

Classic Poetry Series

**Vinayak Damodar  
Savarkar  
- poems -**

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# Vinayak Damodar Savarkar(28 May 1883 - 26 February 1966)

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Marathi: विनायक दामोदर सावरकर), was an Indian freedom fighter, revolutionary and politician. He was the proponent of liberty as the ultimate ideal. Savarkar was a poet, writer and playwright. He launched a movement for religious reform advocating dismantling the system of caste in Hindu culture, and reconversion of the converted Hindus back to Hindu religion. Savarkar created the term Hindutva, and emphasized its distinctiveness from Hinduism which he associated with social and political disunity. Savarkar's Hindutva sought to create an inclusive collective identity. The five elements of Savarkar's philosophy were Utilitarianism, Rationalism and Positivism, Humanism and Universalism, Pragmatism and Realism.

Savarkar's revolutionary activities began when studying in India and England, where he was associated with the India House and founded student societies including Abhinav Bharat Society and the Free India Society, as well as publications espousing the cause of complete Indian independence by revolutionary means. Savarkar published *The Indian War of Independence* about the Indian rebellion of 1857 that was banned by British authorities. He was arrested in 1910 for his connections with the revolutionary group India House. Following a failed attempt to escape while being transported from Marseilles, Savarkar was sentenced to two life terms amounting to 50 years' imprisonment and moved to the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

While in jail, Savarkar wrote the work describing Hindutva, openly espousing Hindu nationalism. He was released in 1921 under restrictions after signing a plea for clemency in which he renounced revolutionary activities. Travelling widely, Savarkar became a forceful orator and writer, advocating Hindu political and social unity. Serving as the president of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar endorsed the ideal of India as a Hindu Rashtra and opposed the Quit India struggle in 1942, calling it a "Quit India but keep your army" movement. He became a fierce critic of the Indian National Congress and its acceptance of India's partition, and was one of those accused in the assassination of Indian leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was acquitted as the charges could not be proven.

The airport at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar's capital, has been named Veer Savarkar International Airport. The commemorative blue plaque on India House fixed by the Historic Building and Monuments Commission for England reads

"Vinayak Damodar Savarkar 1883-1966 Indian patriot and philosopher lived here".

### <b>Early Life</b>

Vinayak was born in the family of Damodar and Radhabai Savarkar in the village of Bhagur, near the city of Nasik, Maharashtra. He had three other siblings namely Ganesh, Narayan, and a sister named Mainabai.

After death of parents the eldest sibling Ganesh, known as Babarao, took responsibility of the family. Babarao played a supportive and influential role in Vinayak's teenage life. During this period, Vinayak organised a youth group called Mitra Mela (Band of Friends) and encouraged revolutionary and nationalist views of passion using this group. In 1901, Vinayak Savarkar married Yamunabai, daughter of Ramchandra Triambak Chiplunkar, who supported his university education. Subsequently in 1902, he enrolled in Fergusson College, in Pune (then Poona). As a young man, he was inspired by the new generation of radical political leaders namely Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai along with the political struggle against the partition of Bengal and the rising Swadeshi campaign. He was involved in various nationalist activities at various levels. In 1905, during Dussehra festivities Vinayak organised setting up of a bonfire of foreign goods and clothes. Along with his fellow students and friends he formed a political outfit called Abhinav Bharat. Vinayak was soon expelled from college due to his activities but was still permitted to take his Bachelor of Arts degree examinations. After completing his degree, nationalist activist Shyam Krishnavarma helped Vinayak to go to England to study law, on a scholarship. It was during this period that Garam Dal, (literally translated as Hot Faction) was formed under the leadership of Tilak, due to the split of Indian National Congress. The members of Garam Dal, did not acknowledge the moderate Indian National Congress leadership agenda which advocated dialogue and reconciliation with the British Raj. Tilak advocated the philosophy of Swaraj and was soon imprisoned for his support of revolutionary activities.

### <b>Activities at India House</b>

After his joining Gray's Inn law college in London Vinayak took accommodation at Bharat Bhawan India House. Organised by expatriate social and political activist Pandit Shyamji, India House was a thriving centre for student political activities. Savarkar soon founded the Free India Society to help organise fellow Indian students with the goal of fighting for complete independence through a revolution, declaring,

“We must stop complaining about this British officer or that officer, this law or that law. There would be no end to that. Our movement must not be limited to being against any particular law, but it must be for acquiring the authority to make laws itself. In other words, we want absolute independence”

Savarkar envisioned a guerrilla war for independence along the lines of the famous armed uprising of 1857. Studying the history of the revolt, from English as well as Indian sources, Savarkar wrote the book, *The History of the War of Indian Independence*. He analyzed the circumstances of 1857 uprising and assailed British rule in India as unjust and oppressive. It was via this book that Savarkar became one of the first writers to allude the uprising as India's "First War for Independence." The book was banned from publication throughout the British Empire. Madame Bhikaji Cama, an expatriate Indian revolutionary obtained its publication in the Netherlands, France and Germany. Widely smuggled and circulated, the book attained great popularity and influenced rising young Indians, Savarkar was studying revolutionary methods and he came into contact with a veteran of the Russian Revolution of 1905, who imparted him the knowledge of bomb-making. Savarkar had printed and circulated a manual amongst his friends, on bomb-making and other methods of guerrilla warfare. In 1909, Madan Lal Dhingra, a keen follower and friend of Savarkar, assassinated British MP Sir Curzon Wylie in a public meeting. Dhingra's action provoked controversy across Britain and India, evoking enthusiastic admiration as well as condemnation. Savarkar published an article in which he all but endorsed the murder and worked to organise support, both political and for Dhingra's legal defence. At a meeting of Indians called for a condemnation of Dhingra's deed, Savarkar protested the intention of condemnation and was drawn into a hot debate and angry scuffle with other attendants. A secretive and restricted trial and a sentence awarding the death penalty to Dhingra provoked an outcry and protest across the Indian student and political community. Strongly protesting the verdict, Savarkar struggled with British authorities in laying claim to Dhingra's remains following his execution. Savarkar hailed Dhingra as a hero and martyr, and began encouraging revolution with greater intensity.

