

1. TWO REQUESTS¹

A friend suggests that I should resume writing my autobiography² from the point where I left off and, further, that I should write a treatise on the science of ahimsa.

I never really wrote an autobiography. What I did write was a series of articles narrating my experiments with truth which were later published in book form. More than twenty³ years have elapsed since then. What I have done or pondered during this interval has not been recorded in chronological order. I would love to do so but have I the leisure? I have resumed the publication of *Harijan* in the present trying times as a matter of duty. It is with difficulty that I can cope with this work. How can I find time to bring the remainder of my experiments with truth up to date? But if it is God's will that I should write them, He will surely make my way clear.

To write a treatise on the science of ahimsa is beyond my powers. I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain, and what I understand, according to my lights, to be my duty, and what comes my way, I do. All my action is actuated by the spirit of service. Let anyone who can systematize ahimsa into a science do so, if indeed it lends itself to such treatment. In the event of my inability, the correspondent has suggested three names in order of preference for this task: Shri Vinoba, Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala, Shri Kaka Kalelkar. The first named could do it, but I know he will not. Every hour of his is scheduled for his work and he would regard it as sacrilege to take a single moment therefrom for writing a Shastra. I would agree with him. The world does not hunger for Shastras. What it craves, and will always crave, is sincere action. He who can appease this hunger will not occupy his time in elaborating a Shastra.

Shri Kishorelal has already written an independent treatise. If his health permits, I know he would like to write further. It may not be correct to call his work a Shastra, but it may be said to be very near to one. In his present state of health, however, I do not think he can shoulder the burden, and I would be the last person to lay it on him.

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from Harijanbandhu" published simultaneously with the source.

² Vide "An Autobiography"

³ *Harijanbandhu* has "twenty-five".

Like Shri Vinoba he too does not allow a moment of his time to be wasted. Much of it is given to help solve the personal problems of large circle of friends. The end of the day leaves him utterly exhausted.

Shri Kakasaheb, like Shri Thakkar, is an incorrigible nomad. Just now he has made the propagation and development of the national and provincial languages his special concern. Even if he wanted to divert a moment of his time to the writing of a Shastra, I would try to prevent him from doing so.

From the above it may be concluded that there is no need at present for the treatise in question. Any such during my lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all, it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would fail to give a complete exposition of ahimsa. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of ahimsa. I can give no guarantee that I will do or believe tomorrow what I do or hold to be true today. God alone is omniscient. Man in the flesh is essentially imperfect. He may be described as being made in the image of God, but he is far from being God. God is invisible, beyond the reach of the human eye. All that we can do, therefore, is to try to understand the words and actions of those whom we regard as men of God. Let them soak into our being and let us endeavour to translate them into action, but only so far as they appeal to the heart. Could any scientific treatise do more for us?

POONA, February 25, 1946

Harijan, 3-3-1946

2. TELEGRAM TO S. SALIVATI

POONA,

February 25, 1946

SALIVATI

MADRAS "HINDU"

BOMBAY

PLEASE FORGIVE. TOO BUSY FOR INTERVIEWS.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

3. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 25, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have read your letter. I am returning it, in case you wish to preserve it. I will of course not keep you here against your wish. I have already told¹ Dinshaw. Let us see now what happens. I remember all the facts given by you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8424

4. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA,²

February 25, 1946

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have started the treatment of Chi. Kishorelal³ yesterday. Let us see what happens.

You have to do your duty by meditating over *navadha bhakti*⁴. Scavenging and kitchen work are the key to our life. If these two are done, the rest follow.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 374

¹ *Vide* "Two Requests"

² Permanent address

³ Kishorelal G. Mashruwala

⁴ The nine-fold devotion

5. A NOTE

February 25, 1946

I am now tired. If the man is here tell him he may come. The car which was to come has been detained. Let it be sent if possible, otherwise he will manage somehow.

First of all decide about the post. Telephone to ask whether Aga Khan has come or not. Write that Gandhi says that he has no house at all; all are his. He will do what both of you say, that your convenience will be his convenience.

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

6. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,

February 26, 1946

I congratulate Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali on her courageous refutation¹ of my statement² on the happenings in Bombay. Except for the fact that she represents not only herself but also a fairly large body of underground workers, I would not have noticed her refutation, if only because she is a daughter of mine not less so because not born to me or because she is a rebel. I had the pleasure of meeting her on several occasions while she was underground. I admired her bravery, resourcefulness and burning love of the country. But my admiration stopped there. I did not like her being underground. I do not appreciate any underground activity. I know that millions cannot go underground. Millions need not. A select few may fancy that they will bring swaraj to the millions by secretly directing their activity. Will this not be spoon-feeding? Only open challenge and open activity is for all to follow. Real swaraj *must* be felt by all—man, woman and child. To labour for that consummation is true revolution. India has become a pattern for all exploited races of the earth, because India's has been an open, unarmed effort which demands sacrifice from all without inflicting injury on the usurper. The millions in India would not have been awakened but for the open,

¹ At Press Conference in Bombay on February 24, 1946

² *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 23-2-1946

unarmed struggle. Every deviation from the straight path has meant a temporary arrest of the evolutionary revolution.

I do not read the 1942 events as does the brave lady. It was good that the people rose spontaneously. It was bad that some or many resorted to violence. It makes no difference that Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala, Kakasaheb and other workers, in their impatient zeal for the movement¹, misinterpreted non-violence. That they did so only shows how delicate an instrument non-violence is. My analogy is not meant to cast any reflection on any person. Everyone acted as he or she thought best. Supineness in the face of overwhelming, organized violence would have meant cowardice. I would be weak and wrong, if I failed to give my estimate of the doing of 1942.

Aruna would “rather unite Hindus and Muslims at the barricade than on the constitution front”. Even in terms of violence, this is a mis-leading proposition. The union at the barricade is honest, there must be union also at constitutional front. Fighters do not always live at the bar-ricade. They are too wise to commit suicide. The barricade life has always to be followed by the constitutional. That front is not taboo for ever.

Emphatically it betrays want of foresight to disbelieve British declarations and precipitate a quarrel in anticipation. Is the official deputation coming to deceive a great nation? It is neither manly nor womanly to think so. What would be lost by waiting? Let the official deputation prove for the last time that British declarations are unreliable. The nation will gain by trusting. The deceiver loses when there is correct response for the deceived

Let us force facts. The coming mission is claimed to be a friendly mission, entertaining the hope that they will discover a constitutional method of delivery. The problem is knotty, probably the knottiest that has ever confronted statemen It is possible that the mission will put forth an insoluble conundrum. So much the worse for them. If they are intent upon findingan honest way out of the difficulties of their own creation, I have no doubt, there is a way. But the nation too has to play the game. If it does, the barricade must be left aside , at least for the time being. I appeal to Aruna and her friends to make wise use of the power their bravery and sacrifice has given them.

¹ The source, however, has “moment”.

It is a matter of great relief that the ratings have listened to Sardar Patel's advice to surrender. They have not surrendered their honour. So far as I can see, in resorting to mutiny they were badly advised. If it was for grievance, fancied, or real, they should have waited for the guidance and intervention of political leaders of their choice. If they mutinied for the freedom of India, they were doubly wrong. They could not do so without a 'call from a prepared revolutionary party. They were thoughtless and ignorant, if they believed that by their might they would deliver India from foreign domination.

Aruna is right when she says that the fighters this time showed grit as never before. But grit becomes foolhardiness when it is untimely and suicidal as this was.

She is entitled to say that the people "*are not* interested in the *ethics* of violence or non-violence", but the people *are* very much interested in knowing *the way* which will bring freedom to the masses—violence or non-violence. The people have, however imperfectly, hitherto gone the way of non-violence. Aruna and her comrades have to ask themselves every time whether the non-violent way has, or has not, raised India from her slumber of ages and created in them a yearning, very vague perhaps, for swaraj. There is, in my opinion, only one answer.

There are other passages in Shrimati Aruna's statement which, as it appears to me, betray confusion of thought. But their treatment can wait.

Needless to say that I have dealt with the message believing it to represent her opinion. If it does not, I apologize to her in advance. My argument, however, is not affected even if it is found that the reporter has not correctly interpreted her. For my argument is, after all, impersonal and directed only to the portions which are calculated to mislead the public, irrespective of their authorship.¹

POONA, February 26, 1946

Harijan, 3-3-1946

¹ *Vide* also "Conflict of Ideas"

**7. TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY, ALL-BENGAL ANTI-SALES
TAX COMMITTEE**

POONA,
February 26, 1946

SECRETARY
ALL-BENGAL ANTI-SALES TAX COMMITTEE
72 CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT PROTEST SO LONG AS PROTEST REMAINS TRULY
NON-VIOLENT AND IS JUSTIFIED BY FACTS. AM PREPARED DO WHAT I CAN
IF YOU FURNISH ME WITH FACTS FIGURES.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

8. TELEGRAM TO DAMODAR M. MEHTA

POONA,
February 26, 1946

DAMODAR MULCHAND
BILKHA

REGRET IMPOSSIBLE JUST NOW.

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

9. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

POONA,
February 26, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have your letter. What are you going to do about Rajaji? He
wants to withdraw¹; let him do so.

If you are keen on taking me to Bardoli, I am ready. I have
already suggested² that in a difficult situation like this your place is in
Bombay. But you know best. In making the suggestion I did not have
my convenience in view, but only what the circumstances of the nation
demanded of us.

¹ His candidature for the University seat in the elections; *vide* "Letter from C.
Rajagopalchari", 21-2-1946

² *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 24-2-1946

You will see what I have again said¹ about Aruna.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhai, pp. 300-1

10. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

[On or before *February 27, 1946*]²

I have been asked by several friends to save Gen. Awari's life by asking Sardar Patel to revise his decision.³ I have refused, for I have neither the power nor the wish to do so. The judgment of the Congress parliamentary Board is, in my opinion, subject to review by the Working Committee as also the A. I. C. C. Gen. Awari says, he is not fighting for himself but for the President of the local Board. This position is altogether wrong. It is regrettable that he should persist in committing suicide by fasting. But his friends should dissuade him. If he refuses to listen, I fear, he must be allowed to die without evoking the slightest sympathy. I say this as the author of satyagraha including fasts. Neither can be capriciously offered. Public sympathy with capricious fasting can disrupt society.

The Hindu, 1-3-1946

¹ *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 26-2-1946

² The statement was reported under the date-line "Poona, February 27".

³ *Vide* footnote 1, "Telegram to Secretary, C. P. Provincial Congress Committee", 20-2-1946 On February 20, 1946, the General Council of Nagpur Congress in an emergency meeting passed a resolution urging the Congress High Command to reconsider its decision having regard to Awari's which was condemned by many Congressmen. Awari, however, in response to an appeal from Vallabhbhai Patel broke his fast on March 10, and agreed to meet him in Bombay on March 13. *Vide* also "Telegram to Manchershaw R. Awari", 27-2-1946 and "Telegram to Manchereshaw R. Awari", 28-2-1946

11. TELEGRAM TO POONAMCHAND RANKA

Express

POONA,
February 27, 1946

PUNAMCHAND RANKA
CONGRESS OFFICE
NAGPUR

YOUR IMPERATIVE DUTY DISSUADE GENERAL AWARI FROM CONTINUING
SUICIDAL FAST.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

12. TELEGRAM TO MANCHERSHAW R. AWARI

Express

POONA,
February 27, 1946

GEN. AWARI
NAGPUR

I WARN YOU ONCE MORE YOUR FAST WHOLLY WRONG. DO NOT COMMIT
SUICIDE.¹

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal. Also *The Hindu*, 1-3-1946

13. TELEGRAM TO DAMODAR M. MEHTA

POONA
February 27, 1946

DAMODAR MULCHAND MEHTA
PRAMUKH SHRICHITAL SARVAJANIK SEVA MANDAL
BILKHA

NO PREVIOUS INTIMATION RECEIVED WHO IS FASTING WHAT FOR. IF MY
OPINION HAS VALUE FAST SHOULD BE SUSPENDED PENDING DECLARATION
OPINION.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 27-2-1946 and "Letter to Manchershaw R. Awari", 28-2-1946

14. SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY¹

I, the undersigned, heir of Shah Karamchand Otamchand Gandhi, resident of Bharat Varsha hereby authorize R[ajaman] R[ajashri] Maneklal Amritlal Gandhi of Porbandar to execute and sign the sale deed on my behalf, produce it before the Registrar for registration, execute a bond relating to the said sale deed and to receive offer for our house situated in the rear side of Srinathaji's *Haveli*² at Porbandar, the deed (which of) stands in the name of our ancestor Harjivan Raidas Gandhi, and for which house an agreement of sale of all my rights, title, share and interest in the aforesaid property along with the construction, structure and building was made in favour of Rajya Ratna Sheth Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta of Porbandar. I have hereby given him authority to transfer and change my right of ownership and to appear on my behalf to do all legal work which I would have myself done. The act of my aforesaid attorney in this behalf will be considered legal and binding from all points of view. For a proof of this I have set my signature hereunder.

M. K. GANDHI

POONA, February 27, 1946

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 7912

15. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 27, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

You must learn to exercise control over your language. Even when thinking about individuals one should not pay too much attention to their shortcomings. You yourself should decide whether or not you should remain here. If you cannot decide, it would mean you should not stay here; for the work is so difficult that, if you cannot take full interest in it, you would not be able to do it. This is

¹ Executed in Porbandar State under serial number 3779

² Temple

an important sphere of work for learning to acquire control over one's temper.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8420. Also C. W. 5606. Courtesy :
Munnalal G. Shah

16. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 27, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I understand all that you say. I do value your services. What other job would you like, if you are not kept here [in Poona]? Do you wish to return to the Ashram? What about Kanchan² and Hiramani? Whom should I post here in your place? Have a talk with me so that we can come to a final decision.³

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8422. Also C. W. 5607. Courtesy :
Munnalal G. Shah

17. LETTER TO POONAMCHAND RANKA

POONA,

February 27, 1946

BHAI POONAMCHAND,

I got your letter. I did not see what was published in *Janmabhoomi*⁴, I did not give them anything. I hope you have my earlier letter⁵ by now.

I do not understand what you write about Sardar. It is not his wont. I don't understand this complication. That a man like you should be involved in it is all the more painful to me.

Awari is now fasting for you. What is this? Fasting has no place in a situation of this kind. Besides, injustice, if any at all, was done to

¹ *Vide* also the following item.

² Addressee's wife

³ *Vide* also the preceding item.

⁴ A Gujarati daily published from Bombay

⁵ *Vide* "Letter to Poonamchand Ranka", 15-2-1946

you, not to him. Explain to him what his prime duty is and, if he refuses to understand, it is your duty to condemn his fast unreservedly.¹

Blessings from
BAPU

POONAMCHAND RANKA
NAGPUR

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

18. LETTER TO DHARMADEV SHASTRI

POONA,
February 27, 1946

BHAI DHARMADEV SHASTRI,

I read your letter to Bapa. It is good and yet not good. It is good because it refutes all the allegations against you and not good because the denial has a touch of resentment and betrays some lack of vigilance in the matter of duty. You took up the work² in a spirit of service and of your own free will, not at anyone else's instance, nor at my bidding. My only part in it was that when I was told of it, I approved of it. Why should you leave it for fear of criticism or even at my bidding? If it should be given up, it will happen when your own heart tells you to leave it. I see no such occasion. One who speaks ill of me should always be a hero for me.³ It is flatterers that we should flee from. Bapa is looking after all the other things.

Though I have written about the money, I still say that any service that is good and is rendered honestly and intelligently finds funds for itself. Why be annoyed with Mirabehn? After all you are regarded as a respectable man and occasional criticism does affect you. But why should it bother us? My advice is that you should go to Mirabehn, listen to all that she says, tell her all that you wish and

¹ *Vide* also "Telegram to Poonamchand Ranka", 27-2-1946

² The addressee started Ashoka Ashram at Kalsi in July 1942, but was arrested in August. On his release after eighteen months, he resumed his work of developing village industries at the Ashram. He was also running a school and hospital in memory of Kasturba Gandhi at Nagthat, near Mussoorie.

³ A saying of the saint Dadu; *vide* "Ashram Bhajanavali"

acquaint her with the facts; render service with a steadfast mind. To face the obstacles bravely, firmly, yet with detachment—is it not an integral part of service?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

19. LETTER TO CHARLES F. GRITZNER

[On or after *February 27, 1946*]¹

The enclosure to your letter of 27-2-1946 reads well, but so far as I can see, is utterly impracticable. My mind does not think in continents. It lays stress on the perfection of the individual conduct. They had been formed to . . . ² to the greatest results.

From the original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

20. TELEGRAM TO MANCHERSHAW R. AWARI

POONA,

February 28, 1946

GEN. AWARI

NAGPUR

YOUR WIRE³. IF YOU HAVE GRIEVANCES YOU SHOULD STATE THEM CLEARLY FIRST. SUBSEQUENTLY YOU CAN REFER THEM TO WORKING COMMITTEE ALL-INDIA COMMITTEE. THEREFORE ADVISE ABANDON FAST.

BAPU

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ The letter is scribbled on the addressee's letter of February 27, 1946.

² Illegible in the source

³ The reference is to a copy of the addressee's telegram to Abul Kalam Azad which read : "My fast on important issues. Central Parlimantary Board absolutely overridden and humiliated on undesirable candidates's interference and conspiracy. We branded as cracks and illiterate. Grievances real. Please regard Province's interests." *Vide* also "Telegram to Manchershaw R. Awari", 27-2-1946

21. LETTER TO PURATAN BUCH

POONA,
[February 28, 1946]¹

CHI. PURATAN,

You write to say that engine-driven flour mills are to be found in thousands of villages. Thousands would mean that their number could be greater than ten thousand. You cannot describe them as thousands, if they were a thousand and one. If you have the statistics, give me the exact figures. You must also have the names of the villages, only then you can arrive at the [right] figure. If the number of the villages runs into thousands, it is a very alarming situation. What would be the cost of the equipment and the engines? Calculate the cost, if you haven't already done so, and let me have the figures.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

22. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

POONA
February 28, 1946

CHI. KISHORELAL,

Today I am attending to a few letters among which your letter catches my eye. What you write about Gomati² is quite understandable. Some nature cure practitioners can diagnose a case which [allopathic] doctors cannot, but this cannot be applied in the case of Gomati, and I am of the opinion that Dr. Dinshaw cannot cope with the case. He has plenty [to recommend himself]. He is liberal but has fallen into a track which he is not likely to give up all at once. He is pulling on with what is not to his liking, thanks to his boundless faith in me. I have taken up the burden of running the clinic under these circumstances. He will guide us wherever we may ask him. Hence even if Dhirubhai comes, he cannot have the benefit of

¹ The source, however, has March 28, 1946, but Gandhiji was not in Poona on that date.

² Addressee's wife

Dinshawji's knowledge, his brilliance and experience. At present he can utilize my own limited knowledge. Dinshaw himself is physical culture personified but he does instruct others. He is possessed by nature cure, by his desire to establish university for it, and he entertains a hope that it will come to be through his association with me. If this department should wholly belong to the poor, we may bid on it some hope of establishing a university. Under the circumstances, I don't think we can give satisfaction to Dhirubhai. I have a feeling that something like Ashram life might come to be here, as though I could do nothing else! Or, maybe, I was not interested in anything else! Thus I am proceeding willingly as well as unwillingly. I am sending away from what may be called the menial staff; it remains to be seen how far I succeed. Therefore, if Dhirubhai and such others came, they will have to be content with my own knowledge of nature cure, such as it is. If, in the mean while, Dinshaw opens up and acquires the ability of transferring his knowledge to others, we can make some progress.

Bharatan Kumarappa will not be able to give such work as you expect. In fact he will be able to write independently. It¹ seems to be very well organized now. Pyarelal and Rajkumari have taken up the English work. Sushila of course very much wants to be useful but I don't take from her much work of this kind. If I did, her medical work would inevitably suffer. I am relieving Kanu for his primary job. At present I get much of his work done by Sushila Pai, and she is doing it well. She has always been in the line. I am taking from her the work of the Gujarati Department. For Hindustani I have brought Om Prakash. I trust he will be trained. He certainly wants to be. It is fairly cold here. I presume you have left Bombay.

Blessings from

BAPU

[KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA]

SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ The reference is to printing work of *Harijan*, *Harijanbandhu* and *Harijan Sevak*.

23. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

POONA,

February 28, 1946

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Abha¹ handed your letter² only today. I read it. Sailen's letter is also before me. It can be said that nowadays I do not always stay at the Ashram. And now it has come to this : that for six months I am at the Ashram and for six months in Poona and Mahabaleshwar. In such a situation it will not be proper at all to keep you [at the Ashram] on my responsibility. I would advise you to have a talk with Chimanlal³ and Krishnachandra. Explain everything to them and, if they agree, stay at the Ashram. Serve the Ashram and earn your livelihood. Have a frank talk with Ashadevi⁴. It will be your responsibility to teach Bengali. How far mother can mentally adjust herself to the Ashram remains to be seen; also whether she can bear the heat during summer. Considering all these, I feel that all of you cannot stay at the Ashram permanently. Even so I am not giving any decision. Yes, this much I want to say : When Sailen says that he can decide for himself, a decision should be taken only about others. Go to Navadweep, stay there and render as much service as you can, and educate the children on the lines of Nayee Talim. It would be good to consider this also as service.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : C. W. 10414. Courtesy : Amrita Lal Chatterjee

24. NOTES

A USEFUL PAMPHLET

A friend sends me a copy of a leaflet published by the Department of Agriculture, Bombay Province. It contains hints on small-scale vege-table cultivation in compounds of bungalows, etc. This was published in 1942 during war time, in pursuance of a campaign for growing more food. What was then necessary is much

¹ Addressee's daughter, Abha Gandhi

² Dated February 20, it was about his and his son, Sailendra Nath's future programme.

³ Chimanlal N. Shah, Manager, Sevagram Ashram

⁴ Ashadevi Aryanayakam

more so now in view of the increasing shortage of food. It is a pity that the leaflet is printed in English. It may be, however, that only the English pamphlet has been sent to me, and that it has been translated into the provincial languages. Be that as it may, the leaflet is certainly instructive and useful and I would suggest to the readers who are interested, as they should be, in the matter that they send for and study it with a view to making use of the suggestions, if they have a plot of land available for the purpose. Among the hints contained are the following chosen by me at random :

(a) Plots selected should be well-drained and not overshadowed by trees or buildings.

(b) Beds in which flowers have been successfully grown are usually suitable but portions of lawns may also be dug up and used for vegetable gardening.

(c) Waste water from bath-rooms or kitchen can be utilized for the purpose.

(d) It stresses the the necessity of using organic manure such as cowdung, and tells the reader what vegetables can be easily grown.

(e) A table is given at the end showing the quantity of particular seeds required, the depth at which they should be sown, the size of the beds and the distance between the rows of plants.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS¹

A correspondent writes :

You are at present in Poona. I understand from the papers that H. H. the Aga Khan is your friend. He has plenty of land and water supply at his disposal in his palace in Poona. The same applies to the spacious grounds of Government House at Ganeshkhind. Could not both these places be utilized for growing food? Could you suggest it to him?

You believe in fasts. You have said that fasts are not merely for attaining religious merit but are also beneficial for health. Cannot you then recommend to the well-fed abstention from food either one day or for even one meal or more during the week? A great deal of foodstuffs could thus be made available to the poor.

They say that even small quantity of sprouted grain, if eaten

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as “from *Harijan Sevak*” published simultaneously with the source.

raw, provides the requisits nourishment. Is this so?

The above is condensed from a letter. All the three suggestions are sound and could easily be put into practice. The first is obviously for those who possess both land and water; the second for the well-to-do; the third applies to all. In essence it means that whatever can be eaten raw would be so eaten. By intelligently following this rule, one can make a small quantity go a long way.¹ Not only that, it is also beneficial. I have little doubt that if people understood the laws of dietetics and acted accordingly, a tremendous economy in food could be effected.

UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE POWER²

Q. Flour grinding machines are turned by engines in thousands of villages in Gujarat. By removing them to the source, these engines could easily be used for drawing water from rivers, tanks and wells for purposes of irrigation. Could not the Government be induced or the owners be persuaded to divert the engines for this useful work in addition to working the grinders?

A. I regard the existence of power wheels for the grinding of corn in thousands of villages as the limit of our helplessness. I suppose India does not produce all the engines or grinding machines. I fondly hope that the correspondent is incorrect and that the number of wheels and engines does not run into thousands even for the whole of India,³ and certainly not in the villages of Gujarat. But if true, it is indicative of the utter laziness into which our people have fallen. The planting of such machinery and engines on a larger scale in villages is also a sign of greed. Is it proper to fill one's pockets in this manner at the expense of the poor? Every such machinery puts thousands of hand *chakkis*⁴ out of work and takes away employment from thousands of housewives and artisans who make these *chakkis*. Moreover the process is infective and will spread to every village industry. The decay of the latter spells too the decay of art. If it meant replacement of old crafts by new ones, one might not have much to say against it. But this is not what is happening. In the thousands of villages where power machinery exists, one misses the sweet music in the early

¹ The following sentence is translated from the Gujarati version.

² Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

³ The rest of the sentence is translated from the Gujarati version.

⁴ Grinding stones

morning of the grinders at work.

But to come to the main point : Whilst I hold that these power engines are at present being put to wrong use, it would be some compensation if the engines, in addition to their present use, were also used to pump water out of rivers, tanks and wells for irrigation. My correspondent suggests Government aid for this. Must this be necessary? Will not the owners of their own free will turn their engines towards this useful and necessary work? Or have we been reduced to such a paralytic state that without Government compulsion we are unprepared to do anything? Be that as it may, it is my firm opinion that all necessary measures should be taken at once to utilize existing power in order to save the people from the terrible fate confronting them.

POONA, March 1, 1946

Harijan, 10-3-1946

25. WHOSE NEED?¹

The institution of domestic servants is an old one. But the attitude of master towards servant has changed from time to time. Some regard servants as members of the family whereas others look upon them as slaves or chattels. Between these two extreme views may be summed up the attitude of society in general towards servants. Nowadays servants are in great demand everywhere. They have become conscious of their value and naturally demand their own conditions of pay and service. This would be proper, if it were invariably coupled with a proper understanding and performance of their duty. In that event they would cease to be servants and would earn for themselves the status of members of the family. The belief in the efficacy of violence is, however, in the air. How then can servants properly win the status of members of their masters' families? That is a question that may well be asked.

I hold that a man who desires the co-operation of, and wishes to co-operate with, others should not be dependent on servants. If anyone has to have one at a time of scarcity of servants, he will have to pay what is demanded and accept all other conditions with the result that he will, instead of being master, become the servant of his

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

employee. This is good for neither the master nor the so-called¹ servant. It has only one thought, that of pursuing his self-interest. But if what an individual seeks is not slavery but the co-operation of a fellow-being, he will not only serve himself but also him whose co-operation he needs. Through the extension of this principle, a man's family will become coterminous with the world and his attitude towards his fellow-beings will also undergo a corresponding change. There is no other way of reaching the desired consummation.

He who wants to act on this principle will be content to start with small beginning. In spite of a man's ability to command the co-operation of thousands, he must have sufficient self-restraint and self-respect in him to enable him to stand alone. Such a person will never dream of looking on any person as his menial and try to keep him under subjugation. In fact he will forget altogether that he is master of his servants and will try his best to bring them to his level. In other words he should be content to do without what others cannot have.

POONA, March 1, 1946

Harijan, 10-3-1946

26. TELEGRAM TO MANCHERSHAW R. AWARI

Express

POONA,

March 1, 1946

GEN. AWARI

NAGPUR

YOUR WIRE. SARDAR HAS NO RIGHT REVIEW BOARD'S DECISION. WAY OF RELIEF IS THROUGH WORKING COMMITTEE. YESTERDAY'S WIRE² WAS SEEN BY SARDAR AND JAWAHARLALJI. ABANDON FAST AND AGITATE FOR REDRESS GRIEVANCE IF ANY

BAPU

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ This word and the sentence which follows are translated from the Gujarati version.

² *Vide* "Telegram to Manchershaw R. Awari", 28-2-1946

27. TELEGRAM TO H. N. BRAILSFORD

POONA
March 1, 1946

H. N. BRAILSFORD¹
FRIENDS SERVICE UNIT
1 UPPERWOOD STREET
CALCUTTA

THANKS. YOU AND MRS. BRAILSFORD CAN COME ANY DAY EXCEPT MONDAYS. PLEASE WIRE WHEN COMING.²

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

28. LETTER TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY

NATURE CURE CLINIC,
6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,
March 1, 1946

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY³ TO THE
GOVERNOR⁴ OF BOMBAY
BOMBAY

DEAR SIR,

A correspondent, writing to *Harijan*, suggests⁵ among other things that I should approach the Government of Bombay to use the vast grounds of Ganeshkhind for growing edibles and use the latter for the needy. I cannot help thinking that this is a wise suggestion and,

¹ Henry Noel Brailsford, journalist and author; leader-writer for *Manchester Guardian* and *Daily News*; joined the Independent Labour Party in 1907

² Vide "Interview to H. N. Brailsford", 17-3-1946.

³ J. S. Drewe

⁴ Sir David John Colville

⁵ Vide "Notes", sub-title A Useful Pamphlet"

if adopted whole-heartedly by His Excellency, it is likely to be fruitful of astonishing results.¹

Yours truly,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 152

29. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POONA,

March 1, 1946

BHAIRAJA,

I have your letters from time to time. Rajkumari replies to them. From my point of view what you did² is quite all right. The sphere of service has no bounds. I on my part wish that you should take rest. Come over, if you can. If nothing else, at least we can have a good laugh together.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 2116

30. LETTER TO MAHESHDUTT MISHRA

POONA,

March 1, 1946

CHI. MAHESH,

I have your two letters. How good it would have been, if you had remained a Bhangi? I hope you have heard of my experience. In Hardwar, somebody thought that I was a labourer and it was so much the better. Others recognized me as we moved on. I have many such experiences. But do not we learn only by making mistakes? He who does not make mistakes is either God or the greatest of fools who imagines that he never makes any mistake. It is good that whenever we

¹ Replying on March 9, the addressee, *inter alia*, said : "A considerable area . . . has been brought under cultivation . . . and a great deal of the remaining area grows grass for fodder. . . His Excellency has recently asked Agricultural Department to carry out a survey of the lands . . . to see to what area cultivation can advantageously be extended. His Excellency hopes . . . when he is in residence at Ganeshkhind to show you what has been done."

² Withdrawing from the elections; *vide* "Letter from C. Rajagopalachari", 21-2-1946

make a mistake we correct it and go ahead.

What you wrote about the election¹ is all right. It was unnecessary for me, but not for you, since you wanted to make a clean breast of everything. I have not shown your letter to anyone nor do I intend to. Many things happened in the election in which I took no interest, nor did I do anything about them. You already know about Rajaji. The outcome is that Rajaji has withdrawn from it.² He likes it and so do I. Keep well. Write to me from time to time. And come whenever you want to after finding out my whereabouts and with prior intimation.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 6713. Also C. W. 4457. Courtesy : Maheshdutt Mishra

31. LETTER TO JAGANNATH

POONA,

March 1, 1946

BHAI JAGANNATH,

I got your letter. For you Ramanama alone is the unfailing remedy.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

32. LETTER TO SHANTI SWARUP BHATNAGAR

POONA

March 1, 1946

BHAI BHATNAGAR³,

Though you forbid my writing, I should at least acknowledge receipt of your letter and should also tell you from my experience that, in what we suppose to be times of difficulty, we should resort to Ramanama, even if the mind is not steady. If we keep trying, success is

¹ To the Central Provinces Assembly; he was unhappy about the rejection of his father C. G. Mishra's nomination.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

³ Eminent scientist

bound to come.

I shall, of course, do what you want me to, but there is no point in it. No one can carry another's burden. Prayer is a mighty thing but also strange. May God grant you peace.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHANTISWARUP BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

33. *REGRET*

My brethren-farmers from Bardoli are unhappy because my visit to Bardoli has been cancelled. Others too have written to me. I can understand their disappointment. I am also pained that I could not go to Bardoli. Although I am short of time, I had made all preparations for going to Bardoli. I had also written to those who wanted to see me. But after the riot which broke out in Bombay I changed my plan. I wrote¹ to the Sardar that he should be in Bombay for the present. He liked the suggestion, and the programme for Bardoli was cancelled.

I hope, all will forget their disappointment when they know these facts. I take it that I will have to go to Bardoli on some other occasion.

POONA, March 2, 1946
[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 10-3-1946

34. *LETTER TO AGA KHAN*

POONA,
March 2, 1946

BHAI SAHEB,

A gentleman has written² to me saying that since I am a friend of yours and at present in Poona, I could perhaps persuade you to grow food-grains and such other things on the large stretch of land

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 24-2-1946 and 186.

² *Vide* "Notes" sub-title A Useful Pamphlet"

that you have, since you lack neither water resources nor money. He also wants to know if this cannot be done on the land at Ganeshkhind which the Governor occupies.

I like his suggestion. If it is feasible, I hope you will take the initiative and set an example to others. On my part I have already offered¹ my suggestion to the Governor regarding Ganeshkind.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

35. LETTER TO MANIBEHN NANAVATI

March 2, 1946

CHI. MANIBEHN²,

Kishorelalbhai writes to tell me that I have not replied to your letter. If so, it is a matter of shame for me. It is, however, clear that I tend to forget. How can a forgetful person take up any responsibility? What should I do? Do become an Agent³ and show your mettle.

Blessings from

BAPU

SMT. MANIBEHN NANAVATI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

36. LETTER TO SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR

POONA,

March 2, 1946

BHAI CAVEESHAR⁴,

So at long last you have been released! You have done a brave

¹ *Vide* "Letter to C. Rajagopalachari", 1-3-1946

² A khadi worker of Bombay

³ Presumably, for Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

⁴ Member, All-India Forward Block; after detention as security prisoner from 1941, he was released from Dharmasala jail on February 22, 1946.

deed too. But is there any gain? And why make allegations?

Vandemataram from

M. K. GANDHI

SARDAR SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR

LAHORE, PUNJAB

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

37. *EXTRACT FROM TALK WITH A FRIEND*¹

[Before *March 3, 1946*]

Look at Italy. Garibaldi² was a great man. He brought deliverance to Italy. And Mussolini³ did make her look great. But where is she today? Look at Japan, look at Germany. The very violence which brought them to the pinnacle of power has razed them to the ground. And has not the atom bomb proved the futility of all violence? And yet we are crazy enough to think that we can win swaraj by breaking a few skulls and destroying property which, after all is said and done, is our own. I am sure, out of this orgy of violence, the people will learn the lesson of non-violence.

Harijan, 10-3-1946

38. *EXTRACT FROM TALK WITH A SOLDIER*⁴

[Before *March 3, 1946*]⁵

No. But, as you know, I stand for unadulterated non-violent action and open means. I abhor secrecy. . . . I laid down a programme of non-violent action in my 7th of August, 1942 speech⁶ in the A. I. C. C. for evoking⁷ and organizing the highest non-violence and self-sacrifice that the country was capable of. I told in that speech what the Press should do, what the students **should do**,

¹ This and the following item are extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" dated "Poona, March 3, 1946". The friend pleaded for "independence at all costs".

² Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882); Italian patriot and guerilla leader

³ Benito Mussolini, 1883-1945

⁴ *Vide* footnotes 1 and 2, above. Pyarelal explains : "Several army men have been to Gandhiji's camp during the week to seek advice. One of them . . . was deeply agitated. The men were getting desperate, he said. Would Gandhiji ask them to lie low and swallow all the humiliations and injustice?"

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *Vide* "Speech at A.I.C.C. Meeting", 7-8-1942

⁷ The source has "looking", a misprint.

what the Princes should do, what the Government servants should do, and lastly what the Indian soldiers should do. If all of them had done their part as suggested by me, it would have had a staggering effect. That programme can still be acted upon. The soldiers should declare that they will do soldiering not for their bellies but to make India free and to keep her free. I do not want them to be disloyal to the Government in whose pay they are, for, if they are disloyal to the present Government today, by the same token they may be disloyal to the national Government tomorrow. But it is no disloyalty for a soldier to go and tell his superiors that he will be their man only so long as they stand for his country's freedom and that he would never bear arms to crush the liberty of his own people. If, as a result of their declaration, they were disbanded, cashiered or even court-martialled, they should not mind. Thereby they would light a spark which not all the armaments at the disposal of any power would be able to put out and before long the entire Indian army would be filled with the spirit of patriotism without having to shed blood. If, on the contrary, they resorted to indiscipline and violence or rowdiness, they would alienate all sympathy and provide the authorities an excuse to teach them a lesson.¹

Harijan, 10-3-1946

39. *CONFLICT OF IDEAS*

She was unable to understand Gandhiji calling upon R. I. N. ratings to resign, if their condition was humiliating.² If they did that, they would have to give up their only means of livelihood. Moreover, they were fighting for principles. If they resigned now, there would be hundreds in these days of unemployment to take their places who would be subject to the same discrimination and treatment and the R. I. N. ratings would not have achieved anything. It simply does not lie in the mouth of Congressmen who are themselves going to the legislatures to ask the ratings to give up their jobs. It does not help the cause of the country at all.

Every one of the statements quoted above from Arunabehn's Press interview is contrary to the views generally held by or attributed

¹ Pyarelal concludes the talk with the following reply from the visitor: "My brain was muddled, when I came here. I now see things more clearly. You have saved us from a big mistake. We shall take no precipitate or thoughtless step."

² *Vide* "Letter to Balvantsinha", 25-2-1946

to Congressmen. Whether she really holds or does not hold, the views put into her mouth is irrelevant here. For the moment it is enough to examine them on their merits and to show that they are wholly inconsistent with Congress resolutions.

The first principle of non-violent action as propounded in the Congress resolution¹ of 1920 at its special session in Calcutta under the late Lal Lajpatrai is that of non-co-operation with everything humiliating. It must be remembered that the R.I.N. was founded not for the benefit of the ruled. The men went with their eyes open. Discrimination stares one in the face. It cannot be avoided, if one enters the service which is frankly organized to keep India under subjection. One may, one ought to, try to mend the conditions. That is possible only up to a point. That cannot be achieved through mutiny. Mutiny may conceivably succeed but the success can only avail the mutineers and their kin, not the whole of India. And the lesson would be a bad inheritance. Discipline will be at least as necessary under swaraj as it is now. India under successful mutineers would be cut up into warring factions exhausted by internecine strife.

India of the Congress has made little headway in the appreciation of the fight for swaraj, if it is true that hundreds would take their places if the present ratings resigned in pursuance of their campaign against humiliation. Can we have swaraj for the masses, if we are so degraded that hundreds of us are ready to swallow humiliation even to the extent of taking the place of humiliated fellowmen? The very thought is unworthy of Congressmen and that too at the moment when swaraj is believed to be within sight.

Those who hold that enlistment in the R.I.N. is their only means of livelihood must have a very poor opinion of them. A soldier's is a hard life. He is disciplined to work in co-operation and trained to work with the pickaxe and the spade. Such a one will disdain to think that apart from soldiering he has no means of livelihood. We have a poor opinion of soliders, if we think that they cannot earn their bread by the sweat of the brow. A labourer is any day worthy of his hire. What is, however, true is that a soldier out of his calling will lack the glamour and the amenities provided for him. We have wasted precious twenty-five years, if we have not yet stripped the profession of killing and destroying the thick coat of varnish that has covered it for so long.

¹ *Vide* "Congress Resolution on Non-Co-Operation"

Aruna Asaf Ali had been reported to have said that the ratings would have gained nothing by resigning. Well, they would have gained honour and dignity, if they had manfully given up their job, and taught the citizens of Bombay the way to save honour and dignity, and they could have spared Bombay the senseless destruction of life, property and very precious food-stuffs. Surely this would have been an achievement not quite beneath notice.

The last statement in the reported interview is surely a confusion of thought. Congressmen going to the legislatures for conserving the honour and liberty of the country is not the same as ratings serving for their livelihood with the possibility of being used against their own countrymen and their liberty. Congressmen who go to the legislatures are representatives elected by their voters and they go even if it is only to prevent those from going who will misrepresent the voters. Going to the legislatures may be altogether bad, but there can be no such comparison as has been just adverted to.

POONA, March 3, 1946

Harijan, 10-3-1946

40. WHAT, AFTER FINISHING STUDIES ?¹

A student has seriously posed this question :

What am I to do after finishing my studies ?

We are today a subject race and our educational system has been devised to serve the interest of our rulers. But even as the most selfish person is obliged to hold out some lure to those whom he is out to exploit, so a number of temptations for studying in their institutions have been brought into being by the rulers. Moreover all members of Gvoernment are not alike. There are some liberal-minded among them who will consider the problem of education on merits. Therefore there is no doubt some good even in the present ;system. But the prevailing education is willy-nilly put to wrong use, i.e., it is looked upon as a means of earning money and position. It lends charm to slavery.²

The ancient aphorism, 'Education is that which liberates' is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge nor does liberation signify only spiritual

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijabandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

² This sentence is translated from the Gujarati version.

liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind, and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kind : slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study. Having had such study, one will not be confronted with the question : 'What, after finishing studies ?'¹''.

Realizing that a form of education devised by foreign rulers could only be calculated to subserve their interests, the Congress accepted, in 1920, among other things, the principle of the boycott of all Governmental educational institutions. But that era seems to be over. The demand for entrance to Government institutions and those imparting education on similar line is increasing faster than the number of such schools and colleges. The ranks of examinees are ever swelling. In spite of this hypnotic spell, however, I hold that true education is what I have defined.

A student who is superficially attracted by the educational ideal set forth by me and leaves his studies is liable to repent of his action later. I have, therefore, suggested a safer course. While continuing his studies in the institution which he has joined, he should ever keep before him the ideal of service set forth by me and use his studies with a view to serve that ideal, never for making money. Moreover he should try to make up the lack in the present education by application of his leisure hours to the ideal. He will, therefore, avail himself to the utmost of whatever opportunity offers for taking part in the constructive programme.

POONA, March 3², 1946

Harijan, 10-3-1946

¹ This sentence is translated from the Gujarati version.

² The source has "I", a misprint.

41. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

POONA,
March 3, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

I am desired by Gandhiji to thank you for your letter of the 25th ultimo and for the information contained therein regarding the export of pulses.¹

May I also thank you for the enquiries regarding Miss Lester's² passage. I understand the difficulty and am writing to her.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
AMRIT KAUR

G. E. B. ABELL, ESQ.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 146

42. TELEGRAM TO G. E. B. ABELL

POONA,
March 4, 1946

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI

THANKS LETTER. MAY I PUBLISH MINE AND YOUR REPLY?³

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 144

43. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

POONA,
March 4, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have gone through your letter. Write down the particulars which you think I should know, such as who are paid workers, including their names and addresses, and then leave by all means. It

¹ *Vide* "Letter from G. E. B. Abell", 26-1-1946

² The reference is to Muriel Lester of Kingsley Hall, East End, London, who was having some difficulty in securing a passage to visit India. She could, however, come later, when she visited Noakhali in East Bengal during the communal strife, and reported to Gandhiji about the condition there.

³ The addressee in his telegram dated March 5 agreed for the publication of the letters; *vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 21-2-1946; also "Letter from G. E. B. Abell", 26-2-1946

seems from your letter that Manibhai¹ has become familiar with everything.

Do send for Kanchan² and go to Vyara. Write to me after you have settled everything. If you are ready, keeping you with me might perhaps be the best way of using your services. Whatever your decision, if you communicate it to me at an early date, it will help me. But come to no decision before meeting Kanchan. Do not take any hasty step. Draw Hiramani's fare as you have suggested and debit the sum to the Ashram account. Yours can be accepted here, but perhaps it would be better to debit that, too, to the Ashram account.

If you have still any more questions to ask, you may ask again.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8459. Also C. W. 5571. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

44. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

POONA,

March 4, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am returning the accompanying [letters]. Decide after most careful thinking.

Meet Dr. Mehta³. Decide something about the workers. Think about other things also which you feel should be taken into consideration. If you do not do that, I see nothing but obstacles in the way. Take the help of all those who are there.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

How is Pillay ? What do you do about Pirone, the leprosy patient?

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8418. Also C. W. 5610. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

¹ Manilal Patel

² Addressee's wife

³ Dr. Dinshaw K. Mehta

45. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

POONA,
March 4, 1946

CHI. SITA ¹,

Why need you write if I do not? Moreover I am busy in my fields of work, and you are busy in yours. Both of us being thus busy, there is nothing wrong in our not writing to each other in the absence of some special reason. See that you succeed in your examination.

I know that whenever I pass through Akola, you have to go back disappointed as I would be sleeping. But remember Manilalbhai's² *ghazal*³ "Immortal hope lies hidden in countless disappointments" and keep on hoping.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4972

46. LETTER TO DR. DINSHAW K. MEHTA

[March 4, 1946]⁴

CHI. DINSHAW,

I was upset in the morning. I felt as though I had erred or committed a blunder. Can we afford to hire such an expensive and well-appointed premises⁵ for the poor ? By doing so am I not abusing the people's trust in me ? I want to serve the poor in my own way. I have a feeling, it will not need any of the paraphernalia you have arranged. My place is only in some village where I can start with a few huts and render service. Such thoughts pass through my mind and I cannot take a decision. Please do not [bother go] reply to this. Speak to me tomorrow. Ponder over it. The board of trustees ought to confer, if only to clear this confusion. I have, therefore, written to Jehangirji a letter, a copy of which I am enclosing. Please read it and think over it. I believe we ought not to persist, if we have made a mistake. Of course there is no reason to be alarmed; it is for us to find a way.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Manilal Gandhi's eldest daughter

² Manibhai Nabhubhai Dwivedi

³ A Persian verse form

⁴ The letter is placed among letters of this date in the source. *Vide* also "My Confession and Cure"

⁵ The reference is to the Nature Cure Clinic, Poona; *vide* "Nature Gure Clinic"

47. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

POONA,¹

March 4, 1946

CHI. ANAND,

I did write to you. My blessings are always there. Do whatever you like, but remain cheerful. Sushila has gone to Quetta.

Bessings from

BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI

C/O R. C. TANDON

10 SOUTH ROAD

ALLAHABAD

From a microfilm of the Hindi. Courtesy : National Archives of India, and Anand T. Hingorani

48. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

POONA,

March 4, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Yesterday Rajkumari did reply to you. Today, however, I am observing silence. I believe we should consume only cow's ghee. Even Champabehn² may not keep buffalo's ghee. The Ashram does not exist for providing all facilities; we ought to put up with difficulties. Then cow's ghee can be made available. Vinoba should not be troubled for this. Yesterday Rajkumari must have written to you about visiting him there from time to time.

Bessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4547

¹ This is in Gujarati.

² Wife of Ratilal P. Mehta

49. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

POONA,
March 4, 1946

CHI. SHARMA,

I write what I feel after listening to what you had to say yesterday. I find that you have a lot of family responsibility¹ which might entail a monthly expense of about Rs. 200. In the circumstances, you would not be able to serve the poor, and it is difficult for you to work here². Therefore you may do whatever you can independently. You had better give up the trust land which is in your custody, though there is room for further consideration of the matter. The other things are going on as they are. If there is any misunderstanding on my part, clear it.

Bessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

50. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

NATURE CURE CLINIC,
6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,
March 5, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

I have been commissioned by Gandhiji to write and ask you whether it is possible to increase the quota of newsprint for *Harijan*. A good deal of matter is felt over every week in spite of the fact that the paper contains no advertisements and nothing but substantial reading matter. The demand from the public is immense. If you feel that *Harijan* is a need of the State as much as of the public, will you see if it can get extra quota of paper, whether for extra reading matter or for a larger number of copies to cope with the demand.

The Manager has made the usual application, but you know the way of red tape.

The present *Harijan* contains 16 columns only. The old often used to

¹ The addressee's elder brother died in October 1945.

² At Nature Cure clinic

be double. Then an Urdu number at the Navajivan Press is on the anvil. This, of course, is besides the application in the different provinces for publication in the provincial languages.¹

Yours sincerely,

AMRIT KAUR

Gandhiji's correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 79-80

51. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POONA,

March 5, 1946

MY DEAR C. R.,

I must write this in what has become as good as your mother tongue. I have written to you more than once in Hindustani and, when you wanted top lines, I gave you them. I have developed a dislike for writing to an Indian in any but the national language. So I write to Sastriar and Bidhan² in Hindustani.

So much for the preface.

Why do you worry about events? Do your duty, never think of results :

कर्मण्ये वाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन³

Let things take their course. It is enough, you and I have acted right.

Of course I was bound to write about you what I felt.⁴ I would never have excused myself, if, when challenged, I had kept silent. It gave us all an insight into man's thoughtlessness. You must, therefore, cheer up and get well quickly. Tell me when you are coming.

¹ Replying on March 18, the addressee agreed "to allow 1,00,000 copies per week, which meant an increase in consumption from 5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ tons per month". He also conveyed the Viceroy's appreciation of Gandhiji's "sound advice on the food situation". Writing again on March 22, Abell informed Amrit Kaur of the decision "to release 10 tons".

² Bidhan Chandra Roy

³ *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

⁴ *Vide* "Curious", "Curious" and "About Rajaji"

While I was closing this, I got your love letter. Do write to me in Tamil. *Anbu*¹ I knew. What is *udan*²?

BAPU³

From a photostat : G. N. 2117

52. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

POONA,

March 5, 1946

CHI. SITA,

I got your postcard. I like your confidence that you will pass. It will bear fruit. Keep up your courage and peace of mind at the time of the examination, too. You may come whenever you wish to. Your place will be reserved.

I wrote⁴ to you one letter yesterday.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4973

53. LETTER TO A. V. THAKKAR

March 5, 1946

BAPA,

I got your reminder. I have taken up Santhanam's [thesis]⁵. The first chapter shows that we (i. e., the Harijan Sevak Sangh) cannot print it. All that is there about Muslims should go. It adversely affects the other chapters. It is an excellent work. He has really taken pains over it and it deserves to be published. It seems perfectly all right to me, if the Hindustan Times [Press] publishes it. It will sell without any effort. You may show this to Santhanam. The proofs should be corrected carefully. I shall send over the corrections in a

¹ Love

² With

³ This and the two italicized words are in Tamil

⁴ Vide "Letter to Sita Gandhi", 4-3-1946

⁵ Titled "Ambedkar's Attack" this was published by Devi Prasad Sharma at the Hindustan Times Press, New Delhi. The "Author's Note" dated July 7, 1946, bore the sub-title "A Critical Examination of Dr. Ambedkar's Book : *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables.*" It was circulated by the addressee for favour of review.

few days. Of course I will not be able to examine them very carefully. You need not rush through the job.

BAPU

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH
KINGSWAY
DELHI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

54. MESSAGE TO FOREIGN PRESS¹

POONA,

[On or after *March 5, 1946*]²

I have seen Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's message, and I have nothing to add to what he has said.

The Hindu, 8-3-1946

55. MY CONFESSION AND CURE³

It is plain to me as it has become to some of my friends that I am incorrigible. I can learn only by my mistakes.⁴ I do not know why I could not learn through objections or warnings from others.⁵ I can learn only when I stumble and fall and feel the pain. As children we all used to learn this way. My condition is just like a child's even in my 76th year. I have just discovered myself making a mistake which I should never have made.

¹ The report said that "this was in reply to a cable asking for a message to the foreign Press". Gandhiji was requested to give a statement on the recent events in India and on the proposed visit of the British Cabinet Mission—Sir Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander—which reached India on March 24 to discuss with Indian leaders the framing of India's Constitution.

² From the reference to Vallabhbhai Patel's message, given in response to a similar request made in Bombay, which was published on March 5; *vide* "Vallabhbhai Patel's Message to Foreign Press", 4-3-1946

³ A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu* published simultaneously with the source.

⁴ The Gujarati version has : "I can learn only by making mistakes and then acknowledging and correcting them."

⁵ This and the following three sentences are translated from the Gujarati.

I have known Dr. Dinshaw Mehta for a long time. He has dedicated his life solely to nature cure of his conception. His one ambition is to see a full-fledged nature cure university established in India. A university worth the name must be predominantly for the prevention and cure of the diseases of the poor villagers of India. No such university exists in the world. The institutes in the West are designed more for the rich than for the poor.

I feel that I know the method of nature cure for the villagers of India. Therefore I should at once have known that nature cure for the villagers could not be attempted in Poona city. But a Trust was made. Very sober Jehangirji Patel permitted himself to be a co-trustee with Dr. Mehta and me, and I hastened to Poona to run for the poor Dr. Mehta's erstwhile Clinic which was designed for the rich. I suggested some drastic changes; but last Monday¹ the knowledge dawned upon me that I was a fool to think that I could ever hope to make an institute for the poor in town. I realized that if I cared for the ailing poor, I must go to them and not expect them to come to me. This is true of ordinary medicinal treatment. It is much more so of nature cure. How is a villager coming to Poona to understand and carry out my instructions to apply mud-poulties, take sun cure, hip and friction sitz-baths or certain foods cooked conservatively?² Will it not be impudence? The villager would go away nodding, but at the same time he would smile and think that the person who advised him to undergo nature cure was a fool. He would expect me to give him a powder or a potion to swallow and be done with it. Nature cure connotes a way of life which has to be learnt; it is not a drug cure as we understand it. The treatment to be efficacious can, therefore, only take place in or near a man's cottage or house. It demands from its physician sympathy and patience and knowledge of human nature. When he has successfully practised in this manner in a village, or villages, when enough men and women have understood the secret of nature cure, a nucleus for a nature cure university is founded. It should not have required eleven days' special stay in the institute to discover and all its attendant paraphernalia for my purpose. I do not know whether to laugh or weep over my folly. I laughed at it and made haste to undo the blunder. This confession completes the

¹ March 4, 1946; *vide* "Letter to Dr. Dinshaw K. Mehta", 4-3-1946

² The following two sentences are translated from the Gaujarati.

reparation.¹ I have not learnt to give up any work once begun and therefore there is only one alternative left for me. In which village should I start this work?

I should like the reader to draw the moral that he should never take anything for gospel truth even if it comes from a Mahatma unless it appeals to both his head and heart. In the present case my folly is so patent that even if it had continued for some time, very few, if any, would have succumbed to it. The real villagers would not have come for relief to this institute. But if the discovery had come too late, it would have blasted my reputation for I would have lost in my own estimation. Nothing hurts a man more than the loss of self-respect. I do not know that now I deserve the confidence of my fellowmen. If I lost it, I know that I shall have deserved the loss. To complete the story I must tell the reader that not a piece of the money earmarked for the poor ailing villagers has been spent on this abortive enterprise. What shape the present institution will now take and where and how poor man's nature cure will be tried is no part of this confession. The result of the initial mistake must not, however, be an abandonment of the new pursuit that I have taken up in the so-called evening of my life. It must, on the contrary, be a clearer and more vigorous pursuit of the ideal of nature cure for the millions, if such a thing is at all practicable. Possible it certainly is.² So far as I am concerned it is enough if this mistake makes me more cautious in realizing my ideals. Time alone can say whether or not poor villagers would welcome nature cure. There is no reason to doubt that it should be welcome.

POONA, March 6, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

56. QUESTION BOX³

Q. How can a person in the military do constructive work?

A. A military man who has any grit in him can take up spinning together with the anterior and posterior processes. He can go in for paper making or any other village craft during his leisure hours. Army men have plenty of leisure when they are not

¹ The rest of the paragraph is translated from the Gujarati.

² What follows is from the Gujarati.

³ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

fighting. Even when there is fighting, all are not [and should not be]¹ engaged in it though they have to stand by ready. Thus they can learn all those activities which are being conducted for the freedom of India. They should learn the national language in the two scripts. All this study must be coupled with a burning love of freedom and the courage to stand true to one's conviction and to act accordingly even if one is left alone. In no way does this conflict with military discipline. I do not believe in indulging in indiscipline especially in military service. Nor is there any room in my scheme of things for secret activity. Adherence to these principles is the only correct course for an individual or a people.

Q. It is supposed to be a sign of ill-breeding not to leave some food on one's plate after finishing a meal. The contrary is supposed to be the correct thing to do.² Why is it so? And can it be tolerated when people are starved?

A. It passes my comprehension how such action can be tolerated, especially in the face of the threatened famine. I do not know the reason for this practice, and it would be waste of time to enquire into it. I consider it to be a sign of vulgarity and lack of perspective to have more on one's plate than one requires. In the present time no one is really entitled to full meals. Waste would be sign of callousness. On the other hand, I consider it good breeding and discrimination to leave one's plate clean of leavings. It saves too the time of those who wash up. It is thoughtful and correct before beginning a meal to remove what one considers excess from one's plate on to a clean plate. Hosts should be discriminating and have enough delicate regard to find out what their guests require in way of food and then give them no more than what they want.

Q. Writing letters in blood and using blood for auspicious marks is becoming almost a fashion. Ought it not to be stopped?

A. To my mind this is a revolting practice. It causes no hurt to take a little blood from oneself. In these days, in particular, blood letting can be performed without the slightest pain or inconvenience. If too much is taken from him, the donor experiences weakness. But to write or sign letters in one's own blood is neither bravery nor does it connote any sacrifice or suffering. It is nothing more or less than criminal folly and ought to be abjured. Not only that, it is duty to

¹ From the Gujarati

² The rest of the question is translated from the Gujarati.

stop it. The easiest way is for all leaders not to countenance such a vulgar and uncivilized practice.

POONA, 6-3-1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

57. SATYAGRAHA IN FACE OF HOOLIGANISM¹

A friend has gently posed the question as to what a satyagrahi should do to prevent looting by *goondas*². If he had understood the secret of satyagraha, he would not have put it.

To lay down one's life, even alone, for what one considers to be right, is the very core of satyagraha. More no man can do. If a man is armed with a sword, he might lop off a few heads but ultimately he must surrender to superior force or else die fighting. The sword of the satyagrahi is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it. He will regard as brothers the hundreds of *goondas* that confront him and instead of trying to kill them he will choose to die at their hands and thereby live.

This is straight and simple. But how can a solitary satyagrahi succeed in the midst of a huge population? Hundreds of hooligans were let loose on the city of Bombay for arson and loot. A solitary satyagrahi will be like a drop in the ocean. Thus argues the correspondent.

My reply is that a satyagrahi may never run away from danger, irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of many. He will have fully performed his duty, if he dies fighting. The same holds good in armed warfare. It applies with greater force in satyagraha. Moreover the sacrifice of one will evoke the sacrifice of many and may possibly produce big results. There is always this possibility. But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results.³ Here I am indicating only a possibility. May no one regard results as a temptation.

I believe that every man and woman should learn the art of self-defence in this age [and in all ages]⁴. This is done through arms

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

² Rowdies

³ The rest of the paragraph is translated from the Gujarati version.

⁴ From the Gujarati

in the West. Every adult man is conscripted for army training for a definite period. The training for satyagraha is meant for all, irrespective of age or sex. The more important part of the training here is mental, not physical. There can be no compulsion in mental training. The surrounding atmosphere no doubt acts on the mind but that cannot justify compulsion.

It follows that shopkeepers, traders, mill-hands, labourers, farmers, clerks, in short everyone ought to consider it his or her duty to get the necessary training in satyagraha.

Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. This can only be effectively proved by demonstration, not by argument. It is the weapon that adorns the strong. It can never adorn the weak. By weak is meant the weak in mind and spirit, not in body. That limitation is a quality to be prized and not a defect to be deplored.

One ought also to understand one of its other limitations. It can never be used to defend a wrong cause.

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well-known to the organizers. In this respect satyagraha differs from armed defence. For the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in ahimsa and satya. Therefore an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.

POONA, March 6, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

58. PERSECUTION OF HARIJANS¹

Sir Parikshitlal Majmudar² writes :

There was high mortality due to some epidemic in a village in Wadhwan State, Kathiawar. The superstition of the villagers ascribed this misfortune to Harijans and they began to intimidate the Bhangi families. The latter fled from the village through fright. Harijan workers . . . approached the State authorities to take immediate steps to protect the Bhangis. . . . The State acted

¹ Originally written in Gujarati this appeared as “from *Harijanbandhu*” published simultaneously with the source.

² Secretary, Gujarat branch of Harijan Sevak Sangh; only an extract from his letter is reproduced here.

promptly and the families returned. . . .

The only remedy for this kind of superstition is the spread of correct knowledge. The reason for its existence in Kathiawar seems to be that the reform movement has not yet touched the villages there. Workers must make Herculean efforts to remedy this de-fect. But wherefrom are such workers to come? Even those already working in Kathiawar fight shy of going to the villages. And, even if they go, one can well imagine the immense difficulty of the task confronting them. Man's endeavour at its highest consists in continuing to perform one's duty undeterred by difficulties. The Kathiawar incident must be taken to heart. Both the State and the people understood their duty and took prompt and firm measures in the instance quoted and the difficulty was surmounted for the time being. If this example were to be widely followed, it would cut at the very root of superstition. And that would be true education.

POONA, March 6, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

59. TELEGRAM TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

POONA,
March 6, 1946

ABUL KALAM AZAD
CONGRESS PREISIDENT
FAIRFIELD
LAHORE

HOPE TO BE WITH YOU ON TWELTH.¹

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

60. LETTER TO JACK JAPHETH

POONA,
March 6, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am glad you have been in touch with Mme. Sophia Wadia.² She is any day a safe friend and guide. Therefore rather than have anything from me, I would ask you to come in frequent and closer contact with her and derive comfort.

Regarding your questions I believe in reincarnation. I believe it

¹ In Bombay to attend the Congress Working Committee meeting

² Of the Bombay Theosophical Society

is possible to recall one's previous states but it is a curiosity which should always be kept under full control. If the belief that your wife's soul like every other is eternal does not sustain you, no prying into the secrets of nature is going to help. I have known cases in which such prying has positively hindered progress.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

JACK JAPHETH
19 "GIRDHAR NIWAS"
COLABA CAUSEWAY
BOMBAY

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

61. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

POONA,

March 6, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your letter. I will have to go there on the 11th. I, therefore, think it useless for you to come here just for two days. I shall be busy with *Harijan*. My health is good. I hope you got my message.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. MANILAL GANDHI
C/O NILKANTH MASHRUWALA
SOUTH AVENUE, BOMBAY-25

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4974. Also C. W. 1387. Courtesy :
Sushilabehn Gandhi

62. *HINDU AND MUSSALMAN TEA, ETC.*¹

Hindu and Mussalman tea is sold at railway stations. Separate arrangements for meals for the two communities are sometimes made and none seems to be there for Harijans. All this is a sign of our pitiable condition and constitutes a blot on British administration. One can understand their not interfering in religious matters, but for them to allow separate arrangements for tea, water, etc., for the two communities is to set the seal of approval on separatism. Railways and railway travelling offer a golden opportunity which could be used for social reform and for educating the public in sanitation and hygiene, good manners and communal unity. Instead, however, an utter neglect of and indifference to these desiderata are shown. Railway travel serves to strengthen, rather than mitigate, evil customs and bad habits. First and second-class passengers are pampered, luxurious habits encouraged. Third-class passengers on whom the railway revenues largely depend are denied even elementary amenities and exposed to all kinds of hardship. In either case weakness is exploited. And when, in addition to this, separatism and un-touchability are recognized by the railway authorities, it is the very limit. If any passenger wishes to impose restrictions on himself, he is at liberty to do so at his own expense and suffer, maybe, even hunger and thirst. But let him not demand special facilities for himself from railway authorities.

That vegetarians and non-vegetarians should be catered for, is another matter. That is already being done.

POONA, March 7, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

63. *LETTER TO JAIKRISHNA P. BHANSALI*

POONA,

March 7, 1946

CHI. BHANSALI,

Would it not be wholly improper, if you had undertaken the three days' fast because you are angry with either Pushpa or Kamala? Such a fast can never have a place in our ethics. And, if you had undertaken it with calm deliberation, shouldn't you have my

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as "from *Harijan Sevak*" published simultaneously with the source.

permission for it? Don't you remember my having suggested that no one was to undertake a fast without my permission? If you don't, henceforth please bear it in mind. Now that it is over, let us not bother about it. Surely you are not going to undertake any more [fasts]; so let bygones be bygones. This letter is for the future.

From a man like you I expect the perfection of human qualities. It would be wrong, if Pushpa or Kamala or any other worker, man or woman, was careless while working for you or for anyone else. The remedy, however, is that the person should be patiently taught to be more careful.

We should do without the services of persons who are careless about their duties. Such persons would then gradually become careful.

Blessings from
BAPU

[J. P. BHANSALI]
SEVAGRAM ASHRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

64. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

POONA,
March 7, 1946

CHI. RAMDAS,

Kanam writes and says that you have again fallen ill. You did not tell me so and I therefore did not believe him. He did well to inform me. You ought to get rid of the disease once for all. Write and tell me everything or ask Nimu to write. I am thinking of going to Bombay on the 12th. I will probably have to stay there for four or five days.

Bessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

65. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

POONA,
March 7, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I did write a few letters to you. And whenever I dictate letters or ask someone to write to you, these too should be looked upon as letters from me. A number of letters have now gone from here. It cannot be said that anything remains to be answered.

I do not consider Bhansalibhai's fast to be right, and nobody in the Ashram has any right to undertake a fast like this. I have always said that if one wanted to undertake a fast, one must take my permission. The rule still applies. It may be asked, what is to be done when I am away. The answer is that the Manager of the Ashram should be consulted and, if he is in doubt, then some senior member like Vinobaji or Kishorelalbhai and others should be consulted. If there is time to consult me, then it is, of course, better to do so. Observance of this rule would save one from any possible conflict of duties.

I think you should now give up your insistence on buying an ox. We may not be able to become the poorest among the poor, but let us try to be like the poor in every way we can. Crores of people cannot afford an ox, and there are very few people in India who have good oxen. Why should we not try to be like them? It would be a sign of perverted reason to cite the instance of the Goseva Sangh in this connection. Let us see how much we can achieve with mere manual labour without oxen and without Western machinery. You will see that a great deal can be done in this way.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4548

66. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,
March 7, 1946

Letters and wires continue to come to me seeking my aid in saving Gen. Awari's life which seems now to be sinking. I know Gen. Awari. He is a lovable worker. But I know too that he is often

improperly obstinate. The present occasion is a case in point.¹ If a man, however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause and fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends (among whom I count myself), fellow-workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair. Let me say once more where Gen. Awari's end is improper and unfair. He may be wholly right in his statement that a great wrong has been perpetrated by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. But who can right the wrong? Not Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as Gen. Awari tells me he can. He is but an individual Sardar² thought he has pronounced the decision of the Board. A judge cannot review his own judgment. The Sardar is out of the picture. The Central Board cannot, must not, review its own judgment. It has no authority. No institution can act capriciously in a well-managed democracy. Gen. Awari and his friends have the right of appeal or review by the Working Committee, then the A. I. C. C.; finally the Congress. This procedure may appear to him too long. It is not, unless he is fighting for an individual or individuals and not for a principle, as he assures me, he is doing. Time always runs in favour of the defence of a principle. If the general session of the Congress which is the highest tribunal for vindicating justice decides against Gen. Awari, he has to submit to its verdict. The Congress is the panchayat. Like the king it can do no wrong. This is merely a necessary and legitimate conception for guidance in the observance of an infallible duty. In truth, however, decisions of human organizations in all climes have been sometimes found to be wrong. So it may be in the case under discussion. Then, but not till then, will Gen. Awari have in theory the right, if he chooses to exercise it, to stir public conscience into action by a fast to the finish. In practice, it will be ludicrous. For the principle behind such action can only euphemistically be so-called. In democracy even pure men may unconsciously give wrong decisions. The remedy is more and purer education, greater awakening of the public and, in such quickened atmosphere, the rise of a number of public workers whose sole duty will be to speak, write and act so as to serve as bright examples for the public.

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Secretary, C. P. Provincial Congress Committee", 20-2-1946 and "Letter to Manchershaw R. Awari", 24-2-1946

² Literally, 'chief'

Now I hope the friends of Gen. Awari will understand me when I say that those who wrongly support him and his fast and thus encourage him will hasten Gen. Awari's death, not those who will not swerve from well-recognized canons of justice even for the sake of saving the life of an erring friend. Let justice triumph though the heavens weep.

Harijan. 17-3-1946

**67. SPEECH AT MEETING OF TRUSTEES OF ALL-INDIA
NATURE CURE FOUNDATION, POONA¹**

March 7, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi explained that nature cure therapeutics as practised in the cities of India and in the West was not suitable for the masses in the villages of India and that they should be based on the material available in and around the villages as well as in keeping with rural economics. Principally the mass awakening was to be made from the point of view of prevention of diseases rather than from the point of view of cure of the same. From the latter view-point he emphasized the need for evolution of a system of nature cure therapeutics based upon Ramanama and the five elements of Nature : earth, water, air, sun, sky.

Mahatma Gandhi particularly emphasized the importance of Ramanama as the basis of his system, and its spiritual significance in nature cure science. He explained that once he started the practice of nature cure of his conception in one the villages around Poona, his idea would evolve a system of therapeutics which can be spread through out the rural population of India. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi then suggested that Dr. Dinshaw Mehta should undertake a trip to the different parts of India with the idea of studying various nature cure institutions existing in the country. . . .²

From a fascimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. 7, between pp. 96 and 97

¹ The speech is extracted from "Minutes" of the fifth meeting of trustees held under the chairmanship of Gandhiji in his room in Nature Cure Sanatorium. Dr. Dinshaw K. Mehta and Jehangir P. Patel were present. Gandhiji permitted Gulabanoo D. Mehta also to attend the meeting.

² Dr. Dinshaw Mehta accepted the suggestion which was supported by Jehangir Patel and Gulabanoo Mehta.

68. TELEGRAM TO HORMUZD

POONA,
March 8, 1946

HORMUZD

HEAD PRIEST PARSI 'AGIARY'

NAGPUR

REVISION ON MERITS ALWAYS POSSIBLE FROM INFERIOR
TO SUPERIOR BODY. WISH YOU SUCCESS. PERSUADE
AWARI ABANDON FALSE POSITION.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

69. TELEGRAM TO FEDERATION OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS EMPLOYEES' UNION

POONA,
March 8, 1946

SECRETARY

FEDERATION POSTS TELEGRAPHS

GAYA

WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF CASE¹ DIFFICULT GIVE OPINION.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

70. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

POONA,
March 8, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I think it would be better, if you joined the deputation². If you cannot agree with the draft³ of the memorandum to be presented to the Viceroy, that is, if you oppose it, then it would be another matter.

¹ The reference, presumably, is to the union's demands in regard to scales of pay and pensions; the Federation had threatened to go on strike from March 23, if their demands were not met by the authorities.

² Of South African Indians led by Aga Khan, who, according to *Gandhi : 1915-1948—A Detailed Chronology*, called on Gandhiji on March 3

³ *Vide* the following item; for extracts from the memorandum submitted to the Viceroy on March 12, *vide* "South African Indian Deputation's Memorandum to the Viceroy", 12-3-1946

It would have been good, if you could have got time to come and see me, but it does not matter. If I can put on paper the shape that the draft is taking in my mind, there will be no need to see me just now. If, after finishing the business in Delhi, all of you return soon, you will be able to see me in Bombay itself. But failing that you will certainly be able to see me here at any rate.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4975

71. DRAFT MEMORANDUM TO VICEROY¹

[On or after *March 8, 1946*]²

We the signatories hereto are deeply grateful to your Excellency for receiving us at short notice in spite of your multifarious preoccupations.

The present intention of the Government of the Union of South Africa will, if carried out, degrade us to a status of inferiority against which we have put up a fight more definitely since 1893, the year in which an attempt was made to disfranchise the Indian community as such in Natal. We then looked upon it as a slur not only on the Indians in Natal but also on the mother country. Then there was no Union of South Africa. The Cape [Town] had practically no Indian question worth the name. Orange Free State had banished the few Indian traders it had and prided itself on its thorough anti-Asiatic policy. The Transvaal had a sprinkling of Indian traders, hawkers and others. The location system later known as segregation had its rise there. The whites in Natal had deliberately and for their own sake invited the large number of indentured Indians for their sugar and tea plantations. This indentured population naturally drew the independent mercantile Indians.

One would have thought that the advent of Union would mean the union of all the races of South Africa, i. e., the African (the Negro), the European and the Asiatics (primarily and principally Indians). What a noble tradition such a union would have been for the world. But it was not to be. On the contrary, the Union became an anti-African and anti-Asiatic combine. Every year of the progress

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² *ibid*

of the Union has definitely marked the progress of this combine and the strenuous opposition to it by the Indian settlers and their descendants as will be clearly seen by reference to the appendix A¹ hereto attached.

We ask Your Excellency to approach the question from that standpoint and no other. The threatened legislation adumbrated by Field Marshal Smuts which has hastily brought the delegation from South Africa is a very large step, perhaps the largest yet made, in the process of consigning the Asiatics to permanent inferiority. Political inequality was their end. The wedge has now expanded into all round inequality and inferiority. Thus there are three segregations in which the whites are inviting segregations of themselves in order to compel the segregation of the other two. God has made man one great human family. The white races of South Africa would make of it three separate parts.

We have come all the way from South Africa not to seek protection of individual or property rights, dear as both are, but we have come definitely to ask Your Excellency and the people of the mother country to appreciate the fight for equality of status, which is theirs as much as ours, and to give us as much help as possible for you and them to give. What is attempted to be done in South Africa is a denial of the brave declarations made by the British and even the F. M. himself.

It has given us much pleasure to learn that the withdrawal of the British power in India in favour of elected Indian representatives is imminent. Then we submit that it is Your Excellency's double and special duty to enunciate and so far as possible enforce that policy in no uncertain terms in connection with the question being submitted to you.

We submit that the least Your Excellency's Government can do is to withdraw the High Commissioner from South Africa and to enforce economic and political sanctions. We are not unaware that they may mean very little material loss to South Africa. We know that counter-measures will cause no hardship. But our loss we count as nothing compared to the moral value of the enforcement.²

From the original : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Not reproduced here

² *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 18-3-1946.

72. LETTER TO SORABJI RUSTOMJI

[After March 8,]¹ 1946

CHI. SORAB²,

Chi. Manilal met me. He does not wish to join the deputation. According to him, the deputation is a farce. Many of the members were drafted here. A deputation so composed can have place on it only for dummies. If that is so, what purpose will Manilal's inclusion serve? You and he are like blood-brothers, but there are differences between you two even in the method of work. What can be done in these circum-stances? So much from Manilal's point of view. But you also need to think. Do not involve me at all in this business unless it is perfectly above board. If Manilal is making a mistake, point it out to him and to me also. But if you yourself are making a mistake, wake up. In the matter of public work, I want to see you to be that. You are, of course, a man of bright intellect. Use it always to strengthen your spirit of service. The draft³ I have prepared deserves the most careful attention. Cling to it at all costs. Improve you health.

Blessing from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C. W. 1386—A Courtesy : Sushila Gandhi

73. FRAGMENT OF TALK WITH GOKULDAS D. RAICHURA⁴

[Before Mrch 9, 1946]⁵

I want to live for 125 years and, if God fulfils my wish, I want to create a new world in India.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati Samachar, 10-3-1946

¹ The source has "March 5"; but from the contents this letter appears to have been written after "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", *vide* "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", 8-3-1946

² Son of Parsee Rustomji

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁴ A Gujarati novelist

⁵ The talk was reported under the date-line "Baroda, March 9, 1946".

74. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

POONA,
March 9, 1946

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Permit Chi. Pyarelal to draw up to Rs. 25 every month as long as he wishes.

Leave the decision about Babudi¹ to herself. She has great love for Gordhandas, and that is as it ought to be. I have told her, too, that she can come to me whenever she wants.

How are things getting on there?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10649

75. LETTER TO PYARELAL

March 9, 1946

CHI. PYARELAL,

What is the remedy if you burn even in the shade ?

1. I will give you whatever time you want. Tell me how much, when ?

2. I have not written to the Ashram about your expenses. I did not know I had to do that. I only gave my approval. I shall write now.

3. Leave everything about Sushila to God. It will be enough if you do not write anything sarcastic.

4. Who was writing the prayer discourses ? If they are in Gujarati, dictate them to Sushila. If they are in Hindi, dictate to C.P.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ Addressee's daughter, Sharda Gordhandas Chokhawala

76. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

POONA,
March 9, 1946

CHI. MRIDU,

I have your letter. It seems you have become as old as I. I of course forget, and so do you. So we are both the same. Then who should remember for whom ?

I have written to Nimubehn.¹ Thank God you have become calm.

Where is the room in Jehangir Patel's house? Let us see. Improve your health. That is your first duty.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C. W. 11256. Courtesy : Sarabhai Foundation

77. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

POONA,
March 9, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have both your letters. Your mind is not stable. Has the Ashram now become worthless?² Is there not someone who is all right? If there is even a single person who is so, then know that it is good. Write to me frankly what is wrong there. I have told them to employ servants. But they are to be treated as brothers. This is one way to serve them. If this does not work, we ought to introduce some reform. If you permit, I shall send both the letters to Chimanlal and ask for an explanation.

Maganbhai must improve his health where he is. Krishnachandra can take work from those who want to work. They can refuse, and you can say no.

What should I do, if I send for you here? You can come over, if you very much want to. I do not know that Abha is going. My

¹ Nirmala Bakubhai

² The addressee had written to Gandhiji that in his absence she found the Sevagram Ashram empty.

staying here is not certain. I go to Bombay on the 29th. No patients are admitted here. Dr. Mehta is not on duty. He will be out of station. They have not yet started [the treatment] for the poor. You may go to your mother, if you wish.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 504

78. MESSAGE TO AGA KHAN¹

[On or before March 10, 1946]²

May you live for many years.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 17-3-1946

79. RAMANAMA, THE INFALLIBLE REMEDY³

Shri Ganesh Shastri Joshi, *vaidya*, tells me after reading my article on nature cure⁴ in Harijan of 3rd March, 1946, that in Ayurveda too there is ample testimony to the efficacy of Ramanama as a cure for all diseases. Nature cure occupies the place of honour and in it Ramanama is the most important. When Charaka⁵, Vagbhata⁶ and other giants of medicine in ancient India wrote, the popular name for God was not Rama but Vishnu. I myself have been a devotee of Tulsidas from my childhood and have, therefore, always, worshipped God as Rama. But I know that if, beginning with *Omkara* one goes through the entire gamut of God's names current in all climes, all countries and all languages, the result is the same. He and His Laws are one. To observe His Law is, there-fore, the best form of worship. A man who becomes one with the Law does not stand in

¹ According to report in *The Hindu*, 12-3-1946, Aga Khan celebrated "his diamond jubilee" on March 10, 1946. Gandhiji had expressed his inability to be present on the occasion; *vide* "Letter to Aga Khan", 10-2-1946

² *ibid*

³ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

⁴ *Vide* "Nature Cure Treatment"

⁵ Principal exponent of Ayurvedic system of medicine and author of *Charaka Samhita*

⁶ An ancient professor of Ayurveda

need of vocal recitation of the name. In other words an individual with whom contemplation of God has become as natural as breathing, is so filled with God's spirit that knowledge of observance of the Law becomes second nature as it were with him. Such a one needs no other treatment.

The question then arises as to why, in spite of having this prince of remedies at hand, we know so little about it, and why even those who know do not remember Him or remember Him only by lip-service, not from the heart. Parrot-like repetition of God's name signifies failure to recognize Him as the panacea for all ills.

How can they? This sovereign is not administered by doctors, *vaidyas*, hakims, or any other medical practitioners. These have no faith in it. If they were to admit that the spring of the Holy Ganges could be found in every home, their very occupation or means of livelihood would go. Therefore they must perforce rely on their powders and potions as infallible remedies. Not only do these provide bread for the doctor, but the patient too seems to feel immediate relief. If a medical practitioner can get a few persons to say 'So and so gave me a powder and I was cured', his business is established.

Nor, it must be borne in mind, would it really be of any use for doctors to prescribe God's name to patients unless they themselves were conscious of its miraculous powers. Ramanama is no copy-book maxim. It is something that has to be realized through experience. One who has had personal experience alone can prescribe it, not any other.

The *Vaidyaraj* has copied out for me four verses. Out of these Charaka's is the simplest and most apt. It means that if one were to obtain mastery over even one out of the thousand names of Vishnu, all ailments would vanish :

विष्णुं सहस्रमूर्धानं चराचरपतिं विभुम् ।

स्तुवन्नामसहस्रेण ज्वरान् सर्वान् व्यपोहति ॥¹

POONA, March 10, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

¹ *Charaka Chikitsa*, m, 311

80. LETTER TO SIR FREDERICK BURROWS

NATURE CURE CLINIC,
6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,
March 10, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

Your predecessor Mr. Casey purposely left for you a legacy and told me that you would have to deal yourself with the remaining political prisoners or detenus of Bengal.

I have no desire to worry you in the beginning stage of your career, but the letter¹ I have just received from important prisoners or detenus in Dum Dum jail encourages me to do so. The letter speaks for itself. I simply say by way of comment that it is a tragedy or, may I say, even a disgrace, to keep these people in jail without trial even on suspicion, however strong that may be. I plead for courageous wholesale release.²

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. SIR FREDERICK BURROWS
GOVERNOR OF BENGAL
CALCUTTA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 136-7

81. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

POONA,
March 10, 1946

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. You must learn to remain calm and composed everywhere and in all conditions. You have to sit daily with Anand³

¹ For extracts from the letter, *vide* "Letter from Security Prisoners", 17-1-1946

² Replying on March 19, the addressee, *inter alia*, said : "I am pursuing the policy of my predecessor though I think I may fairly claim to have speeded things up especially when account is taken of the fact that the persons still detained are those who have been regarded as the most dangerous. In the first fortnight of March, sixty-one detenus were released, and the number still held in detention on the 15th March was 115. This figure will be substantially reduced by the end of the month."

³ Addressee's son

regularly for one hour at least and help him with lessons without getting impatient. In this way at least at that time, at meal-times and during walks, he will regularly get you company.

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 10066. Courtesy : Sharda G. Chokhawala

82. *LETTER TO ANAND G. CHOKHAWALA*

*[March 10, 1946]*¹

CHI. ANAND²,

You must start writing to me now. I hope you will now learn to be a good boy. Have you started eating vegetables regularly?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 10066. Courtesy : Sharda G. Chokhawala

83. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

POONA,

March 10, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I got your letter. I tore it up. If Maganbhai cannot bear the heat, he may go home. If he sits in the tub for long hours, he may be able to bear the heat. You have to go to your mother. You will get enough work in Kanu's camp. Anyway a silent and sincere worker will always have some work to do. Spinning should be regarded as no mean work.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 505

84. *LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

POONA,

March 11, 1946

MY DEAR C. R.,

It is just 6.15 a. m. I am to be off to Bombay by 7.30 a. m.

¹ This and the preceding item appear on the same sheet.

² *ibid*

If we discover a mistake, must we continue it?¹ We began making love in English—a mistake. Must it express itself only by repeating the initial mistake? You have cake and eat it also.

Love is love under a variety of garbs—even when the lovers are dumb. Probably it is fullest when it is speechless. I had thought, under its gentle unfelt compulsion, you will easily glide into Hindustani and thus put the necessary finishing touch to your service of Hindustani. But let it be as you will, not I.²

I do not like your despondence. You have to be thoroughly well. Why not come to me? I hope to return in five or six days.

This *tamasha* will vanish leaving the water of life cleaner for the agitation. If it does not, what then?

*Anbudan*³.

BAPU

From a photostat : G. N. 2118

85. LETTER TO SONJA SCHLESIN

POONA,

March 11, 1946

DEAR MISS SCHLESIN⁴,

You never write for the sake of writing. But the letter before me is the first such.

A highly industrial system under capitalism and full employment are incompatible.

Your proposition about Manilal needs revision. But all such

¹ In *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, “Letter to Dadabhai Naoroji”, 14-7-1894 Pyarelal explains that the addressee in his letter dated March 3 had said : “Your Nagari is so illegible that I have only with great difficulty gathered what you wished to tell me. . . . It won’t do to discard what we both know well and adopt deliberately a difficult medium except occasionally as a joke! I shall begin replying in Tamil, if you write to me in illegible Nagari!”

² Replying on March 13, the addressee said : “Regarding Hindustani I plead guilty and ask for mitigation. Old age (not youth) being the excuse. But don’t argue further. Your very sweetness makes me feel so guilty.”

³ These words are in Tamil. However, the source has *ambudan*, a slip for *anbudan* which means ‘with love’. Vide also “Letter to C. Rajagopalachari”, 5-3-1946

⁴ Gandhiji’s secretary in South Africa

things when we meet, if we do.

The rest from the papers and Manilal.

Love.

