bhavAnI bhAratI by Sri Aurobindo

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1. As I lay sunk in the comfort of my couch and my mind wandered on the roads of Spring, I thought of my people, of poetry, of wife and enjoyments, pleasure and possessions.

2. I shaped my delight into elegant verse in lyrical stanzas of sensuous passion; I sang of the smile on my beloved’s face and of the revered and most sacred feet of the Mother.

3. My country wept all around me, for a villainous Titan oppressed her children. Led by self-interest, I paid homage to the feet of the evil one stained with the blood of my brothers.

4. Lying at ease on a soft couch and dreaming of pleasures, enjoyments and wealth, I felt on my chest the touch of a dreadful hand and to my eyes grew visible the shape of Kali.

5. Garlanded with the bones of men and girdled with human
skulls, with, belly and eyes like a wolf's, hungry and poor, scarred on her back by the 'Titan's lashes, roaring like a lioness who lusters for kill,

6. with her fierce, hungry, blazing eyes irradiating all the worlds, rending the hearts of the gods with the piercing ring of her war-cry,

7. filling the world with bestial sounds and licking her terrible jaws, fierce and naked, like the eyes of a savage beast in the dark-thus did I see the Mother.

8. The mountain-tops cowered beneath her dangling locks and the seas drew back from her awful fangs; her breath scattered the torn clouds and earth trembled at the fall of her feet.

9. "Arise! Give!" The Mother's thirsting call resounded through the night in the starless city. Thundering, the noble goddess filled with her presence the night's blackness and the hearts of men.

10. Alarmed and shaken in mind, I sprang from my couch and questioned that shape of darkness which compelled worship:

"Who art thou who appearest to my heart in the night in thy
terrible splendour? What must I do? Speak! Salutation to thee,
O dreadful goddess!

11. Uttering a sound like the lion’s roar when it roams
ferocious in the jungle in search of prey, the goddess in her
form of terror loosed forth words like the thundering of ocean
upon the rocks.

12. I am the mother, O child, of the Bharatas, the eternal
people beloved of the gods, whom neither hostile Fate nor Time
nor Death has power to destroy.

13. Their strength purified by their continence, rendered
noble by selfknowledge and severe austerities, resplendent
like a thousand suns they shone on a prosperous earth.

14. Heroic and bold, they would brook no hint of defiance
from their foes. Worshipping the Mother with the sacrifice of
her enemies, at battle’s end they stood radiant, their limbs
anointed with blood.

15. But who are these pitiful and indigent wretches who in
their blindness embrace a degrading peace like a prostitute? O
you unmanly and weakminded men! Do you not know that it is
Death you clasp?
16. How long will you thus impotently bear your lives in suffering, wantonly beaten by your oppressors’? Your haters laugh at you; you buy with peace a heap of dishonour and the depletion of your wealth.

17. Who is this, sanctified by the nectarous touch of the feet of foreign barbarians, who prides himself on being a Brahmin? You are a Shudra less Aryan then the Shudras! Of what use are these vows for the traveller on the path to Hell?

18. Arise! Awake! Leave your ritual fires, for you are the incarnate lustre of Krishna, the Supreme. Go forth consuming your enemies with the fire that dwells eternal in your breast.

19. Who is this relative of Kshatriyas hiding in his palace with wine and the darting glances of voluptuous women? Your duty and honour have you forgotten in your weakness? Fight, hypocrite, and preserve the Dharma!

20. Iron there is and the sword is sharp; the cruel cannon bellows here in a drunken fury. How is it that you are unarmed? You lie as if dead! Protect your race, be Aryan and a slayer of your foes.
21. And what kind of Vaishya are you here? What goods are these arrayed in the market-places for the prospering of the people? This is the wealth of the foreign exploiter! You impoverish me, Kali, O vile traitor to your Mother!

22. Give to the flames this wealth of the foreigner. Do you not fear the burning wrath of Kali? Worshipping the goddess Bhavani in your heart, strive and enrich your motherland.

23. You and you, O peoples of Avanti and Magadha, Vanga, Anga and Kalinga, O Kurus and men of Sind: hear me! O southerners, you of Andhra and the Chola country, and you heroes of the land of the five rivers;

24. you who adore the triple form of the one Lord and you, my Mohammedan sons, who worship Him in His uniqueness: I, the Mother, call all of you, for all are my children. Shake off your slumber! Oh, hear!