#### **<b>Arrest in London and in Marseilles</b>**

In India, Ganesh Savarkar had organised an armed revolt against the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. The British police implicated Savarkar in the investigation for allegedly plotting the crime. Hoping to evade arrest, Savarkar moved to Madame Cama's home in Paris. He was nevertheless arrested by police on March 13, 1910. In the final days of freedom, Savarkar wrote letters to a close friend planning his escape. Knowing that he would most likely be shipped to India, Savarkar asked his friend to keep track of which ship and route he would be

taken through. When the ship S.S. Morea reached the port of Marseilles on July 8, 1910, Savarkar escaped from his cell through a porthole and dived into the water, swimming to the shore in the hope that his friend would be there to receive him in a car. But his friend was late in arriving, and the alarm having been raised, Savarkar was re-arrested.

### <b>Savarkar case</b>

Savarkar's arrest at Marseilles caused the French government to protest to the British, which argued that the British could only recover Savarkar if they took appropriate legal proceedings for his rendition. This dispute came before the Permanent Court of International Arbitration in 1910, and it gave its decision in 1911. The case excited much controversy as was reported by the New York Times, and it considered it involved an interesting international question of the right of asylum. The Court held, firstly, that since there was a pattern of collaboration between the two countries regarding the possibility of Savarkar's escape in Marseilles and since there was neither force nor fraud in inducing the French authorities to return Savarkar to them, the British authorities did not have to hand him back to the French in order for the latter to hold rendition proceedings. On the other hand, the tribunal also observed that there had been an "irregularity" in Savarkar's arrest and delivery over to the Indian Army Military Police guard.

### <b>Trial and Andaman</b>

Arriving in Bombay (colonial name of Mumbai), he was taken to the Yervada Central Jail in Pune. Following a trial, Savarkar was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment and transported on July 4, 1911 to the infamous Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

His fellow captives included many political prisoners, who were forced to perform hard labour for many years. Reunited with his brother Ganesh, the Savarkars nevertheless struggled in the harsh environment. Forced to arise at 5 am, tasks including cutting trees and chopping wood, and working at the oil mill under regimental strictness, with talking amidst prisoners strictly prohibited during mealtime. Prisoners were subject to frequent mistreatment and torture. Contact with the outside world and home was restricted to the writing and mailing of one letter a year. In these years, Savarkar withdrew within himself and performed his routine tasks mechanically. Obtaining permission to start a rudimentary jail library, Savarkar would also teach some fellow convicts to read and write.

Savarkar appealed for clemency in 1911 and again during Sir Reginald

Craddock's visit in 1913, citing poor health in the oppressive conditions. In 1920, the Indian National Congress and leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Vithalbhai Patel and Bal Gangadhar Tilak demanded his unconditional release. Savarkar tactically signed a statement endorsing the trial, verdict and British law, and renouncing violence, a bargain for freedom.,

"I hereby acknowledge that I had a fair trial and just sentence. I heartily abhor methods of violence resorted to in days gone by and I feel myself duty bound to uphold law and constitution to the best of my powers and I am willing to make the [1919 Montague-Chelmsford Reforms] a success in so far as I may be allowed to do so in future☐

Savarkar appealed for clemency within a year of his reaching the Andamans. In one of his communications, he says,

"...if the government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I for one cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English government which is the foremost condition of that progress.... Moreover, my conversion to the constitutional line would bring back all those misled young men in India and abroad who were once looking up to me as their guide.☐

On May 2, 1921, the Savarkar brothers were moved to a jail in Ratnagiri, and later to the Yeravda Central Jail. He was finally released on January 6, 1924 under stringent restrictions – he was not to leave Ratnagiri District and was to refrain from political activities for the next five years. However, police restrictions on his activities would not be dropped until provincial autonomy was granted in 1937.

Joglekar considers Savarkar's appeal for clemency a tactical ploy, like Shivaji's letter to Aurangzeb, during his arrest at Agra, Vladimir Lenin's travel by sealed train through Germany as a part of a deal with Germany and Joseph Stalin's pact with Adolf Hitler.

