

MAHAMANA MALAVIYAJI  
FORM THE  
TORCHBEARERS

V. A. SUNDARAM

BHUL.

Mahamana Malabiyaji

From "Torch-Bearers"

By V. A. Sundaram



Price 8. as

# Mahamana Malaviyaji

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"TORCHBEARERS"

By

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V. A. SUNDARAM

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## MALAVIYAJI'S DREAM COMES TRUE

The Benares Hindu University is charming. Over fields and forests have I wandered around this great continent of India and have seen beautiful buildings but nothing can compare with the tapering temple towers of the Benares Hindu University. There is a grace about the architecture. The noble buildings lift up their heads against an azure sky and attract every visitor that passes through ancient Kashi. Often have I fondly gazed, on many a sheeny summer's day, on the College towers glistening above the green foliage of the mango trees.

The Benares Hindu University is the finest achievement of Pandit Malaviya and the credit of founding this institution goes to this great educationist and lover of the mother-land. All of us dream dreams in our lives ; many feel in the end a sense of disappointment and despair; but not so this incomparable lover of ancient learning and Hindu culture. He too dreamed early in life but said solemnly to himself "my dreams must come true." He had such tremendous faith in himself and in the goodness and generosity of his countrymen that he laboured with marvellous energy and unflagging enthusiasm, begged from the rich and poor, prince and peasant, and collected a crore of rupees, and like a magician ordered the stately domes to rise and lo ! the Hindu University has risen from fallow fields. Magnificent colleges and hostels have been symmetrically erected over two square miles of emerald earth and now one can hear the hum of scholars and watch the pageant of students walking across the green turf with gilded volumes in their hands.

This glorious temple of learning has sprung up in an astonishingly short period. Its progress during the past three decades has been amazing indeed. Its fame

has travelled beyond the seas. Thousands of visitors have inhaled the sweet odour of its groves and thousands of students have gone out to the world as torch-bearers of learning. The Benares Hindu University has the seeds of immortality in it and this noble institution will live as a thing of beauty and be a joy for ever to Indians.

This national University has cast its spell on modern India and has awakened the slumbering consciousness of the nation. The great Panditji has breathed new life into the sleeping bones of his countrymen and by creating this temple of learning has shown to the world what the Hindus can yet do. The Benares Hindu University is certainly the noblest monument of Hindu genius in this century.

Praise has been bestowed on this seat of learning by Kings and Viceroys, by Governors and Princes, by foreign travellers and by India's illustrious sons and daughters and by countless visitors who continue to come from far and near to see the "Viswavidyalaya" and its college towers. Many of them on looking around the Benares Hindu University have exclaimed with a fullness of joy and satisfaction "how grand, how beautiful, how glorious indeed," These words I have heard from the lips of distinguished men and women who have visited these new halls of learning from different parts of the world. Savants and scholars have honoured this University by their visits—famous men like Professor Sommerfeld of Germany, Monsieur Sylvan Levi of France, Professor Ramsay Muir of Manchester, Il Marchese Misciatelli of Italy, and Doctor Hume of America. Every one of them admired the work that was being done in the Hindu University. It was Colonel Wedgewood who said "the Hindu University was the greatest thing Indians have done in this century."

Now what is it that makes the visitor feel so kindly and express so nicely about the Benares Hindu

University? Surely there must be something new, something romantic, something charming to make the people so inspired. I believe that it is the vastness of the site and the loftiness of its conception, which make such an irresistible appeal to the pilgrim and devotee of learning. Standing on the expansive green fields of the University, surrounded by the fragrant jasmines and lovely marigolds, with the sparkling golden sky above, one feels at once exhilarated and the heart begins to dance with joy. The Hindu University is as large as the Hindu heart and it is symbolic of the ancient religion of India, which is so full of charity and love to all beings in the world. This vastness of space, this wonderful sun-shower in the day and star-radiance at night and the proximity to the river Ganges make the Benares Hindu University, a unique centre of learning. The ancient seers and sages of India taught under the open sky on the banks of great rivers in large forests. The highest truths were propounded by them. Benares was one of their earliest homes and from time immemorial, this city of Kashi had been the most important seat of learning in India. It was the Jnana-Vapi and great teachers of mankind preached on her river-bank and in her neighbouring groves. Twenty-five hundred years ago Gautama Buddha preached his doctrine of love and mercy at Sarnath in Benares. A thousand years after Sri Sankaracharya visited Varanasi and proclaimed Vedantism here; and after him scores of sages came and taught the highest truths. The immortal Tulsidas wrote his immortal Ramayana on the banks of the Ganges near the Hindu University. Thus the place is hallowed by the memories of divine men and teachers of humanity.

