing good, etc., are just a little exercise to cleanse the mind. I had enough of it. This world will be world ever and always. What we are, so we see it. Who works? Whose work? There is no world. It is God Himself. In delusion we call it world. Neither I nor thou nor you — it is all He the Lord, all One. So I do not want anything to do about money matters from this time. It is your money. You spend what comes to you just as you like, and blessings follow you.

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I have entire sympathy with the work of Dr. Janes and have written him so. If Goodwin and Saradananda can speed the work in U.S., Godspeed to them. They are in no way bound to me or to Sturdy or to anybody else. It

was an awful mistake in the Greenacre programme that it was printed that Saradananda was there by the kind permission (leave of absence from England) of Sturdy. Who is Sturdy or anybody else to permit a Sannyasin? Sturdy himself laughed at it and was sorry too. It was a piece of folly. Nothing short of that. It was an insult to Sturdy and would have proved serious for my work if it had reached India. Fortunately I tore all those notices to pieces and threw them into the gutter, and wondered whether it was the celebrated “Yankee” manners the English people delight in talking about. Even so, I am no master to any Sannyasin in this world. They do whatever it suits them, and if I can help them — that is all my connection with them. I have given up the bondage of iron, the family tie — I am not to take up the golden chain of religious brotherhood. I am free, must always be free. I wish everyone to be free — free as the air. If New York needs Vedanta, or Boston, or any other place in the U.S., it must receive them and keep them and provide for them. As for me, I am as good as retired. I have played my part in the world.

## Chapter 108

### CVIII Sister

CVIII

AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND,

17th Sept., 1896.

DEAR SISTER, (Miss Harriet Hale.)

Your very welcome news reached me just now, on my return here from Switzerland. I am very, very happy to learn that at last you have thought it better to change your mind about the felicity of "Old Maids Home". You are perfectly right now — marriage is the truest goal for ninety-nine per cent of the human race, and they will live the happiest life as soon as they have learnt and are ready to abide by the eternal lesson — that we are bound to bear and forbear and that life to every one must be a compromise.

Believe me, dear Harriet, perfect life is a contradiction in terms. Therefore we must always expect to find things not up to our highest ideal. Knowing this, we are bound to make the best of everything. From what I know of you, you have the calm power which bears and forbears to a great degree, and therefore I am safe to prophesy that your married life will be very happy.

All blessings attend you and your fiancé and may the Lord make him always remember what good fortune was his in getting such a wife as you — good, intelligent, loving, and beautiful. I am afraid it is impossible for me to cross the Atlantic so soon. I wish I could, to see your marriage.

The best I can do in the circumstances is to quote from one of our books: "May you always enjoy the undivided love of your husband, helping him in attaining all that is desirable in this life, and when you have seen your children's children, and the drama of life is nearing its end, may you help each other in reaching that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, at the touch of whose waters all distinctions melt away and we are all one!" (A reminiscence of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam*, where Kanva gives his benedictions to Shakuntalâ on the eve of her departure to her husband's place.)

"May you be like Umâ, chaste and pure throughout life — may your husband be like Shiva, whose life was in Uma!"

Your loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 109

### CIX Joe Joe

CIX

C/O MISS MULLER,

AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND,

7th October, 1896.

Once more in London, dear Joe Joe, and the classes have begun already. Instinctively I looked about for one familiar face which never had a line of discouragement, never changed, but was always helpful, cheerful, and strengthening — and my mind conjured up that face before me, in spite of a few thousand miles of space. For what is space in the realm of spirit? Well, you are gone to your home of rest and peace. For me, ever-increasing mad work; yet I have your blessings with me always, have I not? My natural tendency is to go into a cave and be quiet, but a fate behind pushes me forward and I go. Whoever could resist fate?

Why did not Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they that are always cheerful and always hopeful for they have already the kingdom of heaven"? I am sure, He must have said it, He with the sorrows of a whole world in His heart, He who likened the saintly soul with the child — but it was not noted down; of a thousand things they noted down only one, I mean, remembered.

Most of our friends came — one of the Galsworthys too — i.e. the married daughter. Mrs. Galsworthy could not come today; it was very short notice. We have a hall now, a pretty big one holding about 200 or more. There is a big corner which will be fitted up as the Library. I have another man from India now to help me.

I enjoyed Switzerland immensely, also Germany. Prof. Deussen was very kind — we came together to London and had great fun here. Prof. Max Müller is very, very friendly too. In all, the English work is becoming solid — and respectable too, seeing that great scholars are

sympathising. Probably I go to India this winter with some English friends. So far about my own sweet self.

Now what about the holy family? Everything is going on first-rate, I am sure. You must have heard of Fox by this time. I am afraid I rather made him dejected the day before he sailed by telling him that he could not marry Mabel, until he began to earn a good deal of money! Is Mabel with you now? Give her my love. Also give me your present address.

How is Mother? Frankincense, same solid sterling gold as ever, I am sure. Alberta, working at her music and languages, laughing a good deal and eating a good many apples as usual? By the by, I now live mostly on fruits and nuts. They seem to agree with me well. If ever the old doctor, with "land" up somewhere, comes to see you, you may confide to him this secret. I have lost a good deal of my fat. But on days I lecture, I have to go on solid food. How is Hollis? I never saw a sweeter boy — may all blessings ever attend him through life.

I hear your friend Cola is lecturing on Zoroastrian philosophy — surely the stars are not smiling on him. What about your Miss Andreas and our Yoganandla? What news about the brotherhood of the ZZZ's and our Mrs. (forgotten!)? I hear that half a shipload of Hindus and Buddhists and Mohammedans and Brotherhoods and what not have entered the U.S., and another cargo of Mahatma-seekers, evangelists etc. have entered India! Good. India and the U.S. seem to be two countries for religious enterprise. Have a care, Joe; the heathen corruption is dreadful. I met Madam Sterling in the street today. She does not come any more for my lectures, good for her. Too much of philosophy is not good. Do you remember that lady who used to come to every meeting too late to hear a word but button-holed me immediately after and kept me talking, till a battle of Waterloo would be raging in my internal economy through hunger? She came. They are all coming and more. That is cheering.

It is getting late in the night. So goodnight, Joe. (Is strict etiquette to be followed in New York too?) And Lord bless you ever and ever.

“Man’s all-wise maker, wishing to create a faultless form whose matchless symmetry should far transcend creation’s choicest works, did call together by his mighty will, and garner up in his eternal mind, a bright assemblage of all lovely things, and then, as in a picture, fashioned them into one perfect and ideal form. Such the divine, the wondrous prototype whence her fair shape was moulded into being.” (Shakuntalam by Kalidasa, translated by Monier Williams).

That is you, Joe Joe; only I would add, the same the creator did with all purity and nobility and other qualities and then Joe was made.

Ever yours, with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Mrs. & Mr. Sevier in whose house (flat) I am writing now, send their kindest regards.

## Chapter 110

### CX Miss S. E. Waldo

CX

AIRLIE LODGE, RIDGEWAY GARDENS,

WIMBLEDON,

8th October, 1896.

DEAR (MISS S. E. WALDO),

. . . I had a fine rest in Switzerland and made a great friend of Prof. Paul Deussen. My European work in fact is becoming more satisfactory to me than any other work, and it tells immensely on India. The London classes were resumed, and today is the opening lecture. I now have a hall to myself holding two hundred or more.

...

You know of course the steadiness of the English; they are the least jealous of each other of all nations, and that is why they dominate the world. They have solved the secret of obedience without slavish cringing — great freedom with great law-abidingness.

I know very little of the young man R—. He is a Bengali and can teach a little Sanskrit. You know my settled doctrine. I do not trust any one who has not conquered “lust and gold”. You may try him in theoretical subjects, but keep him off from teaching Raja-Yoga — that is a dangerous game except for the regularly trained to play at. Of Saradananda, the blessing of the greatest Yogi of modern India is on him — and there is no danger. Why do you not begin to teach? . . . You have a thousand times more philosophy than this boy R—. Send notices to the class and hold regular talks and lectures.

I will be thousand times more pleased to see one of you start than any number of Hindus securing success in America — even one of my brethren. “Man wants Victory from everywhere, but defeat from his own children”. . . . Make a blaze! Make a blaze!

With all love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 111

### CXI Mrs. Bull

CXI

WIMBLEDON,

8th October, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . I met in Germany Prof. Deussen. I was his guest at Kiel and we travelled together to London and had some very pleasant meetings here. . . . Although I am in full sympathy with the various branches of religious and social work, I find that specification of work is absolutely necessary. Our special branch is to preach Vedanta. Helping in other work should be subservient to that one ideal. I hope you will inculcate this in the mind of Saradananda very strongly.

Did you read Max Müller's article on Ramakrishna? . . . Things are working very favourably here in England. The work is not only popular but appreciated.

Yours affly.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 112

### CXII Mary

CXII

14 GREYCOAT GARDENS, WESTMINSTER,

LONDON, ENGLAND,

1st November, 1896.

MY DEAR MARY, (Miss Mary Hale.)

“Silver and gold”, my dear Mary, “have I none; but such as I have give I thee” freely, and that is the knowledge that the goldness of gold, the silverness of silver, the manhood of man, the womanhood of woman, the reality of everything is the Lord — and that this Lord we are trying to realise from time without beginning in the objective, and in the attempt throwing up such “queer” creatures of our fancy as man, woman, child, body, mind, the earth, sun, moon, stars, the world, love, hate, property, wealth, etc.; also ghosts, devils, angels and gods, God etc.

The fact being that the Lord is in us, we are He, the eternal subject, the real ego, never to be objectified, and that all this objectifying process is mere waste of time and talent. When the soul becomes aware of this, it gives up objectifying and falls back more and more upon the subjective. This is the evolution, less and less in the body and more and more in the mind — man the highest form, meaning in Sanskrit manas, thought — the animal that thinks and not the animal that “senses” only. This is what in theology is called “renunciation”. The formation of society, the institution of marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality, and ethics are all different forms of renunciation. All our lives in every society are the subjection of the will, the thirst, the desire. This surrender of the will or the fictitious self — or the desire to jump out of ourselves, as it were — the struggle still to objectify the subject — is the one phenomenon in this world of which all societies and social forms are various modes and stages. Love is the easiest and smoothest way towards the self-surrender or subjection of the will and hatred, the opposite.

People have been cajoled through various stories or superstitions of heavens and hells and Rulers above the sky, towards this one end of self-surrender. The philosopher

does the same knowingly without superstition, by giving up desires.

An objective heaven or millennium therefore has existence only in the fancy — but a subjective one is already in existence. The musk-deer, after vain search for the cause of the scent of the musk, at last will have to find it in himself.