**Hindutva**

During his incarceration, Savarkar's views began turning increasingly towards Hindu cultural and political nationalism, and the next phase of his life remained dedicated to this cause. In the brief period he spent at the Ratnagiri jail, Savarkar wrote his ideological treatise – Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?. Smuggled out of the prison, it was published by Savarkar's supporters under his alias "Maharatta." In this work, Savarkar promotes a radical new vision of Hindu social

and political consciousness. Savarkar began describing a "Hindu" as a patriotic inhabitant of Bharatavarsha, venturing beyond a religious identity. While emphasising the need for patriotic and social unity of all Hindu communities, he described Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism as one and same. He outlined his vision of a "Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu Nation) as "Akhand Bharat" (United India), purportedly stretching across the entire Indian subcontinent. He defined the Hindu race as neither Aryan, Kolarian or Dravidian but as

"that People who live as children of a common motherland, adoring a common holyland"

Scholars, historians and Indian politicians have been divided in their interpretation of Savarkar's ideas. A self-described atheist, Savarkar regards being Hindu as a cultural and political identity. While often stressing social and community unity between Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains, Savarkar's notions of loyalty to the fatherland are seen as an implicit criticism of Muslims and Christians who regard Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem as their holiest places. Savarkar openly assailed what he saw as Muslim political separatism, arguing that the loyalty of many Muslims was conflicted. After his release, from jail on 6 January 1924 Savarkar help found the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, aiming to work for the social and cultural preservation of Hindu heritage and civilisation. Becoming a frequent and forceful orator, Sarvakar agitated for the use of Hindi as a common national language and against caste discrimination and untouchability. Focusing his energies on writing, Savarkar authored the Hindu Pad-pada-shahi – a book documenting and extolling the Maratha empire – and My Transportation for Life – an account of his early revolutionary days, arrest, trial and incarceration. He also wrote and published a collection of poems, plays and novels. Another activity he started was to reconvert to Hinduism those who had converted to other also wrote a book named 'Majhi Janmathep'(Meaning My Lifeterm) about his experience in Andaman prison.

**<b>Leader of the Hindu Mahasabha</b>**

In the wake of the rising popularity of the Muslim League led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Savarkar and his party began gaining attraction in the national political environment. Savarkar moved to Mumbai and was elected president of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, and would serve until 1943. The Congress swept the polls in 1937 but conflicts between the Congress and Jinnah would exacerbate Hindu-Muslim political divisions. Jinnah derided Congress rule as a "Hindu Raj", and hailed December 22, 1939 as a "Day of Deliverance" for Muslims when the Congress resigned en masse in protest of India's arbitrary inclusion into World War II. Savarkar's message of Hindu unity and empowerment gained increasing

popularity amidst the worsening communal climate.

Savarkar as president of the Hindu Mahasabha, during the Second World War, advanced the slogan "Hinduize all Politics and Militarize Hindudom", he decided to support the British war effort in India seeking military training for the Hindus. When the Congress launched the Quit India movement in 1942, Savarkar criticised it and asked Hindus to stay active in the war effort and not disobey the government, he urged the Hindus to enlist in the armed forces in order to learn the "arts of war". Under his leadership, the Mahasabha won several seats in the central and provincial legislatures, but its overall popularity and influence remained politicians. Hindu Mahasabha activists protested Gandhi's initiative to hold talks with Jinnah in 1944, which Savarkar denounced as "appeasement." He assailed the British proposals for transfer of power, attacking both the Congress and the British for making concessions to Muslim separatists. Soon after Independence, Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee resigned as Vice-President of the Hindu Mahasabha dissociating himself from its Akhand Hindustan plank, which implied undoing partition.

#### <b>Opposition to the Partition of India</b>

The Muslim League adopted the Lahore Resolution in 1940, calling for a separate Muslim state based on the Two-Nation Theory, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar summaries Savarkar's position, in his Pakistan or The Partition of India as follows,

"Mr. Savarkar... insists that, although there are two nations in India, India shall not be divided into two parts, one for Muslims and the other for the Hindus; that the two nations shall dwell in one country and shall live under the mantle of one single constitution;... In the struggle for political power between the two nations the rule of the game which Mr. Savarkar prescribes is to be one man one vote, be the man Hindu or Muslim. In his scheme a Muslim is to have no advantage which a Hindu does not have. Minority is to be no justification for privilege and majority is to be no ground for penalty. The State will guarantee the Muslims any defined measure of political power in the form of Muslim religion and Muslim culture. But the State will not guarantee secured seats in the Legislature or in the Administration and, if such guarantee is insisted upon by the Muslims, such guaranteed quota is not to exceed their proportion to the general population."

#### <b>Support for Jewish state in Palestine</b>

Savarkar in a statement issued on 19 December 1947, expressed joy at the recognition of the claim of Jewish people to establish an independent Jewish state, and likened the event to the glorious day on which Moses led them out of

Egyptian bondage. He considered that justice demanded restoration of entire Palestine to the Jews, their historical holy land and Fatherland. He regretted India's vote at the United Nations Organisation against the creation of the Jewish state terming the vote a policy of appeasement of Muslims.

### <b>Works</b>

Veer Savarkar wrote more than 10,000 pages in the Marathi language. His literary works in Marathi include "Kamala", "Mazi Janmathep" (My Life Sentence), and most famously "1857 - The First War of Independence", about what the British referred to as the Sepoy Mutiny. Savarkar popularised the term 'First War of Independence'. Another noted book was "Kale Pani" (similar to Life Sentence, but on the island prison on the Andamans), which reflected the treatment of Indian freedom fighters by the British. In order to counter the then accepted view that India's history was a saga of continuous defeat, he wrote an inspirational historical work, "Saha Soneri Pane" (Six Golden Pages), recounting some of the Golden periods of Indian history. At the same time, religious divisions in India were beginning to fissure. He described what he saw as the atrocities of British and Muslims on Hindu residents in Kerala, in the book, "Mopalyanche Band" (Muslims' Strike) and also "Gandhi Gondhal" (Gandhi's Confusion), a political critique of Gandhi's politics. Savarkar, by now, had become a committed and persuasive critic of the Gandhi-an vision of India's future.