And so to revive the ancient traditions and to make Benares once again the centre of India's culture the Hindu University was started thirty years ago. Its founder, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji was a descendant of the great teachers and sages of India. He built this city of knowledge, and dreamt of collect-

ing five crores for this Saraswati mandir and build twenty more colleges and fifty more hostels to accommodate 10,000 scholars. It is not an impossible dream nor an unrealisable longing. Thirteen hundred years ago we had the University of Nalanda "where ten thousand monks and novices were lodged within its walls. Towers, domes and pavilions stood amidst a paradise of trees, gardens and fountains. There were six large ranges of buildings four stories high. There were a hundred lecture rooms. All the inmates were lodged, boarded, taught and supplied with vestments without charge. All religious books were studied. All the sciences, specially medicine and arithmetic, were learnt by the monks." "Taxila was another great university. Indeed our ancient mother-land was the birthplace of the largest universities and venerable sages like Vasistha and Shaunaka taught ten thousand students. We are the descendants of those teachers and surely we can all join together and help the Benares Hindu University to continue its vigorous growth so that it may soon rank among the best universities of the world and become in an ever increasing measure an object of pride to the motherland."

## WITH MALAVIYAJI ROUND INDIA

It is a far cry from Benares to the sunny seas at Cape Comorin, but we had a wonderful tour. We had a glorious time indeed. We saw much of green land. For a while we were in paradise. Malabar, Cochin and Travancore did cast its spell on us and more than once Pandit Malaviyaji on seeing the palm-fringed shores of Kerala exclaimed "ah how grand." Never had he seen such sweet-smiling scenes. The long journey from Benares to Cape Comorin and back to Jacobabad in the north did not tire our nerves. We felt invigorated. The sea and the sky at Cape Comorin were charming. We saw such soft hues in the heavens! The vast ocean was calm and the sight was majestic. Only for an hour we stayed, but we had drunk such peace at Kanyakumari! We longed ever so much to rest in that delectable place for just a night, but another little lovely place was calling us from the neighbourhood.

So we hurried on and passed through green groves and orchards to that sacred island. Punditji's heart leapt with joy on landing at Rameswaram. He felt rejuvenated and he did really run across the sands to Danuskodi for a plunge in the opal seas. The golden morning sun rose from the eastern ocean and we saw the splendour of nature from that classic shore. Standing at the foot of India we fondly looked north-ward towards the snowy Himalayas and the Gangetic plains. Day and night we travelled on and on, stopping nowhere and yet visiting ever so many places on the way. Madura glistened with her golden temples. We went round the Pandian capital and saw the Tamilians in their cleanliness and simplicity. The drive to Trichnopoly was indeed pleasant. Jasmine breezes blew over us from the Kodikanal hills and the midnight air was sweet-scented. Ere we reached Srirangam morning broke and the

waters of the river Kaveri filled our ears with its sweet murmur. We bathed in the Dakshina Ganga and worshipped at Sri Rangantha. We saw more and more of the famous shrines of the south and at each temple we wondered on seeing the ancient architecture. Temples there were innumerable and we entered into so many sanctuaries but found that there was one God. Indeed the countless gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon pointed to one Supreme Being. God was Love, said Panditji and he asked his fellowmen to love one another. He passionately pleaded for the removal of untouchability and for letting in the Pariahs into the temples. Scholars and saints came to hear him and Panditji's words went deep into their hearts. Men and women were moved to tears when he talked of the lowliest and the lost—the Chandalas, who were the hope of India. Thousands thronged to hear his learned discourses and Malabar was awakened. The psychology of her people was changed and the orthodox section began to look more compassionately. I do believe that a great political and spiritual change has been effected by Malaviyaji's visit, to the distant south. I wish I could quote what many elderly folks said of Punditji's visit and talks, but I shall restrain that temptation as they are but platitudes and praises of the great patriot. At Kumbakonam and Madras there were Parishads and Pundits came to cross swords with Malaviyaji. The long talks happily ended in understanding one-another's point of view and a greater comprehension of the spirit of the Shastras. From Madras we proceeded to Bombay and had once again a look at Appolo bunder. As we drove along the beautiful marina I thought over the instability of human glory and the rise and fall of empires.