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

86. *SHOCKING IF TRUE*¹

The Joint Secretary of the Gujarat Harijan Sevak Singh, Shri Hemantkumar, writes that apart from Karadi nowhere are temples open to Harijans, and nowhere may they use public wells.

If this is true, I may say it is a good thing that I have been unable to go to Bardoli.² How can those Gujaratis, who do not look upon Harijans as part and parcel of themselves, who do not permit them to draw water from public wells nor enter temples for the worship of God, who even attribute epidemics to Harijans³ and are prepared to beat them for practices which superstition attributes to them, how can they welcome me? Or what value can their welcome hold for me?

I have long since counted myself as Bhangi in my speech, in my actions and above all in mind and spirit. Anyone who looks upon them with contempt does the same to me. Indeed I hold it an honour to be among the despised Harijans and among the Bhangis. Any welcome to me under the circumstances would be tantamount to an insult.

Therefore I make this request to Gujaratis that they atone for the grievous wrong they continue to do to fellow human beings. I shall consider their repentance adequate when they admit Harijans into their fold, and only then will I consider them capable of maintaining swaraj. I do hope that the people of Bardoli Taluka will understand and respond to my message in a special manner.

BOMBAY, March 11, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared under "Notes" as "from" *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

² *Vide* "Regret"

³ *Vide* "Persecution of Harijans"

87. QUESTION BOX¹

Q. You ask people not to eat polished rice but I fear the disease is too far gone. Polished rice is washed again and again and the water thrown away. It is then boiled and that water too is emptied into the drain thus depriving the cereal of all its vitamin value. The rice thus served, with each grain separate, is pleasant for both the eye and the palate. The practice obtains even in students' hostels. How are we to get rid of it?

A. I am aware of the above-mentioned malpractice. We live in the poorest of poor countries and are yet unable or unwilling to give up such harmful habits. Each one thinks only of himself. We look upon our neighbours as strangers instead of as our kith and kin. What does it matter to us whether they live or die? If they die, it is their own fault. If they live, it is accredited to their merit. Life and death are not in our hands. Therefore let us eat, drink and be merry!

In such a distorted view of life, we have to follow what we consider to be our duty and believe that what is true will one day be followed. Until then, whenever occasion arises, we must proclaim from the house-tops what we consider to be right.

Q. You say that those who eat fish should be provided with the same. Does not this entail violence both for him who eats and him who provides the fish ?

A. Both commit violence. So do those who eat vegetabes. This kind of violence is inherent in all embodied life, therefore, in man too. It is in this condition, and in spite of it, that we have to practise non-violence as a duty. I have often indicated how we may do so. Then man who coerces another not to eat fish commits more violence than he who eats it. Fishermen, fish-vendors and fish-eaters are probably unaware of any violence in their action. Even if they were, they might look upon it as unavoidable. But the man who uses coercion is guilty of deliberate violence. Coercion is inhuman. Those who quarrel among themselves, those who will stoop to anything in order to amass wealth, those who exploit or indulge in forced human labour, those who overload or goad or otherwise torture animals, all these knowingly commit such violence as can easily be stopped. I do not consider

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this apperared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

it violence to permit the fish eater to eat fish. It is my duty to suffer it. Ahimsa is the highest duty. Even if we cannot practise it in full, we must try to understand its spirit and refrain, as far as is humanly possible, from violence.

BOMBAY, March 11, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

88. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY*¹

March 11, 1946

The news of the recent events in Bombay has filled me with shame and humiliation as it must have you too. Let me hope that none of those who are here took part in these disgraceful happenings. but that would not entitle you to my congratulations. We have reached a stage when no-body can afford to sit on the fence or take refuge in the 'ambiguous mid-dle'. One has to speak out and stand up for one's convictions. Inaction at a time of conflagration is inexcusable. Is it too difficult an ideal to follow? Let me tell you, however, that this is the only course that will take us safely through the present difficult times.

It has become the fashion these days to ascribe all such ugly manifestations to the activities of hooligans. It hardly becomes us to take refuge in that moral alibi. Who are the hooligans after all? They are our own contrymen and, so long as any countryman of ours indulges in such acts, we cannot disown responsibility for them consistently with our claim that we are one people. It matters little whether those who were responsbile for the happenings are denounced as *goondas* or praised as patriots—praise and blame must equally belong to us all. The only manly and becoming course for those who are aspiring to be free is to accept either whilst doing our duty.

In eating, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the brute. What distinguishes him from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane. Mankind is at the cross-roads. It has to make its choice between the law of the judgle and the law of humanity. We in India deliberately adopted the latter twenty-five years back but, I am afraid,

¹ This appeared under the title "For Shame!". The meeting was held at Rungta House.

that whilst we profess to follow the higher way, our practice has not always conformed to our profession. We have always proclaimed from the house-tops that non-violence is the way of the brave, but there are some amongst us who have brought ahimsa into disrepute by using it as a weapon of the weak. In my opinion, to remain a passive spectator of the kind of crimes that Bombay has witnessed of late is cowardice. Let me say in all humility that ahimsa belongs to the brave. Pritam¹ has sung : “The way of the Lord is for the brave, not for the coward.” By the way of the Lord is here meant the way of non-violence and truth. I have said before that I do not envisage God other than truth and non-violence. If you have accepted the doctrine of ahimsa without a full realization of its implications, you are at liberty to repudiate it. I believe in confessing one’s mistakes and correcting them. Such confession strengthens one and purifies the soul. Ahimsa calls for the strength and courage to suffer without retaliation, to receive blows without returning any. But that does not exhaust its meaning. Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly. We have to cultivate that courage, if we are to win India’s independence through truth and non-violence as proclaimed by the Congress. It is an ideal worth living for and dying for. Every one of you who has accepted that ideal should feel that inasmuch as a single English woman or child is assaulted, it is a challenge to your creed of non-violence, and you should protect the threatened victim even at the cost of your life. Then alone you will have the right to sing : “The way of the Lord is for the brave, not for the coward.” To attack defenceless English women and children, because one has a grievance against the present Government, hardly becomes a human being.

The British Cabinet Ministers’ Delegation will soon be in our midst. To suspect their *bona fides* in advance would also be a variety of weakness. As brave people it is our duty to take at its face value the declaration of the British Ministers that they are coming to restore to India what is her due. If a debtor came to your house in contrition to repay his debt, would it not be your duty to welcome him? On the other hand, would it not be unmanly to treat him with insult and humiliation in remembrance of past injustice? Let the British

¹ A Gujarati poet

Government prove for the final time that they do not mean to act according to their professions. It will be time to act, if they do so. Till then the only manly course is to maintain dignified silence.¹

Harijan, 7-4-1946

89. TO PATIENTS

Letters are being received in large numbers from patients wanting to be admitted to the Nature Cure Clinic at Poona. Let me inform them that no such facility exists at present. The standard of cleanliness that was intended to be introduced into the institution has not been reached. Work for the village people has not yet been started. So long as the preliminary adaptations are not complete, nothing can be done. The patients have, therefore, to wait. Dr. Dins-haw Mehta's Nature Cure Clinic at Bombay is no doubt there. He may open branches at Poona and Sinhagarh also. But since he has undertaken heavy responsibility in connection with the Nature Cure Trust, all this may take time. For private patients the scale of his fees will continue as before.

BOMBAY, March 12, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

90. QUESTION BOX

Q. You have declared that freedom seems to be near. But I cannot follow the point. The Pakistan problem is only one complication against you.

A. Hope knows no insurmountable complications. But why ask, when the answer will be known within a few months, if not weeks. And I am not the only optimist this time.

BOMBAY, March 12, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

91. LETTER TO AGA KHAN

BOMBAY,
March 12, 1946

BHAISAHEB,

I have your letter dated March 4, 1946. Thank you. How can people like you be remiss in growing trees? When I was a prisoner in the Transvaal, my batch was made to dig up a patch of rocky soil. A

¹ According to a report in *The Hindu*, 13-3-1946, after prayer Gandhiji declined requests for his autograph; he, however, agreed to give it the next day.

beautiful garden now stands there. If only there is water, then food-grains, vegetables or fodder can be easily grown on any kind of soil. I wish you would be the first to start this venture. In the Birla's mansion here they have laid out a garden after covering the terrace with earth. Now they think of growing vegetables, etc., there.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

92. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY

March 12, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking at the conclusion of the prayers this evening, made a reference to the collection of money and ornaments during his recent tour of Bengal¹ and Madras². He said that he had recently been on a long tour of Bengal, Assam and Madras, and passed through Orissa when he came back to Wardha. A large number of sisters and brothers gave him ornaments and money for the Harijan Fund. He collected them every day. But today, he said, somebody had given him some presents which he wanted to auction. He demanded that they should have to pay double the price of those presents.³

Mahatma Gandhi announced that he would not sign autographs this evening and asked the seekers of his autographs to send their books with a sum of Rs. 5 per autographs to him later.

The Hindu, 14-3-1946

¹ From December 1, 1945 to January 19, 1946

² From January 21 to February 4, 1946

³ At this stage the loud-speaker arrangement failed, and Gandhiji had to curtail his speech. Kanu Gandhi then auctioned a silver charkha and a silver flask, which fetched Rs. 250 and Rs. 200 respectively.

93. TALK WITH SHAH NAWAZ KHAN AND P.K. SEHGAL¹

March 12/13, 1946²

Gandhiji repeated to them the advice³ he had previously given to some discharged I.N.A. men who had met him in Madras. He had told them that it should be derogatory to the dignity and self-respect of a soldier to live upon charity. The ideal which they should set before themselves was to earn their bread by honest industry. The I. N. A. Relief-Fund was there but it would be wrong to use it for providing doles. He described to them how in South Africa he had provided relief to dependents of satyagrahi prisoners by settling them on Tolstoy Farm where they had to labour according to capacity. The merit of this method was that it could be multiplied to any degree without proving costly and burdensome. The real test of the I. N. A., he told them, was to come only now. In the fighting line there was the romance and incitement, not so in civil life. The country was today faced with the spectre of famine. Would they help the people to fight it with the same courage, cohesion, doggedness and resourcefulness which they had shown on the battlefield? Would they show the same diligence, mastery and skill in handling the spade, the pickaxe and the hoe as they did in shouldering the rifle? Digging of wells and breaking stony ground to grow food, and plying the wheel and the shuttle to clothe the naked was the nation's need today. Would they respond to the call? They had physical stamina, discipline and, what was more, a feeling of solidarity and oneness, untainted by narrow communalism. All that ought to put them in a singular position of vantage for introducing non-violent discipline and organization among the masses. Constructive activity could absorb every one of the I. N. A. men who was willing and worthy of his name. If they took up that work, not one of them need or would remain unemployed.⁴

Harijan, 31-3-1946

¹ The talk is extracted from Pyarelal's "Ideals for the I. N. A."; Pyarelal explains: "I. N. A. men . . . were anxious . . . to distinguish themselves in national service on the non-violent lines but unless they were suitably absorbed in civil activities and properly guided they might be exploited and led into devious ways by unscrupulous agencies. . . ."

² From a report under the date-line "Bombay, March 12" in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13-3-1946, which read: "Maj. Shah Nawaz Khan and Capt. P. K. Sehgal . . . had about 90 minutes' talk with Gandhiji at Birla House tonight. The talk . . . will be continued tomorrow evening."

³ Vide "Advice to Indian National Army Men", 22-1-1946

⁴ According to a report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14-3-1946; P. K. Sehgal told the United Press of India that Gandhiji would "still believe" in his heart of hearts that Subhas Chandra Bose was alive.

94. HIGH-HANDEDNESS EXPOSED

The Bombay High Court has just delivered an illuminating judgment, allowing two habeas corpus applications of H. K. Shah and B. E. Sathe against detention orders extended from time to time. Chief Justice Stone and Justice Lokur have delivered a considered judgment setting at liberty the two applicants who were evidently illegally detained and might have remained under detention but for the fact that Advocate Purushottam Trikumdas assisted them to bring their cases before the Bombay High Court. I have just time to give below the few important extracts from the judgment.

After observing that the two affidavits filed by Mr. Simms, Home Secretary, Government of Bombay, in relation to the two accused cannot be distinguished from each other except for the numbers at the tops, the learned judges go on to say :

In the case of Mr. Sathe, there is no suggestion in the reasons given that he assisted or supported any underground organization or organized anything underground, though it is suggested that he assisted the activities of an organization, the object of which was to commit acts of sabotage, and even if it is to be presumed that such an organization would work underground, the very fact that these two affidavits of Mr. Simms are in identical terms, though they deal with the circumstances of two different cases, demonstrates a very casual approach to the grave responsibilities and duties, which devolve on every Government servant charged with these wide powers of detention without trial.

In Gokhale's case, a full bench of this High Court had occasion to comment upon detention orders being made on cyclostyled forms inappropriate to the facts of the particular case, and it now appears that, unless checked, the era of the cyclostyled affidavits is about to dawn. Even passing over such irregular features in Mr. Simms's affidavits as referring to an affidavit without stating whose affidavit it is he refers to, his affidavit does not even state that all the circumstances of the petitioner's case were fully considered before the extension orders of the 7th January, 1946, were made.

Commenting upon the further affidavit of Mr. Simms which he filed after declining to attend the court in order to submit himself to cross-examination, the judges observe :

That is a very remarkable document for anyone to file who has been given an opportunity by the Court to attend the Court in order to give *viva voce*

evidence. It is even more remarkable by its omission than by what it says, for it leaves unchallenged the affidavits for the 22nd February of the two petitioners filed in answer to Mr. Simms's two affidavits which are in identical terms, and which the last affidavit seeks to amend.

Referring to the extension orders, the learned judges go on to observe :

But once the original order has run its course, the legislature has provided certain safeguards for the protection of the persons detained. Before the six months expired, the person detained will have received the notice giving him the grounds for his detention, and he may have a representation under Section 7. The extension order itself has to be made within thirty days immediately preceding the expiry of the previous order and, lastly, there is added to subjective satisfaction an objective test that the detaining authority shall have further considered all the circumstances of the case. In our opinion emphasis is to be placed on the word "all", and the question at once arises what is the nature of "all the circumstances" which have to be considered. That must be a question of law.

[Upholding]¹ the defence plea that the detaining authority had not considered all the circumstances of the case, the judges observe :

Mr. Purushottam Trikumdas advanced various heads of circumstances which he submits is obligatory for the detaining authority to consider. In our opinion it is clear that such circumstances must include :

1. A consideration of the matters and things which the detenu did, or was suspected of doing, when the original order was made.
2. These matters and things must be considered in conjunction with, and in the highlight of, the present state of affairs. That is to say, the state of affairs existing in India at the date when the proposed extension order is to be made.
3. A consideration of any representation which the person detained may have made under Section 7 (4), and consideration of the person detained since his detention, and the present state of his health.

Turning again to the circumstances of the two cases before us, having given the whole position our careful consideration, we are not prepared to accept the affidavits of Mr. Simms filed on either of these petitions as affording any reliable answer to the assertion of the petitioners that all the circumstances of their cases have not been considered in the light of the state of the state of affairs current in India on the 7th January, 1946. On that date,

¹ The source has "Holding that".

as the petitioners point out, there was no successful prosecution of a war for the mass movement to hinder, and the various committees of the Congress, previously unlawful, had been legalized, and the members of the Working Committee of the Congress Party and its leader had been released from detention. These are all circumstances which already ought to have been considered before the renewal orders of the 7th January, 1946, were made.

The judges then draw attention to the fact that Mr. Simms did not state that H. E. the Governor had considered the papers and agreed to the extension orders of 7th January, 1946, being made. The judges say :

It is extremely significant that His Excellency did not consider and agree to the making of these extension orders though he had considered and agreed to the making of all the orders in both the cases in 1944 and 1945. If he had done so when the orders of the 7th January, 1946 were made, it is inconceivable that Mr. Simms should not have stated that most important fact which is bound to inspire confidence that any order which has been so considered and agreed to has been made after due care, attention and consideration.

Therefore they hold that the two petitioners have

successfully challenged the two extension orders of the 7th of January as not being validly made, because, having referred to the facts stated by the petitioners, it is impossible to come to the conclusion that the detaining authority complied with the objective test of having considered all the circumstances of the petitioners' cases. . . . That being so, it is our clear duty to order their immediate release.

In my opinion the released men are entitled to damages for illegal detention. This, however, may be debatable. But there can be no doubt that all persons similarly detained, no matter in which province, should immediately be discharged without a doubt. There is no danger of the Government being overturned by reason of the discharges.

BOMBAY, March 13, 1946

Harijan, 17-3-1946

95. LETTER TO J. S. DREWE

BIRLA HOUSE, BOMBAY,

March 13, 1946

DEAR MR. DREWE,

I am desired by Gandhiji to thank you for your letter¹ of the 9th instant, in reply to his of the 1st. He will look forward to the opportunity of seeing the grounds of Ganeshkhind one day with His Excellency.

Yours sincerely,

AMRIT KAUR

J. S. DREWE, ESQ. I.C.S.

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

BOMBAY

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 154

96. LETTER TO ANANTRAI P. PATTANI

BOMBAY,

March 13, 1946

BHAI ANANTRAI,

I have your letter of the 7th.

1. It will have to be ascertained whether the Peasant Relief Fund has any authority to donate the amount for such a purpose. There are likely to be some documents relating to it.

2. I think three members on the Trust will suffice. The chief thing will be to see that the majority should be representatives of the [All-India] Village Industries Association. It will be for Kumarappa² to consider whether the members should be three or five. The whole plan is his. I have given no thought to it at all.

3. I can understand the stipulation that if the Village Industries Association does not wish to run the project, everything should be returned to the State³. The Trustees of the Association will not say

¹ *Vide* footnote 4, "Letter to Private Secretary to Governor of Bombay", 1-3-1946

² J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary, A.I.V.I.A.

³ Bhavnagar State, of which the addressee was Dewan

that they cannot run it. It will be for the others, that is, the State, to say that the former are not able to run it. I cannot welcome, and nobody should welcome, such a position in any circumstances.

The papers with me mention the annual grant to be of the order of Rs. 28,600, and that for a period between five and ten years. I think further clarification on this point can be given only by Bhai Kumarappa and Bahi Jhaverbhai¹. Hence I can say nothing in this matter. I cannot go into the details, nor do I wish to do so just now.

I hope you keep good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9559

97. LETTER TO JHAVERBHAI PATEL

BOMBAY,

March 13, 1946

CHI. JHAVERBHAI,

I got the papers sent by you. I have written² to Pattani Saheb and a copy of the letter is enclosed.

I doubt very much whether you will be able to carry out this project. If the people and Government of Bhavnagar State do not fully co-operate with you, the buildings will remain empty and be a burden on you. I know that this has happened before.

If Bhai Kumarappa and you have not taken care to enlist the support of the people and are banking on the State Government's help, think over the project again.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I cannot say much about Gujarat. But I would suggest that you should do nothing without Sardar's fullest consent.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9558

¹ Jhaverbhai Patel

² *Vide* the preceding item.

98. A LETTER

BOMBAY,

March 13, 1946

Even if Chi. Nalin wishes to embark on the venture by himself, I would not advise him to join in this project. Nanabhai¹ also should consider it from the same point of view. This is my view. However, I will not interfere with any decision you two may arrive at. As for myself, you will have to bear this in mind, namely, that I have made a rule in so far as Gujarat is concerned. I will take interest only in such work as has the fullest approval of Sardar Patel. I have been acting on this rule from the beginning, and I have advised others to do the same. Hence you should obtain Sardar's approval, if you have not already done so. I will not mention this matter to the Sardar even if he is here, for I have no time for that.

I have snatched some time with the utmost difficulty to write these few letters.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9557

99. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

BOMBAY,

March 13, 1946

BHAI PRAKASAM,

I have your letter dated 2-3-1946 as well as the papers. The papers were not necessary.

I did not say I saw nothing wrong in your using the money for your own purpose. I do not have here the copy of my earlier letter. But as far as I remember I had said that Kala Venkatarao had expressed that opinion. Read the letter again. In my view, it is wrong to take money like that for personal expenses. Be that as it may, it is your duty to explain your position to the public. I am hearing bad reports.

Sardar has sent me copies of your letters and his reply. I think Sardar's reply is appropriate.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ Nrisinhprasad K. Bhatt

100. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY¹

March 13, 1946

Gandhiji explained a certain *bhajan*² —God's path is that of a brave man. He said that the words God and Truth were synonymous. Of the million names of God, the best and the choicest was Truth.

Truth itself is God, and non-violence is just a synonym for truth.³

People ought to be prepared to uphold truth and non-violence at all costs, even at the cost of death, just as they would be prepared to sacrifice their lives for God, as was stated in the *bhajan*.

Briefly referring to the recent disturbance in Bombay, he said that those who were responsible for looting did it in ignorance and under misguidance. They did not do it of their own free will. Gandhiji said, he would not call them hooligans.⁴ In Bombay much violence was indulged in recently and many shops were looted. Nothing would be gained by such violence and looting. On the other hand, only truth and non-violence would achieve the freedom of India.

In the end, Gandhiji exhorted the audience to pray to God so that He may grant them strength and determination to die in the cause of the country.

Earlier Gandhiji asked for the approval of the audience, if he could speak in Hindustani at tomorrow evening's prayers and day after's. He offered the option of Gujarati. But the approval of the audience went in favour of Hindustani.

The Bombay Chronicle, 14-3-1946; also *The Hindu*, 15-3-1946

101. CONVENIENCE v. NECESSITY

One whom many Congressmen know writes :⁵

As I was talking with you, I realized how greatly you were worried about the condition of the masses today. . . . I find that during the last five to six years, conflicting experiences have only strengthened my faith in non-violence. . . to

¹ Held at Rungta House

² A Gujarati Composition by Pritam

³ This and the following paragraph are reproduced from *The Hindu*.

⁴ The rest of the paragraph is reproduced from *The Hindu*.

⁵ Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

thousands like me, non-violence has become the Life Force that alone is capable of creating democracy and humanity. Our non-violence now is a matter of conviction and not a matter of convenience or cowardice.

But then there are others who. . . are still thinking in terms of power and organization for power. I personally feel that that is a phase in their development. . .

There are also many that are confused with this game of politics and find it difficult to square it with the non-violent way or are rather confused by the spectacle of many attempting to square non-violence with the game of politics. . .

I feel that we are fighting a war for humanity and. . . that only with rugged fearless experience, and perhaps a few stumblings, shall we be able to grow into non-violence.

Perhaps there are many who experience my difficulties.

BOMBAY, March 14, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

102. COMMUNAL UNITY AND NON-UNTOUCHABILITY IN THE I. N. A.

The Azad Hind movement in East Asia solved many problems. And one of them was the major and intricate problem of communal unity. Although efforts towards this direction were made ever since the inception of the movement in 1942, it became a reality only after the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. There was another question and that was of untouchability, though on a minor scale. . . . Anyhow this ill too was remedied as a result of universal training of Indians in the I.N.A. camps and offices after Netaji's arrival. . . . Netaji had asked for 'total mobilization' for the coming armed struggle for India's freedom. To this call . . . all sections of the community. . . offered their service as . . . volunteers. Some of these volunteers were absorbed in the Azad Hind Sangh, the party behind the Azad Hind Fauj and the Azad Hind Government. Others—a majority of the volunteers—joined the ranks of the Fauj. The Sangh had a network of branches throughout East Asia. In every branch workers consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. . . lived together ate, at the same table and worked together. Same was the case in the Indian National Army. . . .

Note : Except for repetitions, the foregoing¹ is published as it was received. The information is revealing. The natural question is: Now that these soldiers have returned, will the same comradeship persist? It ought to.

BOMBAY, March 14, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

103. TELEGRAM TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

BOMBAY,

March 14, 1946

ANAND HINGORANI

CARE TANDON

10 SOUTH ROAD

ALLAHABAD

YOUR LETTERS RECEIVED. REPLY SENT.

BAPU

From a microfilm. Courtesy : National Archives of India, and Anand T. Hingorani

104. MEMORANDUM ON INTERVIEW TO G.E.B. ABELL²

March 14, 1946

I understand H. E.'s proposal to be this : "He, as President, and Qaid-e-Azam³ Jinnah, possibly Nawabsaheb of Bhopal and I should control and regulate food situation." I told you that the situation created by the acceptance of the proposal would be unreal and, therefore, defeat the purpose in view. Then you asked whether I could see the possibility of Maulana A. K. Azad being invited to work with me assisting him. I said, there might be a possibility in it, I being regarded as an expert in such matters. But I added that everything else without an executive of elected representatives was tinkering with the serious situation involving the fate of

¹ Of which only extracts are reproduced here

² This was an enclosure to "Letter to G.E.B. Abell", March 14, 1946; *vide* the following item. Abell met Gandhiji on March 13.

³ Meaning "supreme leader"

millions of hunger-stricken villagers.¹

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 150

**105. TELEGRAM TO JOINT SECRETARY, HINDU SANGHA
SAMSKARANA SAMAJ, NELLORE²**

BOMBAY,
March 14, 1946

NO LEGAL FORMALITY REQUIRED OPENING TEMPLE. YOU SHOULD SEE
RAMULU.³

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

106. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

BOMBAY,
March 14, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

Although you said I need not put down anything in writing, and I gladly accepted the dispensation, I thought, when I had slept over the

¹ According to *The Transfer of Power, 1942-47*, "Letter to Mrs. Freeth", 8-11-1906 in his dispatch dated March 15 to the Secretary of State of India, the Viceroy, *inter alia*, said : "I sent Abell to Bombay to see Gandhi, and he saw him on the 13th evening. That day Working Committee had decided that an Advisory Committee on food would be useless without a popular Government at Centre and that Congress should not co-operate. Gandhi . . . reminded Abell of long dispute about representative capacity during his conversations at Bombay with Jinnah. He was determined not to be representative of Congress and he admitted that if Azad was put up by Congress, Jinnah would never accept. Abell suggested that willingness of Gandhi and Jinnah to . . . discuss . . . in the interest of India . . . would augur well for immediate future. Gandhi said, if he thought it right to do this, he would do it, but his instinct was strongly against it I see no use pursuing matter further and shall drop it with minimum publicity. . . . In incidental conversation, Gandhi said to Abell that Jinnah could certainly have for his Pakistan the genuine Moslem areas."

² In reply to the addressee's telegram of March 13, 1946, which read : "Trustees approached. Harijan Temple entry favoured. Legal formalities require time. Pray advise Sriramulu break fast."

³ Potti Sriramulu, a Congressman from Nellore who fasted unto death in 1952 for a separate Andhra State.

conversation, that I ought not to be lazy, and should reduce to writing the propositions we discussed. Here is the memo¹ containing them which I hope I have correctly remembered.²

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 149

107. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

BOMBAY,

March 14, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

Many thanks for your kind note.³ The reason for my putting in writing my impression of our talk was only to guard against any misunderstanding about the position. I would not like to put you or me in any false position and certainly not H. E. As it is you will agree with me that it was good I write out my own understanding of the message you had brought me. Of course I have no intention of publishing anything. I have to say something to the Working Committee in a general way, nothing to the Press.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 151

108. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY⁴

March 14, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi thanked the gathering for the atmosphere of silence and calm in which the prayers were conducted.⁵

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² In his reply of even date, the addressee said : “ I have explained to Pyarelal that my own summary of what was said last night would differ a little from yours. . . H. E. would prefer that we should not commit ourselves to writing because of the danger of its leading at some stage or other to recriminations. . . . I will make clear to him the reasons you gave for being unable to accept the proposal.”

³ *Vide* footnote 3, “Letter to G. E. B. Abell”, 14-3-1946

⁴ This appeared under Pyarelal's “Satyagraha—the Art of Living and Dying” as “gist” of Gandhiji's “important address in Hindustani” at Shivaji Park. The text has been collated with version of the speech published in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15-3-1946, and in *The Hindu*, 16-3-1946.

⁵ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

The singing of *Ramdhun* is the most important part of congregational prayer. The millions may find it difficult to correctly recite and understand the *Gita* verses and the Arabic and Zend-Avesta prayers, but everybody can join in chanting Ramanama or God's name. It is as simple as it is effective. Only it must proceed from the heart. In its simplicity lies its greatness and the secret of its universality. Anything that millions can do together becomes charged with a unique power.

I congratulate you on your success in the mass singing of *Ramdhun* without any previous training. But it is capable of further improvement. You should practise it in your homes. I am here to testify that when it is sung in tune to the accompaniment of *tala*, the triple accord of the voice, the accompaniment and thought creates an atmosphere of ineffable sweetness and strength which no words can describe.

Gandhiji said that my prayer, will-power and mental concentration were developed. This lesson he had learnt during his experience over many years, from the time he first started satyagraha.¹

I introduced the practice of having congregational prayer some time before the commencement of the South African satyagraha struggle.

He said that in India there were only a few foreigners, and the native population numbered millions. Yet the former dominated over the latter. In South Africa, on the other hand, Indians were few while Europeans and the natives there numbered several millions.²

The Indian community there was faced with a grave peril. We did all that was humanly possible. All methods of seeking redress, agitation through the Press and the platform, petitions and deputations were tried but proved of no avail. What was the Indian community consisting of a mere handful of illiterate indentured labourers mostly, with a sprinkling of free merchants, hawkers, etc., to do in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Negroes and whites? The whites were fully armed.

What could a handful of Indians . . . do against the armed might of the South African Government? The utmost that they could do was to plead with the Government in power. The richer sections might even send deputations to England.

¹ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

² This paragraph is from *The Hindu*.

Beyond that they could not go. In these circumstances there was nothing that one could do. He could not give guns in the hands of this handful of men and say : “Fight”. He could not drill them into an army and then parade them.¹

It was clear that if the Indians were to come into their own, they must forge a weapon which would be different from, and infinitely superior to, the force which the white settlers commended in such ample measure. It was then that I introduced congregational prayer in Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm as a means for a training in the use of the weapon of satyagraha or soul-force.

As a practising satyagrahi and the author of satyagrahas, he could say that its seed lay in prayers. Satyagraha could be pitted against all earthly powers for it was a divine power.²

The root of satyagraha is in prayer. A satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against the tyranny of brute force. Why should you then be always afraid of the British or anybody playing you false? If someone deceives you, he will be the loser. The fight of satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid. Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying. Birth and death are inevitable among mortals.

These higher attributes of how to live worthily and lay down one’s life nobly, were what satyagraha could teach man. A person who did not understand these twin arts was no true satyagrahi.³ In the vast world every creature had to live, work and die. It was a very common phenomenon. But these creatures could not realize the potent force that could be derived from God. That was because they did not know the art of sacrificing their lives, which satyagraha involved.

Gandhiji said that so far as purely animal functions like eating and breeding and living and dying were concerned, there was no difference between man and beast and birds. But man rose above them all, for he alone could recognize the good and the true, he alone could realize God.⁴

What distinguishes the man from the brute is his conscious striving to realize the spirit within. The last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the *Gita* which are recited at the prayer give in a nutshell the secret of the art of living. It is given there in the form of a description of a *sthitaprajna* or the man of steady wisdom, i. e., a satyagrahi, in reply to Arjuna’s query to Lord Krishna.

The art of dying follows as a corollary from the art of living.

¹ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

² This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

³ These two sentences are from *The Bombay Chronicle*. The rest of the paragraph is from *The Hindu*.

⁴ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

Death must come to all. A man may die of a lightning stroke or as a result of a heart failure or failure of respiration. But that is not the death that a satyagrahi can wish for or pray for himself. The art of dying for a satyagrahi consists in facing death cheerfully in the performance of one's duty. That is an art which the people of Bombay apparently have not yet learnt.

Referring to the mutiny of the ratings of the R. I. N. in Bombay and the disturbances that followed, Mahatma Gandhi said that everything that was done during these days was motivated by a desire for freedom. But those who took part in these did not know the art of satyagraha. Unfortunately many buildings were looted and burnt, many people were assaulted and many died.¹

Judged from these standards, the men who died in the recent disturbances had thrown away their lives. It was a waste of many lives. There was nothing worthy or artistic in looting ships, and exercising violence on the foreigners who were going about their business. The men who did it were no satyagrahis. The men who looked on without helping were also no satyagrahis.

It is not enough not to want to hurt or take the life of your enemy. You are no satyagrahis, if you remain silent or passive spectators while your enemy is being done to death. You must protect him even at the cost of your life. If thousands in India learnt that art, the face of India would be changed and no one would be able to point his finger of scorn at her non-violence as being a cloak for weakness. We would not then try to shift blame for ugly happenings on the hooligan elements. We would convert and control the hooligan elements too.

We are passing through a crisis in our history. Danger besets us on all sides. But we shall convert it into our opportunity, if we realize the power of satyagraha than which there is nothing more potent on earth.²

In a brief reference to the impending Cabinet Mission to India, the Mahatma counselled patience. He would indicate the next step, if the mission failed to implement the pledges and promises made to India.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ This paragraph is from *The Hindu*, and the one that follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

² What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

109. THOUGHTLESSNESS¹

[Q.] You are aware that *pari passu* with the growth of popular outbreaks, the lawlessness of the military is also becoming more and more brutal. You have condemned the hooliganism of the masses but you say nothing about the brutality of the military.

[A.] This is a specimen of thoughtlessness. People have no right to commit excesses whereas the military is the very embodiment of madness. Condemnation of military madness would be meaningless when the very institution of the army is condemned. But criticism of their conduct becomes necessary as a warning to the Government. There is a time and occasion for everything. It would be out of place when condemning popular excesses.

What is the duty of a satyagrahi general? Should he reform his own army or that of the opponent? If he reforms his own, the power of the opposing force is sterilized. If the process continues over a sufficiently long period, the opponent is *ipso facto* completely transformed. The critic's remark can only be meant for me. Others have already condemned military excesses. In my opinion, we have not as yet got sufficient material to judge them. I expect that this is being prepared. The duty of the people, however, is to turn the searchlight inwards. Too much brooding over the wrongs of others is apt to lead one imperceptibly to act likewise. It would then be a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

BOMBAY, March 15, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

110. "A TEMPLE TO GANDHIJI"

Under this strange heading I read a newspaper cutting sent by a correspondent to the effect that a temple has been erected where my image is being worshipped. This I consider to be a gross form of idolatry. The person who erected the temple has wasted his resources by misusing them, the villagers who are drawn there are misled, and I am being insulted in that the whole of my life has been caricatured in that temple. The meaning that I have given to worship is distorted. Worship of the charkha lies in plying it for a living or as a sacrifice for ushering in swaraj. The *Gita* is worshipped not by parrot-like recitation but by following its teaching. Recitation is good and proper only as an aid to action according to its teaching. A man is worshipped only to the extent that he is followed, not in his weaknesses but

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared under "Notes" as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

in his strength. Hinduism is degraded when it is brought down to the level of the worship of the image of a living being. No man can be said to be good before his death. After death too he is good for the person who believes him to have possessed certain qualities attributed to him. As a matter of fact, God alone knows a man's heart. Hence the safest thing is not to worship any person, living or dead, but to worship perfection which resides only in God known as Truth. The question then certainly arises as to whether possession of photographs is not a form of worship carrying no merit with it. I have said as much before now in my writings. Nevertheless I have tolerated the practice as it has become an innocent though a costly fashion. But this toleration will become ludicrous and harmful, if I were to give directly or indirectly the slightest encouragement to the practice above described. It would be a welcome relief, if the owner of the temple removed the image and converted the building into a spinning centre where the poor will card and spin for wages and the others for sacrifice, and all will be wearers of khaddar. This will be the teaching of the *Gita* in action and true worship of it and me.

BOMBAY, March 15, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

*111. TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT, DISTRICT CONGRESS,
NELLORE*

BOMBAY,
March 15, 1946

PRESIDENT

DISTRICT CONGRESS

NELLORE

STATE LEGAL DIFFICULTY SRIRAMULU IS REASONABLE. HE WILL ACCEPT
ANY CLEAR ASSURANCE FROM TRUSTEES.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

112. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

BOMBAY,
March 15, 1946

CHI. JIVANJI¹,

Pyarelal must have replied to your letter yesterday. This morning Lilavatibehn drew my attention to a Gujarati article, “*Vicharonun Gharshan*”² in *Harijanbandhu*. I would not call such Gujarati as lucid or simple. I have no time to suggest improvements. Here I will give only guidance. The translation should not be literal. The sense should be rendered in Gujarati. We may keep the English before us in order to preserve continuity of thought, but the translation should be free. The rendering “Praised *khichri*”³ sticks of the teeth”⁴, is no translation at all. We should think and find an English equivalent for the Gujarati saying. One way of saying it would be, “Praise spoils”⁵. Complex sentences in English may be broken up for facility of translation. This is not by way of criticism, but a first lesson.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9965. Also C. W. 6939. Courtesy : Jivanji D. Desai

113. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

BOMBAY,
March 15, 1946

CHI. RAMDAS,

I received your letter. I will be satisfied only when you cease to be old and become young. Your belief that your body cannot be built up again is groundless. I have not the strength today to prove that it is so. Just now, therefore, I leave it to you to think and discover

¹ Manager of Navajivan Press

² A translation of “Conflict of Ideas”, *vide* “Conflict of Ideas”

³ Kedgerie

⁴ The reference is to a Gujarati saying meaning ‘A much admired thing turning against one.’ Gandhiji has used the expression in English.

⁵ *ibid*

why it is so.

I will not write to Nimu and Kanam today. Kanam may come over to me whenever he wishes to. I will have to run away either to Poona or Mahabaleshwar¹. You will know from the papers.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI RAMDAS GANDHI

KHALASI LINES

NAGPUR, (C.P.)

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

114. LETTER TO ARUNA ASAF ALI

BOMBAY,

March 15, 1946

CHI. ARUNA,

I have your letter. Why have you written to me in English? Your Hindustani is much better than mine.

Will you be a rebel in all matters? I thought of publishing your letter in *Harijan*, but changed my mind. What is the use of getting into a controversy with you in public? What is the use of defeating you? I would prefer your defeating me. So I shall write in public only when I cannot help it. If I can build up poser from out of your letter, then I shall discuss it in *Harijan*. Now I have no time.

Whatever you do, do calmly. During your Assam tour, you observed ahimsa in its true sense. Congratulations.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 2200

¹Gandhiji left for Poona on the 16th.

115. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY¹

March 15, 1946

Announcing that this was his parting speech, Gandhiji said that he had been told that on the previous day many people did not understand what he said. He asked those present, if they could follow Hindustani. On their assenting, he congratulated them and said that it was the good fortune of India that there were so many languages in it. These languages were not barbarous or something to be discarded. They were great languages; but in places like Bombay it was necessary for the people to know more than one language. Bombay's women folk had some knowledge of both Gujarati and Marathi merely by living together. But he wanted that they must make some special effort. They must learn their mother tongue; otherwise it would amount to treachery. They must also know Hindustani. Every man in whose heart burnt the flame of Indian freedom must know Hindustani. In places like Bombay it would be necessary to know a third language also.²

Gandhiji said, he was leaving Bombay the next day. Therefore he wanted to give them a parting message. He wanted to tell them about nature cure. He had written about that subject but had not done much work. Nature cure was not like a doctor giving medicine in a bottle. It was really the natural way of keeping health and happiness. They might be surprised to hear him say so; all the same he would assert that Ramanama was an item in nature cure.

It is not claimed that nature cure can cure all diseases. No system of medicine can do that, or else we should all be immortals. But it enables one to face and bear down with unperturbed equanimity and peace of mind an illness which it cannot cure. If once we decide that what cannot be shared by the millions should be taboo for us, we are driven to nature as the only cure—all for the rich and the poor alike.

In the armoury of the nature curist, Ramanama is the most potent weapon. Let no one wonder at it. A noted Ayurvedic physician³ told me the other day : 'All my life I have been administering drugs. But since you have prescribed Ramanama as a cure for physical ailments, it has occurred to me that what you say has too the authority of Vagbhata and Charakha. The recitation of Ramanama as a remedy for spiritual ailments is as old as the hills. But the greater

¹ Extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—I". The text has been collated with the report in the *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16-3-1946. The meeting was held at Rungta House.

² This and the following paragraph are from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

³ The reference is to Ganesh Shastri Joshi; vide "Message to Aga Khan", 10-3-1946

includes the less. And my claim is that the recitation of Ramanama is a sovereign remedy for our physical ailments also. A nature cure man won't tell the patient : 'Invite me and I shall cure you of your ailment.' He will only tell about the all-healing principle that is in every being and how one can cure oneself by evoking it and making it an active force in his life. If India could realize the power of that principle, not only would be free but we would be a land of healthy individuals too—not the land of epidemics and ill-health that we are today.

For a long time he had been preaching that if all India learnt the doctrine of satyagraha, it would get freedom. He was so convinced of it that if the whole world opposed him, he would still assert it. He was equally convinced that Ramanama could help a man in ill-health.¹

The potency of Ramanama is however subject to certain conditions and limitations. Ramanama is not like black magic. If someone suffers from surfeit and wants to be cured of its aftereffects so that he can again indulge himself at the table, Ramanama is not for him. Ramanama can be used only for a good, never for an evil end, or else thieves and robbers would be the greatest devotees. Ramanama is for the pure in heart and for those who want to attain purity and remain pure. It can never be a means for self-indulgence. The remedy for surfeit is fasting, not prayer. Prayer can come in only when fasting has done its work. It can make fasting easy and bearable. Similarly the taking of Ramanama will be a meaningless farce when at the same time you are drugging your system with medicines. A doctor who uses his talent to pander to the vices of his patient degrades himself and his patient. What worse degradation can there be for man than that, instead of regarding his body as an instrument for worshipping his Maker, he should make it the object of adoration and waste money like water to keep it going anyhow. Ramanama on the other hand purifies while it cures, and, therefore, it elevates. Therein lies its use as well as its limitation.²

Gandhiji explained that he had been practising nature cure even from the days when he was a barrister. But the realization had come to him late in life that he could use it for work in the villages, for the service of the hungry millions.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

² What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

116. TELEGRAM TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

[On or before *March 16, 1946*]¹

SRIRAMULU FASTING AT NELLORE UNDER MY ADVICE³
FOR OPENING A TEMPLE TO HARIJANS. PLEASE GO IF
PHYSICALLY ABLE OR SEND SOMEONE AND DO WHAT
IS PROPER. I HAVE CONFLICTING WIRES. WIRE
POONA.