He is also the author of poems like "Sagara pran talmalala" (O Great Sea, my heart aches for the motherland), and "Jayostute" (written in praise of freedom), one of the most moving, inspiring and patriotic works in Marathi literature. When in the Cellular jail, Savarkar was denied pen and paper. He composed and wrote his poems on the prison walls with thorns and pebbles, memorised thousands lines of his poetry for years till other prisoners returning home brought them to India. Savarkar is credited with several popular neologisms in Marathi and Hindi, like "Hutatma"(Martyr),"Mahapaur" ( Mayor),Digdarshak (leader or director, one who points in the right direction), Shatkar (a score of six runs in cricket), Saptahik (weekly), Sansad (Parliament), "doordhwani" ("telephone"), "tanglekhan" ("typewriting") among others.

He chaired Marathi Sahitya Sammelan in 1938.

### <b>Arrest and acquittal in Gandhi's assassination</b>

Following the assassination of Gandhi on January 30, 1948, police arrested the assassin Nathuram Godse and his alleged accomplices and conspirators. He was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS's Swayanasevak an organisation

started by among others Pundit Madan Mohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai. Godse was the editor of Agrani - Hindu Rashtra a Marathi daily from Pune which was run by a company "The Hindu Rashtra Prakashan Ltd." This company had contributions from such eminent persons as Gulabchand Hirachand, Bhalji Pendharkar and Jugalkishore Birla. Savarkar had invested 15000 in the company. Savarkar a former president of the Hindu Mahasabha, was arrested on 5 February 1948, from his house in Shivaji Park, and kept under detention in the Arthur Road Prison, Mumbai. He was charged with murder, conspiracy to murder and abetment to murder. A day before his arrest, Savarkar in a public written statement, as reported in The Times of India", Mumbai dated 7 February 1948, termed Gandhi's assassination a fratricidal crime, endangering India's existence as a nascent nation.

### <b>The Approver's Testimony</b>

Godse claimed full responsibility for planning and carrying out the attack, However according to Badge the approver, on 17 January 1948, Nathuram Godse went to have a last darshan of Savarkar in Bombay before the assassination. While Badge and Shankar waited outside, Nathuram and Apte went in. On coming out Apte told Badge that Savarkar blessed them "Yashasvi houn ya" ("?????? ???? ??", be successful and return). Apte also said that Savarkar predicted that Gandhi's 100 years were over and there was no doubt that the task would be successfully finished. However Badge's testimony was not accepted as the approver's evidence lacked independent corroboration and hence Savarkar was acquitted.

### <b>Kapur Commission</b>

On November 12, 1964, a religious programme was organised in Pune, to celebrate the release of the Gopal Godse, Madanlal Pahwa, Vishnu Karkare from jail after the expiry of their sentences. Dr. G. V. Ketkar, grandson of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, former editor of Kesari and then editor of Tarun Bharat, who presided over the function, revealed gave information of a conspiracy to kill Gandhi, about which he professed knowledge, six months before the act. Ketkar was arrested. A public furore ensued both outside and inside the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and both houses of the Indian parliament. Under pressure of 29 members of parliament and public opinion the then Union home minister Gulzarilal Nanda, appointed Gopal Swarup Pathak, M. P. and a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India, in charge of inquiry of conspiracy to murder Gandhi. The central government intended on conducting a thorough inquiry with the help of old records in consultation with the government of Maharashtra, Pathak was given three months to conduct his inquiry, subsequently Jevanlal Kapur a retired

judge of the Supreme Court of India was appointed to conduct the inquiry. The Kapur Commission was provided with evidence not produced in the court; especially the testimony of two of Savarkar's close aides - Appa Ramachandra Kasar, his bodyguard, and Gajanan Vishnu Damle, his secretary, Kasar told the Kapur Commission that Godse and Apte visited Savarkar on or about January 23 or 24, which was when they returned from Delhi after the bomb incident. Damle deposed that Godse and Apte saw Savarkar in the middle of January and sat with him (Savarkar) in his garden. Justice Kapur concluded: "All these facts taken together were destructive of any theory other than the conspiracy to murder by Savarkar and his group."

### <b>Later life and Death</b>

After Gandhi's assassination Savarkar's home in Mumbai was stoned by angry mobs. After he was acquitted of the allegations related to Gandhi's assassination and released from jail, Savarkar was arrested by the Congress government, for making "militant Hindu nationalist speeches", he was released after agreeing to give up political activities. He continued addressing social and cultural elements of Hindutva. He resumed political activism after the ban on it was lifted, it was however limited until his death in 1966 because of ill health. His followers bestowed upon him honours and financial awards when he was alive. His body was visited by over a lakh people, when it lay in repose. Two thousand RSS workers gave his funeral procession a guard of honour. According to McKean, there was public antipathy between Savarkar and the Congress for most of his political career, yet after independence Patel and Deshmukh unsuccessfully sought partnership with the Hindu Mahasabha and Savarkar. It was forbidden for Congress party members to participate in public functions honouring Savarkar. Nehru refused to share the stage during the centenary celebrations of the India's First War of Independence held in Delhi. After the death of Nehru, the Congress government, under Prime Minister Shastri, started to pay him a monthly pension.

In 1966 Savarkar renounced medicines, food and water leading to his death on February 26, 1966. He was mourned by large crowds that attended his cremation. He had written an article 'Atma-hatya or Deh-tyaag', arguing that suicide in most cases is taking one's life, but renouncing life after the body was no longer capable of functioning properly was a different matter. He left behind a son Vishwas and a daughter Prabha Chiplunkar. His first son, Prabhakar, had died in infancy. His home, possessions and other personal relics have been preserved for public display.