25. Listen to the drum of Time on the mountain-tops. Behold pitiless Death, my messenger. Famine and earthquake announce that I have come in the fullness of my might.
26. Offer sacrifice to me; give, for I am thirsty. Seeing me, know and adore the original Power, ranging here as Kali who roars aloud and hungers to enjoy the heads and bodies of mighty rulers.

27. Not by torrents of blood from hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of goats am I satisfied. Break open your hearts and offer that blood to me, for so do they worship the unborn and dreadful Goddess.

28. Wheresoever are great heroes and leaders engaged in continual self-sacrifice for the good of their race, towards those nations does Kali grow gracious, nourished with blood, and they crush their enemies.

29. Whom do you fear, O Aryans? Plunge into this sea of blood; show that you are made of Aryan stuff indeed! Lo, there on the further shore see a light arise, inviolable in brilliance and armed with the trident.

30. O poet and sensualist, hear the word of the Mother: adore Kali the Terrible, my son, the fierce Chandi. Verily you shall see her, the mother of the Bharatas, striking down her foes mightily in the thick of the fight.
31. Summon forth to battle the ancient tribes of the Bharatas. Let there be victory; fear not. Lo, I have awakened! Where is the bow, where the sword? Arise, arise, O sleeping lions!

32. Hearing these words in the night and beholding in the darkness a dreadful splendour, my heart danced and leaving my house, shaking off my pleasures, I quickly went forth.

33. I saw then this land of India, the Aryan country, wrapped thickly in darkness, suffering, blinded; hidden in the night, ruined by her enemies, the mother of the Bharatas wept aloud.

34. I cast my glance about in the night, grieved, searching out my brothers in the shadows. Their corpses I saw on the ground, pitiable, reduced to skeletons.

35. Then did I see a lordly Titan, crowned, gigantic, bearing a thunderbolt, feeding the hordes of his offspring with the tears of the Mother mixed with a hundred streams of her blood.

36. Oppressing with one foot the invincible Himalaya, with the other the plains of Andhra and Paundra, he brandished a harsh sword over China and the land of the Pahlavas (Persia).

37. As I looked on him, huge and vile, inflated with the pride
of his strength, unrighteous and boasting of righteousness, my heart became like a fire-pit and burned with an undying wrath.

38. The dread voice of the goddess was raised to call out of their sleep the imperishable tribes. Then, uttering a fierce flood of cries, she came to my side, formidable like the night.

39. Earth and sea shook with the awful violence of her words and the heavens thundered back. The terror of her angry looks afflicted the creation like a deluge of fire.

40. All the three worlds were filled with the maddening summons of Kali. A volcano of devastating flame issued from the throat in immortal words.

41. Now I saw armies as if roused from sleep, agitated by the intense agitation that had seized the world, shouting fiercely,

"Death to the villain!"

42. Growing aware of the Mother's weeping and her wounds, hundreds of eyes darted lightning. Then thousands of faces turned, dire with rage, upon the dread lord of Titans.

43. Who are you Aho, while her sons slept who are now eager
for battle, have drunk the blood of the mother of the Aryans
like a RakShasa, bellowing in the night? Who are you who,
strong, oppress the weak, O fallen one, food for Death?

44. As she uttered these words, incensed, the violent goddess
lifted a weapon, a fire-hurling bow, and rushed at her fearsome
opponent. Before her and behind her Kali roared.

45. The earth grew lurid with flame and swift tongues of
flaming wrath licked the sky. Sounds of neighing tongues and the rumble
of drums frightened the world as Kali fought with the Titan.

46. Clouds stained with blood seemed to burn in the heavens and
a fierce rain of blood fell upon the earth. The mountains rose
up from a bloodred sea. All the land was as if turned to blood.

47. The mighty Titan, terrible in the night, was crushing the
armies of the people beloved of the gods. Intoxicated with
pride, the enemy of the gods thundered, Who is there in the
world who is equal to me?

48. Then, repelling the darkness and piercing the adversary with
beams like arrows, I saw with a thrill of gladness a rising sun
that shed a ruddy glow in the heavens, casting its rays aloft.
49. Crowded with glorious faces of the future, I beheld now
the creator Brahma in the shape of a cloud whence looked forth
a thousand eyes that foresaw the Mother’s deliverance from fear.

50. I hen, far off in the north, there arose, gracious,
annihilating all enemies, a white light in the form of ‘a
Woman delightful in beauty, as radiant as twenty million
dazzling suns.