A King was at Bombay in the Taj Mahal Hotel and crowds had gathered outside the hotel to have a look at the dethroned monarch. Bombay was noisy and we had very little rest. Punditji was surrounded by visitors and even in his illness he was not allowed

to observe silence. Telegrams came in and he had to cancel his stay at lovely Lonavala and go northward again to Delhi. Though the Frontier mail took us in less than a day's time to the Imperial capital, we little enjoyed the arduous journey. Hot winds blew and the scorching sun burnt our faces. We sojourned for a day and left for Lahore and Multan. The elements were angry—hurricane came—the sun hid himself behind the clouds—and a black dust storm swept through the city and ten thousand people sat mute and dumb with the gentle Malaviyaji in their midst. Thank God the mists rolled away—the atmosphere became clear and Punditji's silvery voice was heard and all became radiant again. The people's blood was aprilled over and they vowed to struggle for India's emancipation. From Multan we travelled through the desert of Sind bathing in dust. At last we reached Karachi. Clifton's sea side was welcome to our hearts. We went thither and often heard the music of the waves and enjoyed the beauty of the waxing moonlit nights. For a week we stayed in Sind and Punditji was adored by the people. We forgot the langour of the long journey and enjoyed the love and affection of the Karachi citizens. They gave us luscious grapes and sent creamy milk in large pails; and made us forget the terrible heat of Jacobabad. Almonds and apricots came in baskets and men and women with their cool exhilarating hearts. we found India poor but we saw her people rich in their hospitality. From Cape Comorin to Jacobabad we tasted nothing but the quintessence of affection and love. Oh, for another journey across and around this dear Hindustan with Pundit Malaviya 1929.



## MALAVIYAJI'S VISION

The year 1905 was an eventful one in the history of modern India. The country witnessed the birth of great cultural, economic, and political movements. Gokhale, one of the most beautiful spirits, that was ever born in India, preached the gospel of service to the Motherland, and himself became the first and foremost servant of India. The patriot—saint founded the Servants of India society in Poona in Western India. In the East, Bengal reverberated with the cry of Vande Mataram, and Arabindo Ghose inaugurated the Swadeshi movement there. With the idea of Swadeshi came also the dream of Swaraj. There was a tremendous upheaval in the country. The slumbering spirit of nationality was awakened by songs and lyrics, by slogans and speeches. The millions of India actuated by noblest impulses yearned for a change. And the year 1905 saw a transformation in the psychology of our people. At the end of that year, Gokhale was expressing his beautiful thoughts in noble eloquence in Benares and he appealed to his country-men to love India more than anything else and to spiritualise the politics of the country. It was just at that very moment that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the white-robed leader of Prayag, adumbrated his imperial scheme of founding the Hindu University of Benares on the banks of the sacred Ganges. He convened a meeting of the national leaders in Benares Town Hall and explained his ambitious project. Babu Surendranath Banerjea, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lokamanya Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Babu Arabinda Ghose, Lala Lajpat Rai, Ganga Prasad Varma, and V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, listened to Pandit Malaviya's eloquence with respect but offered little encouragement. For the brilliant protagonist of the neo-Hindu Movement in India was found shooting to the stars above. He was bold, daring, and energetic.

The elder statesmen could not stem the surging torrent of Malaviya's Ganga. A few were positively bewildered at the determination and heroism of the Pandit.

But Malaviyaji had his own way and he made up his mind to walk alone on the road to honour and patriotism. How blessed indeed is that man who resolves to do a great and good thing and plunges headlong into the deep to find the precious pearls below! The Gods and angels flock to him and he goes on from joy to joy till he becomes one with Brahma the Creator. Malaviyaji felt at Benares in 1905 the pride of early manhood. He was in his 45th year radiant and happy. He looked then as the symbol of the nation's hope and victory. The Congress was over, and those who heard of the dream of the Hindu University had forgotten all about it. But certainly not the one who was to sing in praise of his motherland and its imperishable glory in ever-lasting Chunar stone. To every one whom he met, Pandit Malaviyaji shared his deepest thought—his master passion in life. He came across scholars and saints and received their blessings. His own guru and his venerable mother gave their benedictions to him. And what more does one need at the beginning of a great enterprise than the milk of motherly love and the honey of Guru's blessing? Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya, who had inspired the boy Madan Mohan in his teens in the college at Allahabad with ideas of Hindu Sangathan and Hindu Dharma, was enthusiastic about his pupil's passionate appeal for a Hindu University at Benares. Swami Rama Thirta, that great poet-prophet of Indian Nationalism, fell in love with the idea of Malaviyaji, and Lokamanya Bal Gangadara Tilak said to Panditji in his own inimitable way "You become the first crystal and others will join you in your noble task."