According to Kuruvanchira, Savarkar was a national and political 'non-entity' in independent India by the time he died and thereafter. After his death, since

Savarkar was championing militarization, some thought that it would be fitting if his mortal remains were to be carried on a gun-carriage. A request to that effect was made to the then Defence Minister, Y.B. Chavan, who later on became Deputy Prime Minister of India. But Chavan turned down the proposal and not a single minister from the Maharashtra Cabinet showed up in the cremation ground to pay homage to Savarkar. In New Delhi, the Speaker of the Parliament turned down a request that it pay homage to Savarkar. In fact, after the independence of India, Jawaharlal Nehru had put forward a proposal to demolish the Cellular Jail in the Andamans and build a hospital in its place. When Y.B. Chavan, as the Home Minister of India, went to the Andamans, he was asked whether he would like to visit Savarkar's jail but he was not interested. Also when Morarji Desai went as Prime Minister to the Andamans, he too refused to visit Savarkar's cell.

<b>Film</b>

In the 1996 Malayalam movie Kaala Pani directed by Priyadarshan, the noted Hindi actor Annu Kapoor played the role of Veer Savarkar.

In 2001, Ved Rahi and Sudhir Phadke made the biopic film Veer Savarkar, which was released after many years in production. Savarkar is portrayed by Shailendra Gaur. The Movie Veer Savarkar was released in 2001 which was produced by Vocalist, Musician and a renowned Savarkar follower Sudhir Phadke. The movie was directed by Ved Rahi and Shailendra Gaur played the role of Veer Savarkar.

This movie was made after over a decade of fund raising efforts by Sudhir Phadke and his 'Savarkar Darshan Prathisthaan', an organization established solely with the purpose of depicting the life of Savarkar. The finance for the film came entirely from hundreds of Veer Savarkar followers. Phadke spent many years raising funds through his musical concerts in an effort to bring the wishes of Savarkar followers to reality. The Maharashtra Government made the movie tax free when it opened in theatres.

# Alas! Our Country Is Doomed To Hell!

Alas! Our Country is doomed to hell,  
The Freedom Mansion is up in flames!  
Fie! Helplessly you gaped,  
When came a Horde of Foreigners  
And plundered your Land!  
Smashed through your defences, they did-  
Come! Attack like a swarm of locusts, of them be rid!  
Fie! Riches of Freedom they have looted away-  
Yet unmoving like the dead you stay!

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Allow Me To See My God

To see my God in his temple  
Allow me, I beseech.  
Let my eyes have their fill of Him  
Please, O please.  
Defiled my hands are  
Cleaning your filth night and day.  
To cleanse them in the Pure heart  
Allow me, I pray.

I am but the body, he its life,  
I am the thirst only he can sate.  
I am the Wretched, He the Compassionate,  
O, let me fall at his feet, prostrate.  
I am his devotee, he my Lord,  
I am a Hindu, he my Hindu God.  
O Fellow Hindu Brothers,  
Bar not, beg I, my way to my God!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Atmabal

Without beginning nor end am I, Inviolable am I.  
Vanquish me? In this world no such enemy is born!

Resolutely, as the Upholder of Dharma,  
Challenging very Death I charge into the battlefield.  
A sword cannot slice me nor can fire burn me,  
Craven Death itself shall flee in fear of me!  
And yet, O Foolish Foe,  
By fear of Death you dare to scare me!

Fling me into the cage of a ferocious lion, you may-  
Reduce him to a cowering servility, I will!  
Fling me into the blaze of a roaring inferno, you may-  
Remove it! For wrap myself with gentle coolness, I will.

Come! Bring on your mighty, skilled armed Legion,  
Bring on your weapons and missiles spewing deadly fire!  
Ha! Like Lord Shiva consuming the poison Halahal,  
Gulp down and digest all of you, I will

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Beautiful Hindusthan

O, Beautiful Hindusthan! Our very soul you are!  
O, beloved Hindusthan,  
The most delightful one of all you are!

So many Lands seen and heard of,  
Beside her, all so very small do seem!  
Puny are Egypt, China, and Japan,  
Britain very much a hell, I deem!

So many mountains there are-  
Himalaya, the Most Esteemed One, is yours  
So many rivers there are-  
Holy Ganga, the River of Flowing Nectar, is yours!

We have lush and divine forests here  
Steeped in the musk of the Kasturi deer.  
We have the glorious mango groves here  
Where cooing Koyals bring in the morning cheer!

The melodious chanting of the Samaveda  
Through the fragrant sacrificial smoke resounding,  
Lures the Gods from their heavenly abode  
To come here for their Somras carousing.

Here the Poet Kalidas croons his tender verse,  
And the Sage Gautama Sankhyadyan doth reveal.  
Here The Goddess of Freedom readily bestowed  
The heroic Vikram to rout the Shakas with zeal.

Here too was born of Jijabai, Chatrapati Shivaji,  
And Maidens embracing the pyre for their honor.  
Bricked to death here were the Sons of the Great Guru,  
So staunch were they in their loyal Hindu fervor!

Here to countless of our forefathers we offer  
Oblations of your holy water with pride!  
You are-Our Holy land! Our Father land!  
Our Honor, and Our Pride!

O Mother, O Our Queen!  
Who will dare insult you?  
Countless Sons you have  
To give up their very life for you!