The Hindu, 17-3-1946\

117. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER ²

[On or before *March 16, 1946*]

If I find that I have a talent for the service³ of the poor and do not make full use of it, I shall be set down as a fool.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

118. TALK WITH AGATHA HARRISON

[On or before *March 16, 1946*]

AGATHA HARRISON : Won't you ask people to grow flowers on a small piece of land? Colour and beauty is necessary to the soul as food is to the body.⁴

No, I won't. Why can't you see the beauty of colour in vegetables? And then there is beauty in the speckless sky. But no, you want the colours of the rainbow which is a mere optical illusion. We have been taught to believe that what is beautiful need not be useful, and what is useful cannot be beautiful. I want to show that what is useful can also be beautiful.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ The telegram was reported under the date-line "Bombay, March 16".

³ *Vide* "Letter to T. J. Kedar", 23-2-1946; also "Statement to the Press", 16-3-1946

² This and the following two items are extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—I" in which they appeared under sub-title "Five Days in Bombay", that is, from March 11 to 16.

³ The reference is to nature cure treatment. *Vide* also "My Confussion and Cure".

⁴ According to Pyarelal, Agatha Harrison was twitting Gandhiji on his suggestion to Seth Rameshwardas Birla to dig up the flower beds in terrace garden in Birla House, Bombay, and grow vegetables instead.

119. TALK WITH A CASUAL VISITOR

[On or before *March 16, 1946*]

In the case of the ordinary method of treatment, the patient comes to the doctor to take drugs that would cure him. The doctors prescribe the drug. With the relief of abnormal symptoms in the patient, his function ends and with that his interest in the patient. The nature cure man does not 'sell a cure' to the patient. He teaches him the right way of living in his home which would not only cure him of his particular ailment but also save him from falling ill in future. The ordinary doctor or *vaidya* is interested mostly in the study of disease. The nature curist is interested more in the study of health. His real interest begins where that of the ordinary doctor ends; the eradication of the patient's ailment under nature cure marks only the beginning of a way of life in which there is no room for illness or disease. Nature cure is thus a way of life, not a course of 'treatment'.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

120. WHY FOR HARIJANS? ¹

Q. The Harijans are specially favoured by the Government. Special facilities are provided on an extensive scale for their education, employment and advancement. Why should you again seek our help on their behalf? There are equally poor and even poorer people among the *savarnas*. Why don't you work for their betterment?

A. This is a curious question. It is no wonder that Harijans are favoured by the Government. Whatever the reason, the fact is not to be deplored, if the favour really does them good. All Government favours do not. The motive behind seems to me to divide them from the so-called touchables. The reason lies with the latter. If touchables had not misbehaved themselves, there would have been no division possible. And even though the Congress has been championing them all these years, have the *savarna* Hindu masses improved their manners? The answer has to be 'No' even though there has been considerable improvement. The Congress influence is most powerful for ending foreign rule. It is weak on social matters. Therefore, without entering into an unholy competition with the foreign Government, it is necessary for the reformers to do their duty by the Harijans until the bar sinister is completely removed. As for the *savarna* poor, there are many to look after them. Some go to the

¹ This appeared under "Notes".

extent even of spoon-feeding them.

BOMBAY, March 16, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

121. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

March 16, 1946

CHI. BALKRISHNA,

Bring the three friends¹ tomorrow at four. It will be necessary to think about the expenditure. The experiment, however, is to my liking. Vinoba has taken up the responsibility for Waroda². However, write to me a short note about it at your convenience. I may use it for *Harijan*.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 815. Courtesy : Balkrishna Bhavé

122. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS OF INDIA³

BOMBAY,

March 16, 1946

GANDHIJI : What news have you brought for me?

On the United Press representative drawing his attention to the morning papers, which contained Mr. Attlee's speech⁴ in the House of Commons, and saying "Bapuji, swaraj is coming", Gandhiji gave a hearty laughter and said :

Is that so? But you have been telling me so often that swaraj is coming. I shall be glad when you will bring me the news that swaraj has already come.

On being requested to express his views on the implications of Mr. Attlee's speech, Gandhiji said that he had read that speech, but did not propose to say anything on it at present.

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-3-1946

¹ The reference is to Motilal Kothari, an incense manufacturer of Poona, Bhansali, a village worker in Uruli, and Pannalal who had offered to meet the expenses of the addressee's project.

² A village near Wardha. Vinoba Bhavé had taken up the project of its uplift.

³ The special representative met Gandhiji during his morning walk in Birla House.

⁴ The British Prime Minister Clement Richard Attlee's speech on March 15 in the House of Commons during a debate on India; *vide* "Clement Attlee's Speech", 15-3-1946

123. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

BOMBAY,

March 16, 1946

Shri Sriramulu is an unknown poor Congressman and servant of humanity working in Nellore. He has been labouring single-handed for the cause of the Harijans of that place. There was a time when high hope was entertained about removal of untouchability and other social work in Nellore. An ashram was built near Nellore but for a variety of causes the activity received a set-back. Deshabhakta Konda Venkatappayya was, and still is, though very old, the moving spirit in connection with these activities. It is in this place that Shri Sriramulu has been quietly and persistently working for the removal, root and branch, of untouchability. He has been trying to have a temple opened to Harijans. He asked me the other day whether, in order to awaken public conscience in favour of such opening, he could, if all other efforts failed, undertake a fast. I sent him my approval.¹ Now the place is astir. But some persons have asked me to advise Shri Sriramulu to suspend his fast for removing legal difficulties of which I have no knowledge. I have been unable to give such advice. As I am anxious that an unobtrusive servant of humanity may not die for want of public knowledge and support, I bespeak the interest of the journalists of the South, if not all India, to find out for themselves the truth of the matter and, if what I say is borne out by facts, shame by public exposure the opposing parties into doing the right and save a precious life.²

Harijan, 24-3-1946

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Potti Sriramulu" and "Telegram to Konda Venkatappayya" 16-3-1946

² In the source the statement was followed by a note dated March 17 by Gandhiji, written after receipt of Shri Sriramulu's telegram informing him that he had given up the fast, *vide* "Letter to Potti Sriramulu", 17-3-1946

124. TALK WITH HORACE G. ALEXANDER

[On or after *March 16, 1946*]¹

[ALEXANDER :] As outsiders we hope we can play a useful part by providing a link between the people and the Government. The Government is not suspicious of us, and they have the reassurance that we won't suspect their motives. What is more, we are not regarded with suspicion by the people as the Government is. If you think that we should go ahead, you might say something which would encourage and help us and also strengthen the hands of our agents in America in obtaining an adequate quota of food supplies.

Gandhiji in reply commended the example of Ruey Alley, the New Zealander and his companion George Hogg in connection with the organization of Indusco² in China. Although they were foreigners, they inspired the Chinese with self-confidence. There was, of course, the other side³ of the picture too. As for F. A. U.'s⁴ Plan of work for the prevention of famine, while generally approving of it, Gandhiji did not like the idea of what he called "begging for food from outside".

If food comes, it would be welcome. But we should not depend on it. India is the granary of the East and now she has to go a-begging for food to America and other countries. I do not like this. Somehow or other, if we rely on self-help, strength comes, we do not know from where. Probably it comes from the original source, and people feel they need not die. Moreover arrival of food in the ports by itself would not solve the problem unless it is

¹ The talk appeared under the title "Constructive Non-violence", as reported by Pyarelal on March 23, 1946, from Uruli-Kanchan. According to Pyarelal, Horace Gundry Alexander, a Birmingham lecturer and member of Quakers' India Conciliation Group, "accompanied Gandhiji to Poona", presumably, when Gandhiji returned from Bombay on March 16, after the Congress Working Committee meeting.

² A war-time plan of Chinese co-operative in India whose activities were carried on under abnormal circumstances with the backing of the Chinese National Government

³ According to *Harijan*, the work of foreign missionary enterprise, which organized Indusco, "was tainted by the proselytization motive".

⁴ Friends Ambulance Unit's; Horace Alexander was one of its members. Pyarelal explains that the Unit, formed as a war-time organization in 1914, was in action during Bihar earthquake (1934), Midnapore cyclone (1942) and Bengal famine (1943). Another like-minded body, American Friends Service Committee, joined the Unit in 1944, and "the two have been working as a single agency . . . operating food canteens and orphanages for children. . . providing medical relief . . . employment . . . and forming . . . co-operatives. . . . With the threat of India-wide famine . . . the Friends Ambulance Unit has again begun to organize for action."

made available where it is most needed. Distribution is the real problem. Unless it is tackled, there is danger that the food will rot in the ports while people are dying in the interior. At present it seems almost a hopeless task through the present corruption. A Government official sent a note the other day showing how it would be at least two months between the arrival of the food ships in the ports and the food actually reaching the affected areas. In the mean time what are the people to do? I have, therefore, suggested that they should utilize the sub-soil water to grow whatever they can by their own efforts. If crores take up the cue, they can do much to save themselves even before the food arrives from outside.

Horace next told Gandhiji that the F. A. U. are developing work of a more permanent nature for the upliftment of Bengal villages. For instance, they are trying to attack the problem of poverty from four or five different angles simultaneously. They had discussed the question with Pandit Jawaharlal Nahru who had approved of the idea for two reasons. With the coming of freedom, he felt, we might help in post-war economic rehabilitation so that the high expectations entertained by the people of the national government might not be belied. Besides a body of people from the West serving the people here would act as an antidote to racial feeling which might otherwise oversweep the country in the first flush of freedom. Gandhiji agreed entirely with Pandit Nahru.

Any person who does such work is worth his weight in gold. Pandit Nehru has done well to point to the danger signal.

But he felt that the danger was even deeper. The face of the picture as he viewed it seemed horrifying. The feeling towards Europeans was rising all though the East. There were so many complex forces working on the mass mind. If the maelstrom broke out, the F. A. U. might have to bear the brunt of it. They must be prepared for that sacrifice. But whilst they should be prepared for the worst, he wanted them to share with him the hope that all would be well in the end.

To see the danger clearly and yet to remain unperturbed in the face of it, trusting to God's goodness, is true wisdom.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

125. DECIMAL COINAGE AND ITS COST

After due sanction required by Section 153 of the Government of India Act, 1935, a Bill further to amend the Indian Coinage Act, 1906, is said to have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly on the 18th February, 1946. If it becomes law, the rupee will be equivalent to 100 cents instead of 64 pice. The consequential changes

will naturally follow. The object¹ is stated to be :

Modern trade and commerce demand speed and simplicity in the methods of computation, to achieve which there is nothing to compete with the decimal system which has gradually displaced all other systems in most of the advanced countries of the world. Public opinion has expressed itself largely in favour of the adoption of decimal coinage in India . . .

And a note²says :

During the transition period when both the . . . coins will circulate side by side and prices might be quoted in terms of either . . . the Bill provides for conversions involving smaller fractions to be made in rupees of any one transaction. . .

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala has studied the question carefully and has come to the conclusion that whilst in theory the introduction of the decimal coinage may be defensible, in practice, for some years to come, the poor will be sacrificed as usual in the interests of the modern trade, i. e., the rich merchants. It is unnecessary here to summarize his convincing argument in support. It is given in full in the columns of the *Harijanbandhu*. It is sufficient here to state that even in the country of the rulers, the decimal coinage has not been introduced. Public opinion there commands respect and affects the decisions of the House of Commons. In India, public opinion, such as it is, has very little force and, moreover, the opinion of the millions who will be the sufferers is inarticulate. Shri Mashruwala very aptly points out that the poor will be taxed without the odium of additional taxation. Wisdom would have suggested that if the power is to be transferred inside of a few months to the representatives of the people, it would be improper for the Government to embark upon an experiment even though claimed to be scientific and yet manifestly against the immediate interests of the poor. In a poor country like India, often the immediate is, as in this case, the decisive factor. It is to be hoped that the Central Legislative Assembly will throw out the Bill if, on re-consideration, the Government do not withdraw it.³

POONA, March 17, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

¹ Only extracts of these are reproduced here.

² *ibid*

³ *Vide* also the following item.

126. CAN WE AFFORD THE DECIMAL SYSTEM?

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala writes :¹

This letter deserves to be studied. He has pointed out a few instances of the immediate impact of decimal system on ordinary people. Thoughtful readers can think of other instances which will go to prove that the loss to the poor on introducing the decimal system is likely to be very great. It is easy to support the system on scientific grounds. But popular dealings are not based [on science]. India is an unfortunate country where all manner of experiments are carried on in a high-handed manner, and at the cost of the public exchequer, and the people have had to suffer in the name of science. Would this be the last gift [of the British] to India on the eve of their leaving? Even though the purpose of this Bill may be good, it should be abandoned. When the people come to power, they may adopt the decimal system. They may put up with the losses, if any, in adjusting to it. But it is the duty of the Legislature to defeat this Bill.

POONA, March 17, 1946

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 24-3-1946

127. FOREWORD

I have gone through some of the chapters of Bhai Jugatram's *Ashrami Kelavani*². The language is not only simple and interesting, but it is apt even for the villagers. The author has described in a very interesting way all the trivial as well as vital aspects of the Ashram life. He has shown that though the Ashram life is a simple one, real joy and art are to be found in it. Whether my assessment is right or wrong, the reader should judge after reading the entire book.

M. K. GANDHI

POONA, March 17, 1946

[From Gujarati]

Atmarachana Athava Ashrami Kelavni

¹ The letter is not translated here. *Vide* the preceding item.

² Ashram Method of Education, by Jugatram Dave of the Ashram at Vedchhi

128. LETTER TO POTTI SRIRAMULU

POONA,

March 17, 1946

MY DEAR SRIRAMULU,

I write in English because others may understand what I have written.

Here is a letter from G. Ramachandra Rao. Your fast is good. I know you are suffering. I do not mind it. I am doing all I can to reach a proper solution on merits. Your fast is intended, or should be intended, only to quicken lazy conscience, if conscience can ever be lazy. If what Ramachandra Rao says can be sustained, you may postpone the fast as distinguished from abandoning it altogether. If approval by the Provincial Government is necessary, and if the trustees honestly work for it, there is no occasion of the fast. I hope you will survive the ordeal.

Yours,

BAPU

[PS.]

Since this was written, your wire was received. I hope this means that the opening is a certainty.¹

BAPU

From a photostat : G. N. 113

129. A NOTE

The foregoing statement² was issued on the 16th instant. A wire was received today from Shri Sriramulu to the effect that he yielded to public pressure and broke his fast³. I can be glad only if the ending of the fast means that the public has taken over the responsibility of having the temple opened without delay. Prof. Ramachandra Rao's letter received by me shows that there is a real legal difficulty about the opening, and the principal trustee is pledged to have the formality gone through and the temple opened. It is to be hoped that the temple would be opened with the willing consent of the temple-going people.

¹ *Vide* also the following two items.

² *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 16-3-1946

³ On March 16; *vide* the following item.

That can be the only meaning put upon the universal sympathy evoked by the fast.

POONA, March 17, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

130. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,

March 17, 1946

Shri Sriramulu has yielded to public pressure and has broken his fast on Saturday. A legal formality is necessary before opening the temple.¹

The Hindu, 19-3-1946

131. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

NATURE CURE CLINIC,

6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,

March 17, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I thank you for your letter² of 12th instant.

My son³ tells me that the Home Member has come to the conclusion that Shri Vidyarthi's case is all false regarding Delhi. Is my son's interpretation of the Home Member's finding correct? You will please answer my question when you tell me of his finding after investigation in Nagpur are complete.⁴

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 65

¹ *Vide* also the preceding item.

² *Vide* footnote 3, "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 20-2-1946

³ Devdas Gandhi

⁴ In his reply dated March 28, Abell concurred with Devdas Gandhi's interpretation of Home Member and said : "The Home Member, when he met Mr. Devdas Gandhi on March 2, understood that Mr. Devdas Gandhi also had come to the same conclusion. . . The Central Provincial Government have made enquiries into his allegations of maltreatment at Nagpur and state that he has totally failed to substantiate them. On this, the Home Member can offer no remark beyond saying . . . he was capable of inventing the story of ill-treatment at Nagpur also.

132. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POONA,
March 17, 1946

MY DEAR C. R.,

Your dear letter. The Tamil lesson is good. I hope I shall not forget *anbu* and *ambu*¹. Does not the latter also mean lotus? What is the meaning of *anbudan*? Or is the final letter ‘m’?

You are not old, and you must not feel old. You must correct the stomach. So you are so pessimistic as to think that 49 years won’t be enough to see the wise people become foolish!

When are you coming to Poona?

*Romba anbudan*²

BAPU³

[PS.]

Can you use *romba* as I have?

From a photostat : G. N. 2119

133. INTERVIEW TO H. N. BRAILSFORD⁴

POONA
[March 17, 1946]⁵

When last I was in Poona, Gandhi was a prisoner, and I was not allowed to meet him. Then the town, gloomy and angry, was involved in a general strike. Today it is celebrating the spring carnival in a mood of gaiety.

Gandhi in his turn was happy when I met him, for Mr. Attlee’s speech in the Indian debate⁶ had just opened the road to independence. He looked well and very much less than his age. . . . His manner was never solemn and often he relaxed in a

¹ Water; *vide* also “Letter to C. Rajagopalchari”, 11-3-1946

² With much love

³ This and the expressions in italics are written in Tamil.

⁴ This appeared under the title “Gandhiji on New Spirit” by H. N. Brailsford, as “reproduced from *The Hindu*”, 31-3-1946.

⁵ From the reference to the “spring festival”, presumably, Holi, usually celebrated on the full-moon day of the Hindu calendar month *Phalguna*, falling to *Gandhi : 1915-1948—A Detailed Chronology*, the interviewer called on Gandhiji between March 17 and 21.

⁶ On March 15, in the House of Commons; *vide* “Clement Attlee’s Speech”, 15-3-1946

humorous chuckle. In a way, hard to define, one felt that this man was speaking for India He warned me, nonetheless, that he would be speaking only for himself and not for the Congress. Our talk took its start from the Prime Minister's recognition of India's right to choose independence. This, Gandhi welcomed, and not only this, but the whole tone of the speech. He went on :

But I can't forget that the story of Britain's connection with India is a tragedy of unfulfilled promises and disappointed hopes. We must keep an open mind. A seeker of truth will never begin by discounting his opponent's statement as unworthy of trust. So I am hopeful, and, indeed, no responsible Indian feels otherwise. This time I believe that the British mean business. But the offer has come suddenly. Will India be jerked into independence? I feel today like a passenger who has been hoisted in a basketchair on to a ship's deck in a stormy sea and has not yet found his feet. There should have been some psychological preparation, but even now it is not too late. The tide of bitterness had risen high and that is not good for the soul. The last two months should have been filled with generous gestures. This is a milestone not only in India's history and Britain's, but in the history of the whole world.

Gandhiji's meaning was clear. The British Government had done the right thing, but in its manner of doing it, he missed the big touch. When I asked him for concrete illustrations, he chose two. The release of the political prisoners had been gradual and was still incomplete. [He added :]

There was no danger to fear. If independence is coming, would these men have opposed it? A complete amnesty would have captured the people's imagination. When you are about to transfer power, you should do it boldly.

He went on to speak of the Salt Tax.

Its abolition would be a gesture the poorest peasant could understand. It would mean even more to him than independence itself. Salt in this climate is a necessity of life, like air and water. He needs it for himself, his cattle and his land. This monopoly will go, the instant we get independence. Then why not abolish it today? By such acts the Government could have created a feeling among the masses that the new era has already dawned. . . .

I . . . reminded Gandhi that many Englishmen find it hard to understand why Indians prefer independence to Dominion Status. His answer was startling.

There was a time when I used to swear by Dominion Status, and actually preferred it to independence. That was my attitude during the first World War. I even used, in writing¹ to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of those days, an expression that has often been quoted

¹ Vide "Letter to Viceroy", 22-6-1920

against me. I wanted to evoke in the Indian breast the same loyalty to the British Crown that there is in the breast of an Englishman. It was an English footballer who converted me to independence.

With a laugh, Gandhi explained that he was referring to C. F. Andrews, who had been a notable athlete at Cambridge, as well as a don. Gandhi added :

Andrews made me understand the significance of the King-Emperor's title. The British king is king also in the Dominions, but he is the Emperor of India. India alone makes the Empire. The Dominions are peopled by your cousins. But we Indians, with our different culture and traditions, can never belong to the British family. We may belong to a world-wide family of nations, but first we must cease to be under-dogs. So I set myself to win independence. You may object that by so doing I am throwing away the protection of the British army and navy. India would not need them, if she were truly non-violent. If, in the glow of freedom, she could live up to that creed, no power on earth would ever cast an evil eye upon her. That would be India's crowning glory and her contribution to the world's progress.

If only Englishmen could follow this argument of mine, they would make their offer of independence in a different tone altogether. Today they insist that Dominion Status is the best gift they can possibly bestow : 'For the world's sake and for ours as well as your own, you shall have independence today, even as we have it. . . .'

I asked Gandhi to face the anxieties of his English listeners and tell them whether whether Indian independence would make for Britain's security and the world's. He answered that the British need never fear an independent India. If they leave India as willing friends, she in her turn will always remain friendly. But Britain, I told him, might hope for some assurance of friendship. Would an independent India be willing to enter into an alliance with Britain? Gandhi's answer came promptly :

Supposing India said 'No', would you make the recognition of India's independence contingent upon her entering into an alliance with Britain? If you did that, it would immediately lower the value of your offer and rob it of all grace. The proper attitude is to meet India's claims as a matter of right, even if she wanted to be unfriendly and pay you back in your own coin. No calculations entered into the British mind, when they settled with the Boers at the end¹ of a bloody war, and the Boers have stayed friends ever since.

I replied that Britain has made up her mind to end the coercive connection with India. But living as she does in a perilous world it is inevitable that she should ask the question whether as an ally in a defensive war she would be entitled to use

¹ On May 31, 1902

India's strategic bases and ports against India give a reassuring reply? Gandhiji answered :

Englishmen must learn to be Brahmins, not Banias. The Bania, I should explain, is the trader, or as Napoleon put it, the shopkeeper. The Brahmin is the man who is intelligent enough to rank the moral above the material values of life.

A Gujarati novelist has said that Englishmen are soldiers and Brahmins, but not Banias. That was a generous verdict, but it was mistaken. Englishmen have still to evolve the Brahminical spirit. Even the British soldier still calculates and bargains like a Bania, and fails to reach the highest type of courage. I still cherish the hope that the British will respond to the non-violent spirit of India. As the author of that movement, I know what it has meant for the world. The non-violent spirit is the greatest thing in life. I feel it is my responsibility to help my brothers not to degrade themselves by bargaining. If you and we can rise to this moral height, no danger can alarm us. It is probable that many members of the Congress will not take this view and may be willing to discuss an alliance today. But independence would come free as air; don't let us bargain over it.

In reply to a further question, whether a defensive alliance might be discussed when independence is ratified by treaty, Gandhi replied :

If India feels the glow of independence, she probably would enter into such a treaty of her own free will. The spontaneous friendship between India and Britain would then be extended to other powers and among them, they would hold the balance, since they alone would possess moral force. To see that vision realized, I want to live for 125 years. . . .

He said that he hoped for a mutually helpful commercial treaty between a friendly Britain and an independent India. For goods that India needed to import, he was even ready to give Britain a preference.

While we talked of Pakistan, Gandhi said that if no other method of solution succeeded, he was prepared to submit the whole issue to international arbitration. Nor should we forget that expedient, if any insoluble question arose between Britain and India, for example, over debts. But he saw no blank wall of difficulty ahead. His last words were that difficulties make the man.¹

Harijan, 14-4-1946

¹ Brailsford concluded : "I came away with the sense that I had been talking to a brave man who has the courage to believe that human society can be built only on moral principles. Amid our preoccupations over military perils, he stands aloof and repeats with unshaken faith his creed that safety is attainable, only when men learn to treat each other as brothers and equals. No lesser means will avail."

134. CABLE TO J. C. SMUTS

POONA,
March 18, 1946

FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, CAPE TOWN

YOUR ASIATIC POLICY REQUIRES OVERHAULING. IT ILL
BECOMES YOU. LEAST YOU SHOULD DO IS TO
WITHDRAW THREATENED LAND AND FRANCHISE MEA-
SURE AND CALL ADVISORY ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE
AT LEAST OF UNION BRITISH AND INDIAN GOVERN-
MENTS AND IF POSSIBLE OF ALL ASSOCIATE POWERS
TO CONSIDER ASIATIC AFRICAN AND GENERAL COLOUR
POLICY ARISING FROM ASIATIC BILL. THIS IS NOT
FOR PUBLICATION UNLESS YOU SO WISH.¹

YOURS AND SOUTH AFRICA'S SINCERE FRIEND

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 93

135. TELEGRAM TO LORD WAVELL

Express

POONA,
March 18, 1946

H. E. VICEROY

VICEROY'S CAMP

PLEASE ACCEPT MY SYMPATHY IN YOUR LOSS²
WHICH MAY GOD ENABLE YOU AND LADY WAVELL
AND YOUR DAUGHTER BEAR WITH FORTITUDE.

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 176

¹ For the addressee's reply, *vide* "Cable from J. C. Smuts", 21-3-1946

² The reference is to the death of the addressee's son-in-law, Capt. Simon N. Astley, in an accident at Quetta.

136. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

POONA,
March 18, 1946

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. I thought you would like my letters in Hindi. Now I know.

I am glad you have relieved Kripa of pain.

Let it now be understood between us that we must wait till occasion brings me to Delhi. You must keep well.

Rajkumari is in Delhi for a few days. Sushila in Quetta. So you may not expect long love letters from me. And now you have *Harijan*.

Here is a cheque for you sent to me by Shri Kedar of Roorkee. He has met you.

Love.

BAPU

Enclosure :

Cheque No. 354863 on Bharat Bank Ltd., Roorkee, for Rs. 500

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

137. LETTER TO KASHIBEHN GANDHI

POONA,
March 18, 1946

CHI. KASHI¹,

How are you now? You should do whatever you can from where you are. Both of you can give lessons to Gajaraj². It must be pretty hot there. It is boiling hot here. the nights and mornings are pleasant.

Blessings to both from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 9232. Courtesy : Chhaganlal Gandhi

¹ Wife of Chhaganlal Gandhi

² Son of Hoshiari, niece of Balvantsinha

138. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

POONA,
March 18, 1946

CHI. NAJUKLAL,

Your article will be printed after some revisions. It is not likely to be published before the 30th. My being at a distance from the Press is a big handicap, and, secondly, the quota for paper is only eight pages.

A complete or partial fast, steam-bath, hip-bath and friction-bath are the best remedies for Chi. Moti's¹ arthritis.

Prabodh² seems to be getting on well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 12155

139. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

POONA,
March 18, 1946

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

You have to win over Gajaraj [with love]. Anger will consume you as well as him. If you give up anger, you will both rise high. Don't you know it is called *mahashana*² and *mahaparma*³.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 1969

140. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

POONA,
March 18, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter. I have left it to you to decide about teaching. The general rule is that a manager only manages. But he reserves to

¹ Addressee's wife and son

² Arch-devourer

³ Arch-sinner; the source, however, has *mahapaka*.

himself the right to make exceptions. It is true that teaching also is a part of the management.

There is no need of more land for farming, is there?

It is good that you go into the village.

I am well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4485

141. LETTER TO ANANTRAM PURI

POONA,

March 18, 1946

CHI. ANANTRAM,

I am glad that you have concentrated your attention on farming. Do you try any farming without the use of bullocks? I can tell you, in that too, there is something special. Keep well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

142. LETTER TO KEDAR

POONA,

March 18, 1946

BHAI KEDAR,

Shrimati Janakidevi¹ has sent me your letter dated February 22, 1946, to her and also your article. I listened to everything [being read out to me]. I do not agree with your view-point. True, we can accomplish more after achieving independence, but for neglect of cattle, we alone are responsible; the Government has no hand in it. I am afraid, you have not thought over it fully.

¹ Janakidevi Bajaj

Thanks for sending the cheque for Rs. 500. I am sending it to Mirabehn as indicated by you.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI KEDAR

(INDIAN DAIRY CORPORATION, ROORKEE)

DEHRA DUN

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

*143. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*²

Course of events has raised the question of South Africa whiteman's policy to the highest level. Unseen, it holds the seeds of a world war. The threatened Land and Franchise Bill which has brought the South African Indian delegation³ to India, though superficially it affects the Indians of Natal and the Transvaal, is in effect a challenge to Asia and by implication to the Negro races. India in her present exalted mood can view it in no other way. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is Indian to the core but, being also an internationalist, he has made us used to looking at everything in the international light instead of the parochial. India, weak physically and materially but strong ethically and numerically, has proclaimed from the house-tops that her independence would be a threat to no one and no nation, but will be a help to noble effort throughout the world and promise of relief to all its exploited peoples. Therefore India regards the contemplated measure of the Union of South Africa as an insult and challenge to them.⁴

The Indian deputation see in the present measure not merely an assault on Indian property rights but also on their status as free men. They do not want merely to exist in South Africa. They need not have sent the deputation all the way to India for that purpose. They want to be in South Africa as equals of the European settlers of South Africa.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 18-3-1946

² This appeared under the title "Indians in South Africa". According to *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20-3-1946, the statement was released on March 19.

³ For their memorandum to the Viceroy, *vide* "Draft Memorandum to Viceroy", 8-3-1946. and "South African Indian Deputation's Memorandum to the Viceroy", 12-3-1946

⁴ For resolution by the Congress Working Committee, *vide* "Congress Working Committee Resolution on South Africa"

They know that today they are not. But they must stop deterioration and hence move forward. In that forward march India will help, of course. Indeed all the moral forces will be at their call. The brunt, however, will have to be borne by them. They rediscovered the force of Truth (Satyagraha) and that will be their only and ultimate source of power. Time for it is not yet. Let us hope, it will never come. They have to try together on their side all the moral forces of the world. They will have to clear the ground of all the weeds, all sordidness, all personal ambition which always and everywhere creeps in, if sleepless vigilance is not kept on the watch-tower. Imagine the plight of a poor barque sailing when the beacon light in front has gone out.

They must be prepared for accidents and consequent suffering. If they are in earnest and hardy enough to brave the worst, they are bound to come out the best in the end.

What about the whites of South Africa? They invited the Indians in the first instance. If they had thought the invitees would always be like slaves or that they would not be followed by their free brethren, they (the whites) were soon undeceived.

Does real superiority require outside props in the shape of legislation? Will they see that every such wall of protection weakens them, ultimately rendering them effeminate? The lesson of history ought to teach them that might is not right. Right only is might. Field Marshal Smuts is a great soldier-statesman. Will he not perceive that he will be taking the whitemen of South Africa down the precipice, if he persists in the policy underlying his measure? Let him take counsel with the Allies to whose victory on the battlefield he contributed not a little. He will surely throw away its fruits, if he persists in his plan of protecting the civilization of the West by artificial means.

POONA, March 18, 1946

Harijan, 24-3-1946

144. FAMINES AND BIRTH RATE

Maj. Gen. Sir John McGaw, President, India Office Medical Board, is reported by a correspondent to have said :

Famines in India will recur; in fact India is today facing perpetual famine. Unless something is done to decrease the birth rate in India, the country will be heading straight for a calamity.

The correspondent asks what I have to say on this grave issue.

For me this and some other ways of explaining away famines in India is to divert the attention from the only cause of recurring famines in this benighted land. I have stated¹, and repeat here, that famines of India are not a calamity descended upon us from nature but is a calamity created by the rulers—whether through ignorant indifference or whether consciously or otherwise does not matter. Prevention against drought is not beyond human effort and ingenuity. Such effort has not proved ineffective in other countries. In India a sustained intelligent effort has never been made.

The bogey of increasing birth rate is not a new thing. It has been often trotted out. Increase in population is not, and ought not, to be regarded as a calamity to be avoided. Its regulation or restriction by artificial methods is a calamity of the first grade whether we know it or not. It is bound to degrade the race, if it becomes universal which, thank God, it is never likely to be. Pestilence, wars and famines are cursed antidotes against cursed lust which is responsible for unwanted children. If we would avoid this three-fold curse, we would avoid too the curse of unwanted children by the sovereign remedy of self-control. The evil consequences of artificial methods are being seen by discerning men even now. Without, however, encroaching upon the moral domain, let me say that propagation of the race rabbit-wise must undoubtedly be stopped; but not so as to bring greater evils in its train. It should be stopped by methods which in themselves ennoble the race. In other words, it is all a matter of proper education which would embrace every department of life; and dealing with one curse will take in its orbit all the others. A way is not to be avoided because it is upward and therefore uphill. Man's upward progress necessarily means ever-increasing difficulty, which is to be welcomed.

POONA, March 19, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

145. TELEGRAM TO SHYAMLAL

POONA,

March 19, 1946

SHRISHYAMLAL

BAJAJWADI

WARDHA

IT APPEARS I NEED MOVE BEFORE FIRST APRIL, THEREFORE IT SEEMS

¹ Vide "Statement to the United Press of India", 7-2-1946

MEETING AS ORIGINALLY FIXED POSSIBLE BUT I STILL THINK INADVISABLE BUT YOU CAN RECONSIDER IF YOU WISH.

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

146. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR¹

March 19, 1946

Your day dawns, they say, from the moment you wake up.² Having woken up, I cannot now rest. . . . You know, I used to stay in the East End even during the Round Table Conference³. East End might be described as the Harijan quarters of London. In the room I occupied there was hardly accommodation enough for two. A chest of drawers was the only furniture—no table, no chairs. One slept on the floor. All round were the slums. And yet Kingsley Hall itself would be called a model of cleanliness.⁴

Harijan, 7-4-1946

147. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

POONA,

March 19, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I did receive your message⁵ to the Navy. I also got the same information from the Associated Press. I paid no attention to it. I did not think it worth attending to either. I feel that we should chart our course in faith, and wait and see whatever is to happen. Why should one who is already armed worry especially when the weapon in his

¹ The letter is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—II". Pyarelal explains that "Gandhiji has given the reasons for his deciding to stay in Harijan quarters during his forthcoming visits to Bombay and Delhi"; *vide* also "Why Bhangi Quarters?", 25-3-1946.

² A Gujarati saying

³ In 1931

⁴ According to Pyarelal, the addressee replied that "he would himself hereafter stay with Gandhiji in the Harijan quarters".

⁵ According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1946*, "The Foods of India", Vallabhbhai Patel had advised the striking R. I. N. ratings to "surrender unconditionally" and told them that the "Congress would do its best" to get "their legitimate demands accepted without victimization".

hands is *Ramabana*¹. These lines of Pritam constantly reverberate in my ears : Those who are in the fire feel the highest happiness while the onlookers who remain outside are scorched by it.

I hope you will arrange for me to stay in the Bhangi colony. Please do so, if you have not already done it.

For the nature cure clinic I must select some village. I am looking around for it here. My plan is that the period from February to the end of July should be spent in a comparatively cool place, including April and May in the hills. This arrangement cannot be made in Gujarat. Abu is the only hill station, and it does not have a climate comparable to that of Panchgani or Mahabaleshvar. Nor have I found cool climate like that of Poona anywhere in Gujarat. I am telling you all this in order that you should have nothing to complain about later. However, do you think one could find a place in Gujarat where nature cure work could be done and also where the above conditions be satisfied? And would you really prefer it? Nature cure is no longer a hobby with me. I must try it out in detail.

Blessings from

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

68 MARINE DRIVE, BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 302-3

148. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

POONA,

March 19, 1946

CHI. MANUDI²,

I had your letter of the 8th. It is sheer diffidence to keep relying on fate. What can be done if Umiya does not do anything herself or does not have the spirit to fight back? I will explain this further when we meet at some leisure.

I would certainly arrange for your studies. But why set conditions for me? Laying down conditions betrays your distrust and your unhappiness. That is why I desire the presence of Jaisukhlal. Moreover I would not shift you from there as long as you are happy

¹ Literally, Rama's arrow, i. e., something unfailing like faith in God

² Jaisukhlal Gandhi's daughters

and contented there. Don't think that the problem about Jaisukhlal is unimportant. For the present I would insist on his being wherever you are. Moreover he also should be able to see clearly his way.

I received the copy sent by you.

Rajkumari has gone to Delhi for a few days. Sushila¹ has gone to Quetta to her sister, Satya². It will be a month before she can return.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./XXIV

149. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

POONA,
March 19, 1946

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. I got the book, too. Did you learn anything useful from it? Did you take down notes?

Ask Anand to write to me. You should not put a one-sided interpretation on what I write. Remaining contented and cheerful in every condition does not mean that no reasonable effort should be made in a detached spirit to improve or change things. I hope you are gaining strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C. W. 10068. Courtesy : Sharda G. Chokhawala

150. LETTER TO RAI

POONA,
March 19, 1946

BHAI RAI BABU,

I got your letter of the 13th. I think your questions themselves contain the answers. Hence I have nothing to say.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Dr. Sushila Nayyar and her cousin, Dr. Satyavati Malhotra, who was working in the Lady Dufferin Hospital, Quetta

² *ibid*

151. LETTER TO NAGADI

[March 19, 1946]¹

BHAI NAGADI,

I have your letter of February 26, 1946. I understand what you say. I take it that when the time comes you as well as the others will rise to the occasion. Your son is going to come and see me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

152. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

POONA,

March 19, 1946

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Are these the new rules or are they current ones ?² If they are the current rules who has initiated the ones in the second column ? Who will decide that this is to be discarded and that to be accepted ? Or will the Hindustani Sangh have to decide it ?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

153. LETTER TO SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAH

POONA,

March 19, 1946

BHAI CAVEESHAH,

I have your letter of March 3. It pains me that you start writing without thinking. I feel, it is not worth pointing out the mistakes in your letter as well as in the statement.

SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAH

LAHORE

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ The letter, written in Devangari, is found among the letters of this date.

² The question was pertaining to the Urdu script.

154. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

POONA,
March 20, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am writing this letter at your demand. Since your movements were uncertain, I had thought of saving time by not writing to you. But now it is doubtful whether you will get this letter. Your letter of the 17th came into my hands just now (after the morning prayers).

I understand about Chi. Kanchan. Since my own plans are uncertain, I would advise you not to bring along Kanchan. Moreover Chi. Kanu has gone over there and is busy with the preparations for the camp. It will, therefore, be convenient, if Kanchan is there. Abha is here, for very few women are joining the camp, and Kanu has detained Abha here thinking that she will be able to go in the company of some lady from the Ashram.

What you say about Annapurna is quite true.

Blessings to you both from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 10237. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

155. LETTER TO JAIKRISHNA P. BHANSALI¹

POONA,
March 20, 1946

CHI. BHANSALI,

You must learn to strike a balance. Maybe, it is for you the last and sole remaining step. I see no sense in a man undertaking a fast to get rid of his excess fat resulting from overeating. It is my experience that a man who eats a balanced diet and the one who eats little fare better than one who undertakes fasts. The place that is then left for fasting is divine.

I agree that the manager of the Ashram should be of mature age and experience. I shall understand better, if you elaborate the point

¹ The letter is written in Devangari.

more specifically. It is not certain, however, that whomsoever we might find must be someone from amongst the Ashram inmates?

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI BHANSALIBHAI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelel Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

156. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 20, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have not been able to write to you, but I think of you every day. I wish you to be well and render good service. Every village is a place for service.

Maganbhai should take friction-baths and must take a little nap during day-time. He should pass stools regularly. He should go in reciting Ramanama.

You have your mother's wire; you should send her a sweet reply.

I am well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 506

157. LETTER TO ABDUL KARIM SHEIKH

POONA,

March 20, 1946

BHAI ABDUL KARIM,

I have your letter. I hear that you are getting help and that the Bombay [Provincial] Congress Committee has taken over the task.

The death of both your sons must indeed be a great blow to you. I too feel sorry. May God grant you peace.

ABDUL KARIM SHEIKH MAULANA

158. CONGRESSMEN APATHETIC

Q. I am glad that you have expressed yourself in the matter of opening a temple to Harijans in Nellore.¹ It should open the eyes of

¹ Vide "Statement to the Press", 16-3-1946

many Congressmen. The reason given for unwillingness to open the temple was that it might adversely affect the chances of Congress success in the elections.

A. If this represents the general sentiment, it augurs ill for Congress. Even a popular, democratic, India-wide organization like the Congress cannot afford to be untrue to its policy (if it may not be called creed) of removing untouchability, root and branch. Throughout my close contact with the Congress, ever since my return to India in 1915, I have found that the more the Congress has held to its main purpose, the more popular it had become. A democratic organization has to dare to do the right at all cost. He who panders to the weaknesses of a people degrades both himself and the people and leads them not to democratic but mob rule. The line of demarcation between democracy and mobocracy is often thin but rigid and stronger than steel, unbreakable. The one leads to life and progress, the other is death, pure and simple. In the ultimate analysis, the cause of our fall is to be sought from within and not from without. All the empires of the world could not have bent us, if as a people we had been above suspicion and temptation. This may not be regarded as a mere truism. If we recognize the fundamental facts, we would be true and patient and able to deal with whatever difficulty that may face us whether from within or without. Preparedness to lose all elections rather than sacrifice a principle, is the surest way to success at every election. The results prove that the policy laid down by the Congress in 1920 has led to success from stage to stage, but only to the extent that the Congress has been true to the fundamentals of the policy, it accepted during that eventful year. Untouchability is to go, if India is to live and thrive as a nation.

POONA, March 21, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

159. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,

March 21, 1946

I find that the paper at the disposal of *Harijan* is not enough to accommodate all that I am able to send. Moreover I have to send matter sufficiently in advance in order that the Navajivan press might cope with the simultaneous issue of *Harijan* in English, Hindustani and Gujarati. I am, therefore, obliged from time to time to send

matter of immediate importance to the Press in advance of the publication of *Harijan*. It is likely, I fear, that this would be a regular feature.

The Bombay Chronicle, 22-3-1946

160. LETTER TO CHANDRASHANKER P. SHUKLA

POONA

March 21, 1946

CHI. CHANDRASHANKER,

The above demand is reasonable. Send Jivanji a copy of this letter and of my reply. But that does not mean that I or any person authorized by me cannot use these letters as may seem proper to us.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 2332

161. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

POONA,

March 21, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am leaving for Uruli tomorrow. I shall arrange to have a telephone there. Telegrams, of course, are delivered there. Success or failure rests with God.

The report I got from the Professor¹ about Khan Saheb, etc., was quite the opposite. These people's reply must be that they would do as the Congress decided. But will you tell them this or ask the Maulana to do it?

I seek what you mean about Gujarat. I do not want to go anywhere merely for a holiday.

I quite understand the difficulties about putting me up in the Bhangi quarters but do overcome them.²

There should be no hurry about the restitution of Durbar Gopaldas's³ estate.

¹ J. B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the Congress

² The addressee had written : "It will be as you wish. But at present one cannot get enough room in Bombay to bury one's dead and you want fresh accommodation to be improvised for the living!"