And so came blessings in showers. The seed that was already sown had plenty of golden sunshine. Only it took a little time to germinate. In 1911 Pandit

Malaviyaji published the first prospectus of the Benares Hindu University explaining its aims and objects. There was a wonderful response to the Pandit's appeal for a crore of rupees. And when he and the Maharaja of Durbhanga and other distinguished friends began to move about the country, people vied with one another in contributing to the great national educational cause. The leaders also welcomed the enterprise, and for a while the country rang with the cry of Hindu Dharmaki Jai, Kasi Hindu Vidyalayaki Jai" 30 lakhs of rupees in less than a year from the Hindus' The promoter of the scheme felt indeed stronger and happier to serve the cause of national education. Quietly he knelt down and offered thanks to God for his over-flowing mercy. Panditji began to dream more and more delicious dreams and strangely enough to realise them at the same time day after day. He went and saw the men in power and authority. He entered proudly the Prince's Palaces in Rajputana, Mewar and Marwar, and Central India, and which Royal door did not open to this Prince of Patriots? He asked, and got everything that he wanted. He acquainted the Viceroy Lord Hardinge with his plans. He spoke to members of the Imperial Legislative Council, and everywhere he found sympathy and support. He undertook a tour round India and visited the famous metropolitan centres. The Hindus flocked to him wherever he went, and the Pandit cast a spell on his countrymen. There was some indescribable magic about him which nobody had. His golden voice and persuasive method helped him to overcome many an obstacle. In sweet Sanskrit, in melodious Hindi, in fluent Urdu, in beautiful English. Malaviyaji spoke to large gatherings and exhorted his beloved countrymen to protect Hinduism, to send out missionaries for the propagation of Sanatana Dharma, and to train a band of patriots for fighting the battle of freedom. The Pandit's voice was heard. And the princes and the people parted willingly with their wealth. Before the beginning of 1916 the large sum of money that was needed for starting the Hindu

University had been promised and a major portion of it had been realised too. Emboldened by the wonderful success of his attempts, Pandit Malaviyaji requested the Viceroy to lay the foundation stone of the Hindu University on the 4th February 1916. Truly that years' Vasanta Panchmi was a red-letter day in the cultural History of India. The Viceroy, the Governors, the Princes and the elite of the land had gathered on the sacred shore of the Ganga to watch the Vedic ceremony. The Hindu University seed had begun to sprout. And Gods Grace was on that tender little living thing. Gentle protection, overflowing affection and continuous love began to come in from all sides, and the Hindu University plant began to grow in beautiful proportions. A lovely thing indeed to behold.

From 1916 its progress has been rapid and rather astonishing. 1300 acres of ground for housing an Educational Institution which perhaps has no parallel in East or in West, Building operations soon commenced, and 100,00 workmen laboured in stone and wood and with a million rupees to begin with, three stately edifices were built before the midsummer of 1921. A long row of habitations for students sprang up side by side, and the Benares Hindu University was ready to be opened by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in 1921. The Prince felt honoured on visiting the youngest University in the British Empire, and looked around with wistful eyes on the enchanting grounds, and the golden river gleaming afar.

The Benares Hindu University had five Colleges before the end of 1924. Over a 1000 youngmen had arrived from different parts of India to seek inspiration in these new halls of learning. The number began to increase year after year and thirst for knowledge became more and more. Young men wanted to study Law, Medicine. Agriculture, Mining, Commerce, Economics, Politics, and Electrical Engineering. Girls began to come one by one, and who could refuse

admission to the future mothers of the race? A separate hall had to be provided for them also. So one after another new buildings began to lift up their lovely heads in the green fields of Nagwa.

A College for girls, another for medical students, a Hospital for In-patients, a Dissection hall, a college of Oriental Learning and Theology, hostels for students, residences for professors and principals, a workshop for engineers, a Library, an Agricultural Research Institute, a College of Science, and a College of Arts, a Botanical Garden and an amphitheatre for the public and University students to sit and watch the games. Within 30 years beautiful buildings have arisen from green groves of mangoes, and have made Nagwa charming indeed. Roads have been laid out and trees have been planted in thousands. The whole University area is illuminated with brilliant electric lights at nights, and the pilgrims, wayfares, travellers, and tourists, find a peculiar joy in Nagwa, where a new civilization, a new culture and a new hope seem to be blossoming forth. The Benares Hindu University has had a happy childhood so far, and now in 1947 has entered on its vigorous activity. The tree of knowledge has grown large and stately, and invites every patriotic youth, to seek shelter under its shade and draw inspiration for the betterment of their own lives and for the freedom of our beloved Motherland.