To defend your honor and virtue,  
Willingly die we shall!  
Slash the enemy throat in battle,  
And offer you a bath of blood we shall!

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Firt Installment

Heed me well, O my Mother, heed me well,  
Negligible perhaps be this service of mine,  
But heed well this puny Son!  
Nurtured at your breast,  
Blessed by your milk we were!  
Vast a debt we owe to you.  
My body as sacrifice in the blazing fire I offer,  
T'is but a first installment of this debt!  
Over and over in every lifetime, give this body I will,  
Into the holy pyre of your liberation.  
With Shri Krishna as the valiant charioteer,  
With Shri Ram as the Commander,  
Your army of thirty crores  
Will not halt if I be no more!  
Onward march they will to vanquish the Fiend-  
And atop the Himalayas, with their own hands,  
The Saffron flag of Freedom, hoist they will!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Go Fight

Fight! Does the pitiful plight of our people  
Not rend your heart in torment?  
O Youth! Pound not in you hot, young, blood-  
Blood more fiery than lightening?  
Come! Approach Death, meet it head on!  
Who dared to shatter our crown?  
Who snapped the flagpole of the Hindus?  
Who trampled upon our burgeoning hopes?  
Fight! Dwelling upon this, why do not hot, raging tears  
Spill from your eyes night and day!  
Ah, so many Heroes plunged into the battlefield for Bharat!  
Some, still crushed by this torment, died in battle  
Some, in the pyre of untold tortures, were set ablaze,  
Some marched boldly to the gallows, uncowed!  
Hark! The thundering voice of their unfulfilled yearning,  
Every second it calls out to you!  
Is there anyone who can hear its clamour?  
Rise, rise, all ye who do!  
Stake your life! Fight, to fulfill our cause!

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Hail To You!

Victory to you, O Most Auspicious One, O Abode of Sublimity and Eternal Delight!  
O Goddess of Freedom, O Triumphant One, We salute you!

O Embodiment of our National Life-Force, O Goddess of Freedom, Of Virtue and  
Prosperity Supreme Queen you are!

In this darkness of Slavery, O Goddess of Freedom, Alone gleaming in the sky A  
bright and Shining Star you are! O Goddess of Freedom, You are the blush that  
prosper, On cheeks as soft as flowers, On flowers as soft as cheeks! You are the  
Radiance of the Sun, the Depth of the Ocean, O Goddess of Freedom, Without  
you their worth is naught!

You are the Liberation from the Cycle of Birth and Death, O Goddess of Freedom,  
hailed as the Supreme Soul By the Yogis of the Vedas you are! All that is most  
supreme and noble, So very magnificent and oh, so very sweet, O Goddess of  
Freedom, All your companions are!

Soaked in the villain's blood-You are! Worshipped by noble men-You are! O  
Goddess of Freedom, The entire Creation surrenders unto you! Life is to die for  
You, Death is to live without You, O Giver of Boons, We await the time when you  
shall Clasp Our Motherland to your bosom! O Goddess of Freedom, O Triumphant  
One, We salute you!

Even Lord Shankar covets Our Himalayas, The Mighty Mountains of Terraced  
Snow, O, why does it not please you to sport here? Why O, why do you forsake  
the bountiful Ganga? Her stream, glowing like the moonshine, Is not it a worthy  
mirror for even the Apsaras?

O Freedom! What did you lack in this Golden Land? Is there not a fresh Kohinoor  
bloom for your braid each day? Here is The Bounteous One, Our very own  
Motherland, Why O, why did you push her away? O, why did your Motherly love  
of old wither away? O, so anguished is my soul! For she is now but a slave to  
others, Why O, why did you abandon her so, Answer me, I pray! O Goddess of  
Freedom, O Triumphant One, We salute you!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Hindunrusimha

Hail! O, You of Glowing Splendour, Might of the Hindus!  
Hail! O, You of Divine Brilliance, by Hindu penance blessed!  
Hail! O You Gem of Prosperous Hindu Destiny,  
Hail! O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha Incarnate!  
This Hindu nation bows to you,  
Heart and soul, we applaud you,  
With sandalwood paste of our devotion, we anoint you-  
Who fulfilled our unspoken yearnings!  
Hail! O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha Incarnate!  
Every fort rampart is in ruins-today.  
Jayadurga is drenched in tears-today  
Rusted once more is the blade of the Bhavani,  
What wonder then, she withdraws her aid.  
Every fort and coastal stronghold-wrecked!  
Every capital city-wilderness!  
Our fortune, in the coil of Foreigners-enslaved!  
O shame, to be living in these ignominious times!  
Hail! O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha Incarnate!  
Your Purity of heart, so acclaimed by Sant Ramdas,  
Your intellect, that routed the five enemy Shahi Kingdoms,  
Your strategy, that destroyed villains,  
Your strength, that vanquished a power-crazed Tyrant-  
May that purity of purpose sustain!  
May our simple souls that intelligence obtain!  
May such strength flow in our blood,  
May Sant Ramdas bless us with your mantra again!  
Hail! O God-like Shivajiraja, Hindu-Nrusimha Incarnate!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Hindusthan Our Motherland

Hindusthan, our very own Motherland!  
To us Hindus she is everything,  
Our life and our very soul.

The holy abode she is  
Where the Gods in all their magnanimity reside.  
A Heaven for one and all she is,  
A temple for our forefathers to abide.

Suckling her Little ones at her breast  
Tender care upon them she showers.  
O, she is truly a Garden of Love  
Abounding with blossoming fruits and flowers.