Objective society will always be a mixture of good and evil — objective life will always be followed by its shadow death, and the longer the life, the longer will also be the shadow. It is only when the sun is on our own head that there is no shadow. When God and good and everything else is in us, there is no evil. In objective life, however, every bullet has its billet — evil goes with every good as its shadow. Every improvement is coupled with an equal degradation. The reason being that good and evil are not two things but one, the difference being only in manifestation — one of degree, not kind.

Our very lives depend upon the death of others — plants or animals or bacilli! The other great mistake we often make is that good is taken as an ever-increasing item, whilst evil is a fixed quantity. From this it is argued that evil being diminished every day, there will come a time when good alone will remain. The fallacy lies in the assumption of a false premise. If good is increasing, so is evil. My desires have been much more than the desires of the masses among my race. My joys have been much greater than theirs — but my miseries a million times more intense. The same constitution that makes you feel the least touch of good makes you feel the least of evil too. The same nerves that carry sensations of pleasure carry the sensations of pain too — and the same mind feels both. The progress of the world means more enjoyment and more misery too. This mixture of life and death, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance is what is called Maya — or the universal phenomenon. You may go on for eternity inside this net, seeking for happiness — you find much, and much evil too. To have good and no evil is childish nonsense. Two ways are left open — one by giving up all hope to take up the world as it is and bear the pangs and pains in the hope

of a crumb of happiness now and then. The other, to give up the search for pleasure, knowing it to be pain in another form, and seek for truth — and those that dare try for truth succeed in finding that truth as ever present — present in themselves. Then we also discover how the same truth is manifesting itself both in our relative error and knowledge — we find also that the same truth is bliss which again is manifesting itself as good and evil, and with it also we find real existence which is manifesting itself as both death and life.

Thus we realise that all these phenomena are but the reflections, bifurcated or manifolded, of the one existence, truth-bliss-unity — my real Self and the reality of everything else. Then and then only is it possible to do good without evil, for such a soul has known and got the control of the material of which both good and evil are manufactured, and he alone can manifest one or the other as he likes, and we know he manifests only good. This is the Jivan-mukta — the living free — the goal of Vedanta as of all other philosophies.

Human society is in turn governed by the four castes — the priests, the soldiers, the traders, and the labourers. Each state has its glories as well as its defects. When the priest (Brahmin) rules, there is a tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds; the persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all sorts of safeguards — none but they have any knowledge — none but they have the right to impart that knowledge. Its glory is that at this period is laid the foundation of sciences. The priests cultivate the mind, for through the mind they govern.

The military (Kshatriya) rule is tyrannical and cruel, but they are not exclusive; and during that period arts and social culture attain their height.

The commercial (Vaishya) rule comes next. It is awful in its silent crushing and blood-sucking power. Its advantage is, as the trader himself goes everywhere, he is a good disseminator of ideas collected during the two previous states. They are still less exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

Last will come the labourer (Shudra) rule. Its advantages will be the distribution of physical comforts — its disadvantages, (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.

If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?

Yet the first three have had their day. Now is the time

for the last — they must have it — none can resist it. I do not know all the difficulties about the gold or silver standards (nobody seems to know much as to that), but this much I see that the gold standard has been making the poor poorer, and the rich richer. Bryan was right when he said, “We refuse to be crucified on a cross of gold.” The silver standard will give the poor a better chance in this unequal fight. I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.

The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried — if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures. The sum total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same. The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems, that is all.

Let every dog have his day in this miserable world, so that after this experience of so-called happiness they may all come to the Lord and give up this vanity of a world and governments and all other botherations.

With love to you all,

Ever your faithful brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 113

### CXIII Mrs. Bull

CXIII

GREYCOAT GARDENS,

WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.,

13th November, 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

... I am very soon starting for India, most probably on the 16th of December. As I am very desirous to see India once before I come again to America, and as I have arranged to take several friends from England with me to India, it is impossible for me to go to America on my way, however I might have liked it.

Dr. Janes is doing splendid work indeed. I can hardly express my gratitude for the many kindnesses and the help he has given me and my work. ... The work is progressing beautifully here.

You will be interested to know that the first edition of Raja-Yoga is sold out, and there is a standing order for several hundreds more.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 114

## CXIV Lalaji

CXIV

39 VICTORIA STREET,

LONDON S.W.,

21st November, 1895.

DEAR LALAJI, (Lala Badri Sah)

I reach Madras about the 7th of January; after a few days in the plains I intend to come up to Almora.

I have three English friends with me. Two of them, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, are going to settle in Almora. They are my disciples, you know, and they are going to build the Goliath for me in the Himalayas. It was for that reason I asked you to look for some suitable site. We want a whole hill, with a view of the snow-range, all to ourselves. It would of course take time to fix on the site and complete the building. In the meanwhile will you kindly engage a small bungalow for my friends? The bungalow ought to accommodate three persons. I do not require a large one. A small one would do for the present. My friends will live in this bungalow in Almora and then go about looking for a site and building.

You need not reply to this letter, as before your reply will reach me, I shall be on my way to India. I will write to you from Madras as soon as I reach there.

With love and blessings to you all,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 115

### CXV Dear—

CXV

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T STURDY, ESQ.,

**HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, READING**

1896.

DEAR—

... Can anything be done unless everybody exerts himself to his utmost? "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. . . .

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 116

### CXVI Sisters

CXVI

39 VICTORIA ST., LONDON S.W.,

28th Nov., 1896.

DEAR SISTERS, (Misses Mary and Harriet Hale.)

. . . I feel impelled to write a few lines to you before my departure for India. The work in London has been a roaring success. The English are not so bright as the Americans, but once you touch their heart, it is yours for ever. Slowly have I gained, and it is strange that in six months' work altogether I would have a steady class of 120 persons apart from public lectures. Here every one means work — the practical Englishman. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin are going to India with me to work and spend their own money on it! There are scores here ready to do the same: men and women of position, ready to give up everything for the idea, once they feel convinced! And last though not the least, the help in the shape of money to start my "work" in India has come and more will follow. My ideas about the English have been revolutionized. I now understand why the Lord has blessed them above all other races. They are steady, sincere to the backbone, with great depths of feeling — only with a crust of stoicism on the surface; if that is broken, you have your man.

Now I am going to start a centre in Calcutta and another in the Himalayas. The Himalayan one will be an entire hill about 7,000 ft. high — cool in summer, cold in winter. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier will live there, and it will be the centre for European workers, as I do not want to kill them by forcing on them the Indian mode of living and the fiery plains. My plan is to send out numbers of Hindu boys to every civilised country to preach — get men and women from foreign countries to work in India. This would be a good exchange. After having established the centres, I go about up and down like the gentleman in the book of Job.

Here I must end to catch the mail. Things are opening for me. I am glad, and I know so you are. Now all blessings be yours and all happiness.

With eternal love,

VIVEKANANDA,

PS. What about Dharmapala? What is he doing? Give him my love if you meet him.

## Chapter 117

# CXVII Alberta

CXVII

14 GREYCOAT GARDENS,

WESTMINSTER, LONDON S.W.,

3rd Dec., 1896.

DEAR ALBERTA,

Herewith I enclose a letter of Mabel to Joe Joe to you. I have enjoyed the news in it very much and so I am sure you will.

I am to start from here for India on the 16th and to take the steamer at Naples. I will, therefore, be in Italy for some days and in Rome for three or four days. I will be very happy to look in to say good-bye to you.

Capt. and Mrs. Sevier from England are going to India with me, and they will be with me in Italy of course. You saw them last summer.

I intend to return to the U.S. and to Europe thence in about a year.

With all love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 118

# CXVIII Mrs. Bull

CXVIII

39 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON,

9th Dec., 1896.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

It is needless to express my gratitude at your most generous offer. I don't want to encumber myself with a large amount of money at the first start, but as things progress on I will be very glad to find employment for that sum. My idea is to start on a very small scale. I do not know anything yet. I will know my bearings when on the spot in India. From India I will write to you more details about my plans and the practical way to realise them. I start on the 16th and after a few days in Italy take the steamer at Naples.

Kindly convey my love to Mrs. Vaughan and Saradananda and to the rest of my friends there. As for you, I have always regarded you as the best friend I have, and it will be the same all my life.

With love and blessings,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 119

# CXIX Frankincense

### CXIX

13th Dec., 1896.

DEAR FRANKINCENSE,

So Gopâla[6]\* has taken the female form! It is fit that it should be so — the time and the place considering. May all blessings follow her through life. She was keenly desired, prayed for, and she comes as a blessing to you and to your wife for life. I have not the least doubt.

I wish I could have come to America now if only to fulfil the form “the sages of the East bringing presents to the Western baby”. But the heart is there with all prayers and blessings, and the mind is more powerful than the body.

I am starting on the 16th of this month and take the steamer at Naples. Will see Alberta in Rome surely. With all love to the holy family,

Yours ever in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 120

### CXX Alberta

CXX

**HOTEL MINERVA, FLORENCE,**

20th Dec., 1896.

DEAR ALBERTA,

Tomorrow we reach Rome. I will most possibly come to see you day after tomorrow as it will be late in the night when we reach Rome. We stop at the Hotel Continental.

With all love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 121

## CXXI Mary

CXXI

RAMNAD,

30th Jan., 1897.

MY DEAR MARY,

Things are turning out most curiously for me. From Colombo in Ceylon, where I landed, to Ramnad, the nearly southernmost point of the Indian continent where I am just now as the guest of the Raja of Ramnad, my journey has been a huge procession — crowds of people, illuminations, addresses, etc., etc. A monument forty feet high is being built on the spot where I landed. The Raja of Ramnad has presented his address to “His most Holiness” in a huge casket of solid gold beautifully worked. Madras and Calcutta are on the tiptoe of expectation as if the whole nation is rising to honour me. So you see, Mary, I am on the very height of my destiny, yet the mind turns to quietness and peace, to the days we had in Chicago, of rest, of peace, and love; and that is why I write just now, and may this find you all in health and peace! I wrote a letter to my people from London to receive Dr. Barrows kindly. They accorded him a big reception, but it was not my fault that he could not make any impression there. The Calcutta people are a hard-headed lot! Now Barrows thinks a world of me, I hear! Such is the world.

With all love to mother, father, and you all,

I remain, yours affly.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 122

### CXXII Mrs. Bull

CXXII

ALAMBAZAR MATH, CALCUTTA,

25th Feb., 1897.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Saradananda sends £20 to be placed in the famine relief in India. But as there is famine in his own home, I thought it best to relieve that first, as the old proverb says. So it has been employed accordingly.

I have not a moment to die as they stay, what with processions and tomtomings and various other methods of reception all over the country; I am almost dead. As soon as the Birthday is over I will fly off to the hills. I received an address from the Cambridge Conference as well as one from the Brooklyn Ethical Association. One from the Vedanta Association of New York, as mentioned in Dr. Janes's letter, has not yet arrived.

Also there is a letter from Dr. Janes suggesting work along the line of your conference, here in India. It is almost impossible for me to pay any attention to these things. I am so, so tired. I do not know whether I would live even six months more or not, unless I have some rest.