51. Enraptured, the gode in the luminous realms sang her
praises; the birds in the mid-region sang sweetly of her,
and men prostrating themselves on the earth sang of her as
she entered the world dispelling its anguish.

52. On the Himalayan summits, steadfast in meditation, their
bodies turned to ice, the great Yogis who through numberless
ages have guarded India’s destiny praised her with joy.

53. Brushing slowly from eyes fathomless with wisdom the snow
the ages had heaped there, they chanted in their puissance to
the mighty Goddess terrible in radiant beauty:

54. "Salutation to thee, O Goddess omnipotent! To thee I bow
who art terrible and mighty and compassionate. Thou alone
preservest these peoples. Salutation to the Forceful One,
the primeval Goddess!

55. Who is there who can describe thy might, O Goddess impetuous in thy ways? With one delicate hand thou settest whirling or arrestest in its motion the universe with all its stars and suns, O infinite in energy.

56. When, wielding the trident, thou dancest, O Chandi, on the gruesome battlefield noisy with jackals, the vast multitudes of stars seem to tremble in the firmament’at the touch of thy weapon.

57. Thy heart melting with pity for the weeping of men, thou smitest the heads of the oppressors of the people. Ravenous Death, the eater of the world, is thy servant who rides on the prongs of thy trident.

58. Thou art the supreme Power awakening in millions of impassioned men. Incarnating thyself, thou preservest this noble people when it is fallen into distress. From age to age thou fightest, O Mother of the Arvans.

59. Today again I behold thy dazzling white form on the mountains of the north; effulgent thy- light arises, O gracious one, illumining the worlds with beauty.
60. Thou rangest here, noble goddess, with thy lovely limbs of’ radiance mounted on a cow drunk with the zest of battle, and all around thee the Titan hosts tumble like lofty peaks uprooted.

61. Bright of hue and with round black horns, she romps about like a swiftmoving mass of snow: it is the Aryan land of India, dear to the gods, who tramples her enemies in this shape of a cow.

62. F -he legions of those who had defeated the gods, the lustre of their laces turning pale with fear, flee suddenly like cataracts clown the mountainsides, clamorous and intent on speed.

63. I hear, O formidable goddess, the noble tones of thy fierce cry of victory echoed by the people of Punjab. Louder still, O fearsome warrior, is heard the uproar of the opposing forces as they are slaughtered.

64. Yonder Jumna, whose stream witnessed the sports of Krishna, has lost its sapphire hue, turning red with blood. Behold the soil of Bengal turned to a bloody mire, while the southern quarter gleams blood-red.
65. Touched by thy trident, the regions of the sky seem to bleed, diffusing a reddish light everywhere. Due to the exceeding violence of thy warfare, O dreadful one, the clouds that bore water have become carriers of blood.

66. On the rocky sea-beaches I have seen the Goddess annihilating in battle her remaining adversaries. Merciless, wrathful and beneficent, she cuts down with her trident the enemies of Shiva, the beneficent Lord.

67. What is this, hideous and black, trampled by the hooves of the cow of the gods’? It is a lump of flesh which I see on the ground: this is all that is left of those who were hostile to thee.

68. From that disfigured heap what broken heads seem to emerge! Feet and hands lie here and there. Cruel art thou, O Rudrani, in thy savage deeds!

69. Cruel art thou, O Rudrani; or rather is this mercy, as it were, towards the base and cruel tyrant priding himself on the affliction of the people, that he should receive in battle a noble death leading to heaven.
70. Though his life has departed, one hand of this enemy of Rudra still holds a fire-spitting weapon. Charred and mangled, it is as if the demon yet hurls at Bhavani his burnt life-force.

71. I see currents of flame spewing from the mouth of the deadly weapon; but for all his insolence, and though he lies before her, he cannot reach the form of Chandi wrapped in an aura of splendour.

72. A sword thrust between his horns paralyses that parting gesture. Thus I deem thee to have fulfilled thy mighty vow, O Goddess of immense energy.

73. Salutation to thee, O Goddess vast in thy power, to thee of terrible vows who carriest us through our difficult labour. Thou reignest as Bharati over the Bharatas; as the supreme Goddess thou rulest all this universe of animate and inanimate things.

74. Thou art the supreme -Goddess, thou the Mother of creatures; who else has power? Mastery, supremacy and blameless lustre are gifts from thee, O opulent one, thou who givest these smitest also when thou art angered.