³ Ruler of the Dhasa, a principality in Saurashtra ough room in Bombay to bury one's dead and you want fresh accommodation to be improvised for the living!"

The future of Dinshaw's clinic is under consideration. Nothing is decided about the South Africa meeting.

Blessings to Mani¹.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 303

162. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR ²

POONA,

March 21, 1946

CHI. LILAVATI,

One should never rush in haste to a conclusion. An institution cannot transgress its framework of rules whether good or bad. What you write about the medical [technique] is not something which can be summarily dismissed. Vijaya should firmly stick to her studies. No one forbids her to study. In the meanwhile she will have an opportunity to take the examination. We can easily absorb her in the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust work when she is fully qualified even before her examination. Don't let her lose heart. Nor should you despair in her case. Let me know, if there is any hitch in her attending the classes. I shall be prepared to have her examined privately.

All of you have to learn the lesson from Vijaya's case that a degree [by itself] does not qualify one, although it will often be a sign of being qualified. One does come across such cases nowadays. If a person has the same name as a degree-holder's, or adopts it, then steals the certificate and puts up a sign-board, would people go to him for long? Have there been any such cases? I have very little knowledge of all this. Hence it would be more than having a degree,

¹ Addressee's daughter

² The letter is written in Devanagari.

if Vijaya acquires real proficiency. I can actually point out a number of such cases.

I understand what you say about your examination.

Blessings from

BAPU

SMT. LILAVATI ASAR

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

163. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, POONA

March 21, 1946

Gandhiji said that he had fought many battles in his life. There was one more battle to be fought which was quite different from others and that was of nature cure.

He had known Dr. Dinshaw Mehta for a long time and became a cotrustee with him of the Nature Cure Trust to turn Dr. Mehta's clinic into an institute for the poor. But he had found that he could not serve the poor remaining in Poona. The rich could afford to go to hospitals and clinics and get the services of doctors, but the poor could not move away from their homes and villages. If he was to teach them the method of nature cure and serve them, he had to go to them. He had studied nature cure and practised it. Now, in the evening of his life, he had undertaken as part of his life's work the bringing of nature cure within the reach of the poor millions. He was going to the village of Uruli¹ to work and try his experiment there.

The Hindu, 23-3-1946

164. YARN CURRENCY

This adventure² is still at the trial stage. It may gather momentum, if it works even in a single village. At the moment I reproduce it here as a conceptual model.

POONA, [On or before March 22, 1946]³

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 31-3-1946

¹ A number of prominent persons from Uruli-Kanchan had requested Gandhiji to see if the place was suitable for starting a nature cure clinic for the villagers.

² The reference is to an article by Atmaram Sharma, not reproduced here, for replacing coins by yarn.

³ Gandhiji left Poona for Uruli-Kanchan on March 22.

165. CABLE TO J. C. SMUTS

POONA,
March 22, 1946

FIELD MARSHAL SMUTS

CAPE TOWN

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

THANKS FOR WIRE¹. INDIA IS EXPECTED TO GET
INDEPENDENCE THIS YEAR. IF YOU BELIEVE IT
WAIT TILL THEN. CLOISTERED CIVILIZATION LIKE
CLOISTERED VIRTUE. YOUR GOOD INTENTION UNDOUBTED.
PREMISE APPEARS FAULTY. INDIA'S PROTEST AGAINST
INFERIOR STATUS. PROPOSED FRANCHISE DOUBTFUL
PRIVILEGE. LAND TENURE IS SEGREGATION. SHALL
RESPECT YOUR WISH AVOID PUBLICITY CONTENTS OUR
CABLES.

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 95

166. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

POONA,
March 22, 1946

AMRIT KAUR

LADY IRWIN COLLEGE

SIKANDRA ROAD, NEW DELHI

YOUR WIRE. GLAD YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED.² GOING
URULI VILLAGE TWENTY MILES. YOU MEET THERE.
HOPE YOU WELL.

BAPU

From a original : C. W. 4173. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7809

¹ *Vide* footnote 3, "Letter to Sir Frederick Burrows", 10-3-1946

² Presumably, the reference is to increase in the newsprint quota for *Harijan*; *vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 5-3-1946

167. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

POONA,
March 22, 1946

MIRABEHN
KISAN ASHRAM
BAHADRABAD, JWALAPUR

NO CHANGE. COME DELHI WHEN I GO THERE.

BAPU

From the original C. W. 6515. Courtesy : Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9910

168. LETTER TO SIR FREDERICK BURROWS

NATURE CURE CLINIC,
6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,
March 22, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to receive your letter¹ through Shri Sudhir Ghosh. He takes this letter to you, and he will tell you all my thoughts about prisoners, salt, employees of Electric Corporation and khadi.²

With my regards to you and Lady Burrows.

Yours sincerely,

BAPU

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 137

169. LETTER TO VIJAY KUMAR

POONA,
March 22, 1946

DEAR VIJAY,

I have your letter of 10th instant. Of course Andhra is entitled to separation. As to that I have no doubt. But since independence is

¹ *Vide* footnote 3, "Letter to Sir Frederick Burrows", 10-3-1946

² In *Gandhi's Emissary*, "Statement to the Press", 11-2-1946, Sudhir Ghosh explains : "Gandhiji followed up with Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps in Delhi, the question of the release of the rest of the political prisoners . . . in particular . . . Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia. I was instructed to go to the Secretary of State . . . It was no problem to persuade . . . Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps . . . The . . . problem . . . was . . . the Viceroy . . . Lord Pethick-Lawrence said : ' . . . Get Gandhiji to write to me . . . the substance of what you have told me. I will then take it up with the Viceroy.' Post-haste I went back to Gandhiji and made him write . . ." *Vide* "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 2-4-1946.

coming, why agitate and why threaten satyagraha? Is Indian opinion divided on this question?

I hope you are quite well. It distresses me to think that an athlete like you can suffer from any illness. There must be something wrong in athletics which results in illness or early death.

Yours,

BAPU

MAHARAJAKUMAR OF VIZIANAGRA

BENARES

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

170. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

POONA,

March 22, 1946

BHAI MUNSHI,

Will you please guide me regarding Kamlesh? What has been your experience of him? He wants me to take him up for Hindustani *Harijan*, but is he not engaged in propagation of Hindi under you?

Blessings from

BAPU

SJT. KANHAIYALAL MUNSHI, ADVOCATE

MALABAR HILL

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : C. W. 7693. Courtesy : K. M. Munshi

171. LETTER TO BAPUBHAI N. VASHI

POONA,

March 22, 1946

BHAI BAPUBHAI,

How does it happen that you have contracted tuberculosis? If you could repeat Ramanama from the depth of your heart, it could prove an unfailing remedy for tuberculosis. The others who do

not observe the rules of nature do not repeat Ramanama but rather bring a bad name to it.

Blessings from

BAPU

BAPUBHAI NARANJI VASHI

UMER MANZIL

GHODBUNDER ROAD

KHAR

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

172. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

URULI-KANCHAN,

March 22, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

A letter from the Viceroy asking me to see him on the third was received this afternoon. I have not yet replied but I shall have to go.¹

The meeting about South Africa is to be held on the 31st evening. It will be convened by the Eastern Citizenship Association, and I am to preside. You will, of course, hear more about it there.

Here the beginning seems to be good enough. The final result we shall know by and by. I do not think your pessimism is justified.

More from Manilal Gandhi.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 304

173. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, URULI-KANCHAN

March 22, 1946

Gandhiji announced . . . that he would receive patients from the following day, examine them and prescribe treatment for their maladies. If he found the place suitable, and if he had to go elsewhere for some work, he would leave behind two competent men to continue his work.

Mahatma Gandhi said that *Ramdhun* was the most effective remedy for physical and mental ailments. He said that no doctor or *vaidya* could promise cure by medicine.

¹ *Vide* also “Letter to G. E. B. Abell”, 23-3-1946

But God would certainly relieve you of your pains and worries, if you pray to him. But for the prayer to be effective, one must participate in *Ramdhun* whole-heartedly and then only one would feel peace and happiness.

In the song that we have just sung the devotee says : “O Hari, you are the reliever of the people’s distress.” The promise here is universal. It is not qualified or restricted to any particular kind of ailment. . . . If you are subject to anger, eat and sleep for indulgence, not solely for sustenance, you do not know the meaning of Ramanama. Your recitation of it is mere lip-service. Ramanama to be efficacious must absorb your entire being during its recitation and express itself in your whole life.¹

Gandhiji said that he had come to Uruli because he felt that if he was to serve the poor through nature cure, he must go to their cottages in villages. He had been practising nature cure for the last 50 years, but that was for the benefit of himself and a few friends. Until this time he had not felt the urge to extend his activities and now, in the evening of his life, he had taken this work of propagating nature cure to the poor. He believed that the poor would be benefited by nature cure as also the rich.

The Hindu, 24-3-1946; also *Harijan*, 7-3-1946

174. TALK WITH ARMY MEN ²

URULI-KANCHAN,

[After *March 22*, 1946]³

ARMY MEN : We are soldiers, but we are soldiers of Indian freedom.

GANDHIJI : I am glad to hear that. For, so far you have mostly been instrumental in the suppression of Indian freedom. Have you heard of Jallianwala Bagh?

Oh, yes. But those days are past. We were, in those days, like the proverbial frog-in-the-well. We have now seen the world, our eyes have been opened. We admit we are mercenaries. But our hearts are no longer so.

I am glad to hear that. But, let me tell you, my use of that

¹ This paragraph is extracted from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter—I”.

² This is extracted from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter—II”. Pyarelal explains : “In Uruli there is a big military camp. Hardly a day passed, after Gandhiji’s arrival in Uruli, when a group of Indian military men did not contact him. They met him during his morning walks, they were at his evening prayer gatherings, but particularly interesting were the two batches who saw him at his residence.”

³ Gandhiji reached Uruli-Kanchan on March 22.

expression¹ was not intended to cast any reflection upon you. It was only descriptive of a soldiery that serves a foreign Government for a living. My use of that expression at the time brought a hornet's nest round my ears. But I could not withdraw it; I said, our present army system should go.

What would be our position when India is independent?

Why, you will fully share that independence and breathe the air of freedom with your countrymen. Independent India will have need of you. You have had military training. You will give India the benefit of that training. You have learnt the lesson of *comaraderie* under common danger. It would be a bad day, if the moment that peril is lifted, the lesson is lost. But in free India you won't be pampered as you are today. You won't have these lavish privileges with which a foreign Government bribes you at the expense of India's poor. India is destitute. You cannot serve her unless you are prepared to share her destitution. I told² Capt. Shah Nawaz that if the I. N. A. people succumb to the lionization of an India pining for freedom, and forget her destitution, they will earn not the blessings but the silent execration of their countrymen. The same applies to you. Unless you are prepared to forgo your privileges, you will feel sorry when independence comes, and sigh for the return of old times and old masters.

There was a time when we were not allowed to read any civil newspapers. And now we go and tell our officers that we are going to see our greatest leader, and no one dares to stop us.

I know, there is a new ferment and a new awakening among all the army ranks today. Not a little of the credit for this happy change belongs to Netaji Bose. I disapprove of his method, but he had rendered a signal service to India by giving the Indian soldier a new vision and a new ideal.

How anybody can think of dividing India into two, three or more parts, we army men are at a loss to understand. We know only one India for which we have fought and shed our blood.

Well, it requires all sorts to make the world.

May we shout slogans?

Well, you may.³

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ *Vide* "Notes" sub-title 'A Stab in the Back'

² *Vide* "Talk with Shah Nawaz Khan and P. K. Sehgal", 12/13-3-1946

³ There was a deafening roar as they shouted "*Jai Hind*", "*Netajiki Jai*", and so on repeatedly.

175. TALK WITH AN ENGLISH FRIEND¹

[Before March 23, 1946]²

GNADHIJI: I could have understood it, if they had combined from top to bottom. That would, of course, have meant delivering India over the rabble. I would not want to live up to 125 to witness that consummation. I would rather perish in the flames.

The Mission are coming fresh after a bloody victory. They have now an opportunity to add to it the laurels of a bloodless peace. It will be a glorious thing for them and the world, if they rise to the occasion and do justice to India even though it might mean reducing themselves (it won't be so in fact) to insignificance. That would be the height of non-violence. But miracles have happened in the world.

ENGLISH FRIEND: So you believe in miracles?

I do and I do not. God does not work through miracles. But the divine mind is revealed in a flash and it appears like a miracle to man. We do not know God, we know Him only through the working of His law. He and His law are one. There is nothing outside His law. Even earthquakes and tempests do not occur without His will—not a blade of grass grows but He wills it. Satan is here only on His sufferance, not independently of Him.

By justice do you mean that they should agree to withdraw the British army without stipulating any conditions?

I do. Freedom will be truly won only when the British army is withdrawn from the whole of India, not excluding Indian States.

Otherwise it would be sinister.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ This is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—II." Pyarelal explains : "Gandhiji was discussing some time back with an English friend the difficult task ahead of the Cabinet Mission. There was an unprecedented upsurge for independence among the masses on the one hand and on the other, what he had called 'the unholy combination' at bottom among the Hindus and Mussalmans for a joint violent purpose."

² From the reference to the Cabinet Mission which reached India on March 23, 1946

176. QUESTION BOX

Q. What to do when the local Congress machinery refuses to act or work in a way which is effective?

A. A person who is a real Congressman will, in such circumstances, himself act singly or in co-operation with others purely in a spirit of service and give all the credit to the Congress organization. Supposing that many persons acted thus, Congress would rise from day to day. Ineffective workers would be shamed into becoming effective, the Congress machinery always remaining clean and intact. "In a spirit of service" is here the operative phrase. If the spirit is that of aggrandizement, although the work done may be effective, credit will probably go to the aggressor and the Congress will lose. That the aggressor will lose in the end need not be stressed.

Q. What should a Congress worker do when he faces a situation at a place which is outside his area of work?

A. Areas are prescribed for workers for their weakness, not for their strength. For a strong Congress worker all India is the area of his work, and he will be found every time in the area where he is wanted most. Naturally he will be never regarded as an intruder or as an officious man. Appreciation of the service will be uppermost in the minds of all. It would be ludicrous and a sign of impotence, if a Congressman passing through an area not his own and finding a battle royal between two factions does not interpose himself between them, even at the cost of his life, on the untenable plea that the trouble was outside his area.

Q. Can the same person take up parliamentary work, constructive work as distinguished from the parliamentary and the organization work of the Congress, in addition to working for his own livelihood?

A. He must be a modern Hercules who can effectively do these things at the same time. I can conceive the possibility of the same person managing all these departments with a staff of efficient secretaries and clerks working under him. The point of the question, however, is wholly different. Division of labour is a necessity. One-man-show is always undesirable and is a positive hindrance to a system of organization. An organization like the British kingship is not personal. "The King is dead. Long live the King." Hence the saying, "the King can do no wrong." A king as an individual may be

a rascal but personified as an organization he is perfect in the sense the word 'perfection' is understood in a given society. The moral is that however inefficient the persons in charge may be in the beginning stages, in a progressive organization, persons taking charge should be above board and should put the organization first, themselves last. If an attempt is made to organize work through rascals, the organization will always have rescals at its head.

Q. August 1942 has brought a psychological change in the public mind. They do not await orders from the Congress for observance of days, etc. Other parties often take advantage of this spontaneous effort and associate their programme with it, while official local Congress either keeps mum or inactive. It also often happens that programmes and policies as laid down by the Working Committee are not automatically adopted by the Provincial Congress Committees or are sometimes worked out half-heartedly. Some also refuse to create a machinery for it, till they are officially called upon to do so. In such circumstances, what is expected of Congressmen?

A. This is a good question. If Congressmen have really learnt to act for themselves since August 1942, it is a great thing. But I do not believe it. Those only act for themselves who think for themselves. It does not matter whether in doing so they make mistakes. A child often stumbles before it begins to walk. Therefore the effort ceases to be spontaneous or individual when one associates with any programme that comes his way. The secret of the August resolution was that when the Congress as an organization ceased to function every Congressman became his own master, which is wholly different from becoming a pawn in any other person's or group's or party's game.

The second part of the question shows also that 1942 did not teach Congressmen to think and act independently. If they had learnt that lesson truly and well, any programme laid down by the Working Committee would be followed by Congressmen whole-heartedly and the response from Provincial Committees and all constituent elements would be spontaneous, such that the whole organization would move like one man. Such was my expectation in 1942. That it was not so fulfilled is a matter of history. That the people acted somehow, without being paralysed by the wholesale onslaught of the Government, stands to their credit. How much more creditable it would have been, if they had fully carried out the policy of non-violence explicitly laid down in that resolution! If my argument is correct, it

follows that Congressmen with understanding would follow implicitly laid down in the resolution! If my argument is correct, it follows that Congressmen with understanding would follow implicitly the Working Committee's resolutions without reference to the action of their neighbours. When organizational effort stops or is neutralized or becomes ineffective, every individual belonging to it holds himself responsible for the activity of his organization and then gradually builds it up.

Q. When sporadic strikes are such as cannot be supported by the Congress, what should Congressmen and the public do to put an end to them?

A. In the first place, if the Congress organization were complete, there would be no sporadic strikes, and any other strike would be unjustified for the simple reason that a people's organization must shoulder the burden of every justifiable strike within the sphere of that organization. But today unhappily the Congress, powerful as it is, has not attained that supreme position. Hence every sporadic strike has to be judged on merits irrespective of the party that has made itself responsible for it. And, when a strike is indefensible on merits, the Congress and the public should unequivocally condemn it. The natural result would be that the men on strike would go back to work. If the strike is justified, the institution against which it has been declared would be likewise condemned, if it employs black-legs or other questionable means to force strikers into submission.

URULI [-KANCHAN], March 23, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

177. CAPITALISM AND STRIKES

How should capital behave when labour strikes? This question is in the air and has great importance at the present moment. One way is that of suppression named, or nicknamed, 'American'. It consists in suppression of labour through organized *goondaism*. Everybody would consider this as wrong and destructive. The other way, right and honourable, consists in considering every strike on its merits and giving labour its due—not what capital considers as due but what labour itself would so consider and enlightened public opinion acclaim as just.

One preliminary question will justly arise : why should there be a strike at all in any well-regulated concern? Strikes ought to be

impossible when there is perfect understanding between capital and labour, mutual respect and recognition of equality. And since differences there would be sometimes between employers and employed even in the best-regulated concerns, why should there not be a system of arbitration between the parties so that they will always readily carry out in perfect good faith awards of arbitrators?

But we have to consider things not as they should be but as they are. As time progresses, the labour world is getting more insistent in its demands which are daily increasing, and it does not hesitate to resort to violence in its impatient enforcement of those demands. New methods of enforcing them are being employed. Workers do not hesitate to injure the property of the employers, dislocate machinery, harass old men and women who would not join the strike and forcibly keep out black-legs. In these circumstances, how are the employers to behave?

In my opinion, employers and employed are equal partners even if employees are not considered superior. But what we see today is the reverse. The reason is that the employers harness intelligence on their side. They have the superior advantage which concentration of capital bring with it, and they know how to make use of it. One individual rupee has very little potency, but when money combines as capital, the combine derives a power different from and far in excess of the mere sum total of the individual rupees. A million drops individually are negligible. But in combination they make the ocean carrying on its bosom a fleet of ocean hounds. Whilst capital in India is fairly organized, labour is still in a more or less disorganized condition in spite of unions and their federation. Therefore it lacks the power that true combination gives.

Moreover it lacks intelligence, so much so that individuals fight against individuals, unions against unions. Lack of intelligence leads to its exploitation by selfish and unscrupulous men even to the point of creating and promoting mischief. They know no better, being ignorant of the secret of non-violence. The net result is that the workers suffer. If labour were to understand the working of non-violence, the power generated by combination would any day exceed the power of dead metal in the hands of a few capitalists.

Hence my advice to the employers would be that they should willingly regard workers as the real owners of the concerns which they fancy they have created. They should further regard it as their duty to equip the employees with sound education that would draw out the

intelligence dormant in them and gladly promote and welcome the power that this combination of the workers gives them.

This noble work cannot be done in a day by the employers. Meanwhile what should those do who have to face the destruction wrought by strikers in their concerns? I would unhesitatingly advise such employers that they should at once offer the strikers full control of the concern which is as much the strikers' as theirs. They will vacate their premises not in a huff but because it is right, and, to show their goodwill, they would offer the employees the assistance of their engineers and other skilled staff. The employers will find in the end that they will lose nothing. Indeed their right action will disarm opposition, and they will earn the blessings of their men. They will have made proper use of their capital. I would not consider such action as benevolent. It would be an intelligent use by the capitalists of their resources and honest dealing in regard to the employees whom they would have converted into honourable partners.

URULI [-KANCHAN], March 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

178. TELEGRAM TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL¹

March 23, 1946

NAWAB SAHEB
BHOPAL

INVITATION RECEIVED AFTER DESPATCH OF WIRE. AM ACCEPTING.
REACHING DELHI 3RD.

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

179 LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

URULI [-KANCHAN],
March 23, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I had formal invitation to be present for an interview with H. E. the Viceroy and the Cabinet Delegation on the 3rd proximo at 4 p. m.

¹ In reply to the addressee's telegram of March 22, 1946, which read : "If you are accepting the invitation of the Viceroy to meet the Cabinet Mission please let me know. Also when you expect arrive Delhi. Kindest regards."

I hope to be present for the interview.¹

The date of my arrival will be 3rd proximo.² What my address in New Delhi will be I do not know at present, but any inquiry at Birla House will be answered. I shall hope to let you know later when my New Delhi address is fixed up or if there is any change in my programme. Please note that I am just now living in a village, Uruli, 18 miles from Poona, on the Sholapur line.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 177

180. LETTER TO PURSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS³

URULI[-KANCHAN], (POONA)

March 23, 1946

BHAI PURUSHOTTAMDAS,

I have your letter. I am in a village where I propose to live till the 30th. I am here in connection with nature cure.

I have sent today a wire, a copy of which is enclosed.

I think, such a conference⁴ comes off rarely. In your absence it will lack grace. Other things can wait but this cannot, I agree that the date should be convenient to you. What can we do about it? When they enquired of me on the telephone, I did not know that the call was made in consultation with you. I, therefore, selected the earliest date that would suit me and conveyed it; hence the telegram.

So you have again invited cold, have you? I shall have no objection to your having somebody to read out your speech. I suggest it should be either in Gujarati or Hindustani. It is all right, if an English translation is prepared which you may issue to the papers.

¹ For the Viceroy's version of the interview, *vide* "Viceroy's Note on Interview to Gandhiji", 3-4-1946. For Gandhiji's account, *vide* "Letter of Lord Wavell", 6-4-1946.

² Gandhiji, however, arrived in Delhi on April 1, in response to a special message from Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Pethick-Lawrence who wanted to meet him informally before the official proceedings started.

³ This was sent by hand.

⁴ Presumably, a reference to the meeting of Eastern Citizenship Association of which the addressee was Chairman. The conference, however, could not be held as the Muslim League planned a separate one. *Vide* also "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 25-3-1946

This, however, is only a suggestion. Please do as it suits you.

Can the road along Chowpatty still accommodate large crowds? Hasn't all the space been built upon? Why not in Shivaji Park? It seems that is the only large maidan that remains. I would not know much about this.

A draft of the resolution is enclosed. You may revise the draft, if you wish. Your letter will reach me, if you address it to Poona. Telegrams are delivered here. This Uruli is on the G. I. P. railway. There is another place called Uruli. This one is called Uruli-Kanchan.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

SIR PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

NAVASARI CHAMBERS, BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

181. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 23, 1946

CHI. GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have decided firmly that wherever I go, I should stay where the Bhangis live. I shall reach Delhi on the 3rd because I have received the summons¹. Even if it may be rather difficult to stay in the Bhangi quarters, you should arrange for my stay there. I am not writing about this separately to Viyogi Hariji. You may yourself talk to him as well as to Brijkisan².

I am well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : C. W. 8077. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

182. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, URULI-KANHAN ³

March 23, 1946

It has truly been observed that all mental and physical ailments are due to one common cause. It is, therefore, but natural that there should be a common remedy for them too. There is a unity of cure as there is in disease. The Shastras say so. Therefore I prescribed

¹ To meet the Viceroy; *vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 23-3-1946

² Brijkrishna Chandiwalla

³ This is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—I"

Ramanama and almost the same treatment to all the patients who came to me this morning. But we have a knack of explaining away the Shastras in life when they do not suit our convenience. We have deluded ourselves into the belief that the Shastras are meant only for the benefit of the soul in the life to come, that the end of dharma is to acquire merit after death. I do not share that view. If dharma has no practical use in this life, it has none for me in the next.

There is hardly anyone in this world who is completely free from ailment whether bodily or mental. For some of these there is no earthly cure. For instance, Ramanama cannot perform the miracle of restoring to you a lost limb. But it can perform the still greater miracle of helping you to enjoy an ineffable peace in spite of the loss while you live and rob death of its sting and the grave its victory at the journey's end. Since death must come soon or late to everyone, why should one worry over the time.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

183. LETTER TO MOTILAL RAY

[After *March 23, 1946*]¹

BHAI MOTI BABU,

The Charkha Sangh people inform me that you are delaying to refund the sum due to them. It looks bad that a person like you can't make good even this amount. And it is not at all proper. Thus the Prabartaka Sangh has comparatively gone down in my estimation. So much so it is doing business in uncertified khadi. All this is regrettable.

A wire has been sent to you today; a copy of it is enclosed. I hope the Charkha Sangh would not have to file a suit against you.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI MOTILAL RAY
PRABARTAKA SANGH
CHANDERNAGORE
BENGAL

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ The letter is found between letters of March 23 and 26.

184. WASTEFULNESS ¹

Correspondence continues to pour in saying that stored food material, being declared unfit for human consumption, is thrown away. Skimmed milk also is thrown away for want of custom and condensed milk is lying idle owing to ignorance. Accumulation of food material at the ports will not mitigate distress unless it is promptly taken to the places where it is immediately required. Worse than this, however, is the triple waste going on now side by side with ever growing famine conditions. All such waste takes place for lack of a living contact between the people and the rulers.

URULI [-KANCHAN], March 24, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

185. HAND-WEAVING AND HAND-SPINNING ²

Shri Jajuji writes to say that whilst on the one hand hand-spun yarn is piling up, on the other handloom weavers are day by day giving up hand-spun yarn in preference to mill yarn. An appeal to the weavers through the columns of *Harijan*, whether in English or in any of the Indian languages, will be good for nothing. Hardly any weaver reads *Harijan* and, if attempt is made to read it out to him, he will not take interest in it. Hence the task of speaking to the weavers on the suicidal effect of abandoning hand-spun yarn devolves upon the devoted heads of Charkha Sangh workers. They have to reason out to the weavers how they will be ultimately responsible for killing their own occupation by excluding hand-spun yarn. As soon as the mill-owners can do so profitably, they will certainly stop selling mill yarn and will weave it themselves. They are not philanthropists. They have set up mills in order to make money. They will stop selling their yarn to handloom weavers, if they find weaving is more profitable. Therefore it is a question of time when handloom weavers will be starved. These are really fed by hand-spinners even as they in their

¹ This appeared under "Notes".

² Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "form *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

turn are fed by handloom weavers. They are twins, complementary of each other. This fact should be brought home to the weavers by the Charkha Sangh. With loving patience and knowledge they should try to appreciate the difficulties of the weavers and learn how to remove them. Acharya Vinoba has pointed out one remedy, namely, to double and twist the yarn at the same time that the cones are unwound. If this practice becomes universal, there would be no untwisted hand-spun yarn available for weaving. It is found by experience that twisted hand-spun yarn is any day as weavable as mill-spun yarn, if indeed it is not more so. Since the time of my discharge from my last imprisonment, I have been proclaiming as vehemently as I can that the workers should master the art of weaving as well as they have mastered the art of spinning. Had they not taken to spinning themselves, they would not have solved the many difficulties of spinners. They have now to make up for past neglect, however unconscious it may have been, by learning the art of weaving and by practising it assiduously. Then and then only will they understand the difficulties that professional weavers experience in weaving hand-spun yarn and be able to solve them.

URULI[-KANCHAN], March 24, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

186. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, URULI-KANCHAN*¹

March 24, 1946

This is good², because it shows that those who need nature cure treatment are coming forward to avail themselves of it.

If the work proceeded according to plan, Gandhiji explained, he intended to stay for at least four months in the year in their midst. During his absence his colleagues would continue to direct and guide them according to his instructions. [He said:]

The practice of nature cure does not require high academic qualifications or much erudition. Simplicity is the essence of universality. Nothing that is meant for the benefit of the rich only. But India lives in her seven lakhs of villages—obscure, tiny, out-of-the-way villages—where the population in some cases hardly exceeds a few hundreds, very often not even a few scores. I would like to go and settle down in some such village. That is real India, my India, for which I live. You cannot take to these humble people the paraphernalia of highly qualified doctors and hospital equipment. In simple, natural remedies and Ramanama lies their only hope.

He had been told that there was hardly any disease in Uruli[-Kanchan]. Probably what was meant was that no epidemic was prevalent, that being the popular conception of disease. But, from the cases that had come to him during the last two days, it was clear that ill-health there was in plenty in Uruli. He told the villagers:

If you do as I ask you to, Uruli will become an ideal village, to see which people will come from far.

Man's physical body is composed of five natural elements, i. e., air, water, earth, fire or *tejas* (the energizing principle) and ether (space). The soul quickens it.

The most essential of these is air. Man can live without food for several weeks, without water for some time, but without air he cannot live for more than a few minutes. God has, therefore, made air universally available. Shortages of food or water there may be at times but of air never. In spite of it we foolishly deprive ourselves of God's

¹ This is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter—I".

² The reference is to increase in number of patients from 30 to 43.

blessings of fresh and pure air by sleeping within doors with doors and windows shut. One may shut the doors and windows, if he is afraid of thieves at night. But why should one shut oneself up?

To get fresh air, one must sleep in the open. But it is no good sleeping in the open only to breathe dust and dirt-laden air. The place where you sleep must be free from both. Some people cover their faces as a protection against dust and cold. It is a remedy worse than the disease. Then there is the evil habit of breathing through the mouth. Mouth is the organ of ingestion. It is not the organ of breathing. The air passing through the nasal passages is filtered and purified and at the same time warmed up before it enters the lungs.

Anyone who fouls the air by spitting about carelessly, throwing refuse and rubbish or otherwise dirtying the ground, sins against man and nature. Man's body is the temple of God. Anyone who fouls the air that is to enter that temple desecrates it. He takes the name of Rama in vain.

In the end, he warned them that they should be prepared to find in him a hard task-master. If he stayed in their midst, he would neither spare himself nor them. He would visit their homes, inspect their streets, their drains, their kitchens, their latrines. He would tolerate neither dust nor dirt anywhere.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

187. WHY BHANGI QUARTERS? ¹

Friends are puzzled over my keen desire to reside in Bhangi quarters in the cities or towns I may visit. To ask why I have not entertained that desire all these years would be more pertinent. To answer why I did not have the desire long ago must be reserved for a future occasion. Just now I must answer why the desire has come upon me at all.

I have for some time been saying that we must all be Bhangis or untouchables. But it has worried me that I have not accorded the statement with corresponding action. It may not be possible to establish complete accordance with the wish. But it ought to be done so far as possible. Whilst this thought was agitating me, I got the news, which I have already shared with the readers, that in Gujarat

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as "from *Harijan Sevak*" Published simultaneously with the source.

only one well and one temple is shared with Harijans and this in Karadi.¹ Whether the news is true or not is immaterial here. The material thing is the reaction produced on my mind by the news. To be angry was madness. The news quickened the desire for residence in untouchables' quarters. I said to myself: 'If I lived apart from Harijans, what right had I to question the action of others who went further in their adherence to untouchability? But whether the others changed their mode or not was not for me to judge. If it was my duty to reside in Harijan quarters, I must perform it irrespective of the reaction of the step on the others.' This is the thought which is possessing me and goading me to the adumbrated action.

Consequently I have asked Sheth R. D. Birla to arrange, if at all possible, for my residence in untouchables' quarters when I happen to be in Bombay. I have also wired to Sheth G. D. Birla to arrange likewise for Delhi, and Shri Brijkishen Chandiwalla has already asked for my approval of some arrangement he has made². It goes without saying that I must not impose myself on Harijans anywhere. I must not wound their feelings, if they will not tolerate my presence in their midst. But I fear no such thing.

Incidentally I notice that some critics rejoice that I shall no longer reside in the Birla House. They do not know that I have been accepting their hospitality for years. I have accepted donations from them for my many constructive activities. The critics do not know of the changes they have imperceptibly made in their life; nor need they or the public in general know these. Such changes are never made for show. At the same time it is perfectly true that there were wide differences between them and me in outlook. This is no cause for sorrow or wonder. All true change comes from within. Any changes brought about by pressure is worthless. I am neither so vain nor so foolish as to hope that all would follow me. And who can say whether I am right or others in what we are doing? It is enough, if all of us abide by what we consider to be right. We are all His creatures to do His will, not ours. Doing so, we should all be friends to one another.

URULI[-KANCHAN], Macrh 25, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

¹ *Vide* also "Shocking if True", 24-3-1946

² *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 19-3-1946 and "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 21-3-1946

188. WHY ONE MORE BURDEN?¹

Why have I got involved in nature cure in the evening of my life? This question is being asked of me by several people. Had I not enough work on my hands already? Was I not too old to take up new things? Could anyone expect me to add to my existing burdens? All these are pertinent questions demanding my careful consideration. But they did not evoke any echo within me. The still small voice within me whispers: Why bother about what others say? I have given you a colleague like Dr. Dinshaw who understand you, and whom you understand. You have confidence in your capacity, having followed nature cure as a hobby for over half a century. If you hide this talent and do not make use of it, you will be as a thief. It will ill become you. Remember the teaching of the first verse of *Ishopanishad* and surrender all you have to Me. There is nothing that really belongs to you. Only you fancied that something was yours. It is all Mine. Give it also to My creatures like the rest. It will not in any way jeopardize your other work provided only that you have cultivated perfect detachment. You have entertained the desire to live up to 125 years. Its fulfilment or otherwise should not be your concern. Yours is only to understand and do your duty and “be careful for nothing”².

These are the thoughts that haunt me. It is my third day in this village. The number of patients who come for help is daily increasing. They feel happy, and I feel happy in serving them. I am receiving the co-operation of the local people. I know that if I can enter the hearts of the people here, illness will be banished and this village will become a model of cleanliness and health. But if this does not happen, what is that to me? I have only to do the behest of the Master.

URULI [-KANCHAN], March 25, 1946

Harijan, 31-3-1946

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as “from Harijan Sevak” published simultaneously with the source.

² Phillippians, “Permits for the Transvaal”

189. TELEGRAM TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

URULI,
March 25, 1946

SHRI PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

NAVSARI CHAMBERS

FORT, BOMBAY

ONLY ONE MEETING CAN TAKE PLACE. LET LEAGUE CALL IF THEY
WISH AND OMIT ME. PLEASE AVOID DIFFERENCE. SORABJI MUST RESTRAIN
HIMSELF. COMING THIRTYFIRST ANY CASE. SHOW THIS SARDAR.

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

190. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 25, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI

I have your letter. The League's ways are strange. We cannot have two meetings. Let the League arrange one. There is no harm, if they get the credit for it. Purushottamdas will show you the letter I have written¹ to him. If the meeting called by the League is to be held on Sunday, and if you think it would be inadvisable for me to go there on the same day, please send me a wire.

Telegrams were delivered here. We can even get a telephone connection if we want, but why go in for all that trouble for only six days?

My business in naturopathy is flourishing. I can lose nothing in it. And it helps to advance my other work. If I find I have some capital with me and do not use it, what a big fool should I be? One must hope to live and work for 125 years. For the rest, God alone is the master of life and death. I am positive that my duty is to stay in the Bhangi quarters. You must get over the difficulties.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhine, pp. 304-5

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Purshottamdas Thakurdas", 23-3-1946

191. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

URULI[-KANCHAN],

March 25, 1946

DAUGHTER,

I see no difference. You do not understand my point. You want me to agree to your wish. You can go Borkamata today at your own sweet will; I have already indicated what mine is. If you leave Sevagram, then dedicate your life to the service of your mother. If this cannot be done, do just as you please. You cannot come to Delhi.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 619

192. NATURE CURE PRESCRIPTIONS-I

URULI [KANCHAN],

March 25, 1946

VITHABAI,

I would advise this. She should take sun-bath in the nude, followed by a hip-bath and a friction-bath in cold water. The diet should consist of only fruit-juice and milk or butter-milk. She may possibly be cured, if she has faith in Rama. If she does this much regularly, she is sure to get better. Complete cure is rather difficult.

HIRA

She should chew fruit and throw away the residue; take milk or butter-milk; also hip-bath and friction-bath; mud-poultice on the abdomen. This will have to be demonstrated to her; also the type of earth and where to get it. She should also take sun-bath.

ARJUN

Urine will pass regularly, if he is seated in hot and cold water by turns. He should drink boiled water and take fruit-juices and butter-milk for nourishment.

SALU

Is it the same trouble? What is the use of removing cataracts from a poor person's eyes? One should live with it, recite Ramanama and, when the time is up, depart with Ramanama on one's lips. If this cannot be done, she may be taken to a hospital and have cataracts

removed. I do not remember any treatment for cataract.

Had she come yesterday? She should be given sun-bath even in this heat so that she perspires and the boils dry up. I feel that she might derive some benefit, if she lies down naked with a wet towel on her head. While doing so—lying down—she should constantly utter Ramanama. She should be given all this treatment here. We ought to clean the boils for her and bandage. She should be advised about her diet. If all this is done here, then only she can improve.

. . .¹ VITHU

What does he eat? His diet should consist of milk, fruit, vegetable and chapatis. Sun-bath, hip-bath and friction-bath should be taken. His asthma can be brought under control, if he does regular *pranayama*².

HIRUNANA

Fruit-juices for two days; then fruit-juice mixed with milk. Sun-bath, hip-bath and friction-bath. If the motion is not clear, he should try the syringe after two days. Mud-poultices. Tomato juice, if tomatoes are available.

RAJU

Sun-bath, hip-bath, friction-bath. Butter-milk and fruit-juices, absolutely no milk; if he cannot retain even butter-milk, then initially only fruit-juices and boiled water.

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Mahatma—Life of Mahandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 7, between pp. 96 and 97

193. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI³

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 26, 1946

CHI. RAMDAS,

I have started practising nature cure in this village. I shall leave this place on the 31st for Delhi. As regards Dr. Mehta, nothing is certain. His clinic is being vacated. Hence I don't think I can bring you here [for treatment]. The work at Uruli-Kanchan will continue in my absence. But you will not be satisfied. We wish to reach that stage

¹ The first name is illegible.

² Deep breathing exercise

³ The letter is written in Devanagari.

[of giving satisfaction to all the patients], but that will take time. Do the following: Ramanama with faith, hip-bath, friction-bath, sun-bath, *pranayama* and mudpacks on an empty stomach.

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

RAMDAS GANDHI

NAGPUR

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

194. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

URUL-KANCHAN,

March 26, 1946

CHI. KANAIYA

I got your letter. I like my new occupation which is going fairly well. I am keeping good health. Abha¹ has been a good girl these days; she remains cheerful. Rajkumari is expected to arrive today. Sushila Nayyar is in Quetta. She will come when I return from Delhi.

Abha will write you a long letter. I am writing this in the midst of a great rush of work. No one can take your place and to that extent I should miss you; but I refrain from entertaining such a feeling.

Blessings from

BAPU

KANU GANDHI

SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Addressee's wife

195. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

URUL-KANCHAN,
March 26, 1946

CHI. ANAND,

I have your letter. I regret that your weakness persists as much as before. What can you do about it? Live as God wills.

It will be good if the new lady¹ brings you some peace. Do not regret your lack of hearing. Look upon it as a blessing. Address your letters to Poona or Sevagram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindu: Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

196. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

URUL-KANCHAN,
March 26, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I shall leave for Bombay on 31st. From there I shall go to Delhi. I shall leave Bombay on Monday.

My advice about Aryanayakam² is: Give whatever he wants, but not Rustom Bhavan; land—as much as he wants—do not charge any price. Ownership may vest in Gram Seva Mandal. But the possession may remain with Nayee Talim as long as it pays *vighoti*³ and an annual rent of one rupee. We should not hesitate to give as much land as he wants. After all, all work is one. Everything is ours. Still Gram Seva Mandal's opinion should be considered as final. Show this to him.

Do write about Kamble.

Here the new work is going on well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4546

¹ Addressee's wife, Gangi

² E. W. Aryanayakam, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

³ Revenue per acre

197. LETTER TO RANCHHODDAS PATWARI

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 27, 1946

RESPECTED BHAI RANCHHODDAS,

I have your letter. That your eyes are failing is as much a matter for rejoicing as for sorrow. You will not have to see thing which pain you. I had gathered from your previous letter that you did not expect a reply and, therefore, because of heavy pressure of other work I did not reply to it. Since you want a reply to the present letter, I am dictating this after the morning prayer. My eyes are still good enough, but the hand needs rest. I, therefore, spare it other exertion so as to be able to write for *Harijan*.

If your interpretation of ahimsa is correct, what could I achieve by living up to 125? For India would have to bear the load of my ignorance for about 50 years more still. However, so long as my ignorance seems to me to be knowledge, may I not hope to live up to 125 and go on serving up to the end? You say, moreover, that ahimsa will work in dealing with friends, but not in dealing with enemies who do not believe in it; and, in support of your argument, you cite the example of Rajputs and stories from the Puranas. Let us, for the moment, leave aside the examples. If ahimsa was limited to loving those who love us, how could it be described as the supreme dharma? Even dacoits and robbers do that. How great was the love of Alibaba's forty robbers for one another? Does not the aphorism¹ describing the distinguishing characteristics of ahimsa say that in the presence of ahimsa all ill-will subsides? If this is true, ahimsa can be tested only against an enemy. Does not the well-known couplet² of Shamaldas, "For a bowl of water give a goodly meal," [etc.], teach the same lesson in simple but sweet words? The bravery of the Rajputs cannot be denied. If nothing could ever be achieved through violence, would it have acquired the powerful spell that it has? Are the successes of falsehood, too, any the less impressive? We often see falsehood occupying seats of power and truth wandering in rags, but are you impressed by this fact? And what do the Puranas, etc., suggest, if not that God alone may do as He wills? He who creates may destroy, for even through destruction He creates. Prahlada and others displayed

¹ From Patanjali's Yogadarshanam, II. 35—•हिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैर त्यागः—

² Vide "An Autobiography"

pure ahimsa in their lives. He incurred the displeasure of his demon father, but did not give up Rama's name till the last.