Now I have to start two centres, one in Madras, the other in Calcutta. The Madras people are deeper and more sincere, and, I am sure, will be able to collect funds from Madras itself. The Calcutta people are mostly enthusiastic (I mean the aristocracy) through patriotism, and their sympathy would never materialise. On the other hand, the country is full of persons, jealous and pitiless, who would leave no stones unturned to pull my work to pieces.

But as you know well, the more the opposition, the more the demon in me is roused. My duty would not be complete if I die without starting the two places, one for the Sannyasins, the other for the women.

I have already £500 from England about, £500 from Mr. Sturdy, and if your money be added to it, I am sure I will be able to start the two. I think, therefore, you ought to send the money as soon as possible. The safest way is to put the money in a bank in America in your and my

name jointly, so that either of us may draw it. In case I die before the money is employed, you will be able to draw it all and put it to the use I wanted. So that, in case of my death, none of my people would be able to meddle with it. The English money has been put in the bank in the same position in the joint names of Mr. Sturdy and myself.

With love to Saradananda and eternal love and gratitude to yourself,

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 123

### CXXIII Mary

CXXIII

DARJEELING,

April 28, 1897.

DEAR MARY,

A few days ago I received your beautiful letter. Yesterday came the card announcing Harriet's marriage. Lord bless the happy pair!

The whole country here rose like one man to receive me. Hundreds of thousands of persons, shouting and cheering at every place, Rajas drawing my carriage, arches all over the streets of the capitals with blazing mottoes etc.,!!! The whole thing will soon come out in the form of a book, and you will have a copy soon. But unfortunately I was already exhausted by hard work in England; and this tremendous exertion in the heat of Southern India prostrated me completely. I had of course to give up the idea of visiting other parts of India and fly up to the nearest hill station, Darjeeling. Now I feel much better, and a month more in Almora would complete the cure. By the bye, I have just lost a chance of coming over to Europe. Raja Ajit Singh and several other Rajas start next Saturday for England. Of course, they wanted hard to get me to go over with them. But unfortunately the doctors would not hear of my undertaking any physical or mental labour just now. So with the greatest chagrin I had to give it up, reserving it for a near future.

Dr. Barrows has reached America by this time, I hope. Poor man! He came here to preach the most bigoted Christianity, with the usual result that nobody listened to him. Of course they received him very kindly; but it was my letter that did it. I could not put brains into him! Moreover, he seems to be a queer sort of man. I hear that he was mad at the national rejoicings over my coming home. You ought to have sent a brainier man anyway, for the Parliament of Religions has been made a farce of in the Hindu mind by Dr. Barrows. On metaphysical lines no nation on earth can hold a candle to the Hindus; and curiously all the fellows that come over here from Christian land have that one antiquated foolishness

of an argument that because the Christians are powerful and rich and the Hindus are not, so Christianity must be better than Hinduism. To which the Hindus very aptly retort that, that is the very reason why Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not; because, in this beastly world it is blackguardism and that alone which prospers, virtue always suffers. It seems, however advanced the Western nations are in scientific culture, they are mere babies in metaphysical and spiritual education. Material science can only give worldly prosperity, whilst spiritual science is for eternal life. If there be no eternal life, still the enjoyment of spiritual thoughts as ideals is keener and makes a man happier, whilst the foolery of materialism leads to competition and undue ambition and ultimate death, individual and national.

This Darjeeling is a beautiful spot with a view of the glorious Kanchenjanga (28,146 ft.) now and then when the clouds permit it, and from a near hilltop one can catch a glimpse of Gauri Shankar (29,000 ft?) now and then. Then, the people here too are so picturesque, the Tibetans and Nepalese and, above all, the beautiful Lepcha women. Do you know one Colston Turnbull of Chicago? He was here a few weeks before I reached India. He seems to have had a great liking for me, with the result that Hindu people all liked him very much. What about Joe, Mrs. Adams, Sister Josephine, and all the rest of our friends? Where are our beloved Mills? Grinding slow but sure? I wanted to send some nuptial presents to Harriet, but with your "terrible" duties I must reserve it for some near future. Maybe I shall meet them in Europe very soon. I would have been very glad, of course, if you could announce your engagement, and I would fulfil my promise by filling up half a dozen papers in one letter....

My hair is turning grey in bundles, and my face is getting wrinkled up all over; that losing of flesh has given me twenty years of age more. And now I am losing flesh rapidly, because I am made to live upon meat and meat alone — no bread, no rice, no potatoes, not even a lump of sugar in my coffee!! I am living with a Brahmin family who all dress in knickerbockers, women excepted of course! I am also in knickers. I would have given you a surprise if you had seen me bounding from rock to

rock like a chamois, or galloping might and main up and down mountain roads.

I am very well here, for life in the plains has become a torture. I cannot put the tip of my nose out into the streets, but there is a curious crowd!! Fame is not all milk and honey!! I am going to train a big beard; now it is turning grey. It gives a venerable appearance and saves one from American scandal-mongers! O thou white hair, how much thou canst conceal, all glory unto thee, Hallelujah!

The mail time is nearly up, so I finish. Good dreams, good health, all blessings attend you.

With love to father and mother and you all,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 124

### CXXIV Sir

CXXIV[6]\*

(Translated from Bengali)

ALMORA,

30th May, 1897.

DEAR SIR,[7]\*

I hear some unavoidable domestic grief has come upon you. To you, a man of wisdom, what can this misery do? Yet the amenities of friendly intercourse, incidental to relative existence in this world, require my making mention of it. Those moments of grief, however, very often bring out a better spiritual realisation. As if for a while the clouds withdraw and the sun of truth shines out. In the case of some, half of the bondage is loosened. Of all bandages the greatest is that of position — the fear of reputation is stronger than the fear of death; but even this bondage appears to relax a little. As if the mind sees for a moment that it is much better to listen to the indwelling Lord than to the opinions of men. But again the clouds close up, and this indeed is Mâyâ.

Though for a long time I had no direct correspondence with you, yet I have often been receiving from others almost all the news about you. Some time ago you kindly sent me to England a copy of a translation of the Gita. The cover only bore a line of your handwriting. The few words in acknowledgment of this gift, I am told, raised doubts in your mind about my old affection towards you.

Please know these doubts to be groundless. The reason of that laconic acknowledgment is that I was given to see, during four or five years, only that one line of your handwriting on the cover of an English Gita, from which fact I thought, if you had no leisure to write more, would you have leisure enough to read much? Secondly, I learnt, you were particularly the friend of white-skinned missionaries of the Hindu religion and the roguish black natives were repelling! There was apprehension on this score. Thirdly, I am a Mlechchha, Shudra, and so forth; I eat anything and everything, and with anybody and

everybody — and that in public both abroad and here. In my views, besides, much perversion has supervened — one attributeless absolute Brahman, I see, I fairly understand, and I see in some particular individuals the special manifestations of that Brahman; if those individuals are called by the name of God, I can well follow — otherwise the mind does not feel inclined towards intellectual theorisings such as the postulated Creator and the like.

Such a God I have seen in my life, and his commands I live to follow. The Smritis and the Puranas are productions of men of limited intelligence and are full of fallacies, errors, the feelings of class and malice. Only parts of them breathing broadness of spirit and love are acceptable, the rest are to be rejected. The Upanishads and the Gita are the true scriptures; Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, and so on are the true Avatâras, for they had their hearts broad as the sky — and above all, Ramakrishna. Ramanuja, Shankara etc., seem to have been mere Pundits with much narrowness of heart. Where is that love, that weeping heart at the sorrow of others? — Dry pedantry of the Pundit — and the feeling of only oneself getting to salvation hurry-scurry! But is that going to be possible, sir? Was it ever likely or will it ever be so? Can anything be attained with any shred of “I” left anyhow?

Another great discrepancy: the conviction is daily gaining on my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and the root of Maya; all caste either on the principle of birth or of merit is bondage: Some friends advise, “True, lay all that at heart, but outside, in the world of relative experience, distinctions like caste must needs be maintained.” ... The idea of oneness at heart (with a craven impotence of effort, that is to say), and outside, the hell-dance of demons — oppression and persecution — ay, the dealer of death to the poor, but if the Pariah be wealthy enough, “Oh, he is the protector of religion!”

Over and above, I come to see from my studies that the disciplines of religion are not for the Shudra; if he exercises any discrimination about food or about going

out to foreign lands, it is all useless in his case, only so much labour lost. I am a Shudra, a Mlechchha, so I have nothing to do with all that botheration. To me what would Mlechchha's food matter or Pariah's? It is in the books written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found, and not in books revealed from God. Let the priests enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' achievement, while I follow the word of God, for my good lies there.

Another truth I have realised is that altruistic service only is religion, the rest, such as ceremonial observances, are madness — even it is wrong to hanker after one's own salvation. Liberation is only for him who gives up everything for others, whereas others who tax their brains day and night harping on "my salvation", "my salvation", wander about with their true well-being ruined, both present and prospective; and this I have seen many a time with my own eyes. Reflecting on all these sundry matters, I had no heart for writing a letter to you. If notwithstanding all these discrepancies, you find your attachment for me intact, I shall feel it to be a very happy issue indeed.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 125

### CXXV Shuddhananda

CXXV

(Translated from Sanskrit)

ALMORA,

1st June, 1897.

DEAR SHUDDHANANDA,

Glad to know from your letter that all are doing well there, and to go through the news in detail. I too am in better health; the rest you will know from Dr. Shashi Bhushan. Let the teaching go on for the present in the method revised by Brahmananda, and if any changes are needed in future, have them done. But it should never be lost sight of that this must be done with the consent of all.

I am now living in a garden belonging to a merchant situated a little to the north of Almora. Before me are the snow-peaks of the Himalayas looking, in the reflection of the sun, like a mass of silver, a delight to the heart. By taking free air, regular diet, and plenty of exercise, I have grown strong and healthy in body. But I hear the Yogananda is very ill. I am inviting him to come here. But then, he fears the mountain air and water. I wrote to him today, saying, "Stay in this garden for some day' and if you find your illness shows no improvement, you may go to Calcutta." He will do as he pleases.

At Almora, every evening Achyutananda gathers the people together and reads to them the Gita and other Shâstras. Many residents of the town, as also soldiers from the cantonment, come there daily. I learn also that he is appreciated by all.

The Bengali interpretation that you have given of the Shloka interpretation in question is this: "When (the land) is flooded with water, what is the use of drinking water?" If the law of nature be such that when a land is flooded with water, drinking it is useless, that through certain air passages or through any other recondite way people's thirst may be allayed, then only can this novel interpretation be relevant, otherwise not. It is Shankara

whom you should follow. Or you may explain it in this way: As, even when whole tracts are flooded with water, small pools are also of great use to the thirsty (that is to say, just a little water suffices him, and he says, as it were, "Let the vast sheet of water be, even a little of water will satisfy my object."), of identical use are the whole Vedas to a learned Brahmin. As even when the land is overflowed, one's concern lies in drinking the water and no more, so in all the Vedas illumination alone is the concern.