## MALAVIYAJI'S MIRACLE

An act which Buddha or Christ alone could have done, has been performed in Calcutta two days ago and it has added to the glory of the doer of this great and good deed in this naughty world and also to the one who has broken his fast and has suspended it for a year.

Let us hope hereafter that sacred altars will not smell foul with the blood of innocent goats and other animals and that sanctuaries, which are dedicated to the Holy of Holies, will breathe only perfume and sweet odour.

The human mind reels at the idea that the All-Merciful thirsts for blood. God does not want the blood of animals. He who gives life, preserves and protects from all harms and dangers, does not wish to pluck away life when it is growing.

How sad, very sad, indeed it is, that in India, where human thought has reached perfection and sublimity, and where man's spirit has ever soared to reach the Beautiful, any harm should be done to life—any cruelty perpetrated. It is impossible even to imagine that by sacrificing innocent lives, the gods will be appeased.

Who would believe for a moment that Kali, the Mother of the world, from whose womb so many countless lives are born day after day, would wish to see such lives killed in her very temple?

But this mad act has been going on for ages and the time has come when it should cease, for humanity must take a leap forward to enter the kingdom of love and India should begin to lead the thought of mankind and save it from decadence.

The ways of Providence are mysterious indeed. He chooses His own instruments for doing good, for rehabilitating Truth and for planting righteousness.

Fancy a young unknown Pandit of Jaipur coming all the way to Calcutta to worship Kali the Mother in her own shrine. Brahmachari Rama Chandra Sarma sees the precincts of the Kalighat temple smeared with the blood of goats and sheep.

He vows to stop this bloody sacrifice. For 32 days he fasts in a lonely corner in Calcutta. Not many care for Ramachandra's penance or bother to know why this young man had come to Calcutta to fast unto death. Bengal believes in tantric worship—Bengal belongs to the shakti school—so some people say.

But it is not quite so. Bengal has led the thought of India and has scattered the healing message of love and mercy through Chaitanya Maha Prabo, only a few hundred years ago.

And even today in the realm of thought, Bengal reigns supreme. The Poet Rabindranath Tagore, who has been making all his life garlands of beautiful thoughts and dedicating them to Kali—the self-same Mother of the world, is singing the everlasting song of love and not hatred, of life and not of death. The poet did raise his humble voice even in the matter of Pandit Ramachandra's fast, but his voice was not heard from Santiniketan.

A part of India's mind is stuck up in the mire of superstition and *aviveka*, and it is a laborious toil to lift it up. But the thing has to be done patiently.

And when the mind is awakened to the reality of Truth and Love, India will contribute a great deal to the blossoming of humanity. India alone can lead the world as she has led her in the past and when

India resolves to stop this barbarous animal sacrifice at the holy altar, a new day for her and for humanity will dawn.

I see tremendous potentialities for the good of the world in Ramchandra Sarma's mission.

If he succeeds, all glory to him and to the noble one who has saved his life day before yesterday in Calcutta.

It is not given to all to do the sacred task which the venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has done. It is a marvel to behold how he goes on doing good ceaselessly through his life. He has many wonderful deeds of love to his credit, but it looks as though this latest act of his in saving the young Brahmin's life is the greatest and the most beautiful of them all.

India should know more of this epoch-making event in her national history and young India should come forward to help the great Malaviyaji in his new mission of love and mercy to the mute and dumb creations of God.

October 1935.

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## MALAVIYAJI—A MAN OF GOD

1931. A beautiful autumn morning in London. As we go up Primrose Hill through ivy-clad cottages, we hear the song of robins on willow trees and admire the smiling sunlit scenes in Hampstead. It is a far cry from our home in Benares on the Ganges. The golden sun rises over London, and every-thing looks so fair in the light of the morning. Sunshine over all the world brings sunshine in the soul. We enjoy the warmth and glow and feel the magic touch of the Lord. Malaviyaji feels ecstatic, as he stands amidst flowers under the great trees of England, in an atmosphere of poetry and music. He forgets the maze which is the political Round Table Conference, and forgets the sickening communal problem. Morning is the time for communion with God. He talks of ethereal things, and speaks of the immanence of God. For an hour the stream of his eloquent speech flows on. Veda Vyas, the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Bhagavat*, Tulsidas, the *Gita*—he quotes profusely illustrating his marvellous discourse on the Lord. I am spellbound as I hear him describing the nature of the Atman (Soul)—how infinitesimally small and how infinitely big.

