

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-  
Volume 7-Epistles - Third Series

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# Chapter 1

## Note

### NOTE

Before leaving for the USA, Swamiji used to change his name very often. In earlier years he signed as Narendra or Naren; then for some time as Vividishananda or Sachchidananda. But for the convenience of the readers, these volumes use the more familiar name Vivekananda.

PUBLISHER

## Chapter 2

### I Sir

I

(Translated from Bengali)

Glory to Ramakrishna!

**BAIDYANATH,**

25th December, 1889.

DEAR SIR (Shri Balaram Bose),

I have been staying for the last few days at Baidyanath in Purna Babu's Lodge. It is not so cold, and my health too is indifferent. I am suffering from indigestion, probably due to excess of iron in the water. I have found nothing agreeable here — neither the place, nor the season, nor the company. I leave for Varanasi tomorrow. Achyutananda stopped at Govinda Chaudhury's place at Deoghar, and the latter, as soon as he got news of us, earnestly insisted on our becoming his guests. Finally, he met us once again and prevailed on us to accede to his request. The man is a great worker, but has a number of women with him — old women most of them, of the ordinary Vaishnava type. . . . His clerks too revere us much; some of them are very much ill-disposed towards him, and they spoke of his misdeeds. Incidentally, I raised the topic of \_\_\_. You have many wrong ideas or doubts about her; hence I write all this after particular investigation. Even the aged clerks of this establishment highly respect and revere her. She came to stop with \_\_\_ while she was a mere child, and ever lived as his wife. . . . Everyone admits in one voice that her character is spotless. She was all along a perfectly chaste woman and never behaved with \_\_\_ in any relation but that of wife to husband, and she was absolutely faithful. She came at too early an age to have incurred any moral taint. After she had separated from \_\_\_, she wrote to him to say that she had never treated him as anything but her husband, but that it was impossible for her to live with a man with a loose character. His old office-bearers too believe him to be satanic in character; but they consider \_\_\_ a Devi (angel), and remark that it was following her departure that \_\_\_ lost all sense of shame.

My object in writing all this is that formerly I was not a believer in the tale of the lady's early life. The idea that there might be such purity in the midst of a relation which society does not recognise, I used to consider as romance. But after thorough investigation I have come to know that it is all right. She is very pure, pure from her infancy — I have not the least doubt about it. For entertaining those doubts, you and I and everyone are guilty to her; I make repeated salutations to her, and ask her pardon for my guilt. She is not a liar.

I take this opportunity to record that such courage is impossible in a lying and unchaste woman. I have also been told that she had a lifelong ardent faith in religion also.

Well, your disease is not yet improving! I don't think this is a place for patients unless one is ready to spend a good deal of money. Please think out some judicious course. Here every article will have to be procured from elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 3

### II Sir

#### II

(Translated from Bengali)

Glory to Ramakrishna!

#### ALLAHABAD,

30th December, 1889.

DEAR SIR (Shri Balaram Bose),

Gupta left a slip when coming and the next day a letter from Yogananda gave me all the news and I immediately started for Allahabad which I reached the day after, to find that Yogananda had completely recovered. He had chicken-pox (with one or two smallpox rashes also). The doctor is a noble soul, and they have got a brotherhood, who are all great pious men and highly devoted to the service of Sâdhus. They are particularly anxious that I pass the month of Mâgh here, but I am leaving for Varanasi. . . . How are you? I pray to God for the welfare of yourself and your family. Please convey my compliments to Tulasiram, Chuni Babu, and the rest.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 4

## III Sir

### III

(Translated from Bengali)

#### GHAZIPUR,

30th January, 1890.

REVERED SIR (Shri Balaram Bose),

I am now stopping with Satish Babu at Ghazipur. Of the few places I have recently visited, this is the healthiest. The water of Baidyanath is very bad — it leads to indigestion. Allahabad is very congested. The few days I passed at Varanasi, I suffered from fever day and night — the place is so malarious! Ghazipur has a very salubrious climate — specially the quarter I am living in. I have visited Pavhari Baba's house — there are high walls all round, and it is fashioned like an English bungalow. There is a garden inside and big rooms and chimneys, etc. He allows nobody to enter. If he is so inclined, he comes up to the door and speaks from inside — that is all. One day I went and waited and waited in the cold and had to return. I shall go to Varanasi on Sunday next. If the meeting with the Babaji takes place in the meantime, all right, otherwise I bid him good-bye. About Pramada Babu's place I shall write definitely from Varanasi. If Kali Bhattacharya is determined to come, let him do so after I leave for Varanasi on Sunday, but he should rather not. After a few days' stay at Varanasi, I shall start for Hrishikesh. Pramada Babu may accompany me. Please accept all of you my cordial greetings — and blessing to Fakir, Ram, Krishnamayi, etc.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. In my opinion, it will do you much good if you come and stay for some time at Ghazipur. Here Satish will be able to secure a bungalow for you, and there is a gentleman, Gagan Chandra Ray by name, who is the head of the Opium Office and is exceedingly courteous, philanthropic, and social — they will arrange for everything. The house-rent is fifteen to twenty rupees; rice is dear, and milk sells at sixteen to twenty seers a rupee; all other things are very cheap. Besides, under the care of these

gentlemen, there is no chance of any difficulty. But it is slightly expensive — it will cost over forty to fifty rupees. Varanasi is horribly malarious. I have never lived in Pramada Babu's garden. He likes to have me always in his company. The garden is indeed very beautiful, richly laid out, spacious, and open. This time when I go, I shall live there and report to you.

## Chapter 5

### IV Sir

#### IV

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

C/O Satish Mukherji,

**GORABAZAR, GHAZIPUR.**

14th February, 1890.

REVERED SIR (Shri Balaram Bose),

I am in receipt of your letter of contrition. I am not leaving this place soon — it is impossible to avoid the Babaji's request. You have expressed remorse at not having reaped any appreciable results by serving the Sadhus. It is true, and yet not true; it is true if you look towards ideal bliss; but if you look behind to the place from which you started, you will find that before you were an animal, now you are a man, and will be a god or God Himself in future. Moreover, that sort of regret and dissatisfaction is very good; it is the prelude to improvement. Without this none can rise. He who puts on a turban and immediately sees the Lord, progresses thus far and no farther. You are blessed indeed to have that constant dissatisfaction preying upon your mind — rest assured that there is no danger for you. . . . You are a keenly intelligent man, and know full well that patience is the best means of success. In this respect I have no doubt that we light-headed boys have much to learn from you. . . . You are a considerate man, and I need not add anything. Man has two ears but one mouth. You specially are given to plain-speaking and are chary of making large promises — things that sometimes make me cross with you, but upon reflection I find that it is you who have acted with discretion. "Slow but sure." "What is lost in power is gained in speed." However, in this world everything depends upon one's words. To get an insight behind the words (specially, with your economical spirit masking all) is not given to all, and one must associate long with a man to be able to understand him. . . . Religion is not in sects, nor in making a fuss — why do you forget these teachings of our revered Master? Please help as far as it lies in you, but to judge what came

of it, whether it was turned to good or evil account, is perhaps beyond our jurisdiction. . . . Considering the great shock which Girish Babu has received, it will give him immense peace to serve Mother at this moment. He is a very keen-witted person. And our beloved Master had perfect confidence in you, used to dine nowhere else except at your place, and, I have heard, Mother too has the fullest confidence in you. In view of these, you will please bear and forbear all shortcomings of us fickle boys, treating them as if they were done by your own boy. This is all I have got to say. Please let me know by return of post when the Anniversary is to take place. A pain in the loins is giving me much trouble. In a few days the place will look exceedingly beautiful, with miles and miles of rose-banks all in flower. Satish says he will then send some fresh roses and cuttings for the Festival. . . . May the Lord ordain that your son becomes a man, and never a coward!

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. If Mother has come, please convey to her my countless salutations, and ask her to bless me that I may have unflinching perseverance. Or, if that be impossible in this body, may it fall off soon!

## Chapter 6

# V Gupta

V

(Translated from Bengali)

**GHAZIPUR,**

14th Feb., 1890.

MY DEAR GUPTA (Swami Sadananda),

I hope you are doing well. Do your own spiritual exercises, and knowing yourself to be the humblest servant of all, serve them. Those with whom you are staying are such that even I am not worthy to call myself their humblest servant and take the dust of their feet. Knowing this, serve them and have devotion for them. Don't be angry even if they abuse or even hurt you grievously. Never mix with women. Try to be hardy little by little, and gradually accustom yourself to maintaining the body out of the proceeds of begging. Whoever takes the name of Ramakrishna, know him to be your Guru. Everyone can play the role of a master, but it is very difficult to be a servant. Specially you should follow Shashi. Know it for certain that without steady devotion for the Guru and unflinching patience and perseverance, nothing is to be achieved. You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this, and you are gone forever.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 7

## VI Sir

VI

VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from Bengali)

Glory to Ramakrishna!

**GHAZIPUR,**

15th March, 1890.

REVERED SIR (Shri Balaram Bose),

Received your kind note yesterday. I am very sorry to learn that Suresh Babu's illness is extremely serious. What is destined will surely happen. It is a matter of great regret that you too have fallen ill. So long as egoism lasts, any shortcoming in adopting remedial measures is to be considered as idleness — it is a fault and a guilt. For one who has not that egoistic idea, the best course is to forbear. The dwelling-place of the Jivâtman, this body, is a veritable means of work, and he who converts this into an infernal den is guilty, and he who neglects it is also to blame. Please act according to circumstances as they present themselves, without the least hesitation.

— “The highest duty consists in doing the little that lies in one's power, seeking neither death nor life, and bidding one's time like a servant ready to do any behest.”

There is a dreadful outbreak of influenza at Varanasi and Pramada Babu has gone to Allahabad. Baburam has suddenly come here. He has got fever; he was wrong to start under such circumstances. . . . I am leaving this place tomorrow. . . . My countless salutations to Mother. You all bless me that I may have sameness of vision, that after avoiding the bondages which one is heir to by one's very birth, I may not again get stuck in self-imposed bondages. If there be any Doer of good and if He have the power and the opportunity, may He vouchsafe the highest blessings unto you all — this is my constant prayer.

Yours affectionately,

# Chapter 8

## VII Atul Babu

### VII

(Translated from Bengali)

#### HAZIPUR,

15th March, 1890.

DEAR ATUL BABU (Atul Chandra Ghosh.),

I am extremely sorry to hear that you are passing through mental afflictions. Please do only what is agreeable to you.

— “While there is birth there is death, and again entering the mother’s womb. This is the manifest evil of transmigration. How, O man, dost thou want satisfaction in such a world!”

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am leaving this place tomorrow. Let me see which way destiny leads!

## Chapter 9

# VIII Adhyapakji

VIII

SALEM (U.S.A.),

30th Aug., 1893.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (HONOURABLE PROFESSOR) (Prof. John Henry Wright),

I am going off from here today. I hope you have received some reply from Chicago. I have received an invitation with full directions from Mr. Sanborn. So I am going to Saratoga on Monday. My respects to your wife. And my love to Austin and all the children. You are a real Mahâtmâ (a great soul) and Mrs. Wright is nonpareil.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 10

### IX Adhyapakji

IX

SALEM,

Saturday, 4th Sept., 1893.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

I hasten to tender my heartfelt gratitude to you for your letters of introduction. I have received a letter from Mr. Theles of Chicago giving me the names of some of the delegates and other things about the Congress.

Your professor of Sanskrit in his note to Miss Sanborn mistakes me for Purushottama Joshi and states that there is a Sanskrit library in Boston the like of which can scarcely be met with in India. I would be so happy to see it.

Mr. Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on Monday and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding house called Sanatorium. If any news come from Chicago in the meanwhile I hope you will kindly send it over to the Sanatorium, Saratoga.

You and your noble wife and sweet children have made an impression in my brain which is simply indelible, and I thought myself so much nearer to heaven when living with you. May He, the giver of all gifts, shower on your head His choicest blessings.

Here are a few lines written as an attempt at poetry. Hoping your love will pardon this infliction.

Ever your friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

O'er hill and dale and mountain range,  
In temple, church, and mosque,  
In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran  
I had searched for Thee in vain.  
Like a child in the wildest forest lost  
I have cried and cried alone,  
"Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?"

The echo answered, "gone."

And days and nights and years then passed —  
A fire was in the brain;  
I knew not when day changed in night,  
The heart seemed rent in twain.  
I laid me down on Gangâ's shore,  
Exposed to sun and rain;  
With burning tears I laid the dust  
And wailed with waters' roar.

I called on all the holy names  
Of every clime and creed,  
"Show me the way, in mercy, ye  
Great ones who have reached the goal".

Years then passed in bitter cry,  
Each moment seemed an age,  
Till one day midst my cries and groans  
Some one seemed calling me.

A gentle soft and soothing voice  
That said "my son", "my son",  
That seemed to thrill in unison  
With all the chords of my soul.

I stood on my feet and tried to find  
The place the voice came from;  
I searched and searched and turned to see  
Round me, before, behind.  
Again, again it seemed to speak —  
The voice divine to me.  
In rapture all my soul was hushed,  
Entranced, enthralled in bliss.