Here is another interpretation which hits better the meaning the author wishes to convey: Even when the land is overflowed, it is only that water which is drinkable and salutary, that people seek for, and no other kind. There are various kinds of water, which differ in quality and properties — even though the land be flooded over — according to the differences in property of their substratum, the soil. Likewise a skilful Brahmin, too, will, for the quenching of the worldly thirst, choose from that sea of words known as the Vedas, which is flooded over with diverse courses of knowledge, that which alone will be of potency to lead to liberation. And it is the knowledge of the Brahman which will do this.

With blessing and good wishes.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 126

### CXXVI Miss Noble

CXXVI

ALMORA,

3rd June, 1897.

DEAR MISS NOBLE,

. . . As for myself I am quite content. I have roused a good many of our people, and that was all I wanted. Let things have their course and Karma its sway. I have no bonds here below. I have seen life, and it is all self — life is for self, love for self, honour for self, everything for self. I look back and scarcely find any action I have done for self — even my wicked deeds were not for self. So I am content; not that I feel I have done anything specially good or great, but the world is so little, life so mean a thing, existence so, so servile — that I wonder and smile that human beings, rational souls, should be running after this self — so mean and detestable a prize.

This is the truth. We are caught in a trap, and the sooner one gets out, the better for one. I have seen the truth — let the body float up or down, who cares?

It is a beautiful mountain park I am living in now. On the north, extending almost all along the horizon, are peak after peak of the snow-clad Himalayas — forests abounding. It is not cold here, neither very warm; the evenings and mornings are simply delicious. I should like to be here this summer, and when the rains set in, I go down to the plains to work.

I was born for the life of a scholar — retired, quiet, poring over my books. But the Mother dispenses otherwise — yet the tendency is there.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 127

## CXXVII Rakhāl

CXXVII

(Translated from Bengali)

ALMORA,

14th June, 1897.

DEAR RAKHAL,

I am wholly in sympathy with the subject-matter of the letter of Charu that you have sent me.

In the proposed Address to the Queen-Empress the following points should be noted:

1. That it must be free from exaggeration, in other words, statements to the effect that she is God's regent and so forth, which are so common to us natives.
2. That all religions having been protected during her reign, we have been able fearlessly to preach our Vedantic doctrines both in India and England.
3. Her kindness towards the Indian poor — as, for instance, her inspiring the English to unique acts of charity by contributing herself to the cause of famine-relief.
4. Prayer for her long life and for the continual growth of happiness and prosperity among the people of her dominions.

Have this written in correct English and send it to me at Almora, and I shall sign it and send it to Simla. Let me know to whom it should be addressed at Simla.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Let Shuddhananda preserve a copy of the weekly letters that he writes to me from the Math.

V.

## Chapter 128

### CXXVIII Akhandananda

CXXVIII

(Translated from Bengali)

ALMORA,

15th June, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am getting detailed reports of you and getting more and more delighted. It is that sort of work which can conquer the world. What do differences of sect and opinion matter? Bravo! Accept a hundred thousand embraces and blessings from me. Work, work, work — I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death! Those that are weak must make themselves great workers, great heroes — never mind money, it will drop from the heavens. Let them whose gifts you will accept, give in their own name if they like, no harm. Whose name, and what is it worth? Who cares for name? Off with it! If in the attempt to carry morsels of food to starving mouths, name and possession and all be doomed even — अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यम् — thrice blessed art thou! It is the heart, the heart that conquers, not the brain. Books and learning, Yoga and meditation and illumination — all are but dust compared with love. It is love that gives you the supernatural powers, love that gives you Bhakti, love that gives illumination, and love, again, that reads to emancipation. This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human tabernacle, " नेदं यददिमुपासते — not this that people worship". (That is things other than God.) This is but the beginning, and unless we spread over the whole of India, nay, the whole earth, in that way, where lies the greatness of our Lord!

Let people see whether or not the touch of our Lord's feet confers divinity on man! It is this that is called liberation-in-life — when the last trace of egoism and selfishness is gone. Well done! Glory to the Lord! Gradually try to spread. If you can, go to Calcutta, and raise a fund with the help of another band of boys; set one or two of them to work at some place, and begin somewhere else. Spread in that way, and go on inspecting them. You will see that the work will gradually become permanent, and spread of

religion and education will follow as a matter of course. I have given particular instructions to them in Calcutta. Do that kind of work, and I shall carry you on my shoulders — bravo! You will see that by degrees every district will become a centre — and that a permanent one. I am soon going down to the plains. I am a fighter, and shall die in the battlefield. Does it behave me to sit up here like a zenana lady?

Yours with all love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 129

# CXXIX Rakhal

CXXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

ALMORA,

20th June, 1897.

DEAR RAKHAL,

Glad to learn that you are better in health than before. Well, it is seldom that Brother Yogen reports the bare truths, so do not at all be anxious to hear them. I am all right now, with plenty of muscular strength, and no thirst. ... The liver, too, acts well. I am not certain as to what effects Shashi (Babu)'s medicine had. So I have stopped using it. I am having plenty of mangoes. I am getting exceptionally adept in riding, and do not feel the least pain or exhaustion even after a run of twenty or thirty miles at a stretch. Milk I have altogether stopped for fear of corpulence.

Yesterday I came to Almora, and shall not go any more to the garden. Henceforth I am to have three meals a day in the English fashion, as Miss Müller's guest. . . .

Shuddhananda writes to say that they are going on with Ruddock's Practice of Medicine or something of that sort. What nonsense do you mean by having such things taught in the class? A set of common apparatus for physics and another for chemistry, an ordinary telescope and a microscope — all these can be had for Rupees 150 to 200. Shashi Babu may give a lecture on practical chemistry once a week, and Hariprasanna on physics etc. And buy all the good scientific books that you can have in Bengali, and have them read.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 130

### CXXX Rakhāl

CXXX

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

ALMORA,

10th July, 1897.

MY DEAR RAKHAL,

Today I send back the proofs of the objects of our Association that you sent me, corrected. The rules and regulations portion (which the members of our Association had read) is full of mistakes. Correct it very carefully and reprint it, or people will laugh.

. . . The kind of work that is going on at Berhampore is exceedingly nice. It is those works that will triumph — can doctrines and dogmas touch the heart? Work, work — live the life; what do doctrines and opinions count? Philosophy and Yoga and penance — the worship-room — your sunned rice or vegetable offerings — all these constitute the religion of one man or one country; doing good to others is the one great, universal religion. Men and women, young and old, down to the Pariah, nay, the very animal — all can grasp this religion. Can a merely negative religion be of any avail? The stone is never unchaste, the cow never tells a lie, nor do trees commit theft or robbery, but what does it matter? Granted that you do not steal, nor tell a lie, nor lead an unchaste life, but meditate four hours a day and religiously ring the bell for twice as many hours — yet, what matters it after all? That work, little as it is, that you have done, has brought Berhampore to your feet for ever — now people will do whatever you wish them to. Now you will no longer have to argue to the people that “Ramakrishna is God.” Without it what will mere lectures do? — Do fine words butter any parsnips? If you could do like that in ten districts, all the ten would become yours to have and hold. Therefore, like the intelligent boy that you are, lay your greatest stress, for the present, on that work department, and try heart and soul to augment the utility of that alone. Organise a number of boys to go from door to door, let them

fetch, in the manner of the Alakhiâ Sâdhus, whatever they can get — money, or worn out clothes, or rice and eatables, or anything. Then distribute them. That is work, work indeed. After that people will have faith, and will then do what they are told.

Whatever is left over after defraying the expenses of the Calcutta meeting, remit for famine relief, or help with it the countless poor that live in the slums of Calcutta; let Memorial Halls and things of that kind go to the dogs. The Lord will do what He thinks best. I am at present in excellent health. . . .

Why are you not collecting materials? — I shall go down and start the paper myself. Kindness and love can buy you the whole world; lectures and books and philosophy all stand lower than these.

Please write to Shashi to open a work department like this for the service of the poor.

. . . Curtail the expenses of worship to a rupee or two per mensem. The children of the Lord are dying of starvation. . . . Worship with water and Tulasi leaves alone, and let the allowance for His Bhoga (food offerings) be spent in offering food to the Living God who dwells in the persons of the poor — then will His grace descend on everything. Yogen felt unwell here; so today he started for Calcutta. I shall again go to Dewaldhar tomorrow. Please accept my love and tender it to all.

Affly. yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 131

# CXXXI Akhandananda

CXXXI

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

**ALMORA,**

24th July, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. Your wishes about the orphanage are very good and Shri Maharaj (Shri Ramakrishna.) will not fail to fulfil them at an early date. Try your best to found a permanent centre. ... Never worry about money. Tomorrow I shall leave Almora for the plains; and wherever there will be made some stir, I shall open a subscription list for famine — set your mind easy on that score. When in every district there will be a Math on the model of our Math in Calcutta, then will my heart's desire be fulfilled. Let not the work of preaching, too, be at a standstill, and greater even than preaching, is the work of imparting education. By means of lectures and the like, the village people must be taught religion, history, and such other subjects — specially history. To help our educational work there is a Society in England, which, as I find from reports, is doing excellent work. In time we shall get help of this kind from everywhere, don't be frightened. They only do work who think that help will come, directly they are on the field of work.

All strength is in you, have faith in it. It will not go unmanifested. Accept my heartiest love and blessings, and convey them to the Brahmachârin. Write now and then fiery letters to the Math, so that all may take heart and work. Victory to the Guru!

Yours affly.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 132

### CXXXII Akhandananda

CXXXII

(Translated from Bengali)

ALMORA,

30th July, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

According to your instructions, I write a letter to Mr. Levinge, the Dist. Magistrate. Besides, you will write a big letter to the Indian Mirror, describing in detail his method of work (having got the same revised by Dr. Shashi), and send a copy of it to the gentleman named above. Our fools only search for people's shortcomings. Let them see some virtues too.

I am leaving this place next Monday. ...

What do you talk of the difficulty in getting orphans? Better ask for four or five men from the Math, if you like; you can find some orphans in two days, if you seek from village to village.

Of course we must have a permanent centre. And can anything be done in this country unless the —— help? Do not mix in politics etc., nor have any connection with them. At the same time you need not have any quarrel with anybody. You must put your body, mind, and all you have to some one work. Here I gave a lecture to a European audience in English, and another to the Indian residents in Hindi. This was my maiden speech in Hindi, but everyone liked it for all that. Of course the Westerners, as is their wont, were in raptures over it, as coming from a "nigger"! "Oh, how wonderful!" and that sort of thing. Next Saturday there will be another lecture for the Europeans. A big Association has been set on foot here — let us wait and see how far it works in future. The object of the Association is to impart education and religion.