What more need I write? I do not wish to drown myself in the well of the Shastras. They seem to me like the great oceans, full of countless alligators. But do they not contain pearls, too? Let us, therefore, churn them to find that nectar in the form of the pearls.

I hope you will not mind your younger brother indulging in such philosophizing. Won't you forgive him? Do dictate letters to me whenever you get time. Paramanand did call on me and also gave the book he has written.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

In reply to your three questions, which you must remember, Bapu says "yes":

1. Regarding recitation of the *Ramaraksha*.
2. This question pertained to the fact of Rama giving us the strength.
3. Whether Ramanama is an unfailing remedy, occurred for the first time at the prayers.

SUSHILA PAI

From the photostat of Gujarati: G. N. 4976

198. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

URULI [-KANCHAN],

March 27, 1946

MY DEAR C. R.,

You are giving me good lessons in Tamil and incidentally in Sanskrit. From which root is Lakshmi derived? I never knew that etymologically 'Lakshmi'¹ was (ocean-born). Why not *rombu* but *romba* for 'much'? I remember having learnt *rombu*.

The news you give me about the temple-entry case is interesting and disturbing. You will tell me what happens.

Yes, I am off to Delhi (D. V.) on 1st April. Heaven help them that a fool should go on All Fools Day!

So your son-in-law² is off to America with Goenka³. He has

¹ This is in Devanagari.

² Devdas Gandhi, who was Editor of *The Hindustan Times*

³ Ramanath Goenka of *The Indian Express*

become a great man.

But nothing interests me so much as your stomach trouble. It may be beyond me but not nature cure. If it is beyond nature cure, it is beyond repair. Yours is not that. Rest and be thankful. I wanted to give you rest. But now I can't till after my return from Delhi.

Ramba anbudan

BAPU¹

From a photostat : G. N. 2120

199. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

URULI[-KANCHAN],

March 27, 1946

DEAR GHANSYAMDASJI

You will excuse my dictating this in English. You will understand the reason why.

Bapu sent a wire yesterday to Brijkishan approving of the arrangements for his stay in Valmiki Mandir. I have sent you another wire today as follows:

Bapu wired approval and also sent detailed letter yesterday to Brijkishan.

As regards telephone and electricity, Bapu says that he does not mind if they can be installed without much difficulty; but their absence won't make any difference in regard to his plans. In case electricity is installed for lighting, he expects that the arrangements will be permanent. If the wires are removed the moment he goes out of the Bhangi Nivas, the whole thing will become a force. There should be some permanent improvement in the Bhangi Nivas as a result of his stay there. In connection with this, Bapu is very particular about plentiful supply of clean water for bath and drinking. You are to make arrangements for a bath tub for him too. So much for the present. More when we meet.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

PYARELAL

From a copy: C. W. 7873. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

¹ This and the four italicized words are in Tamil

200. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 27, 1946

CHI. SHARMA

I have your letter. I could not reply to it earlier. I do not like the letter. Your old impatience is still there.

You have not to fight for money, do you have to? You have to fight for truth¹. I am in correspondence with Gadodiaji. He had suggested² Bhulabhai's name. When he was told about Bhulabhai's illness, he accepted M[unshi]'s name. I am now writing³ to M. You have to send me your brief⁴. It should be to the point. I will ask Gadodiaji to reply to it. And you will have to send in your rejoinder. I shall send all this correspondence to M. Before that there should be signatures of both of you on the award.

I have today your letter of the 22nd.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, between pages 356 and 357

201. LETTER TO CORBETT

VILLAGE URULI KANCHAN (G.I.P.),
POONA DISTRICT,
March 28, 1946

DEAR MR. CORBETT,

I have your letter. In my opinion the incidents you describe were disgraceful enough if and where they happened. I say 'if' because whilst I have known of some, I have no knowledge of all that you have described. But to give them all-India publicity in the columns of *Harijan* is to exaggerate the evil out of all proportion. To advertise an evil is to give it a fresh lease of life. Wisdom, therefore,

¹ The addressee had claimed remuneration from Lakshminarayan Gadodia, Treasurer and Trustee of his Nature Cure Ashram, for the treatment given to the latter and his wife for the last three years.

² For an arbitrator

³ *Vide* the following item.

⁴ Gandhiji uses the English word.

dictates dignified silence and a determination to prepare to face manfully a repetition.

There are Anglo-Indians who are ashamed of their Indian parentage and will have nothing to do with Indians. These excite prejudice and when feelings run high come in for exhibition of such prejudice resulting even in disgraceful incidents you have described. Living in the midst of a population which numerically reaches nine figures, regrettable incidents will sometimes happen. Times of peace should be devoted [to] think[ing] out ways and means of avoiding the re-eruption. One that occurs to me is that Anglo-Indians should cease to think of themselves as separate people requiring special privileges. These they will not, and should not, enjoy in independent India. Indeed, nobody should have special privileges. All over the world they have been the bane of foreign rule which is evil itself. It must breed evil and exist on that breed.

There are Indians who have adopted European manners and customs and conduct themselves as superiors, much to the discomfort of their fellow-men. I know that before now even these have come in for the ill-treatment to which you have drawn my attention, How nice it would be if all these ugly features of society were removed even before independence becomes the order of the day in law and in fact !

This letter is not intended for publication.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

202. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 28, 1946

BHAI MUNSHI,

I have your letter about Kamlesh. I see that you have had the same experience that I had. In these circumstances I don't think I can give him the work of Hindustani *Harijan*.

Dr. Sharma is a naturopath. We have bought some land for him near Khurja Road and set up a Trust for the same. The trustees are Sheth Lakshminarayan Gadodia and Jajuji. A difference has arisen

between Gadodiaji and Sharma regarding the latter's fee¹. In itself the dispute is about nothing very important. But it involves determination of the truth or otherwise of the facts. They have entrusted that task to me. But I cannot undertake it because I myself am deeply involved in the affair. Moreover, if I have to decide the dispute, I would have to go into the minutest details. I am not in a position to do so. I am busy with so many things that if I started giving my time to individual cases, I would not be able to do justice to the public tasks I have taken up. I am therefore, getting out of all such involvements, and so wish to put this burden on you.

Actually you should be offered a fee for this work. But I am not in a position to ensure that. Gadodiaji can pay the fee, but he has agreed to be a trustee in this venture for love of public service and, since I myself am involved in the affair, I cannot ask him to pay you any fee. And Dr. Sharma is in no position to pay the fee. Hence I must entrust this task to you purely as a form of public service as I have entrusted to many others.

What I am thinking is that Sharma may give a statement setting out this case, then Gadodiaji may do the same, and Sharma may reply to his statement. You may then, if you wish, meet both or call either; otherwise you may decide on the basis of the statements themselves. I think this will not involve much work.

If you express your inability to undertake the work in the conditions I have explained, I will not take it ill. Nobody should consider whether I would be pleased or displeased in any matter connected with my personal work, for I think I have, or rather God has, dulled all such feelings in me. If that were not so, I would be crushed under the weight that I bear, and would have to give up my aspiration to live up to 125.

If you feel that you can decide this matter, it will be necessary to draw up some kind of a rough agreement authorizing you to do so. I will get it drawn up and signed by the parties or will do as you wish.

I am arriving there on the 31st. I will be staying in some Harijan quarters. I had forgotten that Lilavati² was the President

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² Addressee's wife

of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. As a responsible office-bearer, therefore, she will know where I shall be staying Rameshwardas, of course, will know positive, and Sardar, too. Please, therefore, find out. Come and give me your reply personally, but it will suffice, if you even send a message. I will be leaving for Delhi on Monday.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati; C. W. 7694. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

203. *LETTER TO MAGANBHAI'*

March 28, 1946

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

You eat more uncooked vegetables than you should. A couple of *tolas* is more than enough. Increase the quantity of milk, curds, ghee. Vallabhram Vaidya is there to help you to get rid of the impurities in your blood; take *lohabhasma* ² in consultation with him. Don't think there is harm in it. If the body is deficient in iron, you should take it from other sources as may be proper and regain your strength. Do get well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

204. *LETTER TO PRABHAKAR*

March 28, 1946

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. Kamble says that you consider him innocent. Is it true? If it is, you have not written so to me. From your letter I thought that you were inclined to agree with Viramma. Write to me something definite. What do you mean by saying that you are a great sinner? "Who is a greater sinner than I," wrote

¹ The letter is written in Devanagari.

² Iron oxide

Surdas¹ of himself. Do you mean the same that Surdas² meant, or is there something more to it? Write to me explicitly.

My blessings to Chi. Barbara.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9033. Also C. W. 9157. Courtesy : Prabhakar Parekh

205. IMPLICATIONS OF 'QUIT INDIA'

In terms of non-violence, 'Quit India' is a healthy, potent cry of the soul. It is not a slogan. It means the end, through means purely truthful and non-violent, of foreign rule and domination. It does not mean foreigner's destruction but his willing conversion to Indian life. In this scheme, there is no room for hatred of the foreigner. He is a man, even as we are. It is fear of him that gives rise to hatred. Fear gone, there can be no hatred.

Thus his conversion implies our conversion too. If we cease to be inferiors, he cannot be our superior. His arsenals and his weapons, typified in their extreme in the atom bomb, should have no terror for us. It follows that we may not covet them. We often make the mistake of thinking that we must first have things before we cease to covet them. This tempting argument leads to the prolongation of the agony. Must I do all the evil I can, before I learn to shun it? Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.

Let us assume that foreign rule is ended. What should the foreigner do? He could hardly be considered free when he was protected by British arms. As a free man he will discover that it was wrong to possess privileges which the millions of India could not enjoy. He will live doing his duty as behoves a son of India. He will no longer live at India's expense. On the contrary, he will give India all his talents and by his services render himself indispensable to the land of his adoption.

If this is true of the European, how much more true must it be for those Anglo-Indians and others who have adopted European manners and customs in order to be classed as Europeans demanding

¹ Gandhiji, however, says "Tulsidas".

² *ibid*

preferential treatment? All such people will find themselves ill at ease, if they expect continuation of the favoured treatment hitherto enjoyed by them.

They should rather feel thankful that they will be disburdened of preferential treatment to which they had no right by any known canon of reasoning, and which was derogatory to their dignity.

We have all—rulers and ruled—been living so long in a stifling,unnatural atmosphere that we might well feel in the beginning that we have lost the lungs for breathing the invigorating ozone of freedom. If the reality comes in an orderly, that is, a non-violent manner, because the parties feel that it is right, it will be a revealing lesson for the world.

URULI [-KANCHAN], March 29, 1946

Harijan, 7-4-1946

**206. SPEECH AT KASTURBA GANDHI NATIONAL
MEMORIAL TRUST WOMEN AGENTS' MEETING, URULI-
KANCHAN¹**

[On or after *March 28, 1946*]²

Tracing his line of thought, Gandhiji explained how it was women's work, and how he had felt he must make women shoulder the responsibility of it. In no other organization, not even in the Congress, had such a tremendous responsibility been thrown on women.

The Agent's post throws all the burden of work on her area. It is immense but given the industry and intelligence not only will the work grow but the Agent herself will grow in stature. She is there to serve and to give, not to possess. By this giving she will become the people's trusted servant. This is the royal road to democracy.

Gandhiji gave them a clear answer in respect to political work such as volunteering at polling booths. They were not there for that purpose. It was perfectly possible for them not to be in the Congress and yet be of it as he was himself. The work before them was to make women fit to take their

¹ This is extracted from Amrit Kaur's "Inspiring for Women". Amrit Kaur, explains: "Uruli village. . . was the meeting place of all the women Agents so far appointed by the Kasturba Trust to organize and supervise work in the different Provinces. . . When Thakkar Bapa suggested to Gandhiji that an Agents' meeting would be advisable, Gandhiji who talked of democracy should have been party to the appointment of single persons to run the work of Province instead of the originally formed committees."

² *Vide* "Kasturba Smarak Trust", 7-4-1946

place in society. If they succeeded in teaching them the correct way of life, they would have taught them all they needed. Today they were steeped in the Stygian darkness of ignorance and superstition. With the removal of that, women would make freedom worth while.

He cited the good example of Kanu Gandhi who had said that in his camp, soon to be started, it would be his aim to teach the students how to battle against famine by tilling the ground, scavenging, cooking, bringing their own expenses with them, so that they need not be a liability on anyone. Women have to work in famine areas with this ideal. It is ours to mitigate, not to aggravate the burden.

Asked as to what work he would lay most emphasis on, so far as women were concerned, Gandhiji felt that sanitation and hygiene, owing to the lack of knowledge of which our people suffered so greatly, should take first place. Then there were evil customs which had to go, the useless expenditure on jewellery; and he made everyone laugh by his graphic description of a much bejewelled woman patient with a huge nose ring, earring-necklace, bracelets and anklets complete who had visited him as a patient that very morning! It was hard to know what should come first. "Really all work in its own place is of equal importance." There is the very great necessity of teaching women the care and upbringing of children, discipline in their own lives in every department including eating. He placed maternity almost last in comparison with the above mentioned. But nothing could be achieved without friendship with the women. That was the first and basic desideratum.

The pay of workers had caused much discussion. For Gandhiji it was the spirit of the worker that meant everything. Inasmuch as the labourer was worthy of his hire, a decent living wage must be paid; but it was the work and not the pay that should attract.

Were the women to be given the wheel as a revolutionary weapon as, he had said it was, in the hands of a Jawaharlal? The answer was 'No' How could it be such in the hands of an ignorant woman? But if every woman in India span, then a silent revolution would certainly be created of which a Jawaharlal could make full use. Unless steam generated was put to proper use, the engine would not run and the person generating the steam might himself be scalded by it even unto death.

Amongst the members were some staunch feminists who were anxious for women alone to run the show. To them Gandhiji said that the men who were there were serving the memory of one who was instinctively a village woman. Long before he himself had taken to village life as being the ideal life for service, Kasturba has shown her preference for it. Her heart was in Phoenix even in the far off South African days when he himself worked in a town. The men who were honouring her memory were only serving until such time as women were ready to take their place.

I am the only one whom you may find it hard to get rid of, for I have always counted myself as a woman. I believe, I know your sex and your needs better than you do yourselves.

He said, the Kasturba Trust would have even a bigger place in national service when freedom was ours than it today. For all would go to the winds, if women were not properly trained. He hoped that every worker in the Trust would have a great deal to give to the new government.

But we have got to generate that strength within us. We may not be frightened of making mistakes. Man is born to make mistakes, but the great thing is to see our mistakes and learn from them. We should magnify our own errors so as to be deterred from falling into them again. Those who imagine that they never make mistakes are to be feared.

He agreed with one of the members when she said that it was a great tragedy that the uplift of women had to be an item on the constructive programme. "Have we yet to find ourselves?" she asked. The reply was: Yes, indeed, and to where better can you find yourselves than by being true to the highest traditions of Indian women by serving your unhappy sisters today?¹

One worker asked that while he did not advocate their taking any part in politics, what would he advise them to do in case of violent outbreaks?

There is no question of any of you keeping aloof from the fiery furnace, should such ever come your way. I shall not shed a tear; I shall rejoice to hear, if any or all of you are found to have laid down your lives in trying to quell the disturbance. To be killed but never to kill is the law that governs us, and women should surely excel in this field.

Harijan, 14-4-1946 and 28-4-1946

207. LETTER TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

URULI VILLAGE (G.I.P.),
POONA DISTRICT,
March 29, 1946

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

Mr. and Mrs. Kodanda Rao are my friends of long standing. I have no doubt you have heard of the S. of I. Society founded by the late Shri G. K. Gokhale of whom you will learn everything from these friends.

¹ What follows is extracted from Amrit Kaur's "The Lesson of the Cross" published on April 28, 1946.

Will you please introduce them to American friends and otherwise help them to the best of your ability ?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

DR. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

10 PARK AVENUE

NEW YORK CITY

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

208. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKER

URULI-KANCHAN,

March 29, 1946

CHI. KAKA

. . . .¹ I do not know that a cheque for the Trust has been received. If Valji Lakhamsi has resigned, I see no harm in Mangaldas² taking his place. I should like to talk over this matter with Mangaldas and Sardar when I go to Bombay on the 31st . But it is possible that under heavy pressure of other work, I may not be able to do so. You should, therefore, settle the matter through correspondence. If I am able to settle it, I will write to you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the photostat of the Gujarati: G. N.

209. LETTER TO SHIV NARAYAN TANDON

URULI,

March 29, 1946

BHAI SHIV NARAYAN,

I am firmly of the opinion that it will be more becoming on the

¹ Ommission as in the source.

² Mangaldas M. Pakvasa

part of you all to find the money for the building, etc. And it will be good for the Kasturba Memorial Trust too.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

210. NATURE CURE PRESCRIPTIONS-II

URULI[-KANCHAN],

[On or before] *March [30,]*¹ 1946

SUBHADRABAI (the female child's mother)

Does she pass stools? She should keep the girl in the sun after covering her head; mud-poultice on the stomach. The girl should be given *mosambi*-juice. She should seat the girl on a stool in lukewarm water. This will be enough to ensure a clear motion. If she does not have a clean motion in spite of all this, she should be treated with the syringe. But then all this is for you people to do.

PARU (girl)

Sun-bath, hip-bath, friction-bath. Only boiled water and butter-milk to drink. Mud-poultices.

MANU (girl)

Sun-bath, steam-bath, cold water bath, mud-poultices. Milk and fruit-juice mixture for diet.

SADASHIV

May take tomato-juice besides that milk, and nothing else. Sun-bath, hip-bath and friction-bath.

Now the rest may come tomorrow so that we can give the patients the baths.

AJI (girl)

Fruit-juices, sun-bath, hip-bath and friction-bath. Her clothes are very dirty.

KONDIBA/DHONDIBA

The most effective treatment for rickets is sun-bath and taking milk mixed with fruit-juices.

SHRIPAD

He must get himself admitted to the hospital. If he is willing

¹ Gandhiji left Uruli-Kanchan on this date.

and wants to have a note, he may go with one. There is no other remedy for hernia. A strap-belt can also be worn. If he does not want to do all this, he should surrender to Rama and rest content.

PARVATI

Only mosambi-juice. Hip-bath and friction-bath; mud-pack on the abdomenn, regular sun-bath. If she does this much, she is bound to recover. In any case she should realize the greatness of Ramanama.

JAI (or) . . .¹

Advised to take light sun-bath for some minute, then in the shade and then again in the sun. She should do this for an hour. She should be given fruit-juices mixed with water. The water should be boiled. She should be regularly bathed to keep her clean.

SADASHIV

Advised to take milk mixed with fruit-juices. Sun-bath only in the nude; the head must always be covered. Banana or papaya leave can also be put on the head.²

Should sit in the sun until he perspires. Does he take the baths? When he feels very hot after sitting in the sun, he should wipe his body with a clean piece of cloth soaked in cold water.

Today he should also be shown how to take a hip-bath.

Yes, we should keep him in the sun. He is to be given hip-bath.

He is also to be given hip-bath.

Can he see at the moment? If he takes a diet free from chillies, takes fruit, and hip-bath and friction-bath, he is likely to be all right.

Does he pass stools? What is he fed? How come, breast-feeding at this age? How old is he? How can a two year old child be allowed to suckle? He should be given only fruit-juice. He needs an enema, which can be done only here. Make the neccessary arrangements. Joshi should see to all this. And both of them should be given hip-bath. The girl is very dirty. She should take friction-bath and sit in the sun reciting Ramanama.

How many old patients are there? How many of them were asked yesterday to take the baths? They should be given the baths. The girls are as good as women. They must be treated by Prabhavati

¹ The name is illegible.

² What follows is 'Instructions for Various Patients'.

or Sushilabehn, and the men by Joshiji. What is the first woman's complaint? What has she tied to her abdomen? In the first place she should not gird up so tight. She should lie prostrate and naked in a solitary place. She should give up eating bread, and subsist on milk and fruit. Does she pass stools? What does she do? With whom has she come? Does she have anyone at home?

I hope we have a measure.

In that case you should examine closely. Send Dhirubhai for the message.

Send for Dhirubhai also.

All this should be recorded. Ask him what his name is and what his complaint is. What does he eat? Then ask him to lie down in the sun completely nude. He should take fruit-juice only; he should sit in hot water and then in cool water and should continue this practise till he feels better. If he does not pass stool regularly, he should be treated with the syringe. For this, we shall send somebody to his place. If he will do this much regularly, the disease would be cured and then he should practise repetition of Ramanama with faith.

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Mahatma—Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 7, between pp. 96 and 97

211. INSTRUCTIONS FOR NATURE CURE CLINIC, URULI-KANCHAN

[On or before] March [30,]¹ 1946

1. All those who have come to stay should do so in a spirit of service. They should not be a burden on anybody.

2. Manibhai will be in charge of general administration. He will be the Manager.

3. Dr. Bhagwat will be in the Chief Medical Instructor. Other instructors will work under his direction.

4. The treatment is to be limited to sun-bath, hip-bath, friction-bath, Kuhne-bath, mud-poultice, massage, fomentation with hot water.

5. Ramanama is the king of all treatments. It should be proved by our conduct. The evening prayer should be held in public even if very few attend it.

6. All should rise at 4 a. m., and the prayer should be held at 4.30 a. m. All should learn the correct pronunciation and proper

¹ Gandhiji left Uruli-Kanchan on this date.

rhythm. All should learn Hindustani through both the scripts, and should acquire a working knowledge of Marathi.

7. All should maintain diary and give in it their hourly programme.

8. Manibhai should keep account of every pie.

9. Hip-baths should be readily available to all. The tub should be washed with water and hot ashes after use. A clean brush should be used for scrubbing with the ashes.

10. All kitchen work and cleaning should be done by the inmates themselves, and not with the help of the servants. The food should be the simplest possible. In this matter everyone should be guided by Bhagwat.

11. From tomorrow we have to bear all the expenses. Do not expect anything gratis from anyone.

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Mahatma—Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 7, between pp. 96 and 97

212. QUESTION BOX

Q. Horse racing is going on in many important cities. It is alike a lure for high and low, rich and poor, and it leads to moral degradation and, in some cases, penury. Many Princes spend lakhs of their people's money on buying race horses. What steps should our new government take to check this evil?

A. There is no doubt whatsoever about the evil. The good it is supposed to do is extremely doubtful. And, at this time of growing distress in the country, it is criminal. The new national government can do a great deal to check the evil. But let us recognize their limitations. Being popular, i. e., people's governments, they will never be able to go far in advance of popular opinion. That is specially a function belonging to reformers. But these governments can certainly, by their own example, rob the evil of the stamp of fashion that the bureaucracy has set upon it even to the point of wasting public money on the luxury. The Princes will copy the example of good manners that the national governments may set.

Q. We find that the Congress is reluctant to select women representatives on a large scale for elective bodies. It is surely just and necessary that more women are taken into the various bodies. How would you deal with the question?

A. I am not enamoured of equality or any other proportion in

such matters. Merit should be the only test. Seeing, however, that it has been the custom to decry women, the contrary custom should be to prefer women, merit being equal, to men even if the preference should result in men being entirely displaced by women. It would be a dangerous thing to insist on membership on the ground merely of sex. Women and for that matter any group should disdain patronage. They should seek justice, never favour. Therefore the proper thing is for women as indeed for men to advance the spread not of English or Western education among them, but such education on general lines through their provincial languages as will fit them for the numerous duties of citizenship. For men to take a lead in this much-needed reform would be not a matter of favour but a simple act of belated justice due to women.

URULI[-KANCHAN], March 30, 1946

Harijan, 7-4-1946

213. *HINDUSTANI*¹

I have no doubt in my mind that Hindustani, i. e., a correct mixture of Hindi and Urdu, is the national language. But I have not yet been able to prove this in my own writings or speech. Let not readers of *Harijan Sevak*, however, be irritated. Perhaps it is as well that the attempt to create a national language has come into the hands of an inadept. After all the general mass of people come in this category. It will be through the efforts of all such that linguistic pundits will be enabled to create the proper mixture, easily understood by all. If readers of *Harijan Sevak* will keep on pointing out mistakes in language, it will help the journal to create and maintain a proper style. It will be the aim of *Harijan Sevak* to make its language sweet to the ear and easily understandable to every Indian. A language which is not generally understood is useless. It is unreal, if it cannot serve its purpose. All attempts at having a forced language have proved futile.

URULI[-KANCHAN], March 30, 1946

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as “from *Harijan Sevak*” published simultaneously from the source.

214. IS NETAJI ALIVE?¹

Some years ago it was announced² in the newspapers that Subhas Chandra Bose had died. I believed the report. Later the news was proved to have been incorrect. Since then I have had a feeling that Netaji could not leave us until his dream of swaraj had been fulfilled. To lend strength to this feeling was the knowledge of Netaaji's great ability to hoodwink his enemies and even the world for the sake of his cherished goal. These were the only reasons for my belief that he was alive.

I have not the ability for foretelling the future. I have no strength except what comes from insistence on truth. Non-violence too springs from the same insistence. God alone knows absolute truth. Therefore I have often said, Truth is God. It follows that man, a finite being, cannot know absolute truth. Therefore I had nothing but my instinct to tell me that Netaji was alive. No reliance can be placed on such unsupported feeling.

On the other hand, there is strong evidence to counteract the feeling. The British Government is party to that evidence. Capt. Habibur Rahman has said, he was present at the time of Netaji's death and has brought back his charred wrist watch. Another of his companions, Shri Iyer, met and told me that my instinct was wrong and I should abandon the feeling that Subhas Chandra was alive. In the face of these proofs I appeal to everyone to forget what I have said³ and, believing in the evidence before them, reconcile themselves to the fact that Netaji has left us. All man's ingenuity is as nothing before the might of the One God. He alone is Truth and nothing else stands.

URULI[-KANCHAN], March 30, 1946

Harijan, 7-4-1946

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as "from *Harijan Sevak*" published simultaneously with the source.

² In March 1942

³ Vide footnote on "Talk with shah Nawaz Khan and P. K. Sehgal", 12/13-3-1946

215. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

URULI[-KANCHAN],
March 30, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I got your letter.

The mistake is grave enough. How can such work be assigned to the poor labourers? If they pay the fine, understanding its implication, you should accept it. But then it ceases to be a fine. We will not be benefited, if they pay it per force. Tell them that, if they do it again, they will have to go. Take what I say as a suggestion from me, and do what you all think reasonable. Do not exert yourself beyond your strength.

You may, if you want, ask for money from home. I find nothing wrong in it. But you are not duty bound to do so. In this matter, too, do what you think your dharma is. We shall improve only by making mistakes.

Have you seen what Bhansali says? Ask him. See the enclosed letter.

I understand what you say about Hoshiari. It is good that Pushpa¹ has taken over the management.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4549

216. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, URULI-KANCHAN

May 30, 1946

Before his departure from Uruli, Mahatma Gandhi exhorted the villagers of Uruli to lead a clean, healthy life and turn the village into a model village. He also stressed the importance of spinning, and advised the villagers to take it.

He referred to his activities in the villlage during his nine days' stay there and hoped that the villagers would follow the instructions he had given them.²

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-3-1946

¹ Pushpa N. Naik

² The report concluded: "The public of Uruli promised Gandhiji a sum of Rs. 10,000 for opening a nature cure clinic in their village. . . . A complement of three doctors and assistants was stationed at Uruli under Gandhiji's instruction to carry on the work."

217. KASTURBA SMARAK TRUST

There were two meetings at Uruli-Kanchan: on the 28th, 29th and 30th March; one of the Agents¹ of this Trust and the other of the Executive. The meeting of the Agents was the first of its kind. The Agents had many interesting questions. Why could not the Agents be members of the legislatures? The obvious answer is that, if they are to do justice to their work, they should have no time for legislative duties. The decisive reason is that the villagers will have a wrong example set to them, if they have members of legislatures to look up to.

Whatever the sphere of work they choose, they should not be non-entities. It should be remembered that the Agents have displaced the committees that were appointed for the last year. If they cover the whole Province, they have their work cut out from them. If they cannot cope with it, they have to run model *shibirs*² in one or more places to prepare women workers for villages. These may be teachers, nurses, spinners, weavers, sanitarians, etc. Work by women among women in the villages of India is an unbeaten track. Men are hardly fit for it. But the women have so long remained without experiences of such work that it is difficult, especially in the initial stages. If the Agent attempt at intensity and confine their activity to certain centres, they will find the work to be simple and instructive.

Then they have their advisers. They are not meant to be ornamental. Their advice should always be at the disposal of the Agents. If they are well-chosen, they must prove towers of strength to the Agents in their difficult task.

The experiment of having women only as Agents is new. It can only succeed if they are wisely guided by the Centre and ably advised by the advisers. Much as it is to be wished that they too were women, the fear is that in the beginning they will be mostly men. The advisers should never aspire to be more than such and never be less. It should never aspire to be more than such and never be less. It should be their proud privilege to give the Agents their advice whenever it is sought. The members of the defunct committee, it is

¹ Vide "Speech at Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust Women Agents' Meeting, Uruli-Kanchan", 28-3-1946

² Camps

hoped, will never feel that they have been displaced for any other reason save the patent and potent one of manning the organization with women from top to bottom. The secret of success in this as in any other organization lies in the spirit of service actuating its every limb and self being subordinated to the organization.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, March 31, 1946

Harijan, 7-4-1946

218. TEN SUGGESTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING

A worker has made some suggestions for meeting the threatened calamity. I give them below with only some minor changes. Possibly some of the suggestions might have been made earlier in one form or the other. I have not taken that into consideration. The best of suggestion can be misused by a dishonest person. Let us hope that the scorching heat of the Holi fire will burn out the impurities in all of us.

1. There should be a strict and impartial machinery to prevent the removal of even a single grain or a blade of grass unless enough stock of foodgrains and fodder is reserved for the requirement of the entire rural population including the cattle and livestock for the whole year.

2. There should be no difference between the purchase and the sale prices of foodgrains. The sale prices should be kept on par with the purchase prices. The overhead charges should be borne by the Government alone.

3. Foodgrains should be made easily available in every locality at controlled prices. There should be no need for futile treks of five to seven miles and returning with empty hands as at present.

4. Arrangements should be made to provide work according to one's capacity and to pay remuneration in the form of foodgrains and or clothes as the case may be to those who do not have necessary cash to purchase them.

5. The pay of all categories of low-paid employees should be raised to meet the cost of living without waiting for any demands or agitations, but payment may be made in the form of food-grains.

6. Items of current expenditure in the budget should be pruned to provide sustenance to the people. Cuts in the salaries of highly paid official should be introduced, if necessary.

7. The post-war scheme or other such projects could be easily suspended till the crisis blows over.

8. It should be so planned that public donations flow into a central pool from where they are canalized for combating starvation and also for increasing food production.

9. It should be considered the sacred duty of a Government to strive sincerely to provide livelihood to the people in some form or the other.

10. Eating-houses or meal-counters should be introduced where a person without any discrimination of caste and creed can get a meal at the lowest cost or by offering some sort of labour instead.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 31-1-1946

219. LETTER TO ADRIENNE

ON THE TRAIN,
March 31, 1946

DEAR ADRIENNE,

I was glad to have your letter after such a long time. By the time this reaches you, you will be sporting your new name. I hope you will have a joint life of service.

When you return, even though for a short time, you will be a changed woman !

You will have learnt all about my activities from the papers.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

220. LETTER TO SEVAGRAM CAMP INMATES

ON THE TRAIN,
March 31, 1946

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN SEVAGRAM CAMP,

Chi. Kanu Gandhi gives me all the news. I do hope that all inmates of the Camp will produce plenty of foodstuff in this period

of emergency.

And I hope they will all learn other things as well.

Blessings from

BAPU

THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE SEVAGRAM CAMP

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

221. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

ON THE TRAIN,

April 1, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have read your letter. I do not think you can do after a month what you are unable to do today. And what is that—whether you two can live together without seeking sexual pleasure? If you cannot, it means you do hanker after it in your mind, and doing that while refraining from physical gratification can do harm.

It is for your own sake that I have not given you specific work. Your letter itself shows that you are not ready for such work. But you know well enough that there is work you can do. Go through all [the language edition of] *Harijan* carefully and note the errors in the copies themselves. Also translate the English articles into Hindutani and show me; and the Gujarati into Hindustani. Master the Urdu script. Have you done any of these things? If not, why not? But never mind that; correct your error and start again. Do whichever of the things mentioned above you have failed to do.

Start working instead of thinking. From that you will learn the art of thinking.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8415. Also C. W. 5614. Courtesy. Munnalal G. Shah

¹ *Vide* also the following two items.

222. NOTE TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH¹

[April 1, 1946]²

Read your letter again. I shall be happy to discover that I have misunderstood you. I have told you that I have permanent work for you. But what about poor Kanchan?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8426. Also C. W. 5616. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

223. NOTE TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

[April 1, 1946]³

If you agree that your letter lends itself to the meaning I have read in it, that is enough. Do not think again now. The best thing to do is to start working.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8426. Also C. W. 5612. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

224. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR⁴

[ON THE TRAIN],

April 1, 1946

BAPA,

I went through Subbalakshmi's⁵ letter. It is a nice letter, and I am returning it. Write to her that the appointment of another woman as Agent⁶ should not stop her from doing her own work. Only one person could be Agent, whereas there could be thousands of workers. Since this is a new experiment, she should utilize her intelligence as well as her other qualities as much as she can. That will show her real zest. Let her train the girls as she pleases.

¹ The letter is written on a note dated April 1, 1946, by the addressee in which he protested that, contrary to Gandhiji's interpretation (*vide* the preceding item), an earlier letter from him did not suggest that his mind dwelt on sex and that he was not prepared to take up permanent work.

² *ibid*

³ The letter is written below the addressee's note of April 1, 1946. *Vide* also the preceding two items.

⁴ The letter is written in Devanagari.

⁵ A well-known social worker; *vide* also "Letter to R. S. Subbalakshmi", 1-4-1946

⁶ Of Kasturba National Memorial Trust

She should see Soundaram¹ and help her best as she can. I shall also write² to her, if I remember. I am writing this while I am approaching Delhi.

BAPU

SHRI THAKKAR BAPA

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

225. LETTER TO DR. SOUNDARAM G. RAMACHANDRAN

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI,

April 1, 1946

CHI. SOUNDARAM,

You have been appointed Agent. It will be your duty to meet Subbalakshmi. Take her help, and see Gopalaswami³ too. It is not that your advisory committee should be composed of men only, you can take women as well. The committee should be competent to advice you. It is not necessary that there must be ten members; you can have a smaller number. To be in harmony with all is a sign of ahimsa.

Blessings from

BAPU

SOUNDARAM RAMACHANDRAN

MADRAS

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Dr. Soundaram, wife of G. Ramachandran

² *Vide* the following item.

³ L. N. Gopalaswami

226. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI¹

ON THE TRAIN,
April 1, 1946

CHI. KANAIYO,

I have your letter. I have already written² this Monday what you have asked for. I wrote it last evening.

Abha remains cheerful these days, She is keeping a diary and also doing her Urdu. And she is of course immersed in my service and finds pleasure in it. I have asked her to write, to you also, and she does. Don't hesitate to write, if you want anything to be conveyed to her.

May your work be worthy of you, and may you always have a sturdy physique, and may you deserve the title of Hanuman ever more.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. KANHAIYALAL GANDHI (KANUBHAI)
SEVAGRAM
WARDHA

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

227. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN³

ON THE TRAIN,
April 1, 1946⁴

CHI. LAKSHMI BABU,

What is this about Devdoot? Suchetabehn's statement seems straightforward. And now he has to work under Priyamvadabehn. Bhai Devdoot must withdraw the language he has used, and he

¹ The letter is written in Devanagari.

² The addressee was conducting a camp for the Sevagram Ashram inmates, and Gandhiji used to write a few words for the campers every Monday; *vide* "Letter to Sevagram Camp Inmates", 31-3-1946

³ The two items are found among the papers and diary for 1946; the year, however, "1945".

⁴ *ibid*

should do what Priyamvadabehn says and in the manner she suggests. If he cannot, he should quit.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAYAN
SECRETARY, BIHAR CHARKHA SANGH
MADHUBANI (DARBHANGA), BIHAR

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

228. *LETTER TO DEVDOOT VIDYARTHI*₃

April 1, 194[6]

BHAI DEVDOOT,

There was considerable discussion in the Working Committee about you. Now Priyamvadabehn is in charge of the whole work. It is, therefore, your duty to co-operate with her loyally and sincerely. It is possible that you are more capable than her. But if we think along this line, women will never rise. Whatever it is, while under a single management it is not right for anyone to hold such an opinion about oneself.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI DEVDOOT VIDYARTHI
KASTURBA [GANDHI NATIONAL] MEMORIAL TRUST CAMP
MADHUBANI (DARBHANGA), BIHAR

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

229. *LETTER TO S. GANESAN*

ON THE TRAIN,
April 1, 1946

BHAI GANESAN,

I got your long letter. Somehow I cannot bring myself to believe [what you say about] your work. Only when you show me some results, would I be satisfied. May I hope you will not repeat your mistakes?

When will you write in Hindustani?

Have you learnt both the scripts?

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. S. GANESAN
8 PYCROFTS ROAD
TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

230. LETTER TO R. S. SUBBALAKSHMI

DELHI,

[April]¹ 1, 1946

DEAR SUBBALAKSHMI,

I have your letter to Shri Bapa. He will have told you about the appointment by the Committee of Dr. Mrs. G. Ramachandran as Agent. This should not upset your plan of service in the wider field. You should go on with your work in conjunction with and under instructions from her, since as many women workers as possible are needed for the work.

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

SISTER R. S. SUBBALAKSHMI, B. A., B. T.
SHRI VIDYA COLONY
33 EDWARD ELIOTS ROAD
MYLAPORE, MADRAS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

231. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI²

April 1, 1946

Untouchability is the blackest spot on Hinduism, and the sooner it is wiped out the better. I have of late been saying that the Hindus have to become *Ati Shudras* not merely in name but in thought, word and deed. For that token scavenging is not enough. I have, therefore, decided that I must go and actually live among Harijans in Harijan quarters.

I, however, do not delude myself with the belief that by staying here I am sharing the actual life with the Harijans. I have seen some Harijan quarters, and squalor, the dirt and the filth in the midst of which the Harijans live. I know too that this place has been brightened

¹ The source, however, has "March".

² The speech is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". According to a report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2-4-1946, from which the opening sentence is reproduced, the meeting was held in the Valmiki Temple compound adjoining Gandhiji's residence in Harijan Colony. Among those present was Sir Stafford Cripps, who occupied a chair on the dais, and he accompanied Gandhiji to his room at the end of the prayers.

up. Indeed I feel embarrassed by the amenities that have been provided here by Seth Birla for me and my party. My coming to stay here, I hope, is my first step, not the last. It is my constant prayer, and I look forward to the day, when I would actually go and stay in a Harijan hut and partake of the food they may provide me there. In the mean time, it gives me some satisfaction to be able to live in this dharmashala surrounded by Harijan dwellings on all sides.

How can I feel angry with them?¹ I can quite understand their pent up resentment at the way in which they have been treated by the so-called *Savarnas*. They might even want to wreak vengeance.

There is such a glaring contradiction between our profession and practice. They have a right to feel impatient. I can only plead with them to bear with the Hindu society. An age-old evil cannot be eradicated in a day, I know; it has to go or Hinduism must perish. In the mean time the least expiation that we can make is to share with the Harijans their disabilities and to deny ourselves the privilege which the latter cannot share. The present conditions under which they live should be intolerable even for a day to a decent-minded person. I pray for the time when the condition of life, as regards sanitation, cleanliness, etc., in Harijan quarters will be such that even a person like myself might be able to go and stay there without any compunction.

Gandhiji appealed that no one should come to the prayer gatherings merely for the sake of *darshan*. Only those should come who were earnest about prayer.²

Harijan, 14-4-1946; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2-4-1946

232. NOTE TO MANIBEHN PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR, NEW DELHI,

[After April 1, 1946]³

The job of making copies was entrusted to Kanu. I had only asked you to get one made by him. Since you have made the copy, I shall approve it and forward it. But there is a defect in it. There must

¹ Pyarelal explains that Gandhiji was referring to “a hostile demonstration which a certain section of the Harijan had tried to stage on his arrival”.

² According to Pyarelal, however, “the crowd continued to swell daily” and the venue of prayer meeting “had soon to be shifted to the spacious maidan outside Ajmeri Gate”.

³ The source has “After 1945”, but Gandhiji was in Valmiki Mandir, New Delhi, from April 1, 1946.

always be a margin. If you observe the letters that we daily received, you will see that every well-written letter has a margin. You need not make another copy now. This is only for future guidance. I have merely drawn your attention to it.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 148

233. INTERVIEW TO SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION¹

DELHI,

[After April 1, 1946]²

Gandhiji remarked on the presence of divisions among them. They admitted divisions but argued that they were there even in Gandhiji's time.

GANDHIJI: The difference between then and now is this: that in those days the black-legs became isolated after a time, and it was possible to hold monster meetings everywhere. Parsi Rustomji went among the indentured labourers and, in the final struggle, they rose like one man. Repeat that history today, and you will win. Do not repeat it, and you will fail. Do you command the sympathy and support of all the interests? Will the mercantile community back you?

SORABJI: The mercantile community was not with us even then.

But we had Cachalia³. If you have one Cachalia amongst you, the whole of the mercantile community will be covered.

s. Suppose no merchant comes forward. Is not a struggle possible then?

G. It will then take a different turn and in the end the mercantile community will be swept out of existence.

A MEMBER: We are a difficult community at times.

ANOTHER MEMBER: And quarrelsome too.

G. I know, I know. The South Africa of today is not far different from the South Africa that I have known. In the first article

¹ This appeared under the title "With the South African Delegation". by Pyarelal, who explain that the deputationists headed by Sorabji Rustomji, son of Parsi Rustomji who was a leading merchant of Natal and close associate of Gandhiji, "sought Gandhiji's advice for the starting of successful satyagraha".

² According to Pyarelal, the delegation met Gandhiji in Harijan Colony where he arrived on April 1, 1946.

³ A. M. Cachalia

I wrote for the *Indian Opinion* I said that if after all there was one true man in South Africa, he will cover all. He will build up the whole structure from within. 'Amidst a whole heap of bad coins', I wrote, 'If there is one true sovereign, the heap will be worth that one sovereign and no more.' If you produce one civil resister of merit, he will pull things through. Do not start the struggle, therefore, unless you have that stuff. Manage to exist you will anyhow. But that should not satisfy you. You have to live as a self-respecting community with an equal status. Indians have to make good that position by showing the real stuff.