A flash illumined all my soul;  
The heart of my heart opened wide.  
O joy, O bliss, what do I find!  
My love, my love, you are here,  
And you are here, my love, my all!

And I was searching thee!

From all eternity you were there  
 Enthroned in majesty!

From that day forth, where'er I roam,  
 I feel Him standing by  
 O'er hill and dale, high mount and vale,  
 Far far away and high.

The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,  
 The glorious orb of day,  
 He shines in them; His beauty — might —  
 Reflected lights are they.  
 The majestic morn, the melting eve,  
 The boundless billowy sea,  
 In nature's beauty, songs of birds,  
 I see through them — it is He.

When dire calamity seizes me,  
 The heart seems weak and faint,  
 All nature seems to crush me down,  
 With laws that never bend.

Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet  
 My love, "I am near", "I am near".  
 My heart gets strong. With Thee, my love,  
 A thousand deaths no fear.  
 Thou speakest in the mother's lay  
 That shuts the baby's eye;  
 When innocent children laugh and play  
 I see Thee standing by.

When holy friendship shakes the hand,  
 He stands between them too;  
 He pours the nectar in mother's kiss  
 And the baby's sweet "mama".  
 Thou wert my God with prophets old;  
 All creeds do come from Thee;  
 The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold  
 Sing Thee in harmony.

"Thou art", "Thou art" the Soul of souls  
 In the rushing stream of life.  
 "Om tat Sat om." (Tat Sat means that only real existence.  
 [Swamiji's note].) Thou art my God.  
 My love, I am thine, I am thine.

# Chapter 11

## X Adhyapakji

X

CHICAGO,

2nd October, 1893.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

I do not know what you are thinking of my long silence. In the first place I dropped in on the Congress in the eleventh hour, and quite unprepared; and that kept me very very busy for some time. Secondly, I was speaking almost every day in the Congress and had no time to write; and last and greatest of all — my kind friend, I owe so much to you that it would have been an insult to your ahetuka (unselfish) friendship to have written you business-like letters in a hurry. The Congress is now over.

Dear brother, I was so so afraid to stand before that great assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and speak; but the Lord gave me strength, and I almost every day heroically (?) faced the platform and the audience. If I have done well, He gave me the strength for it; if I have miserably failed — I knew that beforehand — for I am hopelessly ignorant.

Your friend Prof. Bradley was very kind to me and he always cheered me on. And oh! everybody is so kind here to me who am nothing — that it is beyond my power of expression. Glory unto Him in the highest in whose sight the poor ignorant monk from India is the same as the learned divines of this mighty land. And how the Lord is helping me every day of my life, brother — I sometimes wish for a life of [a] million million ages to serve Him through the work, dressed in rags and fed by charity.

Oh, how I wished that you were here to see some of our sweet ones from India — the tender-hearted Buddhist Dharmapala, the orator Mazoomdar — and realise that in that far-off and poor India there are hearts that beat in sympathy to yours, born and brought up in this mighty and great country.

My eternal respects to your holy wife; and to your sweet children my eternal love and blessings.

Col. Higginson, a very broad man, told me that your daughter had written to his daughter about me; and he was very sympathetic to me. I am going to Evanston tomorrow and hope to see Prof. Bradley there.

May He make us all more and more pure and holy so that we may live a perfect spiritual life even before throwing off this earthly body.

VIVEKANANDA.

[The letter continues on a separate sheet of paper:]

I am now going to be reconciled to my life here. All my life I have been taking every circumstance as coming from Him and calmly adapting myself to it. At first in America I was almost out of my water. I was afraid I would have to give up the accustomed way of being guided by the Lord and cater for myself — and what a horrid piece of mischief and ingratitude was that. I now clearly see that He who was guiding me on the snow tops of the Himalayas and the burning plains of India is here to help me and guide me. Glory unto Him in the highest. So I have calmly fallen into my old ways. Somebody or other gives me a shelter and food, somebody or other comes to ask me to speak about Him, and I know He sends them and mine is to obey. And then He is supplying my necessities, and His will be done!

“He who rests [in] Me and gives up all other self-assertion and struggles I carry to him whatever he needs” (Gitâ).

So it is in Asia. So in Europe. So in America. So in the deserts of India. So in the rush of business in America. For is He not here also? And if He does not, I only would take for granted that He wants that I should lay aside this three minutes' body of clay — and hope to lay it down gladly.

We may or may not meet, brother. He knows. You are great, learned, and holy. I dare not preach to you or your wife; but to your children I quote these passages from the Vedas —

“The four Vedas, sciences, languages, philosophy, and all other learnings are only ornamental. The real learning, the true knowledge is that which enables us to reach Him

who is unchangeable in His love.”

“How real, how tangible, how visible is He through whom the skin touches, the eyes see, and the world gets its reality!”

“Hearing Him nothing remains to be heard,

Seeing Him nothing remains to be seen,

Attaining Him nothing remains to be attained.”

“He is the eye of our eyes, the ear of our ears, the Soul of our souls.”

He is nearer to you, my dears, than even your father and mother. You are innocent and pure as flowers. Remain so, and He will reveal Himself unto you. Dear Austin, when you are playing, there is another playmate playing with you who loves you more than anybody else; and Oh, He is so full of fun. He is always playing — sometimes with great big balls which we call the sun and earth, sometimes with little children like you and laughing and playing with you. How funny it would be to see Him and play with Him! My dear, think of it.

Dear Adhyapakji, I am moving about just now. Only when I come to Chicago, I always go to see Mr. and Mrs. Lyons, one of the noblest couples I have seen here. If you would be kind enough to write to me, kindly address it to the care of Mr. John B. Lyon, 262 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

“He who gets hold of the One in this world of many — the one constant existence in a world of flitting shadows — the one life in a world of death — he alone crosses this sea of misery and struggle. None else, none else” (Vedas).

“He who is the Brahman of the Vedântins, Ishvara of the Naiyâyikas, Purusha of the Sânkhyas, cause of the Mimâmsakas, law of the Buddhists, absolute zero of the Atheists, and love infinite unto those that love, may [He] take us all under His merciful protection”: Udayanâchârya — a great philosopher of the Nyâya or Dualistic school. And this is the Benediction pronounced at the very beginning of his wonderful book *Kusumânjali* (A handful of flowers), in which he attempts to establish the existence of a personal creator and moral ruler of infinite love independently of revelation.

Your ever grateful friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 12

# XI Mrs. Tannatt Woods

XI

CHICAGO,

10th October, 1893.

DEAR MRS. TANNATT WOODS,

I received your letter yesterday. Just now I am lecturing about Chicago — and am doing as I think very well; it is ranging from 30 to 80 dollars a lecture, and just now I have been so well advertised in Chicago gratis by the Parliament of Religions that it is not advisable to give up this field now. To which I am sure you will agree. However I may come soon to Boston, but when I cannot say. Yesterday I returned from Streator where I got 87 dollars for a lecture. I have engagements every day this week. And hope more will come by the end of the week. My love to Mr. Woods and compliments to all our friends.

Yours truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 13

## XII Adhyapakji

XII

C/O J. LYON,

262 MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO,

26th October, 1893.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

You would be glad to know that I am doing well here and that almost everybody has been very kind to me, except of course the very orthodox. Many of the men brought together here from far-off lands have got projects and ideas and missions to carry out, and America is the only place where there is a chance of success for everything. But I thought better and have given up speaking about my project entirely — because I am sure now — the heathen draws more than his project. So I want to go to work earnestly for my own project only keeping the project in the background and working like any other lecturer.

He who has brought me hither and has not left me yet will not leave me ever I am here. You will be glad to know that I am doing well and expect to do very well in the way of getting money. Of course I am too green in the business but would soon learn my trade. I am very popular in Chicago. So I want to stay here a little more and get money.

Tomorrow I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies' fortnightly club — which is the most influential in this city. How to thank you my kind friend or Him who brought you to me; for now I think the success of my project probable, and it is you who have made it so.

May blessings and happiness attend every step of your progress in this world.

My love and blessings to your children.

Yours affectionately ever,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 14

### XIII Mrs. Woods

#### XIII

541 DEARBORN AVENUE, CHICAGO, 19th November, 1893.

DEAR MRS. WOODS,

Excuse my delay in answering your letter. I do not know when I will be able to see you again. I am starting tomorrow for Madison and Minneapolis.

The English gentleman you speak of is Dr. Momerie of London. He is a well-known worker amongst the poor of London and is a very sweet man. You perhaps do not know that the English church was the only religious denomination in the world who did not send to us a representative, and Dr. Momerie came to the Parliament in spite of the Archbishop of Canterbury's denouncing of the Parliament of Religions.

My love for you, my kind friend, and your noble son is all the same whether I write pretty often or not.

Can you express my books and the cover-all to the care of Mr. Hale? I am in need of them. The express will be paid here.

The blessings of the Lord on you and yours.

Ever your friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. If you have the occasion to write to Miss Sanborn and others of our friends in the east, kindly give them my deepest respects.

Yours truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 15

## XIV Sister

### XIV

#### DETROIT,

17th March, 1894.

DEAR SISTER (Miss Harriet McKindley of Chicago.),

Got your package yesterday. Sorry that you send those stockings — I could have got some myself here. Glad that it shows your love. After all, the satchel has become more than a thoroughly stuffed sausage. I do not know how to carry it along.

I have returned today to Mrs. Bagley's as she was sorry that I would remain so long with Mr. Palmer. Of course in Palmer's house there was real "good time". He is a real jovial heartwhole fellow, and likes "good time" a little too much and his "hot Scotch". But he is right along innocent and childlike in his simplicity.

He was very sorry that I came away, but I could not help. Here is a beautiful young girl. I saw her twice, I do not remember her name. So brainy, so beautiful, so spiritual, so unworldly! Lord bless her! She came this morning with Mrs. M'cDuvel and talked so beautifully and deep and spiritually — that I was quite astounded. She knows everything about the Yogis and is herself much advanced in practice!!

"Thy ways are beyond searching out." Lord bless her — so innocent, holy, and pure! This is the grandest recompense in my terribly toilsome, miserable life — the finding of holy happy faces like you from time to time. The great Buddhist prayer is, "I bow down to all holy men on earth". I feel the real meaning of this prayer whenever I see a face upon which the finger of the Lord has written in unmistakable letters "mine". May you all be happy, blessed, good and pure as you are for ever and ever. May your feet never touch the mud and dirt of this terrible world. May you live and pass away like flowers as you are born — is the constant prayer of your brother.

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 16

## XV Brother

XV

DETROIT,

Yours fraternally,  
VIVEKANANDA.

29th March, 1894.

DEAR BROTHER,[6]\*

Your letter just reached me here. I am in a hurry, so excuse a few points which I would take the liberty of correcting you in.

In the first place, I have not one word to say against any religion or founder of religion in the world — whatever you may think of our religion. All religions are sacred to me. Secondly, it is a misstatement that I said that missionaries do not learn our vernaculars. I still stick to my statement that few, if any, of them pay any attention to Sanskrit; nor is it true that I said anything against any religious body — except that I do insist on my statement that India can never be converted to Christianity, and further I deny that the conditions of the lower classes are made any better by Christianity, and add that the majority of southern Indian Christians are not only Catholics, but what they call themselves, caste Christians, that is, they stick close to their castes, and I am thoroughly persuaded that if the Hindu society gives up its exclusive policy, ninety per cent of them would rush back to Hinduism with all its defects.

Lastly, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for calling me your fellow-countryman. This is the first time any European foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested native by that name — missionary or no missionary. Would you dare call me the same in India? Ask your missionaries, born in India, to do the same — and those not born, to treat them as fellow human beings. As to the rest, you yourself would call me a fool if I admit that my religion or society submits to be judged by strolling globe-trotters or story-writers' narratives.

My brother — excuse me — what do you know of my society or religion, though born in India? It is absolutely impossible — the society is so closed; and over and above, everyone judges from his preconceived standard of race and religion, does he not? Lord bless you for calling me a fellow-countryman. There may still come a brotherly love and fellowship between the East and West.

## Chapter 17

# XVI Professor

XVI

NEW YORK,

25th April, 1894.

DEAR PROFESSOR (Prof. John Henry Wright),

I am very very grateful for your invitation. And will come on May 7th. As for the bed — my friend, your love and noble heart can convert the stone into down.

I am sorry I am not going to the authors' breakfast at Salem.

I am coming home by May 7th.

Yours truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 18

### XVII Sister

XVII

NEW YORK,

26th April, 1894.

DEAR SISTER (Miss Isabelle McKindley.),

Your letter reached me yesterday. You were perfectly right — I enjoyed the fun of the lunatic Interior, (Chicago Interior, a Presbyterian newspaper which opposed Swamiji. — Ed.) but the mail you sent yesterday from India was really, as Mother Church says in her letter, a good news after a long interval. There is a beautiful letter from Dewanji. The old man — Lord bless him — offers as usual to help me. Then there was a little pamphlet published in Calcutta about me — revealing that once at least in my life the prophet has been honoured in his own country. There are extracts from American and Indian papers and magazines about me. The extracts printed from Calcutta papers were especially gratifying, although the strain is so fulsome that I refuse to send the pamphlet over to you. They call me illustrious, wonderful, and all sorts of nonsense, but they forward me the gratitude of the whole nation. Now I do not care what they even of my own people say about me — except for one thing. I have an old mother. She has suffered much all her life and in the midst of all she could bear to give me up for the service of God and man; but to have given up the most beloved of her children — her hope — to live a beastly immoral life in a far distant country, as Mazoomdar was telling in Calcutta, would have simply killed her. But the Lord is great, none can injure His children.