Monday next, trip to Bareilly then to Saharanpur, next to Ambala, thence, most probably, to Mussoorie with Captain Sevier, and as soon as it is a little cool, return to the

plains and journey to Rajputana etc. Go on working at top speed. Never fear! I, too, have determined to work. The body must go, no mistake about that. Why then let it go in idleness? It is better to wear out than rust out. Don't be anxious even when I die, my very bones will work miracles. We must spread over the whole of India in ten years, short of this it is no good. To work like an athlete! Victory to the Guru! Money and all will come of themselves, we want men, not money. It is man that makes everything, what can money do? — Men we want, the more you get, the better. ... Here, for instance, was M— who brought together a lot of money, but there was no man, and what good did he achieve?

Yours affly.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 133

### CXXXIII Mrs. Bull

CXXXIII

THE MATH,

(The letter was actually written from Ambala.)

19th August, 1897.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . . My health is indifferent, and although I have some rest, I do not think I shall be able to regain my usual vigour till winter next. I had a letter from Joe saying that you are both coming to India. I, of course, will be very glad to see you in India, only you ought to know from the first that India is the dirtiest and unhealthiest hole in the world, with scarcely any European comforts except in the big capitals.

I learn from England that Mr. Sturdy is sending Abhedananda to New York. It seems that the English work is impossible without me. Only a magazine will be started and worked by Mr. Sturdy. I had arranged to come to England this season, but I was foolishly prevented by the doctors. In India the work is going on.

I do not think any European or American will be of any service here just now, and it will be hard for any Westerner to bear the climate. Annie Besant with her exceptional powers works only among the Theosophists, and thus she submits to all the indignities of isolation which a Mlechchha is made to undergo here. Even Goodwin smarts now and then and has to be called to order. Goodwin is doing good work, as he is a man and can mix with the people. Women have no place in men's society here, and she can do good only among her own sex in India. The English friends that came over to India have not been of any help as yet, and do not know whether they will be of any in the future. With all these, if anybody wants to try, she is welcome.

If Saradananda wants to come, he may, and I am sure he will be of very good service to me just now in organising the work, now that my health is broken. There is a young English woman, Miss Margaret Noble, very eager

to come to India to learn the state of things, so that she may do some work when she is back home. I have written her to accompany you in case you come via London. The great difficulty is that you can never understand the situation here from a distance. The two types are so entirely different in all things that it is not possible to form any idea from America or England.

You ought to think that you are starting for the interior of Africa, and if you meet anything better, that will be unexpected.

Ever yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 134

# CXXXIV Mother

CXXXIV

(Translated from Bengali)

1897.

DEAR MOTHER, (Shrimati Indumati Mitra)

Please be not anxious because I could not write to you and could not go to Belgaon. I was suffering very much from illness and it was impossible for me to go then. Now thanks to my travels in the Himalayas, I have greatly regained my health. I shall soon resume work. In two weeks I am going to the Punjab, and just after delivering a lecture or two at Lahore and Amritsar, I shall start via Karachi for Gujarat, Cutch, etc. I shall surely see you at Karachi.

This Kashmir is a veritable heaven on earth. Nowhere else in the world is such a country as this. Mountains and rivers, trees and plants, men and women, beasts and birds — all vie with one another for excellence. I feel a pang at heart not to have visited it so long. Please write to me in detail how you are doing, mentally and physically, and accept my special blessings. I am constantly hating your welfare at heart, know this for certain.

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 135

### CXXXV Sarada

CXXXV

(Translated from Bengali)

MURREE,

10th October, 1897.

DEAR SARADA,

I am sorry to learn from your letter that you are not doing well. If you can make an unpopular man popular, then I call you a clever fellow. There is no prospect of work there in the future; it would have been better had you gone rather to Dacca, or some other place. However, it is a good thing that the work will close in November. If you get very badly off in health, you should better come away. There is much field for work in the Central Provinces; and even without famine, there is no lack of poverty-stricken people in our country. Wherever it is, if you can choose a site with an eye to prospect, you are sure to turn out good work. However, be not sorry. What one does has no destruction — no, never. Who knows, at that very place the future may reap golden results.

I shall very soon begin my work in the plains. I have now no need of travelling over the mountains.

Keep watch over your health.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 136

# CXXXVI Akhandananda

CXXXVI

(Translated from Bengali)

MURREE,

10th October, 1897.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter. You need not make a big plan for the present, but do only what is possible under existing circumstances. Gradually the way will open to you. We must certainly have the orphanage, no hesitating in that. We must not leave the girls in the lurch either. But then we must have a lady superintendent for an orphanage of girls. I believe Mother will be a very good hand for that. Or engage for this task some aged widow of the village who has no issue. And there must be separate places for the boys and girls. Captain Sevier is ready to send you money to help in this. Nedou's Hotel, Lahore — that is his address. If you write to him, write the words, "To wait arrival", on the letter. I am soon going to Rawalpindi, tomorrow or the day after; then I visit Lahore and other places via Jammu, and return to Rajputana via Karachi etc.

I am doing well.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. You must admit Mohammedan boys, too, but never tamper with their religion. The only thing you will have to do is to make separate arrangements for their food etc., and teach them so that they may be moral, manly, and devoted to doing good to others. This indeed is religion.

Shelve your intricate philosophical speculations for the present. In our country we at present need manhood and kindness. " [136\_akhandananda\_01.jpg] — The Lord is the Essence of unutterable love." But instead of saying " say, " [136\_akhandananda\_03.jpg] — He is ever manifest as Love in all beings." What other God — the creation of your mind — are you then going to worship! Let the Vedas, the Koran, the Puranas, and all

scriptural lumber rest now for some time — let there be worship of the visible God of Love and Compassion in the country. All idea of separation is bondage, that of non-differentiation is Mukti. Let not the words of people dead-drunk with worldliness terrify you. " [136\_akhandananda\_04.jpg] — Be fearless" "Ignore the ordinary critics as worms!" Admit boys of all religions — Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, or anything; but begin rather gently — I mean, see that they get their food and drink a little separately, and teach them only the universal side of religion.

Be mad over this, and strike others with this madness! This life has no other end. Preach His name, let His teachings penetrate the world to the very bone. Never forget. Repeat this Mantra in your heart of hearts unceasingly, as you go the round of your daily duties.

Yours,

V.

## Chapter 137

### CXXXVII Rakhāl

CXXXVII

(Translated from Bengali)

MURREE,

gone up by leaps and bounds. I am writing to him tomorrow even. Victory to the Lord! — To work! To work!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

10th October, 1897.

DEAR RAKHAL,

Reached Murree from Kashmir in the evening of the day before yesterday. Everybody had an enjoyable time of it, only Krishnalal (Dhirananda) and Gupta (Sadananda) suffered now and then from fever, which, however, was but slight. This Address is to be sent to the Raja of Khetri. Have it printed in gilt etc. The Raja is expected at Bombay about the 21st or 22nd of October. None of us is staying at Bombay at present — if there be any, send him a copy so that he may present the same to the Raja even on Board the ship, or somewhere in the city of Bombay. Send the superior copy to Khetri. Have this passed in a meeting and if any change is needed, no harm. Then sign it, all of you, only leaving a blank for my name, and I shall sign it on going to Khetri. Let no pains be spared in this.

. . . Captain Sevier says he is very anxious for a site. He wishes to have a spot near Mussoorie or in some other central place, as soon as possible. ... The thing is that we do not want a place which is too cold, at the same time it must not be too hot. Dehra Dun is unbearable in summer, but pleasant in winter; Mussoorie itself is, I dare say, not the right place for many in winter. Above or below it, that is, in British or Garhwal territory, some land is sure to be found. At the same time there must be a supply of water at the place throughout the year, for drinking purposes and for everyday use. My plan is this: With only Achyutananda and Gupta I go from Murree to Rawalpindi, thence to Jammu, thence to Lahore, and from Lahore straight to Karachi. ... Give my hearty love and blessings to Shashi Babu. I see that Master Mahashaya has buckled to work after such a long time. Alive him my special love and greetings. To see him, with his feminine retiringness, stirred to work, my courage has

## Chapter 138

### CXXXVIII M—

CXXXVIII

C/O. LALA HANSRAJ,

RAWALPINDI,

Oct., 1897.

DEAR M[6]\*—

C'est bon, mon ami — now you are doing just the thing,  
Come out, man! No sleeping an life; time is flying.  
Bravo! That is the way.

Many thanks for your publication. Only, I am afraid it  
will not pay its way in a pamphlet form. . . . Never  
mind, pay or no pay — let it see the blaze of daylight.  
You will have many blessings on you and many more  
curses — but that is always the way of the world!

This is the time.

Yours in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 139

# CXXXIX Mother

CXXXIX

(Translated from Bengali)

LAHORE,

15th November, 1897.

DEAR MOTHER, (Shrimati Indumati Mitra)

It is a matter of deep regret that in spite of my earnest wishes, I do not find it feasible to go to Karachi this time and see you. First, because Captain and Mrs. Sevier, who have come from England and are travelling with me for the last nine months nearly, are very anxious to buy some land at Dehra Dun and start an orphanage there. It is their special request that I should go and open the work. This makes it unavoidable to go to Dehra Dun.

Secondly, owing to my kidney troubles I cannot count upon a long life. Even now it is one of my desires to start a Math in Calcutta, towards which as yet I could do nothing. Moreover, the people of my country have withheld the little help that they used to give to our Math of late. They have got a notion that I have brought plenty of money from England! Over and above that, it is impossible to celebrate Shri Ramakrishna's festival this year, for the proprietors of Rasmani's garden would not let me go there, as I am returned from the West! Hence my first duty lies in seeing the few friends we have in Rajputana and trying my best to have a centre in Calcutta. For these reasons I have been very sorry to postpone my tour to Sindh at present. I shall try my best to go there via Rajputana and Kathiawar. Please do not be sorry. Never for a day do I forget you all. But duty must be done first. It will ease me of my anxiety when a Math is established in Calcutta. Then I can hope that the work for which I struggled all my life through all sorts of privation and suffering will not die out after I cease to live in this body. I start for Dehra Dun this very day. After a week's stay there, to Rajputana, thence to Kathiawar, and so on.

With blessings,

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 140

# CXL Mother

CXL

(Translated from Bengali)

DEHRA DUN,

24th November, 1897.

DEAR MOTHER, (Shrimati Indumati Mitra)

I have duly received your letter and that of dear Haripada. Of course you have ample reason to feel sorry for, but you see, I couldn't help it. And what took me here also became a fiasco; neither could I go to Sindh. It is the Lord's will. Now, I have an idea of proceeding to Calcutta through Rajputana, Kathiawar, and Sindh. But some difficulty may crop up on the way. If all goes well, I am certainly coming to Sindh. You must have undergone a lot of difficulty in coming to Hyderabad by arranging for leave etc. Any least trouble undergone, is bound to produce its excellent results. Friday next I shall leave this place, and have a mind to go via Saharanpur to Rajputana direct. I am doing well now, and trust you too are in health and peace of mind. . . .