She is our Might, she is our Pride,  
She is our diamond mine.  
Dare anyone try to shackle her,  
We shall defend her with our life!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# My Final Testament

The moon in the summer-night is smiling in the sky  
The Snow-white stars are brightly shining too  
The flowers in the garden of my home blossom  
As the children water them in the evening || 1 ||

All the members in my family have assembled  
Atmosphere as happier than Vrindavan of Krishna  
The beautiful, ideal and chaste youthfulness  
of people is resonating all over the place || 2 ||

Affections reigned in the hearts of young people  
Spreading the fragrance of rich heritage and civilization  
My home was a fragrant and heavenly tree which  
people referred to as 'abode of righteousness' || 3 ||

I savored the food prepared by you  
the taste of which was further enriched by your love  
how we used to dine together  
chatting and relaxing in calm moonlight || 4 ||

How we listened to the stories of Sri Raam's exile  
and those of Italy's quest for independence and unification  
and the ballad of brave Tanaji  
or those of Chittorgarh and Shanivaar-Vaada || 5 ||

How was our beloved (land) orphaned and defiled  
saddened by the slavery and poverty was our mother (land)  
Saddened by her penury, how we  
counselled the youth to alliviete her off her misery || 6 ||  
Ah! ! that time spent in the company of beloved  
that spendid moonlight brightening those beautiful nights  
that heavenly desire to liberate the mother  
And that firm resolve, I remember everything... || 7 ||  
The vows exchanged with the beloved  
do you remember them, Oh Vahini \*  
'Will fight like Bajiprabhu' resolved the young men  
'Will sacrifice like Padmini of Chittorgarh' resolved the ladies as well || 8 ||

Blindly have we not made this resolve  
But in the light of history and the laws of nature  
Whatever is luminous and scorching  
Have we purposefully held the robes of a sati in our hands II 9 II

It has been eight years, since then  
and we have achieved so much  
In spite of all those vows taken and fulfilment of some of them,  
why does not the heart feel the joy? ? ? II 10 II

From Himalayas to Ocean, the nation has risen  
have assumed the valor, giving up the stance of deprivation  
The Yagna-pyre initiated is burning vigorously,  
but so is the resolve of devotees.. II 11 II

Those who undertake responsibility of the Yagna's fulfilment,  
are tested immediately for their resolve  
'For benefit of mankind and this planet  
Who is ready to burn first in this pyre? ? ' II 12 II

As soon as Sri Raam set up this open invitation  
Our family rose with unflinching resolve  
'Your holyness! ! ! ' roared our kin  
'this divine right belongs to us' II 13 II

For upliftment of righteousness, our sacrifice was decided  
These words weren't uttered in childish manner  
nor were we flinched by the prospects of torturous road ahead  
our yoga of desire-less action continued unflinchiingly II 14 II

By all the vows exchanged with loved ones  
We fulfilled them all today  
In this raging fire, for the sake of liberation of mother,  
We burnt ourselves and became immortal II 15 II

Oh Motherland! I have dedicated my intellect to you,  
To you I have dedicated my oratory,  
To you I have dedicated my new poem,  
You have become the sole subject of my prose II 16 II

At your altar, have I sacrificed my friends  
sacrificed the pleasures of youth, myself

Righteous is your cause and blessed by all gods  
Serving you, I realized the supreme truth II 17 II

At your altar, I sacrificed my home, wealth and property  
IN this raging fire did I sacrifice my new-born son and wife  
At your altar, did my Elder brother go  
the one who was embodiment of courage and dignity II 18 II

At your Altar, did my younger brother go as well;  
Now, it is my turn....  
Even if we were seven brothers in family  
All of them would have been sacrificed at your Altar, oh Mother! ! ! II 19 II

India is mother to 300 million children  
All of them are our brothers, truthful and motivated  
our family, but a small dropp in this vast ocean of humanity  
Even if it dies out, our line will continue II 20 II  
In spite of success and failure, Oh motherland,  
our resolve still remains unbroken..  
In this raging fire, for the sake of liberation of mother,  
We burnt ourselves and became immortal II 21II

After saying this, dear Vahini,  
Follow this divine pledge throughout your life  
Just like the torturous penance of Parvati  
Just like the burning resolve of rajput princess II 22 II

That luminous feminine strength  
has not yet disappeared from Bharatbhumi  
Prove these words, Oh brave lady  
may your life be a guiding star for the rest II 23 II

I bid you good-bye, Oh divine lady,  
This brother of your's is bowing in front of you, one last time  
The affections and love shall remain in my heart forever;  
ardently convey this message to my beloved (wife) ... II 24 II

Blindly have we not made this resolve  
But in the light of history and the laws of nature  
Whatever is luminous and scorching  
Have we purposefully held the robes of a sati in our hands II 25 II

[Translated by 'KalChiron']

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Pratidnya Ghya

Take! Do take the oath, O Youths,  
An oath to die for your Country, do take!  
Ah! How rest you with such ease?  
Do not you feel pangs of torment?  
Strive for Tilak's Goal!  
Writhing helpless in anguish it be!  
The Hindu trumpet resounds! The word is spread!  
Hear me! My throat is hoarse, very hoarse  
Reiterating this refrain.  
And yet! Yet your hearts are not ablaze.  
Strive for the goal,  
Lest Our Country be destroyed!  
Let not a mere name it be worldwide!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# Shackles