The cat is out of the bag — without my seeking at all. And who do you think is the editor of one of our leading papers which praise me so much and thank God that I came to America to represent Hinduism? Mazoomdar's cousin!! — Poor Mazoomdar — he has injured his cause by telling lies through jealousy. Lord knows I never attempted any defence.

I read the article of Mr. Gandhi in the Forum before this.

If you have got the Review of Reviews of last month — read to mother the testimony about the Hindus in

connection with the opium question in India by one of the highest officials of the English in India. He compares the English with the Hindus and lauds the Hindu to the skies. Sir Lepel Griffin was one of the bitterest enemies of our race. What made this change of front?

I had a very good time in Boston at Mrs. Breed's — and saw Prof. Wright. I am going to Boston again. The tailor is making my new gown. I am going to speak at Cambridge University [Harvard] and would be the guest of Prof. Wright there. They write grand welcomes to me in the Boston papers.

I am tired of all this nonsense. Towards the latter part of May I will come back to Chicago, and after a few day's stay would come back to the East again.

I spoke last night at the Waldorf hotel. Mrs. Smith sold tickets at \$2 each. I had a full hall which by the way was a small one. I have not seen anything of the money yet. Hope to see in the course of the day.

I made a hundred dollars at Lynn which I do not send because I have to make my new gown and other nonsense.

Do not expect to make any money at Boston. Still I must touch the brain of America and stir it up if I can.

Your loving brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 19

### XVIII Sister

XVIII

NEW YORK,

2nd [actually 1st] May, 1894.

DEAR SISTER (Miss Isabelle McKindley.),

I am afraid I cannot send you the pamphlet just now. But I got a little bit of a newspaper cutting from India yesterday which I send you up. After you have read it kindly send it over to Mrs. Bagley. The editor of this paper is a relative of Mr. Mazoomdar. I am now sorry for poor Mazoomdar!! (The last two sentences were written crosswise on the left margin.)

I could not find the exact orange colour of my coat here, so I have been obliged to satisfy myself with the next best — a cardinal red with more of yellow.

The coat will be ready in a few days.

Got about \$70 the other day by lecturing at Waldorf. And hope to get some more by tomorrow's lecture.

From 7th to 19th there are engagements in Boston, but they pay very little.

Yesterday I bought a pipe for \$13 — meerschaum do not tell it to father Pope. The coat will cost \$30. I am all right getting food . . . and money enough. Hope very soon to put something in the bank after the coming lecture.

. . . in the evening I am going to speak in a vegetarian dinner! Well, I am a vegetarian . . ., because I prefer it when I can get it. I have another invitation to lunch with Lyman Abbott day after tomorrow. After all, I am having very nice time and hope to have very nice time in Boston — only that nasty nasty lecturing — disgusting. However as soon as 19th is over — one leap from Boston . . . to Chicago . . . and then I will have a long long breath and rest, rest for two three weeks. I will simply sit down and talk — talk and smoke.

By the by, your New York people are very good — only more money than brains.

I am going to speak to the students of the Harvard University. Three lectures at Boston, three at Harvard — all arranged by Mrs. Breed. They are arranging something here too, so that I will, on my way to Chicago, come to New York once more — give them a few hard raps and pocket the boodle and fly to Chicago.

If you want anything from New York or Boston which cannot be had at Chicago — write sharp. I have plenty of dollars now. I will send you over anything you want in a minute. Don't think it would be indelicate anyway — no humbug about me. If I am a brother so I am. I hate only one thing in the world — hypocrisy.

Your affectionate brother,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 20

# XIX Adhyapakji

XIX

NEW YORK,

4th May, 1894.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

I have received your kind note just now. And it is unnecessary for me to say that I will be very happy to do as you say.

I have also received Col. Higginson's letter. I will reply to him.

I will be in Boston on Sunday [May 6]. On Monday I lecture at the Women's Club of Mrs. Howe.

Yours ever truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

# Chapter 21

## XX Adhyapakji

XX

17 BEACON STREET, BOSTON,

May, 1894.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

By this time you have got the pamphlet and the letters. If you like, I would send you over from Chicago some letters from Indian Princes and ministers — one of these ministers was one of the Commissioners of the late opium commission that sat under Royal Commission in India. If you like, I will have them write to you to convince you of my not being a cheat. But, my brother, our ideal of life is to hide, to suppress, and to deny.

We are to give up and not to take. Had I not the “Fad” in my head, I would never have come over here. And it was with a hope that it would help my cause that I joined the Parliament of Religions — having always refused it when our people wanted to send me for it. I came over telling them — “that I may or may not join that assembly — and you may send me over if you like”. They sent me over leaving me quite free.

You did the rest.

I am morally bound to afford you every satisfaction, my kind friend; but for the rest of the world I do not care what they say — the Sannyasin must not have self-defence. So I beg of you not to publish or show anybody anything in that pamphlet or the letters. I do not care for the attempts of the old missionary; but the fever of jealousy which attacked Mazoomdar gave me a terrible shock, and I pray that he would know better — for he is a great and good man who has tried all his life to do good. But this proves one of my Master’s sayings, “Living in a room covered with black soot — however careful you may be — some spots must stick to your clothes.” So, however one may try to be good and holy, so long he is in the world, some part of his nature must gravitate downwards.

The way to God is the opposite to that of the world. And

to few, very few, are given to have God and mammon at the same time.

I was never a missionary, nor ever would be one — my place is in the Himalayas. I have satisfied myself so far that I can with a full conscience say, “My God, I saw terrible misery amongst my brethren; I searched and discovered the way out of it, tried my best to apply the remedy, but failed. So Thy will be done.”

May his blessings be on you and yours for ever and ever.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

541 DEARBORN AVE., CHICAGO

I go to Chicago tomorrow or day after.

Yours

V.

## Chapter 22

### XXI Adhyapakji

XXI

541 DEARBORN AVE.,

CHICAGO,

24th May, 1894.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

Herewith I forward to you a letter from one of our ruling princes of Rajputana, His Highness the Maharaja of Khetri, and another from the opium commissioner, late minister of Junagad, one of the largest states in India, and a man who is called the Gladstone of India. These I hope would convince you of my being no fraud.

One thing I forgot to tell you. I never identified myself anyway with Mr. Mazoomdar's party chief. (Evidently, Keshab Chandra Sen.) If he says so, he does not speak the truth.

I hope, after your perusal, you will kindly send the letters over to me, except the pamphlet which I do not care for.

I am bound, my dear friend, to give you every satisfaction of my being a genuine Sannyasin, but to you alone. I do not care what the rabbles say or think about me.

"Some would call you a saint, some a chandala; some a lunatic, others a demon. Go on then straight to thy work without heeding either" — thus saith one of our great Sannyasins, an old emperor of India, King Bhartrihari, who joined the order in old times.

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever. My love to all your children and my respects to your noble wife.

I remain ever your friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. — I had connection with Pundit Shiva Nath Shastri's party — but only on points of social reform. Mazoomdar

and Chandra Sen — I always considered as not sincere, and I have no reason to change my opinion even now. Of course in religious matters even with my friend Punditji I differed much, the chief being, I thinking Sannyasa or (giving up the world) the highest ideal, and he, a sin. So the Brahma Samajists consider becoming a monk a sin!!

Yours,

V.

The Brahma Samaj, like Christian Science in your country, spread in Calcutta for a certain time and then died out. I am not sorry, neither glad that it died. It has done its work — viz social reform. Its religion was not worth a cent, and so it must die out. If Mazoomdar thinks I was one of the causes of its death, he errs. I am even now a great sympathiser of its reforms; but the "booby" religion could not hold its own against the old "Vedanta". What shall I do? Is that my fault? Mazoomdar has become childish in his old age and takes to tactics not a whit better than some of your Christian missionaries. Lord bless him and show him better ways.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

When are you going to Annisquam? My love to Austin and Bime. My respects to your wife; and for you my love and gratitude is too deep for expression.

Yours ever affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 23

# XXII Adhyapakji

### XXII

541 DEARBORN AVENUE, 18th June, 1894.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI (Prof. John Henry Wright),

Excuse my delay in sending the other letters; I could not find them earlier. I am going to New York in a week.

I do not know whether I will come to Annisquam or not. The letters need not be sent over to me until I write you again. Mrs. Bagley seems to be unsettled by that article in the Boston paper against me.[6]\* She sent me over a copy from Detroit and has ceased correspondence with me. Lord bless her. She has been very kind to me.

Stout hearts like yours are not common, my brother. This is a queer place — this world of ours. On the whole I am very very thankful to the Lord for the amount of kindness I have received at the hands of the people of this country — I, a complete stranger here without even “credentials”. Everything works for the best.

Yours ever in gratitude,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. The East India stamps are for your children if they like.

## Chapter 24

### XXIII Mr. Bhattacharya

#### XXIII

(Translated from Bengali)

#### U.S.A.

5th September, 1894.

DEAR MR. BHATTACHARYA (Mr. Manmatha Nath Bhattacharya),

I was much pleased to read your affectionate letter. I shall make inquiries about the weaving machine as soon as I can, and let you know. Now I am resting at Annisquam, a village on the seacoast; soon I shall go to the city and attend to the matter of the machine. These seaside places are filled with people during the summer; some come to bathe in the sea, some to take rest, and some to catch husbands.

There is a strong sense of decorum in this country.

You have to keep yourself always covered from neck to foot in the presence of women. You cannot so much as mention the normal functions of the body: nobody knows when anyone goes to the toilet — one has to live so circumspectly. In this country, you can blow your nose a thousand times into your handkerchief — there is no harm in that; but it is highly uncivilised to belch. Women sometimes are not embarrassed to expose their bodies above the waist — you must have seen the kind of low-cut gown they wear — but they say that to go bare-foot is as bad as being naked. Just as we always dwell on the soul, so they take care of the body, and there is no end to the cleaning and embellishing of it. One who fails to do this has no place in society.

Our method of cooking with cow-dung fuel and eating on the floor they consider eating like pigs: they say that the Hindus have no sense of disgust and that, like pigs, they eat cow-dung. The word “cow-dung” is taboo in English. On the other hand, numbers of people will drink water with the same glass without thinking of washing it, and they rarely observe the rule that things must be washed before cooking. But should the clothes of the cook be a little soiled, they will throw her out. The table-ware is

all spick and span. They are the richest people on earth; their enjoyments and luxuries beggar description.

In Rajputana they imitate the Mohammedans in their mode of dining, which is, on the whole, good. They sit on a low seat and place their plate of rice on a low table. This is much better than spreading a banana leaf on the earthen floor plastered with cow-dung and filth. And how disastrous if the leaf gets torn! The Hindus did not know much about clothes or food. Moreover, whatever Hindu civilisation there was existed in the Punjab and the north-west provinces. . . .

Our women lose caste if they put on shoes, but the Rajput women lose their caste if they don't put on shoes! Says Manu: “One shall always wear shoes”. There is no denying that people should have a decent enough standard of living. I say they should be neat and clean even though not luxurious. . . . I say, why do we have to be Englishmen? It is enough for the present if we imitate our brothers of the western provinces. If group after group of Indians travel all over the world and back for some years, the face of India will be changed within twenty years by that alone; nothing else need be done. But how will anything happen if the people of one village do not visit the next? However, everything will take place by and by. By and by, the stubborn Bengali boys will awaken the country. But Manmatha Babu, you will have to stop this shameful business of marrying off nine-year-old girls. That is the root of all sins. It is a very great sin, my boy. Consider further what a terrible thing it was that when the government wanted to pass a law stopping early marriage, our worthless people raised a tremendous howl! If we don't stop it ourselves, the government will naturally intervene, and that is just what it wants to do. All the world cries fie upon us. You remain shut up in your homes, but the people outside spit upon you. How far can I quarrel with them? What a horror — even a father and mother allow their ten-year-old daughter to be given in marriage to a full-grown fat husband! O Lord, is there any punishment unless there has been a sin? It is all the fruit of Karma. If ours were not a terribly sinful nation, then why should it have been booted and beaten for seven hundred years?

Now, just as in our country the parents suffer a lot to have their daughter married, here in the same way the girls suffer — the parents only a little — it is the job of the girls to capture husbands. I am now closely associated with them in all their affairs; I am, as it were, a woman amongst women. Therefore, I have seen, and am seeing, all their play. To give dinners, to dance, to go to musical parties, go to the watering places — all that is all right. But all the while the young women are scheming within themselves how to capture husbands. They hang round the boys. The boys, on the other hand, are so cautious that, though they mingle with the girls and flirt with them all the time, when it is time to surrender they run away. The boys place the girls above themselves; they show them respect and slave for them; but the moment the girls stretch their hands to catch them, they run away beyond their reach. After many efforts of this kind, a girl succeeds in capturing a boy. If the girl has money, then many a boy dances attendance upon her, but the poor have great difficulty. If a poor girl is exceedingly beautiful, she can marry quickly; otherwise, she has to wait all her life. Just as in our country, so here, one marriage in a thousand takes place through love and courtship; the rest are based on money. After that, quarrel, and then, 'Get out!' — divorce. We do not have this; the only way out is to hang oneself. It is the same in all countries. Only, here the girls take matters into their own hands; and in our country, we get the help of the parents to give their married life a decent appearance. The result is the same in either case.