With best love and blessings to yourself and Haripada,

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 141

# CXLI Margot

CXLI

ALMORA,

20th May, 1898.

DEAR MARGOT (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita.)

. . . Duty has no end, and the world is extremely selfish.

Be of good cheer. "Never a worker of good came to grief." . . .

Ever yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 142

### CXLII Friend

#### CXLII

(Written to Mohammed Sarfaraz Husain of Naini Tal)

#### ALMORA,

10th June, 1898.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I appreciate your letter very much and am extremely happy to learn that the Lord is silently preparing wonderful things for our motherland.

Whether we call it Vedantism or any ism, the truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. I believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus universally.

On the other hand, my experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone.

Therefore I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. 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 harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose that path that suits him best.

For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam — Vedanta brain and Islam body — is the only hope.

I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.

Ever praying that the Lord may make of you a great instrument for the help of mankind, and especially of our poor, poor motherland.

Yours with love,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 143

# CXLIII Margot

CXLIII

KASHMIR,

25th Aug., 1898.

DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

It is a lazy life I am leading for the last two months, floating leisurely in a boat, which is also my home, up and down the beautiful Jhelum, through the most gorgeous scenery God's world can afford, in nature's own park, where the earth, air, land, grass, plants, trees, mountains, snows, and the human form, all express, on the outside at least, the beauty of the Lord — with almost no possessions, scarcely a pen or an inkstand even, snatching up a meal whenever or wherever convenient, the very ideal of a Rip Van Winkle! . . .

Do not work yourself out. It is no use; always remember — "Duty is the midday sun whose fierce rays are burning the very vitals of humanity." It is necessary for a time as a discipline; beyond that, it is a morbid dream. Things go on all right whether we lend them our helping hands or not. We in delusion only break ourselves. There is a false sentiment which goes the extreme of unselfishness, only to injure others by its submission to every evil. We have no right to make others selfish by our unselfishness; have we? . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 144

### CXLIV Dear

CXLIV

**THE MATH, BELUR**

15th Dec., 1898.

DEAR—,

. . . The Mother is our guide and whatever happens or will happen is under Her ordination. . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 145

# CXLV Dhira Mata

CXLV

**BAIDYANATH, DEOGHAR,**

29th Dec., 1898.

MY DEAR DHIRA MATA, (Mrs. Ole Bull)

You know already my inability to accompany you. I cannot gather strength enough to accompany you. The cold in the lungs continues, and that is just what makes me unfit for travel. On the whole I hope to improve here.

I find my cousin has been all these years cultivating her mind with a will, and she knows all that the Bengali literature can give her, and that is a good deal, especially of metaphysics. She has already learnt to sign her name in English and the Roman alphabet. It is now real brain work to teach her, and therefore I have desisted. I am trying simply to idle away my time and force myself to take rest.

Ere this I had only love for you, but recent development proves that you are appointed by the Mother to watch over my life; hence, faith has been added to love! As regards me and my work, I hold henceforth that you are inspired, and I will gladly shake off all responsibilities from my shoulder and abide by what the Mother ordains through you.

Hoping soon to join you in Europe or America, I remain,  
Ever your loving son,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 146

### CXLVI Dear

CXLVI

THE MATH,

11th April, 1899.

DEAR—,

. . . Two years of physical suffering have taken away twenty years of my life. Well, but the soul changeth not, does it? It is there, the same madcap Atman, mad upon one idea, intent and intense.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 147

### CXLVII Mrs. Bull

CXLVII

RIDGELY,

4th Sept., 1899.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

. . .Mother knows best, that is all about me. . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 148

# CXLVIII Margot

CXLVIII

RIDGELY.

1st Nov., 1899.

DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

. . . It seems there is a gloom over your mind. Never mind, nothing is to last for ever. Anyhow life is not eternal. I am so, so thankful for it. Suffering is the lot of the world's best and bravest — yet, for aeons yet — till things are righted; if possible, here — at least it is a discipline which breaks the dream. In my sane moments I rejoice for my sufferings. Some one must suffer here; — I am glad it is I, amongst others of nature's sacrifices.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 149

# CXLIX Margot

CXLIX

NEW YORK,

15th Nov., 1899.

DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

. . . On the whole I don't think there is any cause for anxiety about my body. This sort of nervous body is just the instrument to play great music at times and at times to moan in darkness.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 150

### CL Mrs. Bull

CL

12th Dec., 1899.

MY DEAR MRS. BULL,

You are perfectly right; I am brutal, very indeed. But about the tenderness etc., that is my fault. I wish I had less, much less of that — that is my weakness — and alas! all my sufferings have come from that. Well, the municipality is trying to tax us out — good; that is my fault as I did not make the Math public property by a deed of trust. I am very sorry I use harsh language to my boys, but they also know I love them more than anybody else on earth. I may have had Divine help — true; but oh, the pound of blood every bit of Divine help has been to me!! I would be gladder and a better man without that. The present looks very gloomy indeed; but I am a fighter and must die fighting, not give way — that is why I get crazy at the boys. I don't ask them to fight, but not to hinder my fight.

I don't grudge my fate. But oh! now I want a man, one of my boys, to stand by me and fight against all odds! Don't you vex yourself; if anything is to be done in India, my presence is necessary; and I am much better in health; possibly the sea will make me better. Anyway I did not do anything this time in America except bother my friends. Possibly Joe will help me out with the passage, and I have some money with Mr. Leggett. I have hopes of collecting some money in India yet. I did not see any of my friends in different parts of India. I have hope of collecting the fifteen thousand that will make up the fifty thousand, and a deed of trust will bring down the municipal taxes. If I cannot collect that — it is better to struggle and die for it than vegetate here in America. My mistakes have been great; but everyone of them was from too much love. How I hate love! Would I never had any Bhakti! Indeed, I wish I could be an Advaitist, calm and heartless. Well, this life is done. I will try in the next. I am sorry, especially now, that I have done more injury to my friends than there have been blessings on them. The peace, the quiet I am seeking, I never found.

I went years ago to the Himalayas, never to come back; and my sister committed suicide, the news reached

me there, and that weak heart flung me off from that prospect of peace! It is the weak heart that has driven me out of India to seek some help for those I love, and here I am! Peace have I sought, but the heart, that seat of Bhakti, would not allow me to find it. Struggle and torture, torture and struggle. Well, be it then. since it is my fate, and the quicker it is over, the better. They say I am impulsive, but look at the circumstances!!! I am sorry I have been the cause of pain to you, to you above all, who love me so much, who have been so, so kind. But it is done — was a fact. I am now going to cut the knot or die in the attempt.

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. As Mother wants it, so let it be. I am going to beg of Joe a passage via San Francisco to India. If she gives it, I start immediately via Japan. It would take a month. In India, I think, I can raise some money to keep things straight or on a better footing — at least to leave things where I get them all muddled. The end is getting very dark and very much muddled; well, I expected it so. Don't think I give in in a moment. Lord bless you; if the Lord has made me His hack to work and die on the streets, let Him have it. I am more cheerful just now after your letter than I was for years — Wah Guru ki Fateh! Victory unto the Guru!! Yes, let the world come, the hells come, the gods come, let Mother come, I fight and do not give in. Râvana got his release in three births by fighting the Lord Himself! It is glorious to fight Mother.

All blessings on you and yours. You have done for me more, much more, than I deserved ever.

Love to Christine and Turiyananda.

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 151

## CLI Margot

CLI

921, 21ST STREET, LOS ANGELES,

23rd December, 1899.

MY DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

Yes, I am really getting well under the manipulations of magnetic healing! At any rate I am all right. There was, never anything serious with my organs — it was nerves and dyspepsia.

Now I walk miles every day, at any time — before or after meals. I am perfectly well — and am going to remain so, I am sure.

The wheel is turning up, Mother is working it up. She cannot let me go before Her work is done — and that is the secret.

See, how England is working up. After this blood-letting, (Swamiji refers to the Boer war.) people will then have time of thinking better and higher things than “war”, “war”, “war”. That is our opportunity. We run in quick, get hold of them by the dozens and then set the Indian work in full swing.

I pray that England will lose Cape Colony, so that she will be able to concentrate her energy on India. These capes and promontories never are of any use to England except in puffing up a false pride and costing her hordes in money and blood.

Things are looking up. So get ready. With all love to the four sisters and to you,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 152

### CLII Margot

CLII

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,

24th Jan., 1900.

DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

I am afraid that the rest and peace I seek for will never come. But Mother does good to others through me, at least some to my native land, and it is easier to be reconciled to one's fate as a sacrifice. We are all sacrifices — each in his own way. The great work is going on — no one can see its meaning except that it is a great sacrifice. Those that are willing escape a lot of pain. Those who resist are broken into submission and suffer more. I am now determined to be a willing one.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 153

### CLIII Nivedita

CLIII

C/O MISS MEAD,

447 DOUGLAS BUILDING,

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,

15th Feb., 1900.

MY DEAR NIVEDITA,

Yours of the — reached me today at Pasadena. I see Joe has missed you at Chicago — although I have not heard anything from them yet from New York.

There was a bundle of English newspapers from England with a line on the envelope expressing good wishes for me and signed, F.H.M. Nothing important was in those, however. I would have written a letter to Miss Müller, but I do not know the address; then I was afraid to frighten her.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. Leggett started a plan of a \$100 subscription each a year for ten years to help me, and headed the list with her \$100 for 1900, and got 2 others here to do the same. Then she went on writing letters to all my friends asking each to join in it. When she went on writing to Mrs. Miller I was rather shy — but she did it before I knew. A very polite but cold letter came to her in reply from Mrs. Hale, written by Mary, expressing their inability and assuring her of their love for me. I am afraid Mrs. Hale and Mary are displeased. But it was not my fault at all!!

I get news from Mrs. Sevier that Niranjan is seriously ill in Calcutta. I do not know if he has passed away. Well — but I am strong now, Margo, stronger than ever I was mentally. I was mentally getting a sort of ironing over my heart. I am getting nearer a Sannyasin's life now. I have not had any news from Saradananda for two weeks. I am glad you got the stories; rewrite them if you think so — get them published if you find anybody to do it and take the proceeds, if any, for your work. I do not want any I have got a few hundred dollars here. Going to San Francisco next week, and hope to do better there. Tell Mary when you see her next that I

had nothing whatsoever to do with the proposal of \$100 a year subscription to Mrs. Hale. I am so grateful to them.

Well, money will come for your school, never fear — it has got to come; if it does not come, who cares? One road is quite as good as the other. Mother knows best. I don't know whether I am very soon going to the East or not. If I have an opportunity, of course I will go to Indiana.

The international scheme is a good one and by all mean join it, and be the medium of getting some Indian women's clubs to join it through you, which is better. . .