The discussion then turned on the strategy of the proposed satyagraha. Gandhiji was definitely opposed to sitting in prohibited seats in trains and railway carriages by way of satyagraha. Satyagraha should be on a clear, unequivocal and impersonal issue and capable of taking thousands in its fold. . . .

Gandhiji mentioned how he had refused to send a message for a meeting of the West Africa Federation that was held some time back in London, because they conceived of a struggle after the way of Europe. He added:

Probably theirs is not the way of non-violence. One day the black races will rise like the avenging Attila against their white oppressors, unless someone presents to them the weapon of satyagraha.

A MEMBER: You have said, we should associate with Zulus and Bantus. Does it not mean joining them in a common anti-white front?

GANDHIJI: Yes, I have said that we should associate with Zulus, Bantus, etc. It means that you take them under your wing when you have developed that power of non-violence. It will be good, if you fire them with the spirit of non-violence. You will be their saviour. But if you allow yourselves to be overwhelmed and swept off your feet, it will be their and your ruin. Their slogan today is no longer merely 'Asia for the Asiatics' or 'Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the exploited races of the earth. On India rests the burden of pointing the way to all the exploited races. She won't be able to bear that burden today, if non-violence does not permeate us more than [what it is] today. I have been trying to fit ourselves for that mission by giving a wider bend to our struggle. India will become a torch-bearer to the oppressed and exploited races, only if she can vindicate the principle of non-violence in her own case, not jettison it as soon as independence of foreign control is achieved.

ANOTHER MEMBER: Race consciousness is arising all over South Africa. We

Indians take advantage of the Bantus. We send our children to Native colleges. But we are ashamed to call ourselves Natives. They feel we are arrogant and aloof. We do not do enough to make an adequate return for what we have got from them. They are getting resentful and the white man encourages and promotes that feeling to widen the gulf.

G. It will be an evil day for you, if he succeeds. The trouble is that you are all worshippers of the golden calf.

Christopher: Having never seen it, how can we worship it?

G. Worshipping is different from seeing. Don't we worship God without seeing Him?

The delegation then asked, if a leader could be sent from India to organize and lead them.

Gandhiji, in reply, told them that a leader would have to arise from among them. He hoped that they would throw up one in due time. He described to them how he had been arguing with his son Manilal to train up his children for the task. After they had finished their education in India, he hoped, they would go back and settle down in South Africa and serve the Indian community. Apropos the training that would equip South Africa born Indian children for service, he mentioned how he had refused to send his own children to Loveday and Fort Hare.

Harijan, 19-5-1946

234. *LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE*

VALMIKI MANDIR, READING ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

April 2, 1946

DEAR LORD LAWRENCE,

Our mutual friend Sudhir Ghosh tells me¹ that you would like me to reduce to writing the points I told him to discuss informally with you and Sir Stafford.

One is universal among all independence-minded people, as distinguished from the dumb millions, whether Congressmen or other. It is the immediate release of *political* prisoners irrespective of the charge of violence or non-violence. They cannot be a danger to the State *now* that the necessity for independence has become common cause. It seems to be ridiculous to keep, say Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia, both learned and cultured men of whom any

¹ *Vide* footnote 2, "Letter to Sir Frederick Burrows", 22-3-1946

society would be proud, nor is there any occasion for treating any person as an underground worker. To leave the question of discharge for disposal by the incoming national government would be a step no one will understand or appreciate. Independence will lose its grace.

The other affects the masses. I refer to the salt tax. As a means of raising revenue, it is insignificant. As a means of harassing the masses, it is a measure of which the mischief is indescribable. The masses will hardly appreciate independence, if the burden of the salt monopoly continues to affect them. I must not weary you with argument. I mention the two measures as a preparation of the Indian mind for independence. They will produce a psychological effect.

I may mention that I discussed both the measures in a different setting with Mr. Casey¹, and I am now in correspondence with the present Governor of Bengal. I may add that I have today heard from Mr. Abell in regard to the salt tax that “the Government do not find themselves able to accept the suggestion.”²

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. HON'BLE LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA

NEW DELHI

Gandhiji Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 156-7

235. SELF-SUFFICIENCY v. COMMERCIAL KHADI³

We are ourselves responsible for the creation of this problem. We did not know the science of khadi. We do not know it fully even now. Therefore, like children, we stumble again and again and thereby learn to walk. In order that we may not fall so as never to rise again, we made use of a go-cart and are still using it. Having realized this, the A. I. S. A. has to make a tremendous effort to vindicate its existence or else be wiped out. By A. I. S. A. is meant all its workers and includes even the spinners. It must be borne in mind that to make the spinners self-reliant and through their activity to

¹ *Vide* “Letter to R. G. Casey”, 5-1-1946, “Letter to R. G. Casey”, 8-1-1946, “Letter to R. G. Casey”, 16-1-1946

² *Vide* also “Letter to Lord Wavell”, 6-4-1946

³ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as “from Harijanbandhu” published simultaneously with the source.

achieve India's freedom is, and ought to be, the Association's goal. That we may not reach that goal should not cause undue worry. It is enough for us to know that it is the correct goal and, having started the activity, we have to correct our mistakes and go forward. That is the essence of the scientific method. No science has dropped from the skies in a perfect form. All sciences develop and are built up through experience. Perfection is not an attribute of science. Absolute perfection is not possible either for man or for the science that he creates. For example, astronomy is continually progressing. Many mistakes have been made and corrected. The process still continues. The same may be said of the science of khadi.

If this is intelligently understood and fearlessly acted upon, replies to the questions presented from time to time become easy. The spinners must have full knowledge of all the processes from the beginning to the end, right up to weaving. In this lies the way to swaraj. Up till now, knowingly or unknowingly, we have been producing khadi solely for purposes of commerce. But this too has always been linked with the ideal of swaraj. Had it not been so, even commercial khadi would have failed, and most probably khadi for swaraj would have remained a mere dream.

Commercial khadi has been, and still is, our go-cart, so to speak. To the spinner to have her cotton carded by other has been, and still is, an additional prop. Only as we progressively give up these props, will we bring into being khadi for swaraj. Those branches where commercial khadi is being produced and carding carried on as an independent activity should, if possible, be closed down. Life is, however, made up of compromises. Therefore let it be said that the props should be given up as quickly as possible. Those who have faith and knowledge will be the first to do so. Where sincere and earnest efforts are made, the question of competition should not arise.

One aspect of the present situation needs attention. Those who spin for their livelihood will willingly learn the new processes because thereby their earning capacity will increase. Today this section is diminishing because other and easier sources of income are open to them. For them it is not a moral question. They take what is easiest as, for example, collection of leaves for making *bidis*. It is our duty to impart true knowledge to them and help them up the steep road to swaraj and make them healthy and hardy in the process of climbing. If we cannot do this, we shall deservedly lose our existence. Theref-

ore we can only have dealings with the man or woman who spins with understanding.

Another thing that has to be remembered is that spinning is now one of the recognized avocations and will, therefore, continue.

So we need not worry about the production of commercial khadi. Whatever difficulties may arise from the above have to be overcome by the workers. To ask whether this or that comes within this framework is a sign of mental laziness and ignorance. He who cannot draw deductions cannot be said to know geometry. The same is true of all sciences.

NEW DELHI, April 3, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

236. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

“VALMIKI MANDIR”,

READING ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

April 3, 1946

MY DEAR PRAKASAM,

I have your letter. Most reluctantly I resume English in the hope that I will not be able to convince you that you are in error.

The whole question arose out of my discussion with your secretary, Shri Kala Venkatrao. I began a talk with him about you. I think I enquired how you were able to carry on your practice and also public work at the same time. He said you were not carrying on any practice nor conducting a newspaper but that you were living on purses presented to you by the public and added that he could see nothing wrong in it. This news left a bad taste in my mouth. This was the genesis of our correspondence. I think that it is an extremely bad example. If it is multiplied, purity of public life will come to an end. I can understand a public fund for the maintenance of public servants such, or instance, as was raised by the late Jamnalalji for lawyers who had given up practice in the heyday of non-co-operation. The nucleus of this fund exists even now and some workers are being supported out of it. Mahilashram is being conducted in Wardha for the education of the families of the late Jamnalalji's friends who had become servants of the public, relying for their maintenance upon Jamnalalji. Some of them even go so far as to collect public funds

which they hand over to the public work for which they may have been collected. Of this they render a full account and keep nothing for themselves. But I have never heard of a single instance in which what you say has been done or can be defended. All the papers that you have sent to the Sardar and are now sending to me simply show how in my opinion you have been instrumental, however unwittingly, in, as I would put it, corrupting public life. I do not know that evidence you will put before me to convince me to the contrary. It does not require conviction of friends who doubt the wisdom of the course adopted by you. But it requires peremptory correction of your thought and practice and retracing, so far as possible, what has been done.

I advise your publication of all your doings from the very beginning. It will be good for you and good for the public and the cause you and I stand for. Finally, I would go so far as to suggest that you should, if you do not accept my reasoning, obtain a ruling from the Working Committee. The matter is too dangerous to be left undecided.

I am sending a copy of this to the Sardar.

Yours,

BAPU

SHRIT. PRAKASAM
MADRAS

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

237. *LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH*

NEW DELHI,
April 3, 1946

CHI. NARAHARI,

I return herewith Chunilal's letter and your draft reply. I have written an article¹ based on them. But I see no harm in your reply. You may, therefore, send it to Chunibhai. But I do not wish that you should publish it in *Khadi Jaga*. You should elaborate further my line of reasoning. If, however, you yourself feel that Chunibhai's letter and your reply ought to be published, by all means publish them. I do not like them because I smell in them an attitude of

¹ *Vide* the preceding items.

dependence* on others. Instead of silent workers seeking one another's guidance even in theoretical matters, it is better that they make mistakes and learn from them.

A copy of the article is enclosed.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

*By 'dependence' he here understand intellectual dependence.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9140

238. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

April 3, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Your letter is bad. You should not spend a sleepless night to write such a letter in the morning. What can you have to do with Qutub Minar or the Assembly Hall? What is there to be seen in them? What a change from Sevagram to Assembly Hall? You may, of course, visit any place you like. I am only stating my own view.

If you wish to stay with me, you should bear with me and accept me as I am. I have not kept you chained. I do not look upon you as a child, but you behave like one. Stop writing and stop discussing and go on silently doing work and nothing but work and that in a spirit of service or *yajna*. So many things are waiting to be done and you are tempted to go and see idle shows. Inspect the houses of Harijans, meet all residents of Harijan localities, do carding, *punai*¹, *tunai*², spinning, weaving, go through the language editions of Harijan and correct the mistakes in them, improve your Urdu, teach Abha, Gita, Prabha, etc., improve your temper, learn the Gita and master Sanskrit. He who wants to serve will find no lack of jobs. Now do as the good Lord prompts you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8394. Also C.W. 7211. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

¹ Methods of carding without the help of a carding-bow

² *ibid.*

239. A NOTE

NEW DELHI,
April 3, 1946

I love all activities connected with village industries, but I have learnt from experience that the primary aim of such exhibitions should be educative, and at present it is necessary to draw special attention to such problems as to how the villagers may produce and consume their own khadi and what foodstuff they may produce in their villages for their own consumption.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy Pyarelal

240. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI'

April 3, 1946

Gandhiji dwelt at length on the potency of mass prayers. He said, it gave him immense pleasure to see large multitudes of people joining mass prayers, which, he added, created strength among the people. He paid a tribute to the people of Assam, who, if their thousands, joined in the music at his daily prayers and responded to the rhythm of the *Ramdhun*. Gandhiji thought that the Assamese had a natural gift for understanding the meaning of the *Ramdhun*.

Giving his concept of Rama, Gandhiji said that the Rama to whom his prayers were addressed was not the Rama described in history as the son of Dasaratha. He emphasized that Rama, Allah and God are the same. The word Rama attracted millions of Hindus, and Allah attracted the Muslims. He invited the people belonging to all faiths to join his prayers.

He congratulated the huge gathering on maintaining pin-drop silence throughout the prayers.

Referring to the talks² he and the other leader were having with the Cabinet Mission, Mahatmaji said:

If you are anxious to contribute towards the success of these talks, I have a suggestion for you. We have been under foreign domination for many years. You must all pray to God to deliver us from political bondage. God alone can help us. Nobody else can help, neither you nor Englishmen. Let us pray to God guide our talks

¹ Held on Ramalila Grounds

² For a note on the interview, *vide* "Note on Interview to Cabinet Mission", 3-4-1946

and grant wisdom to all those participating in them, including the members of the Mission for carrying the talks to a successful termination. It is essential at this stage to invoke the help of God. We want the attainment of freedom by peaceful means. God will be our guide and witness in our efforts towards that end.

It is unmanly to disbelieve the Cabinet Mission. We must believe that the Mission has come in good faith. They will not betray us. May God give them and us wisdom, and may He be with us in this important task.¹

The Hindustan Times, 4-4-1946

241. ADVICE TO BHANGIS²

NEW DELHI,
April 3, 1946

Gandhiji said that it would be better, if the money they wanted to spend on entertaining him were spent on educating a Harijan child. He appealed to Harijans to eradicate the evils of wine, gambling and prostitution. He said that they should be Bhangis like him. Defining the term Bhangis he said, it meant a well-wisher of all.

I shall consider my stay among you amply rewarded, if you give up these vices. I have enjoyed your hospitality. You can offer me goat's milk. But I will pay for it. If you are keen that I should take food prepared by you, you can come here and cook for me. My real aim in staying here is to probe into your real needs.

The Hindustan Times, 5-4-1946

¹ The report concluded that, after the meeting, when people rushed to see Gandhiji, one of the volunteers was lightly injured. "I was with great difficulty that Gandhiji could get into his car." *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi", 4-3-1946 "Advice to People", 4-4-1946 and "What is in a Name", 14-4-1946

² According to the report, residents of Bhangi Colony met Gandhiji after evening prayers and "invited him to have a meal with them".

242. ADVICE TO PEOPLE¹

NEW DELHI,
April 4, 1946

Gandhiji asked the people to maintain complete silence. He said:

The business which had brought me to Delhi is an important one, and people should allow me to work in peace. By collecting here in this manner you interfere with my work. If you want, you can see me at the evening prayers. I know that you do all this out of sheer love for me. But even love, if misplaced, does more harm than good. Consider the happenings of yesterday.² While I was going towards my car, after the evening prayers, people went out of control and a volunteer was injured. Such incidents should not recur.

In the end, I appeal to you to pray to God that India may win real freedom. Neither those who have come here nor anybody from among us can deceive Him.

[From Hindi]

Hindustani, 5-4-1946

243. QUESTION BOX³

Q. God is a creation of man's imagination. It is not God who has created man but man who has created God. Is this not true?

A. I have taken this from a correspondent's [long]⁴ letter. There is a semblance to truth in what he says. The writer has, however, unwittingly created the illusion by a play upon the two words 'creation' and 'God'.

God Himself is both the Law and the Law-giver. The question of anyone creating Him, therefore, does not arise, least of all by an insignificant creature such as man. Man can build a dam, but he cannot create a river. He can manufacture a chair, but it is beyond

¹ According to the report, when Gandhiji returned after his morning walk at 7 a. m., he saw a noisy crowd waiting for him outside the Valmiki Temple.

² *Vide* footnote 1, "Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi", 3-4-1946 also "Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi", 4-4-1946

³ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from Harijanbandhu" published simultaneously with the source.

⁴ From the Gujarati version

him to make the wood. He can, however, picture God in his mind in many ways. But how can man who is unable to create even a river or wood create God? That God has created man is, therefore, the pure truth. The contrary is an illusion. However anyone may, if he likes, say that God is neither the doer nor the cause. Either is predicable of Him.

NEW DELHI, April 4, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

244. KASTURBA LEPROSY WORK

This work has been going on under Prof. T. N. Jagadisan's supervision since May 19, 1945. He has produced a short summary of the work done from to day. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan is the chairman of the committee specially formed for this work. Dr. V. P. Ramaswami has specially trained himself for the work under Dr. R. G. Conhrane. He is doing out-patient work as well as conducting surveys of villages.

The first survey in Kandachipuram schools of 655 children revealed that apart from leprosy there was a high incidence of scabies and guinea worm. Over 100 children have to be followed up and 30-40 treated for leprosy. In Madavilagam village, 18 definite case of leprosy have been discovered out of 539 inhabitants. Four of these are infective, and fourteen neural. Infection is spread by indiscriminate contact of infective cases with children.

In Adukkam village, 15 cases have found out of a population of 323. Five of these are infective. Two other places have 29 and 15 definite cases respectively of which 9 are lepromatons.

Dr. Ramaswami has also surveyed five more villages and has so far detected 300 cases out of which 157 only, being women or children under seven years, can benefit from the Trust.

Prof. T. N. Jagadisan's summary points out that poor men patients though in need of attention cannot get the benefit of the funds. This defect cannot be removed by any departure from the terms of the Trust, but the professor can easily raise a small fund locally and bring them within the scope of his work.

NEW DELHI, April 4, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

245. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,
April 4, 1946

Many foreign and local newspaper reporters have been good enough to come to me to ask questions on the topic of the day. A newspaper man myself, I can sympathize with their desire. But they should sympathize and co-operate with me in the delicate mission of adviser to the Cabinet Mission when I tell them that I cannot be advising and broadcasting to the world on the matters covered by my advice. Such a course is calculated to defeat the purpose in view. Anyway these friends will attribute my silence not to any discourtesy on my part but to my desire for successful termination of the labours of the Cabbinate Mission.

The Hindustan Times, 5-4-1946

246. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI'

April 4, 1946

Gandhiji said, though his prayers contained selected verses from different religions, their purport remains the same. He wanted people to come to the prayers with calm and peaceful mind and participate in *Ramdhun*. Thanking the people for maintaining silence, Gandhiji said that the Sanskrit solakas that were recited in the prayer had been culled from those chapters of the *Gita* ² in which Lord Krishna lays down before Arjuna the characteristics of a *sthitaprajna*. [Gandhiji continued.]

If swaraj is to be won through the non-violent strength of the millions, they must in some measure develop in them the qualities of a *sthitapajna* or the man of steady wisdom.

The ideal is not meant for *jnanis* ³ only; it is for all, even ordinary lay people. Lord Krishna himself is depicted in the Mahabharata as a charioteer actually driving a team of white horses while his pupil Arjuna, to whom the *Gita* discourses are addressed is pictured as being plebian in his mental make-up and outlook. What

¹ The speech is extracted from Pyarelal's "Prayer Discourses" in Harijan. The opening paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*.

² II. 58

³ Men of knowledge

then are the characteristics of a *sthitaprajna*? He is one who withdraw his senses from the objects of the senses behind the shield of the spirit, as a tortoise does its limbs under its shell. A man whose wisdom is not steady is liable to be betrayed into anger, evil thoughts or abuse. On the contrary, the man with the steady wisdom will remain equally unaffected by adulation or abuse. He will realize that abuse fouls only the tongue that utters it, never the person against whom it is hurled. A man of steady wisdom will, therefore, never wish ill to anyone, but will pray even for his enemy with his last breath.

Is it too difficult an ideal to follow? No. On the contrary, the conduct laid down in it is the only conduct worthy of the dignity of human beings.

Today our minds are clouded by delusion. In our ignorance, we quarrel with one another and indulge in rowdyism against our own brethren. For such as these there is neither salvation nor swaraj. Self-discipline or rule over self is the first condition for self-rule or swaraj.

All might find it difficult to correctly recite the *Gita* verses which are in Sanskrit. But all can take part in the singing of *Ramdhun*. The mass singing of *Ramdhun* to the accompaniment of *tala* is prayer reduced to its simplest terms.

‘But how can non-Hindus take part in it? The question was once raised.

I laugh within myself, when someone objects that Rama or the chanting of Ramanama is for the Hindus only, [and asks] how can Mussalmans, therefore, take part in it. Is there one God for the Mussalmans and another for the Hindus, Parsis or Christians? No, there is only one omnipotent and omnipresent God. He is named variously, and we remember Him by the name which is most familiar to us.

My Rama, the Rama of our prayers, is not the historical Rama, the son of Dasaratha, the King of Ayodhya. He is the eternal, the unborn, the one without a second. Him alone I worship, His aid alone I seek, and so should you. He belongs equally to all. I, therefore, see no reason why a Mussalman or anybody should object to taking His name. But he is in no way bound to recognize God as Ramanama. He may utter to himself Allah or Khuda so as not to mar the harmony of the sound.

Gandhiji strongly deprecated the wastage of food on marriages and other ceremonial occasions, and said that those who indulged in such extravagant habits

were the enemies of the people and unfit even to pray.¹

Tracing the cause of famine and the other national calamities that occur in our day-to-day life as due to our past sins, Gandhiji added that if people did not commit sins, there would be no famine even if there were no rains. He emphasized the importance of morning prayer. Referring to day-before-yesterday's incident² Mahatmaji said:

There was orderliness until I came. But such arrangement ought to have continued till I left the place. All of a sudden people rushed towards us with the result I was also slightly injured. It was my own fault as the injury was caused by my *chappals*. But an innocent volunteer was badly injured. In future, nobody should get up till I leave this place. People should give up the habit of touching other's feet. They should not swarm towards us. After all we are not monkeys, we are human beings.

Harijan, 28-4-1946; also *Hindustan*, 5-4-1946, and *The Hindustan Times*, 5-4-1946

247. WHAT IS IN A NAME?

Q. From the psychological point of view, I think, the name 'Harijan' instills into the minds of the people to whom it is applied a feeling of inferiority, however sacred that name may be. This feeling is very difficult to wipe out from them—to whatever extent they are advanced—if they are always called 'Harijan'. Similarly if a man in the street is asked about a 'Harijan', the first thing he will speak of is 'untouchability and the Depressed Class'. Would it not be possible to save the 'Harijan' from involuntarily acquiring such an inferiority feeling, and other people from thinking about them without the 'qualification' usually ascribed to them? Would it not be preferable to choose a name which could also bring in its fold people from other sects?

A. This subject was years ago dealt with in the pages of *Young India*. The name 'Harijan' has sacred associations. It was suggested by a Harijan as a substitute for *Asprishya* (untouchable), *Dalita* (depressed), or for the different categories of 'untouchables' such as Bhangis, Mehtars, Chamars, Pariahs, etc.³ The Government

¹ This paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*, and that which follows is translated from *Hindustan*.

² Vide footnote 1, "Advice to Bhangls", 3-4-1946

³ Vide "My Notes", Sub-title The Bengal Murder"

officers put them in a schedule and, therefore, called them the Scheduled Classes, thus making confusion worse confounded. Those who were not untouchables were classed among the Scheduled and the ones who could be so called were excluded. We have now arrived at a stage, thanks to the Government policy, when to be included among the Scheduled Classes is to be coveted. The Government have created a separate electorate agitating for seats in all elective institutions. I do not mind such ambition, if it carries honest merit with it. But it becomes positively mischievous, when seats are coveted irrespective of merit. The wish to be so educated as to be qualified for the highest post is to be appreciated and encouraged, the wish to be appointed to such a post on the basis of belonging to a caste or a class is essentially to be deprecated and discouraged.

The real remedy has been suggested by me. The feeling of inferiority must go. It is going, but too slowly. The process can be accelerated, if every Hindu would deliberately shed his superiority and in practice become a Harijan or, if you like, a master, the lowest class among Harijans. Then we all will become true children of God as the word 'Harijan' means. Until this is done, no matter which word signifies 'untouchables', it will smell of inferiority. The process has to be carried out thoroughly in every walk of life till the last trace of untouchability is removed. When that happy day arrives, every quarter will be a Harijan quarter and cleanliness of the heart and the home will be the order of the day.

NEW DELHI, April 5, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

248. WHAT IS THE LAW?

'Confused' writes :

I grant that Italy, Germany and Japan have lost their power; but is the loss due to their faith in violence, as you would say¹, or is it due to their exhaustion brought about by fortunes of war? Will you hold that Britain, Russia and America have been successful because of their non-violence?

Thus argues a correspondent whom I have paraphrased without diminishing the force of his argument. The questioner has failed to perceive that in the writing quoted by him, I have said nothing about

¹ *Vide* "Extract from Talk With A Friend", 3-3-1946

the so-called victorious Powers. But I have said elsewhere that their victory is an empty boast, if they do not learn the lesson while there is time and do not shape their life in accordance with the law of non-violence. I believe wholly in the truth that “those who take the sword will perish by the sword”. There is no doubt that the victors employed the same means as the vanquished. There was only a question of degree. The victorious parties already seem to be on the verge of quarrelling among themselves. If another war has not already begun, it is because no one is ready to enter upon it. After all men are not machines. They cannot be continually fighting without being reduced to the state of beasts. One has to hope, for the sake of humanity, that they will do some hard thinking and discover the truth that the common man, of whom the world is composed, gains nothing by cutting his fellowman’s throat and that the fruits of peace are infinitely superior to those of war. Ingenuity employed in devising methods of destruction lowers, whereas when employed in devising ways of building it befits mankind.

NEW DELHI, April 5, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

249. LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE

CAMP, NEW DELHI,
April 5, 1946

DEAR LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE,

I have your kind and considerate letter.¹ I note what you say. As it has turned out, I am here till 16th instant at least. Maulana Saheb wants me till then.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 180

250. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPS

HARIJAN MANDIR,
April 5, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

Many thanks for your affectionate letter². Sudhir has given me

¹ Which, *inter alia*, read : "When you and I met at my bungalow on Monday last, and again at the office on Wednesday, you were . . . prepared to have a personal talk with Mr. Jinnah. . . . But . . . the position has not yet sufficiently clarified . . . that a meeting between you now would result in any substantial agreement. I feel that I should communicate this view to you without delay as it may affect your plans, and I could not ask you to stay in Delhi indefinitely."

In *Gandhiji's Emissary*, "The Lesson of Mudurai", 10--1946, Sudhir Ghosh explains that on seeing the letter from the addressee, he "felt that the Secretary of State had not understood the value of keeping Gandhiji in Delhi". He, therefore, met Sir Stafford Cripps and "urged him to do everything in his power" to make Gandhiji stay in Delhi, which he at once did in letter of even date which read : "I hear that there is a chance of your extending your stay here and I very earnestly ask you to do so. We have still a number of interviews with separate interests and sections to carry out before we can come to the closer negotiations with the principal parties interested. This is, therefore, a time of formulation of possibilities, and I know how valuable your influence will be upon persons of all kinds who seek your advice. As soon as the closer negotiations start, I am sure we too shall want to seek that advice, and we should indeed most sadly miss your help, if you were to leave. It is not I, but India that needs you in New Delhi. Please stay."

² *Vide* footnote on "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 5-4-1946

your message too. I am here at least till 16th instant at Maulana Saheb's behest.¹

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 181

251. NOTE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

[April 5, 1946]²

This⁴ will not suit you. One must never pretend; but do come, if you feel like coming.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro 2— : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 305

252. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI³

April 5, 1946

So far, Mahatma Gandhi said, he had refrained from saying anything regarding I. N. A. men, either from platform or in the Press. This did not mean that he had no regard or love for them. He was always conscious of their sacrifices and all that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose did was for the freedom of India. Ever since his visit to the I. N. A. men in Delhi Cantonment yesterday, his love for them had increased all the more, he said, and added that they responded to his love with greater love and affection. Mahatma Gandhi declared :

Let me share with you the thoughts that have been crowding in

¹ In *Gandhi's Emissary*, "Nature Cure Clinic", 10-2-1946, Sudhir Ghosh says: "I not only delivered this note of warm friendliness to Cripps but brought back another friendly little note from him to Gandhiji to say : 'I am so very glad to hear that you are staying on. The long list of your callers shows how much you are appreciated by us all!' "

² The note is written below the one of even date from Agatha Harrison to the addressee inviting him for silent get-together. In *Gandhi's Emissary*, "Nature Cure Clinic", 10-2-1946 Sudhir Ghosh explains : "Good old Agatha, who was everybody's mother, organised a Sunday-morning Quaker Worship meeting in New Delhi, sometimes on a little hall of the Modern School of Barakhamba Road and sometimes in a ground-floor room in the Y. W. C. A. on Asoka Road where Agatha was staying." In *Harijan*, 28-4-1946, Pyarelal says in "Communion of Silence" that Gandhiji "has been attending the Sunday silent prayer meeting every Sunday since his arrival" in New Delhi. *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi", 7-4-1946

³ In *Harijan*, the speech appeared under the title "Message of the I. N. A." by Pyarelal. The opening paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle Weekly*.

my mind since yesterday. India has accorded to the released I. N. A. men a right royal welcome. They have been acclaimed as national heroes. Everybody seems to have been swept off his feet before the rising tide of popular sentiment. I must, however, frankly confess to you that I do not share this indiscriminate hero worship. I admire the ability, sacrifice and patriotism of the I. N. A. and Netaji Bose. But I cannot subscribe to the method which they adopted and which is incompatible with the one followed by the Congress for the last twenty-five years for the attainment of independence. Yesterday I spoke¹ to you of a *sthitaprajna*, i.e., “the man of steady wisdom”, i.e., a satyagrahi. If we accept that ideal, we would not regard anybody as our enemy; we must shed all enmity and ill will. That ideal is not meant for the select few—the saint or the seer only—it is meant for all. I have described myself as a scavenger, having become one, not only in name but in fact, while I was in Phoenix. It was there that I took up the bucket and the broom, impelled by the inner urge to identify myself with the lowest of the low. As a humble fellow-toiler then let me bear witness that anyone, even a simple-minded villager who wants to, and tries, can attain the state of mental equipoise described in the *Gita* verses which are recited at the prayer. We all lose our sanity at times, though we live in peace. It is a higher and more difficult work. We have to die performing our duty and without killing. For that we shall need to cultivate the attributes of a *sthitaprajna* as set forth in the *Gita*.

Far more potent than the strength of the sword is the strength of satyagraha. I said so to the I.N.A. men and they were happy to tell me, as I was to hear, that they had realized this and would hereafter strive to serve India as true soldiers of non-violence under the Congress flag.

NEW DELHI, April 8, 1946.

Harijan, 14-4-1946; also *The Bombay Chronicle Weekly*, 7-4-1946

¹ Vide “Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi”, 4-4-1946

253. *LET US PRAY*

There is little doubt that India is about to reach her cherished goal of political independence. Let the entrance be prayerful. Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

Let us then pray and find out what we have meant by non-violence, and how we shall retain the freedom gained by its use. If our non-violence is of the weak, it follows that we shall never be able, by such non-violence, to retain freedom. But it follows also that we shall not, for some length of time, at any rate, be able to defend ourselves by force of arms, if only because we have neither them nor the knowledge of their use. We have not even the requisite discipline. The result is that we shall have to rely upon another nation's help, not as equals but as pupils upon their teachers, if the word 'inferiors' jars upon our ears.

Hence there is nothing but non-violence to fall back upon for retaining our freedom even as we had to do for gaining it. This means exercise of non-violence against all those who call themselves our opponents. This should not mean much for a man who has used himself to non-violence for nearly three decades. It is summed up in "die for your honour and freedom" instead of "kill if necessary and be killed in the act". What does a brave soldier do? He kills only if necessary and risks his life in the act. Non-violence demands greater courage and sacrifice. Why should it be comparatively easy for a man to risk death in the act of a killing and almost super human for him to do so in the act of sparing life? It seems to be gross self-deception to think that we can risk death, if we learn and practice the art of killing, but cannot do so otherwise. But for the hypnotism induced by the repetition of an untruth we should not grossly deceive ourselves.

But the critic or the scoffer will ask, why bring in prayer if the matter is so simple as you put it. The answer is that prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour.

Undoubtedly prayer requires a living faith in God. Successful satyagraha is inconceivable without that faith. God may be called by

any other name so long as it connotes the living Law of Life—in other words, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one.

NEW DELHI, April 6, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

254. NOTES

EATING WITH HARIJANS¹

Q. How can a vegetarian caste Hindu sit down to food in the home of a meat-eating Harijan ?

A. A vegetarian caste Hindu can eat vegetarian food in the home of a meat-eating Harijan. Inter-dining does not imply that one should eat everything that is put before one. All that is necessary is that the food, the plates on which it is served, and the hands that have cooked it should be clean. The same applies to water. Nor does inter-dining mean that people should eat out of the same plate or drink out of the same glass. There should be no breach of hygiene.

RAMANAMA

Q. Is it not enough to have Ramanama in one's heart, or is there something special in its recitation ?

A. I believe there is special merit in the recitation of Ramanama. If anyone knows that God is in truth residing in his heart, I admit that for him there is no need for recitation. But I have not known such a person. On the contrary, my personal experience tells me that there is something quite extraordinary in the recitation of Ramanama. Why or how is not necessary to know.

MINISTERIAL SALARIES

Ministers and members of the provincial assemblies are in their respective places as servants of the people in every sense of the term. The British scale of pay cannot be copied by them except at their cost. Nor need all draw payments because a certain scale is allowed. The scale fixes the limit up to which they may draw. It will be ludicrous for a monied man to draw the full or any payment. The payments are meant for those who cannot easily afford to render free

¹ Originally written in Hindi, this and the following note appeared as “from *Harijan Sevak*” published simultaneously with the source.

service. They are representatives of the poorest people in the world. What they draw is paid by the poor. Let them remember this salient fact, and act and live accordingly.

NEW DELHI, April 6, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

255. *LETTER TO LORD WAVELL*

VALMIKI MANDIR, READING ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

April 6, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I write this about two things that I discussed before the Cabinet Delegation on the 3rd instant.

Sir Archibald Rowlands¹ was with me last night in order to have a talk with me about the salt tax. At the conclusion of our talk he was frank enough to tell me that, had he met me three months ago, the tax would have been abolished.² I omit the rest of our important conversation in order to make my letter as brief as possible. Regard being had to the admission, I sent to Sir Archibald Rowlands Shri Sudhir Ghosh, whom he knows well, to have further talks with him. He now contemplates abolition within three months or so. I know that nothing can be done by a single official, however strong or able he may be, unless he is supported by his superiors. And so I invoke your assistance in this humanitarian work. But more even than that is the consideration that I put before the Cabinet Delegation, viz., that independence should be ushered in with the greatest good grace which the poorest villager in the remotest village can at once realize. More of this you can glean from Sudhir Babu, if you feel inclined

¹ Finance Member, Viceroy's Executive Council

² Pyarelal explains : "In the course of their conversation, Sir Archibald Rowlands, while admitting to Gandhiji that he had been converted to the proposition for the abolition of the salt tax, seemed to favour the retention of the salt monopoly by the Government even after the salt tax was abolished. Gandhiji felt that this would largely defeat the end in view. In compliance with Sir Archibald's request, he sent him [on April 25] a draft of a proclamation announcing the termination of the levying of the salt tax and a note on the proposed proclamation."

and can spare the time. He is carrying this note.¹

About prisoners, I will not say anything as I understand that their release is imminent.²

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 157-8

256. LETTER TO VAIKUNTHLAL L. MEHTA

HARIJAN MANDIR,

April 6, 1946

BHAI VAIKUNTH,

I have your note. Balasaheb³ also saw me. Join the [Bombay] Ministry for the sake of service. If you can afford to forgo the salary, you may not accept it. Do what you think best.⁴

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 1366

¹ In *Gandhiji's Emissary*, "Letter to M. R. Jayakar", 13-2-1946, describing the Viceroy's silence in response to his appeal, Sudhir Ghosh says: "It was a rather disconcerting experience. I did not know whether I had succeeded or failed to make an impression on the Viceroy's mind. Feeling somewhat uneasy, I went back to Gandhiji to report . . . whereupon Gandhiji decided that he himself had better go and see the Viceroy. . . ." *Vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 8-4-1946

² According to *The Transfer of Power*, "Letter to Private Secretary to General Smuts", 15-8-1907, the addressee who forwarded this letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, said: ". . . I have ascertained that it is correct that Rowlands saw him and, without any consultation with myself or his colleagues, agreed that the Salt Tax could be abolished. I think you will like to know this. I make no comment at the moment on the conduct of my Finance Member, but should like to discuss the matter with the Delegation tomorrow morning, since this is one of the questions which Gandhiji raised with them."

³ B. G. Kher, Premier, Bombay

⁴ The addressee joined as Minister for Finance, Co-operation and Village Industries.

257. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI¹

April 6, 1946

Twenty-seven years ago when the late Swami Shraddhanandji² was alive, satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act was inaugurated on this day. History was made the following week. For the first time the entire masses of India from one end to the other rose like one man. It was an entirely spontaneous demonstration.³ I had myself not imagined that its outcome could be so miraculous. I could feel God's hand in this miracle.

That was the time when Hindus and Muslims for the time forgot all their difference. The Ali Brothers⁴ and I used to go all over the country together like blood-brothers. We spoke with one voice and delivered the message of Hindu-Muslim unity and swaraj to the masses. We resolved that thereafter we should address our prayers to God alone, instead of the British Government, and so satyagraha was born in India after it was first initiated in South Africa. On April 13, unarmed civilians were subjected to firing. The Ali brothers readily fell in with the programme of a national day of fasting and prayer. People fasted on the 6th and 13th of April. They realized that they were all children of the one God, destined to live together and die together in the land of their birth, which was India. They assembled together in their thousands and offered prayers in temples, churches and mosques. The climax was reached when in Delhi a monster gathering, consisting of both Hindus and Mussalman, was held in the Juma Mosque and was addressed by the late Swami Shraddhanand. It was a glorious day in India's history, the memory of which we shall always treasure.

But the situation has changed today. We have gone wrong

¹ Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani. The *Harijan* report, which appeared under the title "The Sacred Week" by Pyarelal, has been collated with the Hindi version in *Harijan Sevak* published simultaneously with the source.

² Munshiram Manekchand (1856-1926), known as Mahatma Munshiram before he became a sannyasi; as member of Aryasamaj, he took active part in public activities in Delhi and the Punjab; was assassinated on December 24, 1926.

³ The following two sentences are translated from *Harijan Sevak*.

⁴ Mahomed Ali and Shaikat Ali. The rest of this sentence and the one that follows are translated from *Harijan Sevak*.

somewhere. The hearts of Hindus and Muslims are sundered. The air is poisoned with communal bitterness and rancour. A section of the Muslims has begun to claim that they are a separate nation. This, however, is not the time to go into the reason for it. I confess that it baffles my understanding.

Since then we commence our proceedings as today, with prayer¹. If we believe in prayer, we cannot fly at one another's throat, or regard anybody as our enemy. At Amritsar people lost their heads. But we promptly confessed our mistake and made expiation for it by fasting and praying to God for forgiveness. To err is human. By confessing we convert our mistakes into stepping stones for advance. On the contrary, a person who tries to hide his mistake becomes a living fraud and sinks down. Man is neither brute nor God but a creature of God striving to realize his divinity. Repentance and self-purification are the means. The moment we repent and ask God for forgiveness for our lapse, we purged of our sin and new life begins for us. True repentance is an essential prerequisite of prayer.

Prayer is not mere lip-service. It must express itself through action. How shall we then pray during the Sacred Week? We can pray by purging our hearts of any taint of communal hatred and ill will that might be lurking there and invoking God's aid for the same. Achievement of communal harmony would thus be one form of prayer. Then we can pray by doing sacrificial spinning for the attainment of non-violent swaraj. I have a vivid recollection of how in 1919 every home in the Punjab hummed with the music of the spinning-wheel. A mountain of yarn was presented to me on one occasion during my tour, which was never equalled before, nor has it been since, except recently at Madura during my Madras tour. What are the sisters of the Punjab doing today? That is the question which you must ask yourselves during this week of introspection. If the four hundred millions of India took spinning in earnest, and spun for sacrifice, i. e., not for self, with the name of God in their hearts and with common purpose of winning India's freedom through non-violence, their united effort would not only bring us freedom assuredly, but also provide us the means for safeguarding it after it is won, and enable us to point the way out of darkness to the whole world.

¹ This sentence and the paragraph that precedes are translated from *Harijan Sevak*.

The other day I was talking¹ to the I. N. A. men in the Red Fort. We were discussing as to what they should do on their release. They assured me that they would, on their release, serve India as true soldiers of non-violence under the Congress flag. I told them that today a true soldier of India is he who spins to clothe the naked, and tills the soil to grow more food to meet the threatening food crisis. The Congress has declared that she would carry on the struggle for India's independence through the method of non-violence. But she has not yet decided whether she would adhere to that method for the protection of that freedom against possible foreign aggression. To me it is a self-evident truth that if freedom is to be shared equally by all—even physically the weakest, the lame and the halt—they must be able to contribute an equal share in its defence. How that can be possible when reliance is placed on armaments, my plebeian mind fails to understand. I therefore, swear and shall continue to swear by non-violence, i.e, by satyagraha or soul force. In it physical incapacity is no handicap and even a frail woman or a child can put herself or himself on equal terms against a giant, armed with the most powerful weapons.

The eighteen-fold constructive programme with the spinning-wheel as its centre is the concrete expression of that spirit in organized society. Let us realize that spirit by devoting ourselves prayerfully to the carrying out of the constructive programme during the National Week.

Harijan, 21-4-1946

258. A REMARK²

[April 7, 1946]³

I have been praying to God to give me the right word, so that it will induce those to whom it is addressed to act with the courage and wisdom which the occasion demands.

Harijan, 14-4-1946

¹ Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi", 5-4-1946

² The remark is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". Pyarelal explains that Gandhiji was "describing to one of his companions" how he "kept awake for better part of the night on Saturday", April 6, 1946. Being aware of the people's "deep hatred of the British rule", Gandhiji was "concerned as to how they would behave" at the dawn of independence "after the long servitude. . . full of bitter memories", and apprehended "conflagration".

³ *ibid*

259. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI ¹

April 7, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi referred to his visit to the Quakers' silent prayer meeting this morning, and said that people at this meeting sat in absolute silence for half an hour. They were busy in worship of God and realized the sense of God's presence in their midst. Mahatma Gandhi said that he had himself felt the presence of God during silence. He asked the people to observe silence once a week as it played an important part in the individual's life.

Gandhiji described how his own experience tallied with that of the Quakers.

Emptying of the mind of all conscious process of thought, and filling it with the spirit of God unmanifest, brings one ineffable peace and attunes the soul with the infinite.