Nowadays, however, American girls don't want to marry. During the Civil War a large number of men were killed and women began to do all kinds of work. Since then, they have not wanted to give up the rights they have acquired. They earn their own living, and therefore they say, "There is no use in marrying. If we truly fall in love, then we shall marry; otherwise, we shall earn and meet our own expenses". Even if the father is a millionaire, the son has to earn enough before he marries. One may not marry depending on an allowance from the father. The girls also want the same thing now. When a son marries he becomes like a stranger to his own family, but when a girl marries she brings her husband, as it were, into her parents' home. Men will visit their wives' parents ten times, but rarely go to their own parents. Yet they are very much afraid of having their mothers-in-law on their neck.

In this country, there are rivers of wealth and waves of beauty, and an abundance of knowledge everywhere. The country is very healthy; they know how to enjoy this earth. . . . When princes of Europe become poor they come to marry here. The average American doesn't like this; but some rich, beautiful women fall for the titles. Yet it is very difficult for American women to live in Europe. The husbands of this country are slaves of their wives;

but the European wives are slaves to their husbands — this the American women don't like. In everything, the men here have to say, 'Yes dear'; otherwise the wives lose face before people.

The women in America are very sentimental and have a mania for romance. I am, however, a strange sort of animal who hasn't any romantic feeling, and therefore they could not sustain any such feeling toward me and they show me great respect. I make all of them call me "father" or "brother". I don't allow them to come near me with any other feeling, and gradually they have all been straightened out. . . .

The ministers in this country . . . are eager to throw sinners into hell. A few of them are very good, however. . . . I have a great reputation among the women in this country. I have not as yet seen a single unchaste girl among the unmarried. It is either a widow or a married woman who turn unchaste. The unmarried girls are exceedingly good, because their future is bright. . . .

Those emaciated Western women, looking like old dried-up fruit, whom you see in India, are English, and the English are an ugly race amongst the Europeans. In America, the best blood strains of Europe have been blended, and therefore, the American women are very beautiful. And how they take care of their beauty! Can a woman retain her beauty if she gives birth to children . . . every hour from her tenth year on? Damn nonsense! What a terrible sin! Even the most beautiful woman of our country will look like a black owl here. Yet it must be admitted that the women of the Punjab have very well-drawn features. Many of the American women are very well educated and put many a learned professor to shame; nor do they care for anyone's opinion. And as regards their virtues: what kindness, what noble thought and action! Just think, if a man of this country were to visit India, nobody would even touch him; yet here I am allowed to do as I please in the houses of the best families — like their own son! I am like a child; their women shop for me, run errands for me. For example: I have just written to a girl for information about the machine, which she will gather carefully and send to me. Again, a phonograph was sent to the Maharaj of Khetri: the girls managed the whole affair very well. Lord! Lord! It is the difference between heaven and hell! "They are the goddess Lakshmi in beauty and the goddess Saraswati in talents and accomplishments." This cannot be achieved through the study of books. I say, can you send out some men and women to see the world? Only then will the country wake up — not through the reading of books. The men here are very clever in earning wealth. Where others do not see even dust, there they see gold. Whoever will leave India and visit another country will earn great merit.

Keeping aloof from the community of nations is the only cause for the downfall of India. Since the English came, they have been forcing you back into communion with other nations, and you are visibly rising again. Everyone that comes out of the country confers a benefit on the whole nation; for it is by doing that alone that your horizon will expand. And as women cannot avail themselves of this advantage, they have made almost no progress in India. There is no station of rest; either you progress upwards or you go back and die out. The only sign of life is going outward and forward and expansion. Contraction is death. Why should you do good to others? Because that is the only condition of life; thereby you expand beyond your little self; you live and grow. All narrowness, all contraction, all selfishness is simply slow suicide, and when a nation commits the fatal mistake of contracting itself and of thus cutting off all expansion and life, it must die. Women similarly must go forward or become idiots and soulless tools in the hands of their tyrannical lords. The children are the result of the combination of the tyrant and the idiot, and they are slaves. And this is the whole history of modern India. Oh, who would break this horrible crystallisation of death? Lord help us! (This paragraph was written in English.)

Gradually all this will come about: "One should cross a road slowly and cautiously; one should patch a quilt carefully and cautiously; so should one be slow and cautious in crossing a mountain".

The papers have arrived duly and in good shape; there has not been any difficulty about that. The enemy has been silenced. Consider this: They have allowed me, an unknown young man, to live among their grown-up young daughters, and when my own countryman, Mazoomdar, says I am a rogue, they don't pay any attention! How noble they are, and how kind! I shall not be able to repay this debt even in a hundred lives, I am like a foster son to the American women; they are really my mother. If they don't flourish in every way, who would?

A while back several hundred intellectual men and women were gathered in a place called Greenacre, and I was there for nearly two months. Every day I would sit in our Hindu fashion under a tree, and my followers and disciples would sit on the grass all around me. Every morning I would instruct them, and how earnest they were!

The whole country now knows me. The ministers are very angry; but, naturally, not all of them. There are many followers of mine amongst the learned ministers of this country. The ignorant and the stubborn amongst them don't understand anything but only make trouble, and thereby they only hurt themselves. But abusing me,

Mazoomdar has lost three-fourths of what little popularity he had in this country. I have been adopted by them. When anyone abuses me he is condemned everywhere by the women.

I cannot say when I shall return to India, possibly next winter. There I shall have to wander, and here also I do the same.

There is nothing more to add. Please don't make this letter public. You understand, I have to be careful about every word I say — I am now a public man. Everybody is watching, particularly the clergy.

Yours faithfully,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 25

### XXIV Kali

#### XXIV

(Translated from Bengali)

#### U.S.A.

(November ?) 1894.

DEAR KALI [ABHEDANANDA],

Thanks for all that I come to know from your letter. I had no news of the telegram in question having appeared in the Tribune. It is six months since I left Chicago, and I have not been yet free to return. So I could not keep myself well posted. You have taken great pains indeed! And for this how can I thank you adequately? You have all evinced a wonderful capacity for work. And how can Shri Ramakrishna's words prove false? — You have got wonderful spirit in you. About Shashi Sanyal, I have already written. Nothing remains undetected, through the grace of Shri Ramakrishna. But let him found a sect or whatever he will, what harm? " [24\_kali\_01.jpg] — May blessings attend your path!" Secondly, I could not catch the drift of your letter. I shall collect my own funds to build a monastery for ourselves, and if people criticise me for it, I see nothing in this to affect us either way. You have your minds pitched high and steady, it will do you no harm. May you have exceeding love for one another among yourselves, and it would be enough to have an attitude of indifference towards public criticisms. Kalikrishna Babu has deep love for the cause and is a great man. Please convey my special love to him. So long as there is no feeling of disunion amongst you, through the grace of the Lord, I assure you, there is no danger for you, " mountains". " [24\_kali\_03.jpg] — All noble undertakings are fraught with obstacles". It is quite in the nature of things. Keep up the deepest mental poise. Take not even the slightest notice of what puerile creatures may be saying against you. Indifference, indifference, indifference! I have already written to Shashi (Ramakrishnananda) in detail. Please do not send newspapers and tracts any more. "Take the husking hammer to heaven, and there it will do its husking", as the Bengali saying goes. The same trudging about here as it was in India, only with the carrying of others' loads added! How can

I procure customers for people's books in this land? I am only one amongst the many here and nothing more. Whatever the papers and things of that sort in this country write about me, I make an offering of to the Fire-God. You also do the same. That is the proper course.

A bit of public demonstration was necessary for Guru Maharaja's work. It is done, and so far so good. Now you must on no account pay any heed to what the rabble may be prattling about us. Whether I make my pile or do whatever else I am reported to, shall the opinions of the riff-raff stand in the way of His work? My dear brother, you are yet a boy, while I am growing grey. What regard I have for the pronouncements and opinions of such people, you should guess from this. So long as you gird up your loins and rally behind me, there is no fear even if the whole world combine against us. This much I understand that I shall have to take up a very lofty attitude, I should not, I think, write to anyone except to you. By the by, where is Gunanidhi? Try to find him out and bring him to the Math with all kindness. He is a very sincere man and highly learned. You must try your best to secure two plots of land, let people say what they will. Let anyone write anything for or against me in the papers; you shouldn't take the slightest notice. And my dear brother, I beseech you repeatedly not to send me any more newspapers by the basketful. How can you talk of rest now? We shall have rest awhile only when we give up this body. Just do once get up the celebration, brother, in that spirit, so that all the country around may burn with enthusiasm. Bravo! Capital indeed! The whole band of scoffers will be swept away by the tidal wave of love. You are elephants, forsooth, what do you fear from an ant-bite?

The address (The Address presented by the citizens of Calcutta who gathered at a meeting at the Town Hall on September 5, 1894, under the Presidentship of Raja Pyari Mohan Mookherjee.) you sent me reached me long ago and the reply to it has also been despatched to Pyari Babu (18 Nov. 1894).

Bear in mind — the eyes are two in number and so the ears, but the mouth is but one! Indifference, indifference, indifference! " [24\_kali\_04.jpg] — The doer of good deeds never comes to grief, my dear". Ah! To fear!

and whom are we going to fear, brother? Here the missionaries and their ilk have howled themselves into silence — and the whole world will but do likewise.

" [24\_kali\_05.jpg]

— Whether people skilled in policy praise or blame, whether the Goddess of Fortune favours or goes her way, whether death befalls today or after hundreds of years — persons of steady mind never swerve from the path of righteousness" (Bhartrihari, Nitishataka)

You need not even mix with the humdrub people, nor beg of them either. The Lord is supplying everything and will do so in future. What fear, my brother? All great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles.

— You valiant one, put forth your manly efforts; wretched people under the grip of lust and gold deserve to be looked upon with indifference. Now I have got a firm footing in this country, and therefore need no assistance. But my one prayer to you all is that you should apply to the service of the Lord that active impulse of manliness which your eagerness to help me through brotherly love has brought out in you. Do not open out your mind, unless you feel it will be positively beneficial. Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy. The desire for fame, for riches, for enjoyment is quite natural to every mortal, dear brother, and if that agrees well with serving both ways (i.e. serving both God and mammon), why, all men would exhibit great zeal! It is only the great saint who can work, making a mountain of an atom of virtue in others and cherishing no desire but that of the good of the world —

" [24\_kali\_07.jpg] " etc., (Bhartrihari, Nitishataka, 70).

Therefore let dullards whose intellect is steeped in ignorance and who look upon the non-Self as all in all, play out their boyish pranks. They will of themselves leave off the moment they find it too hot. Let them try to spit upon the moon — it will but recoil upon themselves. [24\_kali\_08.jpg] — Godspeed to them! If they have got anything substantial in them, who can bar their success? But if it be only empty swagger due to jealousy, then all will be in vain. Haramohan has sent rosaries. All right. But you should know that religion of the type that obtains in our country does not go here. You must suit it to the taste of the people. If you ask them to become Hindus, they will all give you a wide berth and hate you, as we do the Christian missionaries. They like some of the ideas of the Hindu scriptures — that is all. Nothing more than that, you should know. The men, most of them, do not trouble about religion and all that. The women are a little interested — that is all, but no large doses of it! A few thousands of people have faith in the Advaita doctrine. But they will give you the go-by if you talk obscure mannerisms about sacred writings, caste, or women. Everything proceeds slowly, by degrees. Patience, purity,

perseverance.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 26

# XXV Brother Shivananda

XXV

(Translated from Bengali)

U. S.A.,

1894.

DEAR BROTHER SHIVANANDA,

Your letter just reached me. Perhaps by this time you have received my other letters and learnt that it is not necessary to send anything to America any more. Too much of everything is bad. This newspaper booming has given me popularity no doubt, but its effect is more in India than here. Here, on the other hand, constant booming creates a distaste in the minds of the higher class people; so enough. Now try to organise yourselves in India on the lines of these meetings. You need not send anything more in this country. As to money, I have determined first to build some place for Mother, (Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi.) for women require it first. . . . I can send nearly Rs. 7,000 for a place for Mother. If the place is first secured, then I do not care for anything else. I hope to be able to get Rs. 1,600 a year from this country even when I am gone. That sum I will make over to the support of the Women's place, and then it will grow. I have written to you already to secure a place. . . .

I would have, before this, returned to India, but India has no money. Thousands honour Ramakrishna Paramahansa, but nobody will give a cent — that is India. . . . In the meanwhile live in harmony at any price. The world cares little for principles. They care for persons. They will hear with patience the words of a man they like, however nonsense, and will not listen to anyone they do not like. Think of this and modify your conduct accordingly. Everything will come all right. Be the servant if you will rule. That is the real secret. Your love will tell even if your words be harsh. Instinctively men feel the love clothed in whatever language. (These two paragraphs and the last half of the fourth were written in English.)