Things shall look up for us, never mind. As soon as the war is finished we go to England and try to do a big work there. What do you think? Shall I write to Mother Superior? If so, send her whereabouts. Has she written to you? Sturdies and "Shakies" will all come round — hold on.

You are learning your lessons — that is all I want. So am I; the moment we are fit, money and men must flow towards us. Between my nerves and your emotion we may make a mess of everything just now. So Mother is curing my nerves and drilling you into level-headedness — and then we go. This time good is coming in chunks, I am sure. We will make the foundations of the old land shake this time.

. . . I am getting cool as a cucumber — let anything come, I am ready. The next move — any blow shall tell — not one miss — such is the next chapter.

With all love,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 154

### CLIV Akhandananda

#### CLIV

(Translated from Bengali)

#### CALIFORNIA,

21st February, 1900.

MY DEAR AKHANDANANDA,

I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the details of news. Learning and wisdom are supersfluities, the surface glitter merely, but it is the heart that is the seat of all power. It is not in the brain but in the heart that the Atman, possessed of knowledge, power, and activity, has Its seat. " शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाड्यः — The nerves of the heart are a hundred and one" etc. The chief nerve-centre near the heart, called the sympathetic ganglia, is where the Atman has Its citadel. The more heart you will be able to manifest, the greater will be the victory you achieve. It is only a few that understand the language of the brain, but everyone from the Creator down to a clump of grass, understands the language that comes from the heart. But then, in our country, it is a case of rousing men that are, as it were, dead. It will take time, but if you have infinite patience and perseverance, success is bound to come. No mistake in that.

How are the English officials to blame? Is the family, of whose unnatural cruelty you have written, an isolated one in India? Or, are there plenty of such? It is the same story all over the country. But then, it is not as a result of pure wickedness that the selfishness commonly met with in our country has come. This bestial selfishness is the outcome of centuries of failure and repression. It is not real selfishness, but deep-rooted despair. It will be cored at the first inkling of success. It is only this that the English officials are noticing all round, so how can they have faith at the very outset? But tell me, do they not sympathise with any real work that they meet with? . . .

In these days of dire famine, flood, disease, and pestilence, tell me where your Congressmen are. Will it do merely to say, "Hand the government of the country

over to us"? And who is there to listen to them? If a man does work, has he to open his mouth to ask for anything? If there be two thousand people like you working in several districts, won't it be the turn of the English themselves to consult you in matters of political moment? " A— was not allowed to open a centre, but what of that! Has not Kishengarh allowed it?— Let him work on without ever opening his lips; there is no use of either telling anything to anybody, or quarrelling with any. Whoever will assist in this work of the Divine Mother of the universe, will have Her grace, and whoever will oppose it will not only be " laying the axe to his own prospects. [154\_akhandananda\_04.jpg] — all in good time. Many a little makes a mickle. When a great work is being done, when the foundations are laid or a road constructed, when superhuman energy is needed — it is one or two extraordinary men who silently and noiselessly work through a world of obstacles and difficulties. When thousands of people are benefited, there is a great tomtoming, and the whole country is loud in notes of praise. But then the machine has already been set agoing, and even a boy can work it, or a fool add to it some impetus. Grasp this that, that benefit done to a village or two, that orphanage with its twenty orphans, those ten or twenty workers — all these are enough; they form the nucleus, never to be destroyed. From these, hundreds of thousands of people will be benefited in time. Now we want half a dozen lions, then excellent work will be turned out by even hundreds of jackals. . .

If orphan girls happen to come to your hands for shelter, you must take them in above all else. Otherwise, Christian missionaries will take them, poor things, away! What matters it that you have no particular arrangements for them? Through the Divine Mother's will, they will be provided for. When you get a horse, never you worry about the whip. ... Get together whomsoever you can lay your hands on, no picking and choosing now — everything will be set right in course of time. In every attempt there are many obstacles to cope with, but gradually the path becomes smooth.

Convey to the European officer many thanks from me. Work on fearlessly — there is a hero! Bravo! Thrice well

done! The starting of a centre at Bhagalpur that you have written about is no doubt a good idea — enlightening the schoolboys and things of that sort. But our mission is for the destitute, the poor, and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and if, after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry. Those peasants and labouring people will be won over by love. Afterwards it will be they who will collect small sums and start missions at their own villages, and gradually, from among those very men, teachers will spring.

Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds and have one of these in their village. " — this holds good in all spheres. We help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with your daily bread is a real bit of work done. The moment they will come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is in the right direction, while the little good that the moneyed classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to their own problem, to grapple with and solve it. But then you must take care not to set up class-strife between the poor peasants, the labouring people, and wealthy classes. Make it a point not to abuse the moneyed classes. " [154\_akhandananda\_06.jpg] — The wise man should achieve his own object."

Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Mother of the Universe! What fear! Opportunity, remedy, and its application will present themselves. I do not care about the result, well or ill. I shall be happy if only you do this much of work. Wordy warfares, texts and scriptures, doctrines and dogmas — all these I am coming to loathe as poison in this my advanced age. Know this for certain that he who will work will be the crown on my head. Useless bandying of words and making noise is taking away our time, is consuming our life-energy, without pushing the cause of humanitarianism a step further. — Away with fear! Bravo! There is a hero indeed! May the blessed Guru be enthroned in your heart, and the Divine Mother guide your hands.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 155

# CLV Nivedita

CLV

SAN FRANCISCO,

4th March, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

I don't want to work. I want to be quiet and rest. I know the time and the place; but the fate or Karma, I think, drives me on — work, work. We are like cattle driven to the slaughter-house — hastily nibbling a bite of grass on the roadside as they are driven along under the whip. And all this is our work, our fear — fear, the beginning of misery, of disease, etc. By being nervous and fearful we injure others, by being so fearful to hurt we hurt more. By trying so much to avoid evil we fall into its jaws.

What a mass of namby-pamby nonsense we create round ourselves!! It does us no good, it leads us on to the very thing we try to avoid — misery. ...

Oh, to become fearless, to be daring, to be careless of everything! . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 156

# CLVI Nivedita

CLVI

SAN FRANCISCO,

25th March, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

I am much better and am growing very strong. I feel sometimes that freedom is near at hand, and the tortures of the last two years have been great lessons in many ways. Disease and misfortune come to do us good in the long run, although at the time we feel that we are submerged for ever.

I am the infinite blue sky; the clouds may gather over me, but I am the same infinite blue.

I am trying to get a taste of that peace which I know is my nature and everyone's nature. These tin pots of bodies and foolish dreams of happiness and misery — what are they?

My dreams are breaking. Om Tat Sat!

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 157

### CLVII Margot

CLVII

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

28th March, 1900.

MY DEAR MARGOT, (Margaret E. Noble or Sister Nivedita)

I am so glad at your good fortune. Things have got to come round if we are steady. I am sure you will get all the money you require here or in England.

I am working hard; and the harder I work, the better I feel. This ill health has done me a great good, sure. I am really understanding what non-attachment means. And I hope very soon to be perfectly non-attached.

We put all our energies to concentrate and get attached to one thing; but the other part, though equally difficult, we seldom pay any attention to — the faculty of detaching ourselves at a moment's notice from anything.

Both attachment and detachment perfectly developed make a man great and happy.

I am so glad at Mrs. Leggett's gift of \$1,000. She is working up, wait. She has a great part to play in Ramakrishna's work, whether she knows it or not.

I enjoyed your accounts of Prof. Geddes, and Joe has a funny account of a clairvoyant. Things are just now beginning to turn. . . .

This letter, I think, Will reach you at Chicago. . . .

I had a nice letter from Max Gysic, the young Swiss who is a great friend of Miss Souter. Miss Souter also sends her love, and they ask to know the time when I come over to England. Many people are inquiring, they say.

Things have got to come round — the seed must die underground to come up as the tree. The last two years were the underground rotting. I never had a struggle in the jaws of death, but it meant a tremendous upheaval of the whole life. One such brought me to Ramakrishna, another sent me to the U.S., this has been the greatest

of all. It is gone — I am so calm that it astonishes me sometimes!! I work every day morning and evening, eat anything any hour — and go to bed at 12 p.m. in the night — but such fine sleep!! I never had such power of sleeping before!

Yours with all love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 158

### CLVIII Joe

#### CLVIII

#### ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,

18th April, 1900.

MY DEAR JOE,

Just now I received yours and Mrs. Bull's welcome letter. I direct this to London. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is on the sure way to recovery.

I am so sorry Mr. Leggett resigned the presidentship.

Well, I keep quiet for fear of making further trouble.

You know my methods are extremely harsh and once roused I may rattle A— too much for his peace of mind.

I wrote to him only to tell him that his notions about Mrs. Bull are entirely wrong.

Work is always difficult; pray for me Joe that my works stop for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works, She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more — the old friends, give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more shall that of the body. The battles are lost and won, I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

“Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore.”

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking — love dying, work becoming tasteless — the glamour is off life. Only the voice of the Master calling. — “I come Lord, I come.” “Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me.” — “I come, my beloved Lord, I come.”

Yes, I come. Nirvana is before me. I feel it at times — the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.

I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone for ever, never to come back again! The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant is left behind.

You understand why I do not want to meddle with A—. Who am I to meddle with anyone, Joe? I have long given up my place as a leader — I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this year I have not dictated anything in India. You know that. Many thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All blessings follow you ever! The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting: I am drifting again — with the bright warm sun ahead and masses of vegetation around — and in the heat everything is so still, so calm — and I am drifting languidly — in the warm heart of the river! I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet — for fear of breaking the marvellous stillness, stillness that makes you feel sure it is an illusion!

Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst of power! Now they are vanishing, and I drift. I come! Mother, I come! In Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come — a spectator, no more an actor.

Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like rains, distant whispers, and peace is upon every thing, sweet, sweet peace — like that one feels for a few moments just before falling into sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows — without fear, without love, without emotion. Peace that one feels alone, surrounded with statues and pictures — I come! Lord, I come!

The world is, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations

without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it! Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions to me — my body among the first. Om That Existence!

I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris. Fresh joy — fresh benefits to mind and body.

With love as ever to you and Mrs. Bull,

Yours faithfully,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 159

# CLIX Nivedita

CLIX

NEW YORK

20th June, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

. . . Well, Mother seems to be kind again and the wheel  
is slowly rising up. . . .

Yours etc.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 160

# CLX Nivedita

CLX

NEW YORK,

2nd July, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

. . . Mother knows, as I always say. Pray to Mother. It is hard work to be a leader — one must crush all one's own self under the feet of the community. . . .

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 161

## CLXI Nivedita

CLXI

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS, PARIS,

25th Aug., 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

Your letter reached me just now. Many thanks for the kind expressions.

I gave a chance to Mrs. Bull to draw her money out of the Math; and as she did not say anything about it, and the trust deeds were waiting here to be executed, I got them executed duly at the British Consulate; and they are on their way to India now.