75. Salutation, salutation, O noble goddess with thy large
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76. Salutation, salutation, O Goddess! Forcibly loosened by the exertion of battle, the array of thy unbraided tresses flying about, long and wavy, appears to float like a cloud in the sky.

77. When thy eyes flash with anger, O white-faced goddess, thou art like a streak of lightning fallen to earth; like lightning amid the thunderclouds thy dreadful laughter plays in the corners of thy eyes.

78. This white neck of thine is bent slightly to look at thy fallen and lifeless foemen. The white legs of Bhavani, from the feet to the beautiful knees, gleam like pillars of snow.

79. Fluttering in the breeze, thy bright and airy robe is a luminous cloud from whose midst thy radiant firmbs shine forth like moonlight.

80. This breast of thine is a foaming wave of milk swelling in the Milky Ocean. Difficult art thou to discern, O Mother, when my gale falls back from tire splendour of thy body of beauty.

81. Thou art ancient, t) Goddess -before Shiva thou wart—yet
thou wearest this form of a maiden. Salutation to thee, O beginningless Mother! Be gracious, O terrible One. to those who prostrate themselves before thee.

82. Pointing to a land dark with trees visible in the vast spaces between the mountains, thy hand is extended, O compassionate one, O Rudrani, granting freedom from fear to the peoples.

83. By that sign of thy flowerlike hand the darkness is expelled from the land of the Bharatas. The clouds of blood vanish from the skies. Unthinkable is thy strength; beautiful thou art and gracious.

84. Gracious is thy noble form white as snow, gracious the exalted countenance of Bhavani; I bow to the Mighty One robed in white, radiant with the bright beauty of youth, her eyes moist with compassion.

85. Where now is that terrible figure, garlanded with the bones of men and girdled with skulls, naked and fierce, dreadful with her gaping mouth, by whose cries I was suddenly roused?

86. In the river of blood which flows yonder laughs the shadow
of the beautiful One, brandishing a sword, thundering, naked
and hideous: I bow to Kali!
87. Thou indeed art Kali and utterly ruthless thou art; thou
art Annapurna, the merciful and gracious. I bow to thee as the
Violent One, O ender of the worlds; I bow to thee, O Radha,
in thy ecstasy of love.
88. Who can support in himself thy plenitude of infinite Power
in which all thy forms are manifest, O Goddess omnipotent? Thou
art this blazing might and thou art the strength of the strong;
thou art also the gentlest of the gentle.
89. Two-armed in thy gracious aspect I bow to thee, and
again with trident uplifted bringing deliverance from fear;
to thee I bow, O Mother, O radiant Savitri, O three-eyed one,
thy white-limbed, white-robed loveliness mounted on a bull.
90. Ten-armed with all thy ten weapons thou protectest the
Aryans, O Mother unattainable in the ten directions; as the
womb of the world thou sitst with a thousand arms embracing
thy children, unthinkable in thy energy.
91. Illumining with her rays the impenetrable depths of
the forests, her form like a mountain of fire, terrible and
sublime, I see the gracious Goddess standing, sword in hand,  
at the gates of the cities of the Aryan country.

92. The mighty Mother of creatures has vanquished the Age of Strife. Once again the movements of freedom are abroad;  
I observe them following the paths of the ancient scriptures.

93. Once again I hear in the forests the chanting of the Veda which is a fountain of immortalising nectar to the heart. An overflowing river of humanity streams to the hermitages of the sages perfected in self-knowledge.

94. Once again the eternal ways of the Dharma are guarded by one nobly born in the Solar Race. And once again resplendent LakShmi, a smile on her lips, reigns steadfast among the Bharatas.

95. In East and West I hear the cry and stir of the whole world hastening with praise on its tongue to this country, the ancient Mother of the Vedas.

96. Praising the gracious and awe-inspiring Mother as the source of the true Law, the fulflier of mighty vows, they
revere as a place of pilgrimage this land dear to the Goddess beginningless in her power.

97. As those who dwell in Shiva’s sacred city of Kashi are liberated by the auspicious touch of the Lord, so all this Aryan country where the Goddess has set her purifying feet shall be the Kashi of the world.

98. O infinite in thy forms, thou art contentment, compassion, patience and indomitable heroism, faith and endurance and knowledge of every kind. Be gracious, noble goddess; dwell long in the hearts of the Indian people!

99. Illumining these rivers and snowy mountains with a most gentle lustre, be firmly established in the Aryan country. Abide forever gracious in this land, O Mighty One, for the good of the world!

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