My dear brother, that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was God incarnate, I have not the least doubt; but then you must let people find out for themselves what he used to teach — you cannot thrust these things upon them — this is my only objection.

Let people speak out their own opinions, why should we object? Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahansa first, one can never understand the real import of the Vedas, the Vedanta, of the Bhâgavata and the other Purânas. His life is a searchlight of infinite power thrown upon the whole mass of Indian religious thought. He was the living commentary to the Vedas and to their aim. He had lived in one life the whole cycle of the national religious existence in India.

Whether Bhagavân Shri Krishna was born at all we are not sure; and Avatars like Buddha and Chaitanya are monotonous; Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the latest and the most perfect — the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity, and the desire to serve mankind. So where is anyone to compare with him? He must have been born in vain who cannot appreciate him! My supreme good fortune is that I am his servant through life after life. A single word of his is to me far weightier than the Vedas and the Vedanta. [25\_brother\_shivananda\_01.jpg] — Oh, I am the servant of the servants of his servants. But narrow bigotry militates against his principles, and this makes me cross. Rather let his name be drowned in oblivion, and his teachings bear fruit instead! Why, was he a slave to fame? Certain fishermen and illiterate people called Jesus Christ a God, but the literate people killed him. Buddha was honoured in his lifetime by a number of merchants and cowherds. But Ramakrishna has been worshipped in his lifetime — towards the end of this nineteenth century — by the demons and giants of the university as God incarnate. . . . Only a few things have been jotted down in the books about them (Krishna, Buddha, Christ, etc.). "One must be a wonderful housekeeper with whom we have never yet lived!" so the Bengali proverb goes. But here is a man in whose company we have been day and night and yet consider him to be a far greater personality than any of

them. Can you understand this phenomenon?

You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of Mother's life — none of you. But gradually you will know. Without Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that our country is the weakest and the most backward of all countries? — Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her the nucleus, once more will Gârgis and Maitreyis be born into the world. Dear brother, you understand little now, but by degrees you will come to know it all. Hence it is her Math that I want first. . . . Without the grace of Shakti nothing is to be accomplished. What do I find in America and Europe? — the worship of Shakti, the worship of Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification. Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship Her with all purity, in a Sattvika spirit, looking upon Her as their mother! I am coming to understand things clearer every day, my insight is opening out more and more. Hence we must first build a Math for Mother. First Mother and Mother's daughters, then Father and Father's sons — can you understand this? . . . To me, Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's. Mother's grace, Mother's blessings are all paramount to me. . . . Please pardon me. I am a little bigoted there, as regards Mother. If but Mother orders, her demons can work anything. Brother, before proceeding to America I wrote to Mother to bless me. Her blessings came, and at one bound I cleared the ocean. There, you see. In this terrible winter I am lecturing from place to place and fighting against odds, so that funds may be collected for Mother's Math. Baburam's mother must have lost her sense owing to old age and that is why she is about to worship Durga in the earthen image, ignoring the living one. (Viz. Holy Mother Shri Sarada Devi.) Brother, faith is very difficult to achieve. Brother, I shall show how to worship the living Durga and then only shall I be worthy of my name. I shall be relieved when you will have purchased a plot of land and established there the living Durga, the Mother. Till then I am not returning to my native land. As soon as you can do that, I shall have a sigh of relief after sending the money. Do you accomplish this festival of Durga of mine by making all the necessary arrangements. Girish Ghosh is adoring the Mother splendidly; blessed is he, and blessed are his followers. Brother, often enough, when I am reminded of the Mother, I ejaculate, "What after all is Rama?" Brother, that is where my fanaticism lies, I tell you. Of Ramakrishna, you may aver, my brother, that he was an Incarnation or whatever else you may like but fie on him who has no devotion for the Mother. Niranjana has a militant disposition, but he has great devotion for Mother and all his vagaries I can easily put up with. He is now doing the most marvellous work. I am keeping myself well posted. And you too have done excellently in co-operating with the Madras. Dear brother, I expect

much from you, you should organise all for conjoint work. As soon as you have secured the land for Mother, I go to India straight. It must be a big plot; let there be a mud-house to begin with, in due course I shall erect a decent building, don't be afraid.

The chief cause of malaria lies in water. Why do you not construct two or three filters? If you first boil the water and then filter it, it will be harmless. . . . Please buy two big Pasteur's bacteria-proof filters. Let the cooking be done in that water and use it for drinking purposes also, and you will never hear of malaria any more. . . . On and on, work, work, work, this is only the beginning.

Yours ever,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 27

# XXVI Brahmananda

### XXVI

(Translated from Bengali)

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

1894.

DEAR AND BELOVED (Swami Brahmananda.),

. . . Well, do you think there is any religion left in India! The paths of knowledge, devotion, and Yoga — all have gone, and now there remains only that of Don't touchism — "Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" The whole world is impure, and I alone am pure. Lucid Brahma-jnâna! Bravo! Great God! Nowadays Brahman is neither in the recesses of the heart, nor in the highest heaven, nor in all beings — now He is in the cooking-pot. Formerly the characteristic of a noble-minded man was " [26\_brahmananda\_01.jpg] — Pleasing the whole universe by one's numerous acts of service" but now it is — I am pure and the whole world is impure — go and get money and set it at my feet. . . . Tell the sapient sage who writes to me to finish my preaching work here and return home, . . . that this country is more my home. What is there in Hindusthan? Who appreciates religion? Who appreciates learning?

To return home! Where is the home! I do not care for liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells, " — this is my religion. I do not want to have any connection with lazy, hard-hearted, cruel and selfish men. He whose good fortune it is, may help in this great cause.

. . . Please convey to all my love, I want the help of everyone. Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is character that can cleave through adamantine walls of difficulties. Bear this in mind. . . .

Ever yours in love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 28

# XXVII Alasinga

XXVII

VIVEKANANDA.

1895.

DEAR ALASINGA,

We have no organisation, nor want to build any. Each one is quite independent to teach, quite free to preach whatever he or she likes.

If you have the spirit within, you will never fail to attract others. Theosophists' method can never be ours, for the very simple reason that they are an organised sect, we are not.

Individuality is my motto. I have no ambition beyond training individuals up. I know very little; that little I teach without reserve; where I am ignorant, I confess it as such, and never am I so glad as when I find people being helped by Theosophists, Christians, Mohammedans, or anybody in the world. I am a Sannyasin; as such I consider myself as a servant, not as a master in the world. . . . If people love me, they are welcome, if they hate, they are also welcome.

Each one will have to save himself, each one to do his own work. I seek no help, I reject none. Nor have I any right in the world to be helped. Whosoever has helped me or will help, it will be their mercy to me, not my right, and as such I am eternally grateful.

When I became a Sannyasin, I consciously took the step, knowing that this body would have to die of starvation. What of that, I am a beggar. My friends are poor, I love the poor, I welcome poverty. I am glad that I sometimes have to starve. I ask help of none. What is the use? Truth will preach itself, it will not die for the want of the helping hands of me! "Making happiness and misery the same, making success and failure the same, fight thou on" (Gita). It is that eternal love, unruffled equanimity under all circumstances, and perfect freedom from jealousy or animosity that will tell. That will tell, nothing else.

Yours,

## Chapter 29

# XXVIII Brother

XXVIII

54 W. 33 NEW YORK,

25th April, 1895.

DEAR BROTHER (To Dr. I. Janes.),

I was away in the Catskill mountains and it was almost impossible to get a letter regularly posted from where I was — so accept my apology for the delay in offering you my most heartfelt thanks for your letter in the “Eagle”.

It was so scholarly, truthful and noble and withal so permeated with your natural universal love for the good and true everywhere. It is a great work to bring this world into a spirit of sympathy with each other but it should be done no doubt when such brave souls as you still hold your own. Lord help you ever and ever my brother and may you live long to carry on the mighty work you and your society has undertaken.

With my gratitude and love to you and to the members of the Ethical Society.

I remain Yours ever truly,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 30

### XXIX Dear—

XXIX

54 W. 33 NEW YORK,

May, 1895.

DEAR \_\_,

Since writing to you my pupils have come round me with help, and the classes will go on nicely now no doubt.

I was so glad at it because teaching has become a part of my life, as necessary to my life as eating or breathing.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I saw a lot of things about \_\_ in an English paper, the Borderland. \_\_ is doing good work in India, making the Hindus, very much to appreciate their own religion. . . . I do not find any scholarship in \_\_'s writing, . . . nor do I find any spirituality whatever. However Godspeed to anyone who wants to do good to the world.

How easily this world can be duped by humbugs and what a mass of fraud has gathered over the devoted head of poor humanity since the dawn of civilisation.

## Chapter 31

# XXX Rakhhal

XXX

(Translated from Bengali)

19 WEST 38th STREET, NEW YORK, August, 1895.

**BELOVED RAKHAL,**

. . . I am now in New York City. The city is hot in summer, exactly like Calcutta. You perspire profusely, and there is not a breath of air. I made a tour in the north for a couple of months. Please answer this letter by return of post to England, for which I shall start before this will have reached you.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 32

### XXXI Alasinga

XXXI

U.S.A.

March, 1896.

DEAR ALASINGA,

Last week I wrote you about the Brahmvâdin. I forgot to write about the Bhakti lectures. They ought to be published in a book all together. A few hundreds may be sent to America to Goodyear in New York. Within twenty days I sail for England. I have other big books on Karma, Jnana, and Raja Yogas — the Karma is out already, the Raja will be a very big book and is already in the Press. The Jnana will have to be published, I think, in England.

A letter you published from Kripananda in the Brahmvadin was rather unfortunate. Kripananda is smarting under the blows the Christians have given him and that sort of letter is vulgar, pitching into everybody. It is not in accord with the tone of the Brahmvadin. So in future when Kripananda writes, tone down everything that is an attack upon any sect, however cranky or crude. Nothing which is against any sect, good or bad, should get into the Brahmvadin. Of course, we must not show active sympathy with frauds. Again let me remind you that the paper is too technical to find any subscriber here. The average Western neither knows nor cares to know all about jaw-breaking Sanskrit terms and technicalities. The paper is well fitted for India — that I see. Every word of special pleading should be eliminated from the Editorials, and you must always remember that you are addressing the whole world, not India alone, and that the same world is entirely ignorant of what you have got to tell them. Use the translation of every Sanskrit term carefully and make things as easy as possible.

Before this reaches you I will be in England. So address me c/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq., High View, Caversham, Eng.

Yours etc.,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 33

### XXXII Dear

XXXII

(Translated from Bengali)

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM,

READING,

27th April, 1896.

DEAR (Members of the Alambazar Math),

. . . Let me write something for you all. It is not for gaining personal authority that I do this, but for your good and for fulfilling the purpose for which the Lord came. He gave me the charge of you all, and you shall contribute to the great well-being of the world — though most of you are not yet aware of it — this is the special reason of my writing to you. It will be a great pity if any feeling of jealousy or egotism gain ground amongst you. Is it possible for those to establish cordial relations on earth who cannot cordially live with one another for any length of time? No doubt it is an evil to be bound by laws, but it is necessary at the immature stage to be guided by rules; in other words, as the Master used to say that the sapling must be hedged round, and so on. Secondly, it is quite natural for idle minds to indulge in gossip, and faction-mongering, and so forth. Hence I jot down the following hints. If you follow them, you will undoubtedly prosper, but if you don't do so, then there is a danger of all our labours coming to naught.

First let me write about the management of the Math:

1. For the purposes of the Math please hire a commodious house or garden, where everyone may have a small room to himself. There must be a spacious hall where the books may be kept, and a smaller room for meeting the visitors. If possible, there should be another big hall in the house where study of the scriptures and religious discourses will be held every day for the public.

2. Anyone wishing to visit anybody in the Math should see him only and depart, without troubling others.

3. By turns someone should be present in the hall for a few hours every day for the public, so that they may get satisfactory replies to what they come to ask.

4. Everyone must keep to his room and except on special business must not go to others' rooms. Anyone who wishes may go to the Library and read, but it should be strictly forbidden to smoke there or talk with others. The reading should be silent.

5. It shall be wholly forbidden to huddle together in a room and chat the whole day away, with any number of outsiders coming and joining in the hubbub.

6. Only those that are seekers after religion may come and peacefully wait in the Visitors' Hall and when they have seen the particular persons they want, they should depart. Or, if they have any general question to ask, they should refer to the person in charge of that function for the day and leave.

7. Tale-bearing, caballing, or reporting scandals about others should be altogether eschewed.

8. A small room should serve as the office. The Secretary should live in that room, which should contain paper, ink, and other materials for letter-writing. He should keep an account of the income and expenditure. All correspondence should come to him, and he should deliver all letters unopened to their addressees. Books and pamphlets should be sent to the Library.

9. There will be a small room for smoking, which should not be indulged in outside this room.

10. He who wants to indulge in invectives or show temper must do so outside the boundaries of the Math. This should not be deviated from even by an inch.

#### THE GOVERNING BODY

1. Every year a President should be elected by a majority

of votes. The next year, another, and so on.

2. For this year make Brahmananda the President and likewise make another the Secretary, and elect a third man for superintending the worship etc., as well as the arrangement of food.