Now I am free, as I have kept no power or authority or position for me in the work. I also have resigned the presidentship of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Math etc., belong now to the immediate disciples of Ramakrishna except myself. The presidentship is now Brahmananda's — next it will fall on Premananda etc., etc., in turn.

I am so glad a whole load is off me, now I am happy. I have served Ramakrishna through mistakes and success for 20 years now. I retire for good and devote the rest of my life to myself.

I no longer represent anybody, nor am I responsible to anybody. As to my friends, I had a morbid sense of obligation. I have thought well and find I owe nothing to anybody; if anything, I have given my best energies, unto death almost, and received only hectoring and mischief-making and botheration. I am done with everyone here and in India.

Your letter indicates that I am jealous of your new friends. You must know once for all, I am born without jealousy, without avarice, without the desire to rule — whatever other vices I am born with.

I never directed you before; now, after I am nobody in the work, I have no direction whatever. I only know this much: So long as you serve "Mother" with a whole heart,

She will be your guide.

I never had any jealousy about what friends you made. I never criticised my brethren for mixing up in anything. Only I do believe the Western people have the peculiarity of trying to force upon others whatever seems good to them, forgetting that what is good for you may not be good for others. As such, I am afraid you might try to force upon others whatever turn your mind might take in contact with new friends. That was the only reason I sometimes tried to stop any particular influence, and nothing else.

You are free, have your own choice, your own work. ...

Friends or foes, they are all instruments in Her hands to help us work out our own Karma, through pleasure or pain. As such "Mother" bless them all.

With all love and blessings,

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 162

### CLXII Nivedita

CLXII

VIVEKANANDA.

PARIS,

28th August, 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

Such is life — grind, grind; and yet what else are we to do? Grind, grind! Something will come — some way will be opened. If it does not, as it probably never will — then, then — what then? All our efforts are only to stave off, for a season, the great climax — death! Oh, what would the world do without you, Death! Thou great healer!

The world, as it is, is not real, is not eternal, thank the Lord!! How can the future be any better? That must be an effect of this one — at least like this, if not worse!

Dreams, oh dreams! Dream on! Dream, the magic of dream, is the cause of this life, it is also the remedy. Dream' dream; only dream! Kill dream by dream!

I am trying to learn French, talking to — here. Some are very appreciative already. Talk to all the world — of the eternal riddle, the eternal spool of fate, whose thread-end no one finds and everyone seems to find, at least to his own satisfaction, at least for a time — to fool himself a moment, isn't it?

Well, now great things are to be done! Who cares for great things? Why not do small things as well? One is as good as the other. The greatness of little things, that is what the Gita teaches — bless the old book!! . . .

I have not had much time to think of the body. So it must be well. Nothing is ever well here. We forget them at times, and that is being well and doing well. . . .

We play our parts here — good or bad. When the dream is finished and we have left the stage, we will have a hearty laugh at all this — of this only I am sure.

Yours etc.,

## Chapter 163

### CLXIII Mother

#### CLXIII

##### 6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS, PARIS,

3rd Sept., 1900.

DEAR MOTHER, (Mrs. Francis Leggett.)

We had a congress of cranks here in this house.

The representatives came from various countries, from India in the south, to Scotland in the north, with England and America buttressing the sides.

We were having great difficulty in electing the president, for though Dr. James (Professor William James) was there, he was more mindful of the blisters raised on him by Mrs. Melton (probably a magnetic healer) than solution of world problems.

I proposed Joe (Josephine MacLeod), but she refused on the ground of non-arrival of her new gown — and went to a corner to watch the scene, from a coign of vantage.

Mrs. (Ole) Bull was ready, but Margot (Sister Nivedita) objected to this meeting being reduced to a comparative philosophy class.

When we were thus in a fix — up sprung a short, square, almost round figure from the corner, and without any ceremony declared that all difficulties will be solved, not only of electing a president but of life itself, if we all took to worshipping the Sun God and Moon God. He delivered his speech in five minutes; but it took his disciple, who was present, fully three quarters of an hour to translate. In the meanwhile, the master began to draw the rugs in your parlour up in a heap, with the intention, as he said, of giving us an ocular demonstration of the power of "Fire God", then and there.

At this juncture Joe interposed and insisted that she did not want a fire sacrifice in her parlour; whereupon the Indian saint looked daggers at Joe, entirely disgusted at the behaviour of one he confidently believed to be a perfect convert to fire worship.

Then Dr. James snatched a minute from nursing his blisters and declared that he would have something very interesting to speak upon Fire God and his brethren, if he were not entirely occupied with the evolution of Meltonian blisters. Moreover his great Master, Herbert Spencer, not having investigated the subject before him, he would stick to golden silence.

"Chutney is the thing", said a voice near the door. We all looked back and saw Margot. "It is Chutney," she said, "Chutney and Kali, that will remove all difficulties of Life, and make it easy for us to swallow all evils, and relish what is good." But she stopped all of a sudden and vehemently asserted that she was not going to speak any further, as she has been obstructed by a certain male animal in the audience in her speech. She was sure one man in the audience had his head turned towards the window and was not paying the attention proper to a lady, and though as to herself she believed in the equality of the sexes, yet she wanted to know the reason of that disgusting man's want of due respect for women. Then one and all declared that they had been giving her the most undivided attention, and all above the equal right, her due, but to no purpose. Margot would have nothing to do with that horrible crowd and sat down.

Then Mrs. Bull of Boston took the floor and began to explain how all the difficulties of the world were from not understanding the true relation between the sexes. She said, "The only panacea was a right understanding of the proper persons, and then to find liberty in love and freedom in liberty and motherhood, brotherhood, fatherhood, Godhood, love in freedom and freedom in love, in the right holding up of the true ideal in sex."

To this the Scotch delegate vehemently objected and said that as the hunter chased the goatherd, the goatherd the shepherd, the shepherd the peasant, and the peasant drove the fisher into the sea, now we wanted to fish out of the deep the fisher and let him fall upon the peasant, the peasant upon the shepherd, and so on; and the web of life will be completed and we will be all happy. He was not allowed to continue his driving business long. In a second everyone was on his feet, and we could only hear a confusion of voices — "Sun God and Moon God", "Chutney and Kali," "Freedom holdings up right

understanding, sex, motherhood”, “Never, the fisherman must go back to the shore”, etc. Whereupon Joe declared that she was yearning to be the hunter for the time and chase them all out of the house if they did not stop their nonsense.

Then was peace and calm restored, and I hasten to write you about it.

Yours affly.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 164

# CLXIV Alberta

CLXIV

6 PLACE DES ETATS UNIS,

PARIS, FRANCE,

10th September, 1900.

DEAR ALBERTA,

I am surely coming this evening and of course will be very glad to meet the princess (probably Princess Demidoff) and her brother. But if it be too late to find my way out here, you will have to find me a place to sleep in the house.

Yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 165

### CLXV Joe

CLXV

THE MATH, BELUR,

11th Dec., 1900.

DEAR JOE,

I arrived night before last. Alas! my hurrying was of no use.

Poor Captain Sevier passed away, a few days ago — thus two great Englishmen gave up their lives for us — us the Hindus. Thus is martyrdom if anything is. Mrs. Sevier I have written to just now, to know her decision.

I am well, things are well here — every way. Excuse this haste. I will write longer ere long.

Ever yours in truth,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 166

# CLXVI Nivedita

CLXVI

**THE MATH, BELUR, HOWRAH,**

19th Dec., 1900.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

Just a voice across the continents to say, how do you do?  
Are you not surprised? Verily I am a bird of passage.  
Gay and busy Paris, grim old Constantinople, sparkling  
little Athens, and pyramidal Cairo are left behind, and  
here I am writing in my room on the Ganga, in the Math.  
It is so quiet and still! The broad river is dancing in  
the bright sunshine, only now and then an occasional  
cargo boat breaking the silence with the splashing of the  
oars. It is the cold season here, but the middle of the  
day is warm and bright every day. But it is the winter of  
Southern California. Everything is green and gold, and  
the grass is like velvet; yet the air is cold and crisp and  
delightful.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 167

### CLXVII Joe

CLXVII

THE MATH, BELUR, HOWRAH,

26th Dec., 1900.

DEAR JOE,

This mail brought your letter including that of Mother and Alberta. What the learned friend of Alberta says about Russia is about the same I think myself. Only there is one difficulty of thought: Is it possible for the Hindu race to be Russianised?

Dear Mr. Sevier passed away before I could arrive. He was cremated on the banks of the river that flows by his Ashrama, à la Hindu, covered with garlands, the Brahmins carrying the body and boys chanting the Vedas.

The cause has already two martyrs. It makes me love dear old England and its heroic breed. The Mother is watering the plant of future India with the best blood of England. Glory unto Her!

Dear Mrs. Sevier is calm. A letter she wrote me to Paris comes back this mail. I am going up tomorrow to pay her a visit. Lord bless her, dear brave soul!

I am calm and strong. Occasion never found me low yet Mother will not make me now depressed.

It is very pleasant here, now the winter is on. The Himalayas will be still more beautiful with the uncovered snows.

The young man who started from New York, Mr. Johnston, has taken the vow of a Brahmachârin and is at Mayavati.

Send the money to Saradananda in the Math, as I will be away in the hills.

They have worked all right as far as they could; I am glad, and feel myself quite a fool on account of my nervous

chagrin.

They are as good and as faithful as ever, and they are in good health. Write all this to Mrs. Bull and tell her she was always right and I was wrong, and I beg a hundred thousand pardons of her.

Oceans of love for her and for M—

I look behind and after  
And find that all is right. In my deepest sorrows  
There is a soul of light.

All love to M—, Mrs. C—, to Dear J.B.—, and to you,  
Dear Joe, Pranâms.

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 168

# CLXVIII Nivedita

CLXVIII

THE MATH, BELUR,

7th Sept., 1901.

DEAR NIVEDITA,

We all work by bits, that is to say, in this cause. I try to keep down the spring, but something or other happens, and the spring goes whirr, and there you are — thinking, remembering, scribbling, scrawling, and all that!

Well, about the rains — they have come down now in right earnest, and it is a deluge, pouring, pouring, pouring night and day. The river is rising, flooding the banks; the ponds and tanks have overflowed. I have just now returned from lending a hand in cutting a deep drain to take off the water from the Math grounds. The rain-water stands at places some feet high. My huge stork is full of glee, and so are the ducks and geese. My tame antelope fled from the Math and gave us some days of anxiety in finding him out. One of my ducks unfortunately died yesterday. She had been gasping for breath more than a week. One of my waggish old monks says, "Sir, it is no use living in this Kali-Yuga when ducks catch cold from damp and rain, and frogs sneeze!"

One of the geese had her plumes falling off. Knowing no other method, I left her some minutes in a tub of water mixed with mild carbolic, so that it might either kill or heal; and she is all right now.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.





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