It is an inspiration to be with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in London. We visit Oxford, Harrow and Cambridge. We look around and see the beauty of the Magdalene Tower and gaze fondly at the King's College Chapel. Malaviyaji is proud of Oxford and Cambridge with their centuries-old traditions, but he feels prouder of his own University in Benares, the oldest city in the world and the birthplace of universities. "Don't you love the Benares Hindu University?" he asks. He does not wait for an answer. He tells me the romantic story of its birth, how he receives a hundred and one rupees at the beginning of the great educational enterprise from a saint, with his benediction that the little sum would soon become a crore and one rupees. So it

swells in ten year's time and Malaviyaji's dream of founding a university comes true. The national academy is founded. Benares becomes the pride of India and a great centre of learning and research.

1946. It is a real pleasure to catch a few words that fall from his lips on the morning, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues take charge of the Government of India. "अपने देश में अपना राज" <sup>1</sup> says Malaviyaji, with a heart full of gratitude. For establishing our own Government in our own country, he has strenuously worked all through his life. Now his back is bent. He cannot stand erect, as age has told even on Malaviyaji. His sweet voice has become soft and low. He speaks in whispers. But his memory is quite good and he oft-times remembers all his old friends and comrades. Dadabhoy Naoroji, Gokhale, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Surendranath Banerjea, Lala Lajpat Rai, Chittaranjan Das, Vijayaraghavachariar. He has worked with 50 Congress Presidents, who alas! have passed away. Malaviyaji is the last of the old veterans of the Congress. Thirty years older than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and nine years senior to Mahatma Gandhi; he was present at the cradle ceremony of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Anand Bhawan Allahabad, 57 years ago. Then came a time when the old and the young Pandit—Malaviyaji and Jawaharlalji—lived in the same prison at Naini and dreamed common dreams for India's liberation. Malaviyaji has been a teacher, editor, lawyer, civil resister, jailbird, parliamentarian, President of Congress, Rector of University and religious leader. He is one of the most beautiful spirits born in India.

On four occasions Pandit Malaviya was President of the Indian National Congress. First at Lahore in 1909, next at Delhi in 1918, again at Delhi in 1930 and for the fourth time at Calcutta in 1933 when all the Congress leaders were imprisoned and when repression was in full swing after Mahatma Gandhi's return from

<sup>1</sup> "APNE DESH MEN APNA RAJ"

the Round Table Conference. From the day he delivered his maiden speech at the Calcutta Congress in 1886, Malaviyaji ranked as one of the foremost national leaders. The first speech of his at Calcutta gave him a niche in the temple of fame. He was called the silver-tongued orator of India. During the last 60 years, the patriot-politician presided over a hundred conferences all over the country as the chosen leader. Millions of words fell from his lips. His speeches were marked by moderation and wisdom. His mastery over Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and English was unique. He charmed myriads of his listeners by his moving orations. The last time we heard him make one of his famous speeches in Hindi was when he delivered an inspiring address at the Golden Jubilee of the Allahabad Convocation in the winter of 1939.

To meet the venerable old Panditji one has to go as a pilgrim to holy Benares. There the Octogenarian leader lives in his peaceful retreat at the Rector's Lodge, in the garden of learning. His time is spent in watching the blue-winged birds warbling on pomegranate boughs outside his little room, in hearing the hum of scholars, that have flocked to that centre of culture and on gazing constantly at the tender blue of the sky. "That is the colour of my Lord Krishna," he says. He is most of the time in bed, lying like an infant. He greets everyone with his stainless smile. Every evening before sunset, Malaviyaji takes a drive round the campus of the University, and when the automobile stops near the dairy, milk-white calves, their slender tails wagging, spring forward to welcome the old golden-hued Malaviyaji. I have watched this delightful scene day after day. He looks at them with a sweet tenderness and talks to them in an under-tone, in a language, which, the mute lovely animals, seem to understand. I can only describe it as the voice of love, and as Mahatma Gandhi, has so aptly said of the great man, Malaviyaji is a Devata Purusha—a man of God.

## THE MAHAMANA

To write about the great Panditji is not an easy task. It is like trying to pour all the water of the Ganges into a tea cup. Pandit Malaviyaji lived a long, rich and very useful life. He was a many-sided genius of the Indian renaissance. He was one of the rarest figures in Indian history—one of the noblest lives that Hinduism gave to mankind. He was the supreme architect of the temple of learning, builder of a new India, a pure devotee of God, an eminent educationist, father of a nation, a karma yogi, lord of language, master-mind, Nestor among politicians, great Parliamentarian and Patriarch among the leaders of his generation, religious reformer and Rector, scholar, savant, sage and servant of the motherland and mankind, torch-bearer and wonder worker. Twenty thousand words could be written on each aspect of his life. For seventy years Panditji went about doing good. To do good was his mission in life. He became great by doing ceaselessly good to all beings. He was good to the sub-human beings, and to the plants too. He believed in the ancient religion of sanatana dharma and preached the gospel of the immanence of god. Sanatana dharma was eternal dharma. It was ancient, most sacred, most high. It was a dharma, Pandit Malaviyaji said, which could bring salvation to the whole world. Knowledge, devotion and renunciation were its three pillars. Knowledge was its soul. Sanatana dharma believed in God's presence not only in mankind, but even in birds, insects, animals and plants. If the people could feel the presence of God in everything, none would think of injuring the other. "Do not do that unto others, what you wish others not to do to you." was the golden teaching of sanatana dharma.

Malaviyaji maharaj was very fond of the Cow, and worshipped the gomata. The Divine gentleness which one saw in the innocent face of the mother cow, was visible in Pundit Malaviyaji's charming countenance, so full of purity and sweetness. The Mahamana was fond of birds, which are even more beautiful than animals. He used to soliloquise, when he was in the mountains and used to talk to the Birds. Many years ago he was found lost in reverie on seeing a blue-winged bird swinging on the deodar tree in Simla. When it flew away and he was left suddenly companionless, he uttered in a painful voice "ah truant, why are you so unfair? why do you fly away so soon." Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji was an ardent lover of birds. In his home at Allahabad, he used to feed the birds every day before taking his morning meal. At Rameswaram he was seen welcoming the little messengers of the dawn. There was a Franciscan love in him for the blithe spirits of the air.

Pundit Malaviyaji was passionately fond of flowers. Not merely of the Lotus, the Jasmine and the Rose, which perfume the Indian air by their intoxicating odour but he also loved the beautiful wee little flowers on the fields, which one sees in millions on the fair Gangetic valley. Once while taking a morning stroll over the emerald grounds of the Viswa vidyalaya, he pointed out the lovely soft sapphire-hued sankapushpi blossoms, which had carpeted the earth in early spring-time and asked his companion to walk gently over the flower-smiling land. Then he spoke of the therapeutic value of the little sankapushpi and how beneficial it was to the brain. While talking about flowers the Mahamana's soul bowed in adoration to the creator of plants, animals and mankind. As he was greatly interested in the science of Ayurveda, he had studied the life and history of plants and knew hundreds of names in the vegetable kingdom. For hours he would talk to the gardener, the horticulturist and the Botanist, about the endless variety, the utility

and the beauty of the plants. "Give me more money, I will make the Viswa vidyalaya" into a lovely garden, he would often say to his friends." It is a wonder how he changed with his magic wand, the fallow fields of Nagwa into a cultural capital and a garden of learning.

The large-hearted Punditji was fond of the beautiful little ones of the world. He enjoyed their angelic company. He taught the children to sing in praise of Bal Ram and Bal Gopal, and of Prahalad and Dhruva. He used to pat the kids whenever they clung round him at Bharati Bhavan. To the mothers, the Mahamana was reverential and worshipful. He always addressed them as "Deviyo". There was a sweetness in his tone, and purity in his expression. He would tell the women, of the immortal stories of Arundhati, Droupadi, Sita and Savitri and transport his listeners to ethereal realms. The women of India adored Mahamana Malaviyaji. Who can forget the vast gathering of thousands of women, who had gathered on the Bombay beach to hear his soul-stirring address in 1930, during the Satyagraha days, when he came out of Arthur road jail. He exhorted the women of India to be brave and fearless and to save their honour in moments of danger and practice methods of self-defence. His words infused a new hope in the hearts of the women of India. Mahamana Malaviyaji moulded the lives of tens of thousands of young men and women. "Practice Truth, Follow the path of Duty, he would say to everyone who went to receive his blessings. On a score of occasions young India heard Malaviyaji's golden voice at the annual Convocations of the Banares University, when he chanted so beautifully ancient vedic hymns and exhorted the youths to follow the path of "Dharma." The vibration of the word Dharma from the stainless lips of the "Dharmatma Malaviyaji" thrilled the hearts of the national gathering in Kashi.

Besides the large number of students, the poor-folk used to flock at the gatherings. Pundit Malaviyaji

loved the poor, the needy, the sorrow-stricken. They were ever at his door. He would talk to everyone of them in their dialect. Hundreds of poor people waited outside his small room to have his darshan—to have just a glance at his God-like face, so full of beauty and grace. Malaviyaji's eyes were suffused with tears, as he saluted the villagers. He talked to them of Ram and Krishna, of truth and love. His heart was moved by the sufferings of the ill-clad, starving millions of India. From his childhood Malaviyaji was accustomed to meet large crowds. He began lecturing to them from his seventh year. For seventy-nine years the Mahamana spoke to gatherings of men and women in various parts of India. Trillions of words must have fallen from his lips and millions of people must have heard the silver-tongued orator of India. As an orator he was transcendent. He inspired his hearers by his moral fervour. He made great speeches and some of them lifted him to the skies. His reputation grew as his golden voice became mellow. The people adored him for his sweet words and for his good deeds. He has become immortal.

Looking at the soaring sun-lit spires of the Benares Hindu University and the panorama of colleges, hostels, laboratories, pavilions and residences, the mind wanders to Prayag, where amidst immemorial scenes of purity and beauty, the dreamer and builder of the viswa vidyalaya was born eighty seven years ago. To breathe the air of Malaviyaji one must go on a pilgrimage to Prayag—his native city. Beautiful is Allahabad. beautiful are the lovely scenes there, where ethereal breezes blow at the confluence of the three rivers. There is Madhan Mohan's cradle. There are all his early memorials—the schools where he studied, the famous Muir College, where the boy Madan Mohan acted the graceful part of Portia, the clubs, societies and samajs, where he spoke, are all at Allahabad. The school, where he taught, the news-papers which he edited, the famous "Leader" which he founded are

there. Allahabad has the temple of justice, where Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji practiced as a lawyer for eightetn years. The city is rich in associations-full of historic memories. That is the City of Malaviyaji's perennial inspiration. Earth had not anything to show more fair for him and whenever Pundit Malavyaji went out, his heart fondly turned to Allahabad "Allahabad is the most beautiful city of India. It is noted for its health and purity. The sight of the confluence of the three rivers is exhilarating. I like it best" said the Mahamana while refering to his beloved native city. Allahabad had exercised a tremendous influence on Punditji for full fifty five years. One day in Mag, when Allahabad looks like a paradise on earth, Pundit Madan Mohan Malavivaji took a plunge in the sangam waters, heard voices calling him to consecrate his talents, came out of the river with a prayer on his lips, went home, shared his Himalayan vision with his saintly parents, received their benediction and their precious gift, took a vow and with an indomitable will, came to Benares to fulfil the dream of his life—to raise the noblest monument in India to Hinduism. There is some-thing Bhagirathian about the majestic and solemn fervour with which he plunged into the greatest mission of his life.

Ten thousand days he spent in Kashi, dreaming, working, planning, praying, preaching, making use of every minute of his waking time. Who will remember the bygone days of 1916-1947 and yet who can forget the fragrant years when the Mahamana crowned the city of Shiva and immortalised it by his sacrifice and selfless service. It is not an easy thing to build a university, which has become in the words of a savant "Unique". It is the work of a "super-human being" said a statesman. The very soul of patriotism breathes in the university. Look at the great institution. Look at the care—the anxiety—the labour, behind the marvellous undertaking. It has taken half a century of thought and work to transform the dream into reality. What



painstaking workmanship, skill, statesmanship and patience, behind this colossal enterprise-. For thirty years the Mahamana worked like a titan. He strove with the Gods, saved the University from all harms and brick by brick, stone upon stone, he built, what Gandhiji calls the "majestic structure," which stands on the rock of his purity, sacrifice and love of learning. The day will come when posterity will remember with an ocean of gratitude the Mahamanas' services to the motherland. While sharing his hopes about the future of the Benares Hindu University with a fellow worker the Mahamana wrote down the following words :—"It is only men, who possess great courage and patience and who have developed in them a constant spirit of self-sacrifice and who possess undying devotion to the cause, which they have understood to be great and glorious, that can serve an institution like the Benares Hindu University." With all these matchless qualities did the Mahamana build this Pride of India. Thank God India had produced a sage like the Mahamana.

1948.





“In the presence of Pundit Malaviyaji I felt a sense of holiness of something withdrawn.”

—Rt. Hon'ble Ellen Wilkinson.

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