3. The Secretary shall have another function, viz to keep watch over the general health. Regarding this I have three instructions to give: (i) In every room for each man there shall be a Nair charpoy, mattress, etc. Everyone must keep his room clean. (ii) All arrangements must be made to provide clear and pure water for drinking and cooking purposes, for it is a deadly sin to cook sacramental food in impure or unclean water. (iii) Give everyone two ochre cloaks of the type that you have made for Saradananda, and see that clothing is kept clean.

4. Anyone wishing to be a Sannyâsin should be admitted as a Brahmacharin first. He should live one year at the Math and one year outside, after which he may be initiated into Sannyâsa.

5. Make over charge of the worship to one of these Brahmacharins, and change them now and then.

### DEPARTMENTS

There shall be the following departments in the Math:

I. Study. II. Propaganda. III. Religious Practice.

I. Study — The object of this department is to provide books and teachers for those who want to study. Every morning and evening the teachers should be ready for them.

II. Propaganda — Within the Math, and abroad. The preachers in the Math should teach the inquirers by reading out scriptures to them and by means of question-classes. The preachers abroad will preach from village to village and try to start Maths like the above in different places.

III. Religious Practice — This department will try to provide those who want to practise with the requisites for this. But it should not be allowed that because one has taken to religious practice he will prevent others from study or preaching. Any one infringing this rule shall be immediately asked to clear out, and this is imperative.

The preachers at home should give lessons on devotion, knowledge, Yoga, and work by turns; for this, the days and hours should be fixed, and the routine hung up at the door of the class-room. That is to say, a seeker after devotion may not present himself on the day

fixed for knowledge and feel wounded thereby; and so on.

None of you are fit for the Vâmâchâra form of practice. Therefore this should on no account be practised at the Math. Anyone demurring to this must step out of this Order. This form of practice must never even be mentioned in the Math. Ruin shall seize the wicked man, both here and hereafter, who would introduce vile Vamachara into His fold!

### SOME GENERAL REMARKS

1. If any woman comes to have a talk with a Sannyasin, she should do it in the Visitors' Hall. No woman shall be allowed to enter any other room — except the Worship-room.

2. No Sannyasin shall be allowed to reside in the Women's Math. Anyone refusing to obey this rule shall be expelled from the Math. "Better an empty fold than a wicked herd."

3. Men of evil character shall be rigorously kept out. On no pretence shall their shadow even cross the threshold of my room. If anyone amongst you become wicked, turn him out at once, whoever he be. We want no black sheep. The Lord will bring lots of good people.

4. Any woman can come to the class-room (or preaching hall) during class time or preaching hour, but must leave the place directly when that period is over.

5. Never show temper, or harbour jealousy, or backbite another in secret. It would be the height of cruelty and hard-heartedness to take note of others' shortcomings instead of rectifying one's own.

6. There should be fixed hours of meals. Everyone must have a seat and a low dining table. He will sit on the former and put his plate on the latter, as is the custom in Rajputana.

### THE OFFICE-BEARERS

All the office-bearers you should elect by ballot, as was the mandate of Lord Buddha. That is to say, one should propose that such and such should be the President this year; and all should write on bits of paper 'yes' or 'no' and put them in a pitcher. If the 'yes' have a majority, he should be elected President, and so on. Though you should elect office-bearers in this way, yet I suggest that this year Brahmananda should be President, Nirmalananda, Secretary and Treasurer, Sadananda Librarian, and Ramakr-

ishnananda, Abhedananda, Turiyananda, and Trigunatananda should take charge of the teaching and preaching work by turns, and so on.

It is no doubt a good idea that Trigunatita has of starting a magazine. But I shall consent to it if only you can work jointly.

About doctrines and so forth I have to say only this, that if anyone accepts Paramahansa Deva as Avatâra etc., it is all right; if he doesn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramahansa Deva beats all previous records; and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, more original, and more progressive than all his predecessors. In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of this new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of Yoga, devotion, knowledge, and work must be combined now so as to form a new society. . . . The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of this age — the synthesis of Yoga, knowledge, devotion, and work — the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down to the very lowest, without distinction of age or sex. The previous Incarnations were all right, but they have been synthesised in the person of Ramakrishna. For the ordinary man and the beginner, steady devotion (Nishthâ) to an ideal is of paramount importance. That is to say, teach them that all great Personalities should be duly honoured, but homage should be paid now to Ramakrishna. There can be no vigour without steady devotion. Without it one cannot preach with the intensity of a Mahâvira (Hanumân). Besides, the previous ones have become rather old. Now we have a new India, with its new God, new religion, and new Vedas. When, O Lord, shall our land be free from this eternal dwelling upon the past? Well, a little bigotry also is a necessity. But we must harbour no antagonistic feelings towards others.

If you consider it wise to be guided by my ideas and if you follow these rules, then I shall supply on all necessary funds. . . . Moreover, please show this letter to Gour-Mâ, Yogin-Mâ, and others, and through them establish a Women's Math. Let Gour-Ma be the President there for one year, and so on. But none of you shall be allowed to visit the place. They will manage their own affairs. They will not have to work at your dictation. I shall supply all necessary expenses for that work also.

May the Lord guide you in the right direction! Two persons went to see the Lord Jagannatha. One of them beheld the Deity — while the other saw some trash that was haunting his mind! My friends, many have no doubt served the Master, but whenever anyone would be disposed to consider himself an extraordinary personage, he should think that although he was associated with Shri Ramakrishna, he has seen only the trash that was uppermost in his mind! Were it not so, he would manifest the results. The Master himself used to quote, "They would

sing and dance in the name of the Lord but come to grief in the end." The root of that degeneration is egotism — to think that one is just as great as any other, indeed! "He used to love me too!" — one would plead. Alas, Nick Bottom, would you then be thus translated? Would such a man envy or quarrel with another and degrade himself? Bear in mind that through His grace lots of men will be turned out with the nobility of gods — ay, wherever His mercy would drop! . . . Obedience is the first duty. Well, just do with alacrity what I ask you to. Let me see how you carry out these few small things. Then gradually great things will come to pass.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Please read the contents of this letter to all, and let me know whether you consider the suggestions worth carrying out. Please tell Brahmananda that he who is the servant of all is their true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his feet.

V.

## Chapter 34

### XXXIII Sister

XXXIII

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON,

May, 1896.

DEAR SISTER,

In London once more. The climate now in England is nice and cool. We have fire in the grate. We have a whole house to ourselves, you know, this time. It is small but convenient, and in London they do not cost so much as in America. Don't you know what I was thinking — about your mother! I just wrote her a letter and duly posted it to her, care of Monroe & Co., 7 Rue Scribe, Paris. Some old friends are here, and Miss MacLeod came over from the Continent. She is good as gold, and as kind as ever. We have a nice little family, in the house, with another monk from India. Poor man! — a typical Hindu with nothing of that pluck and go which I have, he is always dreamy and gentle and sweet! That won't do. I will try to put a little activity into him. I have had two classes already — they will go on for four or five months and after that to India I go. But it is to Amerique — there where the heart is. I love the Yankee land. I like to see new things. I do not care a fig to loaf about old ruins and mope a life out about old histories and keep sighing about the ancients. I have too much vigour in my blood for that. In America is the place, the people, the opportunity for everything. I have become horribly radical. I am just going to India to see what I can do in that awful mass of conservative jelly-fish, and start a new thing, entirely new — simple, strong, new and fresh as the first born baby. The eternal, the infinite, the omnipresent, the omniscient is a principle, not a person. You, I, and everyone are but embodiments of that principle, and the more of this infinite principle is embodied in a person, the greater is he, and all in the end will be the perfect embodiment of that and thus all will be one as they are now essentially. This is all there is of religion, and the practice is through this feeling of oneness that is love. All old fogy forms are mere old superstitions. Now, why struggle to keep them alive? Why give thirsty people ditch-water to drink whilst the river of life and truth flows by? This is only human

selfishness, nothing else. Life is short — time is flying — that place and people where one's ideas work best should be the country and the people for everyone. Ay, for a dozen bold hearts, large, noble, and sincere!

I am very well indeed and enjoying life immensely.

Yours ever with love,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 35

### XXXIV Shashi

XXXIV

(Translated from Bengali)

C/O E. T. STURDY, ESQ.

HIGH VIEW, CAVERSHAM, READING,

May (?) 1896.

DEAR SHASHI (RAMAKRISHNANADA),

. . . This City of London is a sea of human heads — ten or fifteen Calcuttas put together. One is apt to be lost in the mazes unless he arranges for somebody to meet him on arrival. . . . However, let Kali start at once. If he be late in starting like Sharat, better let no one come. It won't do to loiter and procrastinate like that. It is a task that requires the height of Rajas (activity). . . . Our whole country is steeped in Tamas, and nothing but that. We want Rajas first, and Sattva will come afterwards — a thing far, far removed.

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 36

### XXXV Adhyapakji

XXXV

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD,

LONDON, S.W.

16th May, 1896.

DEAR ADHYAPAKJI, (Prof. John Henry Wright. The letter was written on the death of his daughter, aged 16.)

Last mail brought the very very sad news of the blow that has fallen on you.

This is the world my brother — this illusion of Mâyâ — the Lord alone is true. The forms are evanescent; but the spirit, being in the Lord and of the Lord, is immortal and omnipresent. All that we ever had are round us this minute, for the spirit can neither come nor go, it only changes its plane of manifestation.

You are strong and pure and so is Mrs. Wright, and I am sure that the Divine in you has arisen and thrown away the lie and delusion that there can be death for anyone.

“He who sees in this world of manifoldness that one support of everything, in the midst of a world of unconsciousness that one eternal consciousness, in this evanescent world that one eternal and unchangeable, unto him belongs eternal peace.”

May the peace of the Lord descend upon you and yours in abundance is the prayer of

Your ever loving friend,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 37

### XXXVI Miss Noble

XXXVI

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD, LONDON,

7th June, 1896.

DEAR MISS NOBLE,

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

This world is in chain of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors.

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

Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake!

May all blessings attend you for ever!

Yours affectionately,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 38

# XXXVII Friend and Brother

XXXVII

63 ST. GEORGE'S ROAD,

LONDON, S.W.

6th July, 1896.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER, (To Dr. Lewis I. Janes.)

Yours of the 25th June has duly reached and gave me great pleasure. I am so glad to see the noble work progressing. I had learnt with the greatest delight from Mrs. Bull of the work that is going to be done in Cambridge this winter and no better person could have been selected to direct it as yourself. May all power attend you. I will be only too glad to write for the magazine from time to time and my first instalment was to be in a few weeks, when I hope to get some leisure. Certainly it goes without saying that no one of the types we call religious ought to die — they like races require fresh infusion of blood in the form of ideas. It is wonderful to be able to sympathise with others from their standpoints of view.

By this time Goodwin and the other Swami must have reached America. They I trust will be of help to you in your noble work. Godspeed to all good work and infinite blessings on all workers for good.

Yours ever in the truth,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 39

# XXXVIII Sharat Chandra Chakravarti

XXXVIII

(Written to S. Sharat Chandra Chakravarti, B.A.)

(Translated from Sanskrit.)

**DARJEELING,**

19th March, 1897.

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

May you prosper! May this letter conveying blessings and cordial embrace make you happy! Nowadays this fleshy tabernacle of mine is comparatively well. Meseems, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, the Chief among mountains, bring even the moribund back to life. And the fatigue of the journeys also seems to have somewhat abated. I have already felt that yearning for Freedom — potent enough to put the heart into turmoil — which your letter suggests you are experiencing. It is this yearning that gradually brings on a concentration of the mind on the eternal Brahman. "There is no other way to go by." May this desire blaze up more and more in you, until all your past Karma and future tendencies are absolutely annihilated. Close upon the heels of that will follow, all on a sudden, the manifestation of Brahman, and with it the destruction of all craving for the sense-world. That this freedom-in-life is approaching for your welfare is easily to be inferred from the strength of your fervour. Now I pray to that world-teacher, Shri Ramakrishna, the Preacher of the gospel of universal synthesis, to manifest himself in the region of your heart, so that, having attained the consummation of your desires, you may with an undaunted heart try your best to deliver others from this dreadful ocean of infatuation. May you be ever possessed of valour! It is the hero alone, not the coward, who has liberation within his easy reach. Gird up your loins, ye heroes, for before you are your enemies — the dire army of infatuation. It is undoubtedly true that "all great achievements are fraught with numerous impediments"; still you should exert your utmost for your end. Behold, how men are already in the jaws of the shark of infatuation! Oh, listen to their piteous heart-rending wails. Advance, forward, O ye brave souls, to set free those that are in fetters, to lessen the burden

of woe of the miserable, and to illumine the abysmal darkness of ignorant hearts! Look, how the Vedanta proclaims by beat of drums, "Be fearless!" May that solemn sound remove the heart's knot of all denizens of the earth.

Ever your well-wisher,  
VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 40

### XXXIX Mrs. Bull

XXXIX

ALAMBAZAR MATH, CALCUTTA,

May 5th, 1897.

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I have been to Darjeeling for a month to recuperate my shattered health. I am very much better now. The disease disappeared altogether in Darjeeling. I am going tomorrow to Almora, another hill station, to perfect this improvement.