'O how you polish them, over and over,  
Pampering them all day!  
What think you-  
Ornaments of silver and gold they are? '  
My iron fetters-not just for today are they here!  
O, break these shackles, do  
They destroy my free will to move so!  
'Fit only to be shattered and burnt they are-  
Why then lavish care upon our very own fetters?  
'Tis an insane fancy you cherish! '  
Break they will one day,  
For ever they are not! Until then  
Why let the fetters rust?  
That will only add to the distress.  
'Fetters forever encircling the Feet of our Desire-  
Who forges those social fetters,  
That impose the laws of decorum? '  
Who knows that today? Ordained it be.  
But think so do I,  
We have the power to choose betwixt-  
Desire or Fetters for that Desire!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# That Beautiful Hind

Hind, Our Beautiful Motherland!  
Brought to life all the Great Ones she did-

The treasured Rigveda and Samaveda,  
The knowledge and Poetry of the Upanishads  
The age-old Gayatri Mantra,  
And Sandhatri, The Goddess of Unity!

A Mother to Bharadwaj, Janak, Vasishtha,  
Shuka, Sanaka and Shri Garga, she is.  
A Mother to the whole clan of illustrious Sages, she is.

Learned Vyasa and Valmiki of Ramayana fame  
Their first baby words learned  
In the shelter of her bosom, they did.

Hailed 'O, Mother, O Our Mother'  
By Legendary Kings Nala, Raghu,  
Rama and Dharmaraj, she is!

From her womb came forth,  
Gargeyi, Vidula, Sita, Draupadi  
And the Valiant Lakshmibai of Jhansi did.  
She, who is revered by the Three Worlds,  
The great Buddha, Chaitanya and Guru Nanak  
Blessed by her milk she did!

Fearless Rana Pratap and Shivaji,  
Banda Bairagi and Guru Gobindji-  
Who gave birth to them, inspired them? -she did

A Mine of Scientific wisdom,  
A Lotus of the fine Arts, She is.  
Land of Pure Flowing Water,  
And Fruit laden with sweet, syrupy juice, she is!

Such are the wonders born of her,  
Born of her precious womb.  
Why even for a second should our Mother Earth be a slave?

This Eclipse, but for a moment it shall last!  
Eternal is the Sun, eternal are the galaxies-  
Soon, very soon, liberated and accomplished shall she be  
As the Mighty Benefactor of the world!

[Translated by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# To Mother India

O Mother! How did these Foreign Devils invade your home?  
Was it, perhaps, not an invasion at first?  
But, 'twere I who welcomed them in!  
Alas! When strength I had, how virtuous was I-  
Looting these Foreigners I deemed to be a sin.  
Once I overcome my stupor, O Mother,  
This very righteousness will curse me!  
While you are being violated so-  
Your Son is unable to entertain even the thought of killing a ferocious beast!  
Forsaken God Nrusimha, The Protector, have I!  
To mere Cow worship have I turned.  
Alas! Before a tiger become I,  
More docile than the very Cow I worship!  
Ah! Who has stung you? Wounded you with deadly poison?  
Woe betide me! T'was the very Snake I nourished with milk-  
He sank his teeth in you!

[Translated by by Anurupa Cinar]

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

# To The Ocean

Take me, O Ocean! Take me to my Motherland!  
My soul is in torment away from her,  
So much torment, O Ocean! Did not I always see you  
Lapping worshipfully at my Mother's feet?  
Did not you call me to visit other Lands, To see the bounties of nature abound,  
said you.

My Mother's heart, so full of pain and uncertainty it was, To hear of the parting of  
our ways!  
Then, a sacred oath you did give-to her,  
Carrying me on your back,  
My speedy homecoming, you promised-to her.

The way home is known, said you. Believe this your promise, did I!  
More worldly-wise and able, be I  
More worthy to extol her glory, be I  
Upon my return. So saying, so believing, I bid farewell-to her!

My soul is in torment away from her,  
So much torment, O Ocean! Duped was I-Like a parrot in a cage, Like a deer in a  
trap!  
Doomed by this continual separation,  
Besieged with darkness am I!  
Gathering the Flowers of Virtue, Desiring to shower my Mother by its fragrance  
was I.

O, but of what use all my knowledge is, Doomed to be a mere burden it be,  
When use it not for her glorification can I!  
Estranged am I from Her Garden of Flowers, For the love of the  
Her mango tree, pine I  
For Her trailing vines, pine I  
For the bud of the Her rose, pine I My soul is in torment away from her,  
So much torment, O Ocean!  
O, abounding with stars is the heaven above,  
But love only do I-The bright Star of my Motherland!

O, abounding with magnificent palaces these lands are,  
But love only do I  
Ever the humble hut in my Motherland!

What care I for a promised Kingdom-without Her?

O, to be with my Mother

Ever a life exiled in her forests choose I. More deception is futile now, O Lord of the Rivers,

Let you not be spared, vow I

Suffer the same pangs, say I

Of separation from the most beloved of your rivers!

My soul is in torment away from her,

So much torment, O Ocean!

O pitiless One, how you mock me with your foaming surf!

Think you my Mother is helpless? -that you dare deceive her so!

That you dare condemn me to this longing so!

Why do you go back on your word?

So afraid of Britain be you?

-She does flaunt her mastery over you so! Quail before a fearsome Britain, do you?

But, not so my Mother, see you!

No! My Mother is not so feeble! Tell this tale to Sage Agasti she will, Fear him, who in one gulp your waters drank!

Take me, O Ocean! Take me to my Motherland!

My soul is in torment away from her, So much torment, O Ocean!

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar