

“... think you have understood by now that the man with whose fate yours has been linked is a man of a very unusual character. Mine is not the same field of action, the same purpose in life, the same mental attitude as that of the people of today in this country. I am in every respect different from them and out of the ordinary. Perhaps you know what ordinary men say of an extraordinary view, an extraordinary endeavour, an extraordinary ambition. To them it is madness; only, if the madman is successful in his work then he is called no longer a madman, but a great genius. But how many are successful in their life's endeavour? Among a thousand men, there are five or six who are out of the ordinary and out of the five or six one perhaps successful. Not to speak of success, I have not yet even entirely entered my field of work. There is nothing then for you but to consider me mad. And it is an evil thing for a woman to fall into the hands of a mad fellow. For woman's expectations are all bound up in worldly happiness and sorrow. A madman will not make his wife happy, he can only make her miserable. The founders of the Hindu religion understood this very well. They loved extraordinary characters, extraordinary endeavours, extraordinary ambitions. Madman or genius, they respected the extraordinary man.

... The wife shares the dharma [law of conduct] of her husband. She must help him, counsel him, encourage him in whatever work he accepts as his dharma. . . . Now, the point is this. Are you going to choose the path of the Hindu religion or follow the ideal of the new culture? Your marriage to a madman is the result of bad karma in your previous lives. It is good to come to terms with one's fate, but what sort of terms will they be? Will you also dismiss your husband as a madman on the strength of what other people think? A madman is bound to run after his mad ways. You cannot hold him back; his nature is stronger than yours. Will you then do nothing but sit in a corner and weep? Or, will you run along with him; try to be the mad wife of this madman, like the queen of the blind king who played the part of a blind woman by putting a bandage across her eyes? For all your education in a Brahmo school, you are still a woman from a Hindu home. The blood of Hindu ancestors flows in your veins. I have no doubt you will choose the latter course.

I have three madnesses. The first one is this. I firmly believe that the accomplishments, genius, higher education and learning and wealth that God has given me are His. I have a right to spend for my own purposes only what is needed for the maintenance of the family and is otherwise absolutely essential. The rest must be returned to God. If I spend everything for myself, for my pleasure and luxury, I am a thief. ...

My second madness has only recently seized me. It is this: by whatever means I must have the direct vision of God. Religion these days means repeating the name of God at any odd hour, praying in public, showing off how pious one is. I want nothing of this. If God exists, there must be some way to experience His existence, to meet Him face to face. However arduous this path is, I have made up my mind to follow it. The Hindu religion declares that the way lies in one's own body, in one's own mind. It has laid down the rules for following the way, and I have begun to observe them. Within a month I have realised that what the Hindu religion says is not false. I am experiencing in myself the signs of which it speaks. Now I want to take you along this way. ... there is nothing to prevent you from following behind me. All can attain perfection on this path, but to enter it depends on one's own will. Nobody can drag you onto it. If you consent to this, I shall write more about it.

My third madness is that while others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter - a few meadows and fields, forests and hills and rivers - I look upon my country as the Mother. I adore Her, I worship Her as the Mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood? Would he quietly sit down to his dinner, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother? I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength, - I am not going to fight with sword or gun, - but the strength of knowledge. The power of the Kshatriya is not the only one; there is also the power of the Brahmin, the power that is founded on knowledge. This feeling is not new in me, it is not of today. I was born with it, it is in my very marrow. God sent me to earth to accomplish this great mission. The seed began to sprout when I was fourteen; by the time I was eighteen the roots of the resolution had grown firm and unshakable.

... Now I ask you, what are you going to do in this connection? The wife is the shakti, the strength of her husband. Will you be Usha's disciple and go on repeating the mantras of Sahib-worship? Will you diminish the strength of your husband by indifference or redouble it by your sympathy and encouragement? You will say, “What can an ordinary woman like me do in these great matters? I have no strength of mind, no intelligence, I am afraid to think about these things.” But there is an easy way out. Take refuge in God. Enter once the path of God-realisation; He will soon make good your deficiencies. Fear gradually leaves one who takes refuge in God. And if you can put your trust in me, if you can listen to me alone and not to all and sundry, I can give you my own strength; that will not diminish my strength but increase it. We say that the wife is the husband's shakti, his strength. This means that the husband's strength is redoubled when he sees his own image in his wife and hears an echo of his own high aspirations in her.

... At the present time the life of women in this country has taken this narrow and contemptible form. Give up all this and follow after me. We have come to this world to do God's work; let us begin it.

... You must acquire knowledge by listening to one person only. You must have a single aim and accomplish your work with a resolute mind. You must ignore the calumny and the ridicule of others and hold fast to your devotion.

... This is the secret of mine I wanted to tell you. Do not divulge it to anybody. Ponder calmly over these matters. There is nothing to be frightened of, but there is much to think about. ...

Yours