Things are looking not very hopeful here as I have already written you — though the whole nation has risen as one man to honour me and people went almost mad over me! The practical part cannot be had in India. Again, the price of the land has gone up very much near Calcutta. My idea at present is to start three centres at three capitals. These would be my normal schools, from thence I want to invade India.

India is already Ramakrishna's whether I live a few years more or not.

I have a very kind letter from Prof. Janes in which he points out my remarks about degraded Buddhism. You also write that Dharmapala is very wroth about it. Mr. Dharmapala is a good man, and I love him; but it would be entirely wrong for him to go into fits over things Indian.

I am perfectly convinced that what they call modern Hinduism with all its ugliness is only stranded Buddhism. Let the Hindus understand this clearly, and then it would be easier for them to reject it without murmur. As for the ancient form which the Buddha preached, I have the greatest respect for it, as well as for His person. And you well know that we Hindus worship Him as an Incarnation. Neither is the Buddhism of Ceylon any good. My visit to Ceylon has entirely disillusioned me, and the only living people there are the Hindus. The Buddhists are all much Europeanised — even Mr. Dharmapala and his father had European names, which they have since changed. The only respect the Buddhists pay to their great tenet of non-killing is by opening "butcher-stalls" in every place!

And the priests encourage this. The real Buddhism, I once thought, would yet do much good. But I have given up the idea entirely, and I clearly see the reason why Buddhism was driven out of India, and we will only be too glad if the Ceylonese carry off the remnant of this religion with its hideous idols and licentious rites.

About the Theosophists, you must remember first that in India Theosophists and Buddhists are nonentities. They publish a few papers and make a lot of splash and try to catch Occidental ears. . .

I was one man in America and another here. Here the whole nation is looking upon me as their authority — there I was a much reviled preacher. Here Princes draw my carriage, there I would not be admitted to a decent hotel. My utterances here, therefore, must be for the good of the race, my people — however unpleasant they might appear to a few. Acceptance, love, toleration for everything sincere and honest — but never for hypocrisy. The Theosophists tried to fawn upon and flatter me as I am the authority now in India, and therefore it was necessary for me to stop my work giving any sanction to their humbugs, by a few bold, decisive words; and the thing is done. I am very glad. If my health had permitted, I would have cleared India by this time of these upstart humbugs, at least tried my best. . . . Let me tell you that India is already Ramakrishna's and for a purified Hinduism I have organised my work here a bit.

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 41

# XL Shuddhananda

XL

ALMORA,

11th July, 1897,

My dear Shuddhananda,

I was very glad to receive your last report. I have very little criticism to make except that you ought to write a bit more legibly.

I am quite satisfied with the work done so far, but it must be pushed forward. I have not learnt as yet of the suggestion I made before as to getting a set of chemical and physical apparatus and starting classes in elementary and experimental Chemistry and Physics, especially in Physiology.

What about the other suggestion of buying sets of all the scientific books that have been translated into Bengali?

It now seems to me that there must at least be three Mahantas (heads) elected at a time — one to direct the business part, one the experimental, the other the intellectual part.

The difficulty is to get the director of education. Brahmananda and Turiyananda may well fill the other two. Of visitors I am sorry to learn that you are only getting Babus from Calcutta. They are no good. What we want are brave young men who will work, not tomfools.

Ask Brahmananda to write to both Abhedananda and Saradananda to send weekly reports to the Math without fail, also to send Bengali articles and notes for the would-be paper. Is G. C. Ghosh getting up things for the paper? Work on with a will and be ready.

Akhandananda is working wonderfully at Mahula, but the system is not good. It seems they are frittering away their energies in one little village and that only doling out rice. I do not hear that any preaching has been done along with this helping. All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly

educational, both moral and intellectual. I have not learnt anything about it — only so many beggars are helped! Ask Brahmananda to open centres in different districts so as to cover the largest space with our small means.

And then, so far it seems to have been ineffectual, for they have not succeeded in rousing the people of the place to start societies to educate the people, so that they may learn to be self-reliant, frugal, and not given to marrying, and thus save themselves from future famine. Charity opens the heart, but work on through that wedge.

The easiest way is to take a hut — make it a temple of Guru Maharaj! Let the poor come here to be helped, also to worship. Let there be Kathâ (Puranic recitals) morning and evening there — through that you may teach all you want to teach the people. By degrees the people will be interested. They will keep up the temple themselves; maybe the hut temple will evolve into a great institution in a few years. Let those that go to relief-work first select a central spot in each district and start such a hut-temple, from which all our little work is to proceed.

Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task if it be after his heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into one that suits his taste. No work is petty. Everything in this world is like a banyan-seed, which, though appearing tiny as a mustard-seed, has yet the gigantic banyan tree latent within it. He indeed is intelligent who notices this and succeeds in making all work truly great. (This paragraph only is translated from Bengali.)

Moreover, they have to see that cheats do not get the food of the deserving. India is full of lazy rogues, and curious, they never die of hunger, they always get something. Ask Brahmananda to write this to everyone in relief-work — they must not be allowed to spend money to no good. We want the greatest possible good work permanent from the least outlay.

Now you see you must try to think out original ideas — else, as soon as I die, the whole thing will tumble to pieces. For example, you hold a meeting to consider,

“How we can reap the best permanent results out of the small means at our disposal.” Let all have notice a few days before and let each suggest something and discuss all the suggestions, criticising them; and then send me a report.

Lastly, you must remember I expect more from my children than from my brethren. I want each one of my children to be a hundred times greater than I could ever be. Everyone of you must be a giant — must, that is my word. Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause — if you have these three, nothing can hold you back.

With love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 42

### XLI Miss Noble

XLI

ALMORA,

23rd July, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

Excuse these few lines. I shall write more fully as soon as I reach some place. I am on my way from the hills to the plains.

I do not understand what you mean by frankness without familiarity — I for one will give anything to get rid of the last lingering bit of Oriental formality in me and speak out like a child of nature. Oh, to live even for a day in the full light of freedom, to breathe the free air of simplicity! Is not that the highest purity?

In this world we work through fear of others, we talk through fear, we think through fear, alas! we are born in a land of enemies. Who is there who has been able to get rid of this feeling of fear, as if everyone is a spy set specially to watch him? And woe unto the man who pushes himself forward! Will it ever be a land of friends? Who knows? We can only try.

The work has already begun and at present famine-relief is the thing next to hand. Several centres have been opened and the work goes on; famine-relief, preaching, and a little teaching. As yet of course it is very very insignificant, the boys in training are being taken out as opportunity is offering itself. The sphere of action at present is Madras and Calcutta. Mr. Goodwin working in Madras. Also one has gone to Colombo. From the next week a monthly report of the whole work will be forwarded to you if it has not already reached you. I am away from the centre of work, so things go a little slow, you see; but the work is satisfactory on the whole.

You can do more work for us from England than by coming here. Lord bless you for your great self-sacrifice for the poor Indians.

I entirely agree with you that the work in England will look up when I am there. But all the same it is not proper to leave India before the machine is moving at some rate

and I am sure that there are many to guide it in my absence. That will be done in a few months. "God willing", as the Mussulmans say. One of my best workers is now in England, the Raja of Khetri. I expect him soon in India, and he will be of great service to me no doubt.

With everlasting love and blessings,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 43

### XLII Miss Noble

XLII

ALMORA,

29th July, 1897.

MY DEAR MISS NOBLE,

A letter from Sturdy reached me yesterday, informing me that you are determined to come to India and see things with your own eyes. I replied to that yesterday, but what I learnt from Miss Muller about your plans makes this further note necessary, and it is better that it should be direct.

Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman — a real lioness — to work for the Indians, women specially.

India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.

Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank, and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

Then the climate is fearfully hot; our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities. If in spite of all this, you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, a hundred times welcome. As for me, I am nobody here as elsewhere, but what little influence I have shall be devoted to your service.

You must think well before you plunge in; and after work, if you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you, I will stand by you unto death whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it.

“The tusks of the elephant come out, but never go back”; so are the words of a man never retracted. I promise you that. Again, I must give you a bit of warning. You must stand on your own feet and not be under the wings of Miss Muller or anybody else. Miss Muller is a good lady in her own way, but unfortunately it got into her head, when she was a girl, that she was a born leader and that no other qualifications were necessary to move world but money! This idea is coming on the surface again and again in spite of herself, and you will find it impossible to pull on with her in a few days. She now intends to take a house in Calcutta for herself and yourself and other European or American friends who may come.

It is very kind and good of her, but her Lady Abbess plan will never be carried out for two reasons — her violent temper and overbearing conduct, and her awfully vacillating mind. Friendship with many is best at a distance, and everything goes well with the person who stands on his own feet.

Mrs. Sevier is a jewel of a lady — so good, so kind! The Seviere are the only English people who do not hate the natives, Sturdy not excepted. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier are the only persons who did not come to patronise us, but they have no fixed plans yet. When you come, you may get them to work with you, and that will be really helpful to them and to you. But after all it is absolutely necessary to stand on one's own feet.

I learn from America that two friends of mine, Mrs. Ole Bull of Boston and Miss MacLeod, are coming on a visit to India this autumn. Miss MacLeod you already know in London, that Paris-dressed young American lady; Mrs. Ole Bull is about fifty and has been a kind friend to me in America. I may suggest that your joining the party may while away the tedium of the journey, as they also are coming by way of Europe.

I am glad to receive a note at least from Sturdy after long. But it was so stiff and cold. It seems he is disappointed at the collapse of the London work.

With everlasting love,

Yours ever in the Lord,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 44

### XLIII Madam

#### XLIII

(Translated from Bengali)

#### BELUR MATH,

16th April, 1899.

DEAR MADAM (Shrimati Sarala Ghosal, B. A.),

Very glad to receive your kind note. If by the sacrifice of some specially cherished object of either myself or my brother-disciples many pure and genuinely patriotic souls come forward to help our cause, rest assured, we will not hesitate in the least to make that sacrifice nor shed a tear-drop — you will see this verified in action. But up till now I have seen nobody coming forward to assist in this way. Only some have wished to put their own hobby in place of ours — that is all. If it really help our country or humanity — not to speak of giving up Guru-worship — believe me, we are prepared to commit any dire iniquity and suffer the eternal damnation of the Christians. But my hairs have turned grey since I began the study of man. This world is a most trying place, and it is long since I have taken to wandering with the lantern of the Grecian Philosopher in hand. A popular song my Master often used to sing comes to my mind:

“He who’s a man after one’s heart  
Betrays himself by his very looks.  
Rare indeed is such a one!  
He’s a man of aesthetic perceptions  
Who treads a path contrary to others.”

This much from my side. Please know that not one word of it is exaggerated — which you will find to be actually the case. But then I have some doubts about those patriotic souls who can join with us if only we give up the worship of the Guru. Well, if, as they pose, they are indeed panting and struggling so much — almost to the point of dissolution from their body — to serve the country, how can the single accident of Guru-worship stop everything!

This impetuous river with rolling waves which bade fair to sweep away whole hills and mountains — was a bit of

Guru-worship sufficient to turn it back to the Himalayas! I put it to you, do you think anything great will come of such patriotism, or any substantial good proceed from such assistance? It is for you to say; I can make nothing out of it. For a thirsty man to weigh so much the merits of water, or for a man about to die of hunger to cogitate so much and turn up his nose at the food presented! Well, people have strange ways of thinking. I, for one, am inclined to think that those people were best in a glass-case; the more they keep away from actual work, the better.

“Love stops not for questions of birth.  
Nor the hungry man for stale food.”

This is what I know. But I may be wholly mistaken. Well, if this trifle of Guru-worship sticks in one’s throat to choke one to death, we had better extricate him from this predicament.

However, I have a great longing to talk over these points with you in detail. For talking these things over, affliction and death have given me leave till now, and I hope they will do so yet.

May all your wishes be fulfilled in this New Year!

Yours sincerely,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 45

### XLIV Sturdy

XLIV

C/O F. H. LEGGETT,

21 WEST THIRTY-FOURTH STREET

NEW YORK

Nov., 1899.

MY DEAR STURDY,

This is not to defend my conduct. Words cannot wipe off the evils I have done, nor any censor stop from working the good deeds, if any.

For the last few months I have been hearing so much of the luxuries I was given to enjoy by the people of the West — luxuries which the hypocrite myself has been enjoying, although preaching renunciation all the while: luxuries, the enjoyment of which has been the great stumbling-block in my way, in England at least. I nearly hypnotised myself into the belief that there has at least been a little oasis in the dreary desert of my life, a little spot of light in one whole life of misery and gloom; one moment of relaxation in a life of hard work and harder curses — even that oasis, that spot, that moment was only one of sense-enjoyment!!

I was glad, I blessed a hundred times a day those that had helped me to get it, when, lo, your last letter comes like a thunderclap, and the dream is vanished. I begin to disbelieve your criticisms — have little faith left in all this talk of luxuries and enjoyments and other visions memory calls up. These I state. Hope you will send it round to friends, if you think fit, and correct me where I am wrong.

I remember your place at Reading, where I was fed with boiled cabbage and potatoes and boiled rice and boiled lentils, three times a day, with your wife's curses for sauce all the time. I do not remember your giving me any cigar to smoke — shilling or penny ones. Nor do I remember myself as complaining of either the food or your wife's incessant curses, though I lived as a thief, shaking through fear all the time, and working every day

for you.

The next memory is of the house on St. George's Road — you and Miss Muller at the head. My poor brother was ill there and Miss Müller drove him away. There too I don't remember to have had any luxuries as to food or drink or bed or even the room given to me.

The next was Miss Müller's place. Though she has been very kind to me, I was living on nuts and fruits. The next memory is that of the black hole of London where I had to work almost day and night and cook the meals oft-times for five or six, and most nights with a bite of bread and butter.

I remember Mrs. Sturdy giving me a dinner and a night's lodging in her place, and then the next day criticising the black savage — so dirty and smoking all over the house.

With the exception of Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, I do not remember even one piece of rag as big as a handkerchief I got from England. On the other hand, the incessant demand on my body and mind in England is the cause of my breakdown in health. This was all you English people gave me, whilst working me to death; and now I am cursed for the luxuries I lived in!! Whosoever of you have given me a coat? Whosoever a cigar? Whosoever a bit of fish or flesh? Whosoever of you dare say I asked food or drink or smoke or dress or money from you? Ask, Sturdy, ask for God's sake, ask your friends, and first ask your own "God within who never sleeps."

You have given me money for my work. Every penny of it is there. Before your eyes I sent my brother away, perhaps to his death; and I would not give him a farthing of the money which was not my private property.

On the other hand, I remember in England Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, who have clad me when I was cold, nursed me better than my own mother would have, borne with me in my weakness, my trials; and they have nothing but blessings for me. And that Mrs. Sevier, because she did not care for honours, has the worship of thousands today; and when she is dead millions will remember her

as one of the great benefactresses of the poor Indians. And they never cursed me for my luxuries, though they are ready to give me luxuries, if I need or wish.

I need not tell you of Mrs. Bull, Miss MacLeod, Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. You know their love and kindness for me; and Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod have been to our country, moved and lived with us as no foreigner ever did, roughing it all, and they do not ever curse me and my luxuries either; they will be only too glad to have me eat well and smoke dollar cigars if I wish. And there Leggetts and Bulls were the people whose bread whose money bought my smokes and several times paid my rent, whilst I was killing myself for your people, when you were taking my pound of flesh for the dirty hole and starvation and reserving all this accusation of luxury.

“The clouds of autumn make great noise but send no rain; The clouds of the rainy season without a word flood the earth.”

See Sturdy, those that have helped or are still helping have no criticism, no curses: it is only those who do nothing, who only come to grind their own axes, that curse, that criticise. That such worthless, heartless, selfish, rubbish criticise, is the greatest blessing that can come to me. I want nothing so much in life as to be miles off from these extremely selfish axe-grinders.

Talking of luxuries! Take these critics up one after the other — It is all flesh, all flesh and no spirit anywhere. Thank God, they come out sooner or later in their true colours. And you advise me to regulate my conduct, my work, according to the desires of such heartless, selfish persons, and are at your wit's end because I do not!

As to my Gurubhais (brother-disciples), they do nothing but what I insist on their doing. If they have shown any selfishness anywhere, that is because of my ordering them, not what they would do themselves.

Would you like your children put into that dark hole you got for me in London, made to work to death, and almost starved all the time? Would Mrs. Sturdy like that? They are Sannyasins, and that means, no Sannyasin should unnecessarily throw away his life or undertake unnecessary hardship.

In undergoing all this hardship in the West we have been only breaking the rules of Sannyasa. They are my brothers, my children. I do not want them to die in holes for my sake. I don't, by all that is good and true I don't, want them starved and worked and cursed for all their pains.

A word more. I shall be very glad if you can point out to me where I have preached torturing the flesh. As for the Shâstras (scriptures), I shall be only too glad if a Shâstri (Pundit) dares oppose us with the rules of life laid down for Sannyasins and Paramahamsas.

Well, Sturdy, my heart aches. I understand it all. I know what you are in — you are in the clutches of people who want to use you. I don't mean your wife. She is too simple to be dangerous. But, my poor boy, you have got the flesh-smell — a little money — and vultures are around. Such is life.

You said a lot about ancient India. That India still lives, Sturdy, is not dead, and that living India dares even today to deliver her message without fear or favour of the rich, without fear of anybody's opinion, either in the land where her feet are in chains or in the very face of those who hold the end of the chain, her rulers. That India still lives, Sturdy, India of undying love, of everlasting faithfulness, the unchangeable, not only in manners and customs, but also in love, in faith, in friendship. And I, the least of that India's children, love you, Sturdy, with Indian love, and would any day give up a thousand bodies to help you out of this delusion.

Ever yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 46

# XLV Mrs. Leggett

XLV

CHICAGO,

26th Nov., 1899.

MY DEAR MRS. LEGGETT,

Many, many thanks for all your kindness and especially the kind note. I am going to start from Chicago on Thursday next, and got the ticket and berth ready for that day.

Miss Noble is doing very well here, and working her way out. I saw Alberta the other day. She is enjoying every minute of her stay here and is very happy. Miss Adams (Jane Adams), as ever is an angel.

I shall wire to Joe Joe before I start and read all night.

With all love to Mr. Leggett and yourself,

Ever yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 47

# XLVI Mother

XLVI

CHICAGO,

30th Nov., 1899.

MY DEAR MOTHER, (Mrs. Leggett.)

Nothing new — except Madame Calvé's visit. She is a great woman. I wish I saw more of her. It is a grand sight to see a giant pine struggling against a cyclone. Is it not?

I leave here tonight. These lines in haste as A\_\_ is waiting. Mrs. Adams is kind as usual. Margot doing splendidly. Will write more from California.

With all love to Frankincense,

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 48

### XLVII Margot

XLVII

LOS ANGELES,

6th Dec., 1899.

DEAR MARGOT,

Your sixth has arrived, but with it yet no change in my fortune. Would change be any good, do you think? Some people are made that way, to love being miserable. If I did not break my heart over people I was born amongst, I would do it for somebody else. I am sure of that. This is the way of some, I am coming to see it. We are all after happiness, true, but that some are only happy in being unhappy — queer, is it not? There is no harm in it either, except that happiness and unhappiness are both infectious. Ingersoll said once that if he were God, he would make health catching, instead of disease, little dreaming that health is quite as catching as disease, if not more! That is the only danger. No harm in the world in my being happy, in being miserable, but others must not catch it. This is the great fact. No sooner a prophet feels miserable for the state of man than he sours his face, beats his breast, and calls upon everyone to drink tartaric acid, munch charcoal, sit upon a dung-heap covered with ashes, and speak only in groans and tears! — I find they all have been wanting. Yes, they have. If you are really ready to take the world's burden, take it by all means. But do not let us hear your groans and curses. Do not frighten us with your sufferings, so that we came to feel we were better off with our own burdens. The man who really takes the burden blesses the world and goes his own way. He has not a word of condemnation, a word of criticism, not because there was no evil but that he has taken it on his own shoulders willingly, voluntarily. It is the Saviour who should "go his way rejoicing, and not the saved".

This is the only light I have caught this morning. This is enough if it has come to live with me and permeate my life.

Come ye that are heavy laden and lay all your burden on

me, and then do whatever you like and be happy and forget that I ever existed.

Ever with love,

Your father,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 49

### XLVIII Mother

XLVIII

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

I am a very bad correspondent, but the heart never fails.  
Tell this to Miss Spencer.

V.

17th March, 1900.

MY DEAR MOTHER (Mrs. Leggett.),

So glad to get your nice letter. Well, you may be sure I am keeping in touch with my friends. Yet a delay may sometimes cause nervousness.

Dr. and Mrs. Hiller returned to the city, much benefited, as they declare, by Mrs. Melton's rubbings. As for me, I have got several huge red patches on my chest. What materialises later on as to complete recovery, I will let you know. Of course, my case is such that it will take time to come round by itself.

So thankful to you and to Mrs. Adams for the kindness. I will surely go and call on them in Chicago.

How are things going on with you? I have been following the "Put up or shut up" plan here, and so far it has not proved bad. Mrs. Hansborough, the second of the three sisters, is here, and she is working, working, working — to help me. Lord bless their hearts. The three sisters are three angels, are they not? Seeing such souls here and there repays for all the nonsense of this life.

Well, all blessings to you for ever is my prayer. You are one of the angels also, say I.

With love to Miss Kate,

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. How is the "Mother's child"?

How is Miss Spencer? All love to her. You know already

# Chapter 50

## IL Mother

IL  
1719 TURK STREET,  
SAN FRANCISCO,

got completely cured?

V.

17th March, 1900.

DEAR MOTHER (Mrs. Leggett.),

I had a letter from Joe asking me to send my signature on four slips of paper, so that Mr. Leggett may put my money in the bank for me. As I cannot possibly reach her in time, I send the slips to you.

I am getting better in health and doing financially something. I am quite satisfied. I am not at all sorry that more people did not respond to your call. I knew they would not. But I am eternally thankful to you for all your kindness. May all blessings follow you and yours for ever.

It is better that my mail be sent to 1231 Pine Street, C/o the Home of Truth. For though I be moving about, that place is a permanent establishment, and the people there are very kind to me.

I am so glad to learn that you are very well now. Mrs. Melton has left Los Angeles — I am informed by Mrs. Blodgett. Has she gone to New York? Dr. and Mrs. Hiller came back to San Francisco day before yesterday. They declare themselves very much helped by Mrs. Melton. Mrs. Hiller expects to get completely cured in a short time.

I had a number of lectures here already and in Oakland. The Oakland lectures paid well. The first week in San Francisco was not paying, this week is. Hope the next week will pay also. I am so glad to hear the nice arrangement made by Mr. Leggett for the Vedanta Society. He is so good.

With all love,

Yours,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Do you know anything about Turiyananda? Has he

## Chapter 51

### L Mother

L

1719 TURK STREET,

SAN FRANCISCO,

7th April, 1900.

DEAR MOTHER (Mrs. Leggett.),

Accept my congratulations for the news of the cause of the wound being completely removed. I have no doubt of your being perfectly cured this time.

Your very kind note cheered me a good deal. I do not mind at all whether people come round to help me or not; I am becoming calm and less worried.

Kindly convey my best love to Mrs. Melton. I am sure to recover in the long run. My health has been improving in the main, though there are occasional relapses. Each relapse becoming less, both in tone and in time.

It is just like you to have Turiyananda and Siri treated. The Lord has blessed you for your great heart. May all blessings ever follow you and yours.

It is perfectly true that I should go to France and work on French. I hope to reach France in July or earlier. Mother knows. May all good ever follow you, is the constant prayer of

Your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

## Chapter 52

# LI Mr. Leggett

LI

17th April, 1900.

MY DEAR MR. LEGGETT,

Herewith I send the executed Will to you. It has been executed as desired by her, and of course, as usual, I am requesting you for the trouble of taking charge of it.

You and yours have been so uniformly kind to me. But you know, dear friend, it is human nature to ask for more favours (now that they have come) where it gets from.

I am only a man, your child.

I am so sorry A\_\_ has made disturbances. He does that now and then, at least used to. I do not venture to meddle, for fear of creating more trouble. You know how to manage him best. By the time you receive this letter, I will be off from San Francisco. Will you kindly send my Indian mail C/o Mrs. Hale, 10 Aster Street, Chicago, and to Margot in the same place? Margot writes very thankfully of your gift of a thousand dollars for her school.

May all blessings ever follow you and yours for your uniform kindness to me and mine, is the constant prayer of

Yours affectionately,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. I am so glad to learn that Mrs. Leggett has already recovered.

V.

## Chapter 53

### LII Aunt Roxy

#### LII

2nd May, 1900.

DEAR AUNT ROXY, (Mrs. Blodgett of Los Angeles),

Your very, very kind letter came. I am down again with nerves and fever, after six months of hard work. However, I found out that my kidneys and heart are as good as ever. I am going to take a few days' rest in the country and then start for Chicago.

I have just written to Mrs. Milward Adams and also have given an introduction to my daughter, Miss Noble, to go and call upon Mrs. Adams and give her all information she wants about the work.

Well, dear good mother, may all blessings attend you and peace. I just want a bit of peace badly — pray for me. With love to Kate,

Ever your son,

VIVEKANANDA.

PS. Love to Miss Spencer — the Basaquisitz(?), Mrs. S\_\_\_, and the other friends.

A heap of loving pats on the head to Tricks.

#### V.

## Chapter 54

### LIII Alberta

LIII

PERROS GUIREC

BERTAGNE,

22nd September, 1900.

To Miss Alberta Sturges  
on her 23rd birthday

The mother's heart, the hero's will,  
The softest flower's sweetest feel;  
The charm and force that ever sway  
The altar fire's flaming play;  
The strength that leads, in love obeys;  
Far-reaching dreams, and patient ways,  
Eternal faith in Self, in all  
The sight Divine in great in small;  
All these, and more than I could see  
Today may "Mother" grant to thee.

Ever yours with love and blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

DEAR ALBERTA,

This little poem is for your birthday. It is not good,  
but it has all my love. I am sure, therefore, you will like it.

Will you kindly send a copy each of the pamphlets there  
to madame Besnard, Clairoix, Bres Compiègne, Oise,  
and oblige?

Your well-wisher,

VIVEKANANDA.

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