The question may, however be raised: Should not one's whole life be an unbroken hymn of praise and prayer to the Maker? Why then have a separate time for prayer at all? Brother Lawrence testified that "with him the set times of prayers were no different from other times, that he retired to pray according to the directions of his superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor asked for it. because his greatest business did not divert him from God." Gandhiji does not question that view. He observed:

I agree that if a man could practise the presence of God all the twenty-four hours, there could be no need for a separate time for prayer.

When the mind is completely filled with His spirit one cannot harbour ill will or hatred towards anyone and reciprocally the enemy will shed his enmity and become a friend. It is not my claim that I have always succeeded in converting enemies into friends, but in numerous cases it has been my experience that when the mind is filled with His peace all hatred ceases. An unbroken succession of world teachers since the beginning of time have borne testimony to the same. I claim no merit for it. I know it is the due entirely to God's grace. Let us then in the Sacred Week seek His grace through the communion of silence and, maybe, the experience will abide us ever afterwards.

Harijan, 28-4-1946; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8-4-1946

¹ The speech is extracted from Pyarelal's "Communion of Silence". The opening paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

260. VANASPATI AND GHEE

Sardar Sir Datar Singh has been putting up a fight on behalf of the cow in India. The cow includes the buffalo. In that case both can live. If the buffalo includes the cow then both die. "The cow is the mother of prosperity." To understand how this is so, the reader should see Shri Satis Chandra Das Gupta's two instructive volumes¹. Here I want to confine myself to ghee which is in danger of being swamped by *vanaspati*, as the so-called vegetable ghee is called. In reality ghee is pure animal product. One thoughtlessly uses the expression vegetable ghee or *vanaspati*, but it is a contradiction in terms. Sardar Datar Singh has shown in a considered note that the sale of *vanaspati* has risen from 26,000 tons in 1937 to 1, 37,000 tons in 1945, i.e., it has increased more than 400 percent during seven years. *Pari passu* the ghee industry has declined. Those who would study the whole note should procure a copy from Sardar Datar Singh or the Goseva Sangh in Wardha. I condense below the Sardar's conclusions:

1. Vanaspati as an article of diet is a very poor substitute for ghee. It not only lacks absorption by the human system, but has no vitamin potency.
2. Due to its similarity with ghee in texture and flavour, most of it is being used as an adulterant or is passed off as genuine ghee, and is, therefore, a great menace to ghee.
3. Due to great margin of profit in this industry, it has developed from 26 thousands tons per annum in 1937 to 105 thousands tons in 1943, and there are proposals afoot to at least double this production in the near future.
4. The ghee industry is India's greatest cottage industry involving production of 2,30, 00, 000 maunds of ghee per annum at a cost of one hundred crores of rupees.
5. The destruction of the ghee industry will not only adversely affect the welfare of the cultivators, but it will have a very deleterious effect on the cattle industry upon which the prosperity of the whole nation directly depends.

In order to overcome the difficulties explained above, the following remedial measures are suggested:

¹*The Cow in India*

1. If, due to some reasons, the Government cannot actually ban the manufacture altogether of *vanaspati*, it must at least be brought under strict control immediately.

2. All manufacturers and wholesale and retail dealers of *vanaspati* should be licensed. Such person should not be permitted to trade in or stock ghee on their premises.

3. It should be made compulsory to colour all *vanaspati* at the source of its manufacture in India, and to colour all such imported product immediately on its landing at an Indian port. Manufacturers must mix ten per cent of *til*¹ oil with *vanaspati*. The advantage of this would be that, if pure ghee is adulterated with *vanaspati* containing 10% *til*¹ oil, the detection will become extremely simple. The presence of *til*¹ oil can be most easily detected by well-known chemical reactions.

4. The addition of synthetic essences to give *vanaspati* a semblance of ghee should be prohibited.

5. Persons selling food products in the preparation of which they use *vanaspati* should be required, under marketing law, to display a sign to that effect. The presence of *vanaspati* on the premises not displaying the sign should be made an offence under law. This will eradicate the evil of *halwais*² and confectioners using *vanaspati* for their preparations and passing them off as made from genuine ghee.

6. *Vanaspati* should not be allowed to go in the market under names such as 'Vegetable Ghee' or '*Vanaspati* Ghee' or any other name which is apt to deceive the customers as to its real origin of composition.

7. *Vanaspati* should not be allowed to be marketed in packages of the same pattern as used for packing ghee and all packages containing *vanaspati* should be distinctly labelled.

It is clear that the mischief arises principally from the greed of the very persons who worship the cow. *Vanaspati* is wholly superfluous. Oils may be refined of injurious property, but they do not need to be solidified nor need they be made to look like ghee. An honest manufacturer will not stoop to counterfeits. The market is flooded with them. Counterfeit coins are heavily punishable. Why not counterfeit ghee, since the genuine article is much more precious than coins? But the sovereign remedy lies in all round honesty

¹ Sesame

² Sweetmeat sellers

among dealers who are in a hurry to become rich even at the cost of the health of the nation.

NEW DELHI, April 8, 1946

Harijan, 14-4-1946

261. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

VALMIKI MANDIR,

April 8, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I feel that I have not got across to H. E. my innermost thoughts on the matter covered by my letter¹ of day before yesterday's date. I would love to see him, if he can spare me a few minutes from his busy time. Will you please let me know, if H. E. can and, if yes, when?²

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

G. E. B. ABELL ESQ.

Gandhiji' Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 58

262. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI

[NEW DELHI,]³

April 8, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

It is not right that I should have no letter from you. Are the rules⁴ framed by me being followed? If no patients come, you may visit the sick in their homes, though not outside Uruli. Has the name been changed to Kanchan only? The doctor informs me that Pillay has left. Ask Joshi and Dhuru to write. How is the air of that place? I shall have to stay here up to the 16th. The exact date will be known

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Wavell", 6-4-1946

² In *Gandhi's Emissary*, ("What ought to be Done"), Sudhir Ghosh explains: "There was no response from the Viceroy who, evidently, was not prepared to talk any more about salt. The Viceroy was furious when he heard that Sir Archibald Rowlands had given Gandhiji to understand that he would, within three months, abolish the salt tax. . . But Gandhiji was not the man to give up his struggle for the abolition of the salt tax. He, therefore, discussed the matter with the Viceroy again the following day. For Viceroy's version of the interview, *vide* "Viceroy Note on Interview to Gandhiji", 9-4-1946

³ The source has "Bombay".

⁴ *Vide* "Instructions for Nature Cure Clinic, Uruli-Kanchan", 30-3-1946

by and by. Is it not very hot there?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2753. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

263. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

DELHI,

April 8, 1946

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I have your letter. My advice is that you should continue to do there whatever you can. Grow new food crops, vegetables, etc. Stimulate the sympathy of the people.

I am glad that your activities are going on well.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. BHAGWANJI PURUSHOTTAM

HARIJAN ASHRAM

WADHWAN CITY

KATHIAWAR

From the photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 403. Courtesy: Bhagwanji p. Pandya

264. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI¹

VALMIKI MANDIR,

April 8, 1946

CHI. KANAIYO,

Abha has slight fever today. Of course, Dinshaw who is available is treating her. She is not worried on her account, nor is there any cause for worry.²

My letter³ of last Monday addressed to the campers has, I hope, reached you. All I can think about today is whether all of you are fully observing truth and non-violence. Are you enthusiastic about all that you do, and is it done with humility? I shall be encouraged to

¹ The letter is written in Devanagari.

² What follows is in Hindi.

³ *Vide* "Letter to Sevagram Camp Inmates", 31-3-1946

write for the third Monday when I get your replies to my two earlier letters.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI KANU GANDHI

SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

265. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

DELHI,

April 8, 1946

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. Kamble has been proved to be a liar. Where he is, nobody knows.

Boiled milk is certainly better. Add some potassium permanganate in water. It is, no doubt, against nature. The same is true of quinine also. But when we are helpless, we have to violate nature.

I have already written about natural diet. Milk, fruit, leafy vegetables, potatoes, etc., are included in it.

It is good to throw some lime into the well. You may also throw some bleaching powder. If pure water is available, then there is no need of disinfectants.

It irks me that the grinding stone cannot be stopped even for two minutes for the sake of silence. Two minutes is nothing. Just the same, Babaji¹ may do what he thinks right.

You have explained well what you meant when you talked about being a great sinner.

I would not consider eggs and fish as opposed to natural diet. They cannot be included in a vegetarian diet, but then neither can milk.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9022. Also C. W. 9146. Courtesy:

¹ Mahadeo Moghe

266. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

April 8, 1946

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. The idea that Krishnachandra should earn and pay up the money is not right. The decision I have taken is the only proper one.

Chi. Hoshiari comes now and then. Her father also paid a visit. She is not steady at home. My faith in her steadiness has somewhat weakened. She ought not to have brought along Gajaraj. The child is being spoiled.

Part of the Ashram ought to be reserved for farming. I think it would be a mistake to put up buildings all over the place.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1970

267. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I think the hostel land, the well and the building should be handed over¹. They may use it as they wish. You may retain Rustom Bhuvan as long as R. stays there. He may vacate it, if he can. It should not be given to any outsider. I understand this is what Ashadevi has said. You cannot devote one day in a week to prepare slivers for the other six days. Whatever the difficulty, one should do oneself all the processings up to spinning. Have I not written about it in *Harijan*?

I shall be here up to the 16th at any rate.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4550

¹ To E. W. Aryanakam for Nayee Talim

268. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[April 8, 1946]¹

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Don't you go to the patients?² I have sent over whatever spinning equipment of yours I could find. Let me know what still remains so that I can send for it. Even these things I found only with difficulty.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 507

269. LETTER TO CHAKRAYYA

HARIJAN MANDIR, NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1946

CHI. CHAKRAYYA,

I have your letter. I am very busy. Stay on where you are. Learn a lot. Learn the art of being well at any place. It is good if Rajuji learns Hindi. He may come to Sevagram when ever he wishes.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9117. Also C. W. 9186

270. LETTER TO ACHYUT PATWARDHAN

NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1946

BHAI ACHYUT,

Yesterday I wasted time wondering whether to write or send a wire to you and, owing to the burden of work, I could do neither. Today I received your letter. The release is hardly a cause for congratulations, but I am glad that you are well. Everything is uncertain about me. I would, of course, like to meet you soon, but let

¹ The letter was an enclosure to Amrit Kaur's letter of April 8 to the addressee.

² At Uruli-Kanchan, to give instruction in spinning

us see when God makes it possible. I am very glad that you are going to Vinoba. You might possibly meet kishorelalji and Kakasaheb too in Wardha Sevagram.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI ACHYUT PATWARDHAN
VINCENT SQUARE
TRAM TERMINUS
DADAR
BOMBAY

From a copy of the Hindi: pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*271. SPEECH READ OUT AT PRAYER MEETING,
NEW DELHI*

April 8, 1946

I am both happy and sad as I could not speak today because of the silence I observe on Mondays. The fact that I am not able to speak before you makes me unhappy, and happiness lies in the very fact of my being able to complete my vow of observing silence.

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 9-4-1946

272. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI

[After *April 8, 1946*]¹

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your and Dhiru's beautiful letter. Keep me informed about the details. Admit only as many patients as you can easily look after. The chief thing is to teach the people the secret of not falling ill. If we succeed in that, I shall believe that our health-mission has succeeded to perfection. And, therefore, teach that to boys, girls, grown-ups and everybody else.

A person suffering from any infectious disease may have been bathed in the tub; but, if it has been cleaned afterwards with burning-hot ashes, you may take it to be as good as a new one and bathe me in

¹ The letter was, presumably, written after the one of April 8, 1946; *vide* "Letter to Manibhai Desai", 8-4-1946

it. I will have no hesitation whatever.

For morning breakfast, I think, it might be better, instead of eating *ghensh*¹, to eat home-made biscuits which require to be chewed, and some fruit. You may cap that with milk, or may have milk in the afternoon. This is only a suggestion. It is good that Joshi has gone there. Ask Gokhale to write. I shall be here up to the 24th at any rate. After that it is uncertain.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2754. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

273. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

DELHI,

April 9, 1946

BHAI MUNSHI,

I am scribbling these few lines early in the morning. Your letter is worthy of you. I will now get ready the papers² which will cost you the least labour.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI KANU MUNSHI, ADVOCATE

26 RIDGE ROAD

MALABAR HILL

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 7695. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

274. DRAFT LETTER OF AUTHORITY³

[April 9, 1946]

We submit the dispute existing between us to Shri Kanhaiyalal Munshi, Advocate, Bombay, for his decision which we shall accept as final. We shall forward our submissions through Gandhiji and, if

¹ Porridge made from coarse grain

² Vide "Letter to K. M. Munshi", 28-3-1946

³ Copies of the Draft letter were sent to H. L. Sharma and Lakshminarayan Gadodia, vide "Letter to H. L. Sharma", 9-4-1946. The draft bears the following note in Gujarati: "Two clean copies of the above to be prepared. This may be done today by Munnalal." Vide also the preceding item.

Munshiji wishes to have any clarification, we shall present ourselves and witnesses, if any, wherever required. Munshiji may kindly give his award within three months of the receipt of our submissions by him. The award when conveyed to Gandhiji will be deemed to have been conveyed to us.

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

275. *LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRA RAO*

HARIJAN MANDIR, NEW DELHI,
April 9, 1946

DEAR RAMACHANDRA RAO,

I have your letter¹. Though there is a resemblance between your thought and practice and mine superficially, I must own that yours is far superior to mine. Having made that admission let me emphasise the fact that deep down there is a fundamental difference between you and me and, therefore, your thought and mine. For you consciously ignore God. Equally consciously, probably more progressively, I rely upon God. Therefore your complaint is hasty. You will be better able to judge, if you survive me and *vice versa*.

Do not think of passing any time with me whilst I am wandering. I may be said to be not wandering when I am in Sevagram. Therefore come to me whenever I am there.

*yours*²

BAPU

An Atheist with Gandhi, p. 48

¹ *Vide* "Letter From G. Ramachandra Rao" The addressee explains that the letter was written "some time in March 1946 or so" to congratulate Gandhiji on his decision to stay with Harijans, about which the addressee came to know from newspapers.

² The addressee says: "There was an episode associated with the above letter. It was written in another hand and Bapuji signed the letter. The letter was closed at first with 'Yours sincerely'; but when Bapuji signed it, he scored out 'sincerely' left 'Yours' stand. I did not understand why 'sincerely' was scored out and so I wrote to Bapuji... I got the following reply from... Amrit Kaur... "Yours sincerely" is too formal; therefore the word was struck out. What else could there be in it?"

276. *LETTER TO LAKSHMINARAYAN GADODIA*

DELHI,
April 9, 1946

BHAI LAKSHMINARAYAN,

Enclosed with this are the letter of authority¹ for Musnhiji, and Bhai Sharma's statement of complaint. Duly complete the letter of authority with the signatures, date, witness, etc., and return it to me; also a reply to the statement. I shall ask² Sharma for his rejoinder to the reply and draft that I shall send everything to Munshiji.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

277. *LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA*

DELHI,
April 9, 1946

CHI. SHARMA,

I have your letter. How can one be called a naturopath, if one acts with so much impatience and forgets one's dharma?

Why don't you give up the land and house since you are resting at home?

Your statement of complaint is not as it ought to be, but I have sent it over to Gadodaji for his reply³. The letter of authority for Munhiji is enclosed. Put your signature on it and return it. Your signature should be accompanied by the date, place and the signature of a witness.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhaymen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 358

¹ *Vide* "Draft Letter of Authority", 9-4-1946

² *Vide* the following item.

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

278. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI*¹

April 9, 1946

Referring to the Quakers' Association of New Delhi, Gandhiji said that people from different religions observed silence there for long time. According to him, there is only one God or Allah in every religion. We should thus not hate followers of others religions. We should also learn the method of keeping peace by observing silence like the Quakers. Peace is a great strength. If we fail to understand the way of keeping peace, no doubt the country will get independence but the freedom thus achieved would serve no purpose. If plunder and pillage and murders were still there, you would soon lose interest in swaraj.

Gandhiji said that we should not kill or torture others. We should rather learn how to kill ourselves and never others. Those who know how to die, also know how to live. But those who torture and kill others remain as burden on earth.

In the end, Gandhiji appealed to women to maintain silence in the prayer meeting in future.

[From Hindi]

Harijan, 10-4-1946

279. *LETTER TO A. KALESWAR RAO*

NEW DELHI,

April 10, 1946

MY DEAR KALESWAR RAO,

I have your letter. If all that you say about the state of affairs in Andhra is correct it is terrible and only Andhra people themselves can put things right.

Your defence of Shri Prakasam is wholly unwarranted by facts. If every Congressman were to make use of money presented to him by the public for personal needs the Congress as an organization would cease to exist. I have not known such a thing during the long course of my public life.

I met and had a long talk last night with the Madras M.L.A.s of whom Shri Prakasam was one. His philosophy of the correctness of which he is convinced appals me. I have gone so far as to tell him that

¹ The report said: "Contrary to his practice of addressing only after the prayer, Gandhiji, who heard some noise from the side of women, spoke even before the prayer and particularly advised the women on the importance of maintaining silence.

he should take a back seat, i.e., not dream of taking ministership and not even retain his seat in the legislature. You and he may think differently and even the Congress Working Committee may not subscribe to my views. But I have suggested that he should seek the decision of the Working Committee in this matter.¹

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

280. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

“VALMIKI MANDIR”,
READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1946

MY DEAR PRAKASAM,

I have received your long exposition with which I heartily disagree. The worst form of receiving money you have considered to be the best. It is pity that you do not see the danger behind it. I tried to explain but I failed.

There were two things which I did not want to discuss in the midst of the company we had last night. You had from the Congress a sum of money which you never returned; similarly, from the Provincial Congress Committee, which also you did not return. This news has come to me without seeking. If the information is wrong, you will tell me. If it is not, you will see how wrong it was.

The *Swarajya*² affair also seems not to have been creditable.

All these things have come to me after our correspondence. I wish you would make a clean breast of all your affairs and produce an accurate account of all your doings. If they have been questionable, or if there is anything that cannot be defended by sane people, you should retire into private life and think out what your obvious duty is.

It grieves me to write this letter and yet I must if I am to be absolutely frank with you. I would have discussed these things with

¹ Vide also “Speech at Prayer Meeting, Bombay”, 11-3-1946 “Memorandum on Interview to G.E. B. Abell”, 14-3-1946 and the following item.

² Of which the addressee was editor

you if we had met. But I cannot now after the attitude you took up last night. I have not the heart to do so.

Yours,

BAPU

SHRIT. PRAKASAM

NEW DELHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

281. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

DELHI,

April 10, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter. Why 'Yours' only?

The letter is not good. It stinks of pride. Bhansali is a noble soul. One should not mind, if he says anything. You should not feel hurt, if anyone says anything. These are the qualities of a *sthitaprajna*. I offer a word of advice even in a meeting of thousands. Let noble people be our watchmen. It does not mean that we should do all that they say, but we should be more alert when they say things to us. Where is the point in laying down a condition for me? When I lose faith in you I will tell you so, as I did in the case of Dahyalal.

Explain clearly to Appa the condition regarding *brahmacharya*. Tell him about all the rules.

Mulkraj has been removed. He is silly.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4551

282. *DRAFT FOR H. L. SHARMA AND L. N. GADODIA*

[April 10, 1946]¹

We have mutual complaints. We entrust the responsibility of settling the dispute to Shri Kanhaiyalal Munshi, advocate, Bombay.

¹ This was signed by Gadodia on April 10, 1946, and by Sharma on April 11, 1946. The draft bears the instructions : "Two clean copies of this are needed. Let Munnalal do the copies today."

We shall accept his decision and take it as the final judgement. To this end we shall send our questions and answers to Munshiji through Gandhiji; and if Munshiji wants to ask us anything, we shall present ourselves wherever he says and shall produce the witnesses if they are there. We request Munshiji to be good enough to give his decision within three months of the receipt of our questions. If the decision is sent to Gandhiji it will be understood as having been sent to us.

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

283. TALK WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1946

After a few preliminaries I told Sir Stafford that I had come in response to the message he had sent and added "I am at your service now."

CRIPPS : I am glad you have been good enough to come for this chat. The whole thing is off the record and let us have a free and frank talk. Will you please let me have your appraisal of the situation ?

GANDHIJI : It is too soon for me to give any definite appraisal. Day to day developments are as much within your knowledge as mine. So far as I am able to say, you and the Mission have come out with two objectives —the setting up of a machinery for framing the new constitution and the formation of an Interim Government at the Centre. Are you hopeful of solving both the problems on this visit ?

C. I am quite hopeful. I can tell you that we do not mean to go back from this country without solving both of them.

G. Cutting across both those problems is the issue of Pakistan. If you are hopeful of solving both those problems it means that you have in the first instance to reach a decision on the issue of Pakistan.

C. Yes, you are right. I would only add that we propose to reach a decision on the preliminary issue by bringing about an agreement.

G. The prospects of an agreement do not seem to look bright. You have no doubt been reading the statements and interviews given recently by Jinnah and the speeches which have been made at the Muslim Legislators' Convention.

C. Of course, I have. They breathe fire and brimstone. But you can take it from me that they do not disturb us. I am quite accustomed to such things in my own

country.G. That may be so. But the effect of such statements and utterances may not be the same in this country as it is in your country with seasoned politics.

C. When I find a person getting louder and more violent in his denunciations of his opponents. I get the feeling, as with your experience you will get under the same circumstances, that he is beginning to recognise that the extreme case for which he stands is becoming desperate.

G. I am very glad that the Mission whose advent to and presence in this country are the immediate provocation for these intensified denunciations, is not taking them at their face value. But you were mentioning that you hoped to reach a solution on Pakistan by agreement. In the present tempers of the two main parties, particularly of the Muslim League, it is difficult to see how an agreement could be reached.

C. Has not the issue been reduced to a narrow one ? The question is about the machinery for the administration of common subjects like defence, foreign affairs, etc. Jinnah says that arrangements for their administration should be made by treaty between Pakistan and the rest of India. The Congress says you must have a federal centre for administering them. The gulf between these two points of view is by no means unbridgeable.

G. But are not the two points of view fundamentally different ? The one is thinking of two independent sovereign states having treaty relation with each other, while the other is thinking in terms of a single federal State in which these common subjects would be assigned for administration to a Centre.

c. That of course is so; but where differences of opinion of such a nature do crop up it is quite possible for the two parties to come to an agreement if only they will meet, sit down and try to arrive at a solution by a process of give and take. From my experience I could tell you that the issue is dispute and the difference to be reconciled cannot be considered too difficult for arriving at an agreed solution. In international affairs much bigger issues between Governments have been and are being settled by that process. It will be necessary for the Congress and the League each to come down a bit and meet.

G. Where are they to meet ? What is the half-way house that you want them to meet at ?

c. There is something like a confederation and a confederal Centre.

G. Would not a confederal Centre mean merely a gathering of representatives of Governments of Independent States ?

c. Yes.

G. And there would be no legislature of other auxiliary things which you find in a Centre of the usual type ?

c. No.

G. What about the sanction behind the decision which such a confederate machinery will take ? C. No doubt it will be a loose unit. But it is unnecessary for me to point out to you that the States of the American Union formed first a confederation which later on developed into a federation. There is no reason why a similar thing should not happen in India.

G. But you forget, however, some rather fundamental differences between the two cases. In the case of America the states were independent units which first formed a loose kind of union. They found that union did not satisfy their requirements and therefore developed the closer federal union that now exists. In India we have now a unitary state with a common Centre. You propose to scatter the units in this state.

C. Oh, no. No, I am not scattering them.

G. When I said you are now scattering them I did not intend to convey that you personally were doing or wanted to do so. I am only trying to put to you my understanding of the proposal that you apparently have under consideration, of forming a confederal union between the proposed Pakistan and the rest of India. To resume what I was saying, the units of the existing unitary Indian State will, if the Pakistan idea is accepted, be scattered and then given the option of grouping themselves as they like into two or more independent States and come together in a loose confederation in the hope that later on the deficiencies of such a confederal arrangement will compel them to convert the confederal into a closer federal union. In other words the ultimate development visualised is, so far as inter-relations between the units and the administration on common subjects are concerned, to bring them into more or less the condition in which they are today.

C. I see your point, but if agreement has to be arrived at, we cannot altogether justify an acceptable or accepted solution on the basis of argument alone. We have got to take psychological considerations into account. All the same I do not wish you to take away from this conversation the idea that I am finally committed to the solution being found in the shape of a confederation.

G. I understand, but what psychological consideration are you

thinking of ?

C. Rightly or wrongly the Muslims have now very widespread amongst them the fear of Hindu domination and if India is to get on peacefully in the future they have to be convinced that the political system that is to be set up will be one which will remove this fear.

G. I am all for doing everything that in reason is possible for removing this fear. But in the conditions of this country and taking into account the members of Muslims involved and the manner in which they are distributed it is difficult for anybody to agree that the removal of this fear can be accomplished only or even most successfully by setting up an independent State where, though the Muslims may be in a majority, there will be a very large population of non-Muslims to reckon with. What are the grounds for your hope that an agreement could be reached between the parties and how could the reaching of such an agreement be furthered ?

C. Between you and me, I may tell you that in spite of all the violent speeches that have been made within the last two days at the Muslim Convention, leading representatives of the Muslim community are, even as we are talking now furiously thinking as to how best they could moderate their published demands so as to arrive at a settlement with the other party and if a gentleman like you could go round Delhi and speak to your Muslim friends and bring them round to realise that if they did not show a spirit of accommodation they stood the risk of the decision of the Mission going against them on the issue of Pakistan, it would be of great assistance.

G. All advice which may come from people like me is suspect in Muslim circles. Emotionally worked up as Muslim sentiment is today, the more effective method of making them climb down from their extravagantly high perch is for you or other members of the Mission giving to Jinnah as early as you can a broad hint that there was no likelihood of Pakistan being agreed to by the Mission or His Majesty's Government.

C. No doubt that would be more effective, but the time is not yet for your making known even in an informal way what might be our ultimate decision even if we had reached one already.

G. I should have thought that there could be no hesitation in this matter. With all the background of your history in this country, your present position and the state system you have built up, it is impossible for a person like me to imagine that if you were put on your conscience and asked to give a fair decision on the merits your judgment would be in favour of dividing the country into two or more

independent States.

C. I quite appreciate your point of view, but where agreement has to be arrived at, it may be necessary for the party even with the strongest case agreeing to accept something less than what it may rightly be considered entitled to in order to avoid a possible decision against them. Often in my practice at the Bar, parties with a very strong case for whom I was appearing have come to me and said, "no doubt our case is very strong, but we do not know what the judge might finally decide. Meanwhile the other side is offering to compromise on terms which although less than what we are rightfully entitled to are still sure and certain. We have to place this against a possible adverse finding of the judge. Shall we accept those terms?"

G. If the two main protagonists do come to a settlement, nothing could be more satisfactory. But the danger of a compromise is that the terms may be such, especially when they are dictated by pressure from a third party, as would not in the long run satisfy or be in the interests of the one party or the other or perhaps even both.

c. There is that point no doubt but has not it happened in Indian history already that the country has settled down to decisions which when given did not please any party, as the Communal Award for instance. G. The Communal Award has no doubt been acquiesced in though everybody not excluding the Muslims have been loudly complaining against it. But its successful enforcement is due primarily to the fact that the British have been in power and also strong enough to force down even an unpopular decision of that sort. The conditions will, however, be very different if on the issue of Pakistan you give a decision of a similar nature. India will be declared independent. You will not be here to face the risk that will inevitably follow such a decision. You will not be doing a service to the country by giving a decision which will intensify communal conflict and lead perhaps to a civil war, the responsibility for tackling which will not be yours. So any decision that you give has more chance of being implemented successfully after you leave if it is one which is justifiable on the merits. If on the other hand it is one which attempts merely to decide the dispute between two antagonists by denying to each a portion of his claim, whatever the merits may be, it will leave a trail of trouble behind.

C. I agree that there are risks but we are determined to see that a settlement is reached and if it is not reached by agreement between the parties, to give a decision ourselves.

G. I have always been a staunch supporter of the view that if the

parties in this country do not come to an agreement, the British Government which is in power today cannot escape the responsibility of giving a decision. There are suggestions for arbitration.

C. I know, but if the parties concerned agree to refer an issue like Pakistan for decision of a committee consisting of a Russian, a Turk and a Chinese, I cannot see why we should stand in the way. No doubt in view of all the connections that exist between us and India and the knowledge that we possess of conditions here there is justification for your view that the British should give a decision; but if the parties to the dispute themselves prefer to agree to abide by the decision of an outside committee of the sort I mentioned, I cannot see why I should stand in the way. The main thing is the reaching of a settlement which both parties will accept.

G. Sir Stafford, as regards the constitution-making machinery, I presume you will agree that you cannot have two constitution-making bodies or I understand the suggestion has been made of two compartments of a single constitution-making body unless the decision is first taken in favour of Pakistan. Such a decision necessarily implies that provinces will have to decide beforehand which constitution-making body or compartment of a single constitution-making body they will go into.

C. Yes.

G. Similarly, Indian States will have to choose in a similar way.

C. Yes, but we cannot rule out the possibility in that case of the Indian States wishing to have a constitution-making body of their own!

G. Are you contemplating seriously of these complications ?

C. There are complications but the whole thing will depend upon the agreement reached on the question of Pakistan. That hurdle has to be crossed before everything else.

G. How do you propose to set up the constitution-making body? What is the authority which will constitute it ? By Act of Parliament ?

C. (After some hesitation) I am afraid we have not thought this out. I should not think that an Act of Parliament is necessary for this purpose.

G. If not an Act of Parliament, there should be at least a proclamation of His Majesty. The matter is, you will agree, big enough not to be left to be provided for by a Press communique of the present Government of India or even by an announcement by the Viceroy.

C. We shall no doubt go into this question. The main thing is that we should reach an agreement first on the issue of substance. When such agreement is reached we shall take the best advice that is available and implement it in the form most suitable.

G. What about the Indian States ? Do you think they will come in without standing out for things which it might be difficult to agree to ?

C. I do not foresee any great difficulty from that quarter.

G. What about Paramountcy ? Where will it rest after you transfer power ?

C. Paramountcy when we go will have to disappear. When India gets independence not only British India but every one of the Indian States will become independent.

G. All the 562 or 601 of them ?

C. Yes, and when they so become independent it will be for each of them to negotiate fresh arrangement with the new Government of India.

G. This will be another additional complication which you will introduce as the result of your quitting power in India. It is difficult for me to think that you should expect 562 States each to negotiate separately a new arrangement with the Government of India. Even now there are only about 40 States with treaties and they as well as the rest of the States are all really held together by the British power exercising paramountcy.

C. But it is difficult to expect a State like Hyderabad with permanent treaty relations with the British Crown to agree to any arrangement over its head. It might well say whatever you and the new Government may do we refuse to recognise it.

G. With such experience of Indian States as I possess, it is difficult for me to believe that an Indian State, even if it be Hydera-bad, could maintain the position that it will not acquiesce in the arrangements which are made by the paramount power. C. You are probably right in saying that even Hyderabad could not maintain such an attitude for long. But we cannot ignore our obligations. What is that you yourself would suggest ?

G. The natural thing. British power over Indian States is exercised through paramountcy. You are transferring power to Indian hands. The authority which takes your place in British India should exercise that paramountcy after you hand over power.

C. That is not the law.

G. I cannot follow you. Was not it law in 1858 and in 1935 ?

c. But surely if bad law was perpetrated in the past you would

not advise us to follow that example now.

G. You are not squarely facing the problem. That bad law has been in force and all States have settled down to it for nearly a century.

C. We have certain obligations to States under paramountcy-protection for instance. We were able to discharge this obligation because there was the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force at our disposal. But the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force will not be available after India becomes independent. It would not be right for us to tell the States that as we are quitting India we are handing over our obligations to a new Indian Government which [do not] have such forces at its disposal and which therefore will not be in a position to implement those obligations. It is for the States to look out for themselves and if they are so minded, to make fresh trials with the new Government of India.

G. What do you mean when you say that the new Indian Government will not be in a position to implement their obligations of protection of Indian States ?

C. It is obvious that the new Government will not have at its disposal a Navy and Air Force sufficient to defend even itself.

G. You are exaggerating the position. It is true that the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force have to be greatly developed before they can be considered efficient parts of the armed forces of an independent India. But while they are being developed new India will certainly make other arrangements, for example by treaty with Britain, for having at its disposal their Naval and Air units to help her in defending the country. Defending the country will include defending the Indian States as well and it should not be impossible so to make arrangements with Britain that the New India Government will be in a position to implement the obligations of paramountcy which it will inherit from the British power. Again, you surely do not think that in protecting Indian States British power had to place any reliance worth mentioning on the Navy and Air Force. That protection was largely given by the Indian army and even from the commencement of the new regime, we shall have, according to the Commander-in-chief, an Indian Army which would be quite capable of providing fully for the internal defence requirements of the country.

C. There is the other point that the treaties were made by the British Crown and therefore except with their consent the obligations could not be transferred by the Crown to any other authority.

G. I have already said that you have effected these transfers twice in recent history. On the first occasion Rulers of States were not even consulted, I believe. That was in 1858 when the Crown took over the relations with Indian States from the East India Company and administered those relations through the Governor-General in Council, that is the Government of India. In 1935 this arrangement gave place to a new one under which the Crown withdrew the powers from the Governor-General in Council and vested them in a Crown Representative. Under independent India both the Governor-General in Council and the Crown Representative will presumably disappear. Their places will have to be taken by the new Government of what is now British India. If the transfer of paramountcy to this new Government could be effected with consent of Indian States and on terms, perhaps, which might be made more acceptable to them than those on which paramountcy is exercised today by the Crown Representative it will be to the good, but if all or some of the States should hesitate as regards this transfer it has to be made in spite of such hesitation, for otherwise not merely the defence and foreign policy of India, but even the efficient internal administration of common economic and other matters will become almost impossible.

C. Formerly it was the Governor-General that was controlling the Indian States.

G. You are mistaken. The authority that was in law responsible for the conduct of relations with Indian States was, from 1858 to 1935, the Governor-General in Council and not the Governor-General.

C. But then the Governor-General under that system was an autocrat and exercised all powers.

G. That may have been so but I thought you were placing insistence on the letter of the treaties and on the legal position as regards the obligations of paramountcy and you cannot deny that from those two points of view the authority concerned was the Governor-General in Council and not the Governor-General up to 1935.

C. Have nothing more to say on the subject of Indian States.

G. There is one point I would like to draw your attention to. The enormous proportions which communal tension has reached in the country are directly traceable to separate electorates. You cannot have healthy political life in any country where the electorates which

should exercise the sovereign controlling power are based upon religion, race, creed or caste. If in connection with the negotiations you are now engaged in, it is possible as part of the agreement which you propose to see arrived at between the parties you can put pressure on them for substituting joint electorates for separate electorates, it will be a service of incalculable value to the future political development of India.

C. I am all with you as regards separate electorates. But don't you think that we should rather not touch that question but leave it to the Interim Government and the constitution-making body ?

G. The immediate matter for settlement no doubt is the issue of Pakistan, the formation of an Indian Government and the convening of a constitution-making body. But I thought it would be helpful to the Interim Government and the constitution-making body if while pressure is being applied on both parties for a settlement on the major issue of Pakistan this important problem of electorates is also tackled and that even if a final decision is not arrived at on it now the way could be paved for a fairly satisfactory solution at the proper time. Let me add that separate electorates are unhealthy not only to the Government of a united India; in fact if Jinnah has his way about Pakistan—which God forbid—separate electorates will prove a greater headache to Pakistan than to Hindustan. The Muslim minority in the Hindustan of Jinnah's conception will be 20 millions against a Hindu population in the same area of about 150 millions. On the other hand the non-Muslim minority in Pakistan will be 44 millions against a Muslim population therein of about 70 millions.

C. Oh ! That is Jinnah's Pakistan ! It is an impossible idea. To think of setting up a new State of Pakistan with so heavy a Hindu minority of 44 millions which will always be in opposition to the Government of Pakistan ! It is inconceivable. I think you will agree that this question of electorates is left over for decision by the constitution-making body.

After a few final words of courtesy we parted. At the door Sir Stafford said he hoped he would have an opportunity of meeting me again and added with a twinkle in his eye "before we leave this country at the end of July". I turned round to him and said, "July !" Sir Stafford then said, "I do hope we shall be able to leave earlier but I thought I would mention a safe limit !"

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

284. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI

April 10, 1946

In that hymn there is an assurance that whom God protects, no power on earth can injure. The message of that hymn has a particular relevancy in the present times when the whole world is plunged in strife. Although the war has ended, the causes that brought it about still continue. This is not peace; it is only silent preparation for another war.

Look at the mutual recrimination, abuse and threats of violence that poison the atmosphere in Delhi itself. But, if you have faith in God, you will remain unaffected by all these threats and abuse, and feel secure in the assurance that not a hair of your head will be injured so long as you are under God's protecting care. There is a saying to the effect that the outer is only the reflection of the inner. If you are good, the whole world will be good to you. On the contrary, if you feel tempted to regard anybody as evil, the odds are that the evil is within you.

The Choudhari Saheb² has had great regard for me. If, therefore, somebody comes and tells me that he has abused the Hindus and called them names, I must refuse to believe it or think ill of him. How can a person who till yesterday was like a blood-brother to me turn all of a sudden into a hater of Hindus? I would rather think that some Hindus have exasperated him by their behavior and made him lose his balance. Similarly I am quite sure that if the Choudhary Saheb were to meet me today and I were to ask him if he really believed that the whole mass of Hindus had turned bad overnight, he would laugh at the remarks attributed to him and dismiss them as absurd. We must neither think evil about others nor suspect others of thinking evil about us. Proneness to lend ear to evil reports is a sign of lack of faith.

Harijan, 28-4-1946

¹ Extracted from Pyarelal's "Prayer Discourses"

² The reference is to Khaliq-uz-Zaman. According to Pyarelal, "an outburst against the Hindus. . . attributed to Khaliq-uz-Zaman . . . had appeared in the Press".

285. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

April 11, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. Badshah Khan¹ has arrived here. He has not met me, but will do so today. You may, if you wish, go on the basis of the letter you have received. You need not wait for my permission. Forget Borkamata. You may go there after you are fully restored. You have to cultivate peace of mind to improve your health. You must also see that Zohra² improves. Do only as much as you can. Don' go out in the heat. Also do the work connected with spinning only as much as you can. It seems I shall be able to return only after the end of this month. Write to me regularly.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 508

286. *LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI*³

April 11, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

There is no letter from you. I assumed, you did not write because Amtussalaam has written. All of you should work hard. Dhiru and Gokhale should also write.

Blessings from

BAPU

MANILAL DESAI

URULI

287. *LETTER TO DR. BHAGWAT*

April 11, 1946

BHAI BHAGWAT,

I have your letter. Stay where you are. Do not worry, if nobody comes up. We should visit people in their homes and instruct them about the rules of hygiene. We should go into the schools and undertake to teach there. For every moment there is some work to be

¹ Abdul Ghaffar Khan

² Zohra Chawda, wife of Akbar Chawda

³ The letter is written in Devanagari

done. Write to me regularly. How is the heat there?

See Zohrabehn and also Amtul.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 2756. Courtesy: Manilal Patel

288. *TALK WITH I. N. A. PRISONERS*¹

April 11, 1946

What particularly delighted Gandhiji during both these visits² was to see so many officers and men representing so many different religions and races of India drawn together in a common cause—the cause of India’s freedom—and living together like members of one family. It was like a whiff of fresh invigorating air from the free India that is to be. The absence of the third party had enabled them to obliterate all communal distinctions and develop a perfect spirit of *comaraderie* in exile, but in detention, these distinctions were again being brought home to them.

“We never felt any distinction of creed or religion in the I. N. A.” remarked one of them. “But here we are faced with ‘Hindu tea’ and ‘Mussalman tea’. What are we to do?” Gandhiji asked:

Why do you suffer it?

“No, we do not,” they replied. “We mix ‘Hindu tea’ and Musalman tea’ exactly half and half, and then serve. The same with food. Gandhiji replied (laughing):

That is very good.³

Harijan, 21-4-1946

289. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI*

April 11, 1946

Summing up his reactions of his second visit⁴, Gandhiji, in course of his remarks at the evening prayer, narrated how Col. Niranjana Singh Gill, speaking for the I.N.A. prisoners in the Red Fort, had told him that they were finally convinced that India could not win or retain her independence except through non-violence.

¹ This and the following items are extracted from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter”. Pyarelal explains that Gandhiji met “some 35 I.N.A. prisoners. . . detained in the Red Fort”. According to report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12-4-1946, Gandhiji, who was accompanied by Vallabhbhai Patel and Pyarelal, met the officers in the afternoon for about half an hour.

² The earlier visit was at Kabul lines on April 4, 1946; *vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi”, 5-4-1946

³ *Vide* also the following item.

⁴ *Vide* the preceding item.

They had further assured him that after their release they would serve India as true soldiers of non-violence. "We shall disdain to depend on anybody's charity for our support," they had told him. "We would rather dig the ground and till the land than compromise our self-respect by living on subscriptions." Gandhiji said :

I told them that they would be sadly disillusioned, if they thought that a free India would be able to provide them all those emoluments, honours and perquisites which a foreign Government gave to the army men by the exploitation of the masses, while education, public health and the allied nation-building activities were starved. India was a poor country, her children were born in poverty and grew up in poverty into anaemic, stunted specimens of humanity. If they wanted to become true soldiers of India, they must be prepared to share her destitution and try to ameliorate it to the best of their capacity, not expect to be pampered at the cost of the poor. A true soldier would prefer death to charity. In reply, they assured me that Netaji had inculcated upon them the twin lessons of poverty and equality.

Among us, officers and men live together and dine together without any distinction. There is no high, no low.¹

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi mentioned how he had asked the military officer-in-charge of the camp whether the I.N.A. personnel were well-behaved. The officer had replied that he was very pleased with their behaviour. The I.N.A. people on their part had no complaint to make about the treatment they were receiving. He considered all that to be a very healthy sign. He interpreted it as indication of things to come. A free India would not want to harbour bitter memories against anyone and would like to make friends with all including the Britishers.

In conclusion, he referred to the labours of the Cabinet Mission and suggested that all should pray during the National Week so that God might guide them as well as the people into right at this critical juncture in India's history.

Harijan, 21-4-1946; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12-4-1946

¹ What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

290. WHAT ABOUT WOMEN? ¹

I am glad to read your reply² to the complaint that enough women have not been put up for elections or selected for official posts. . . . Neither in the ministries and legislatures nor in local bodies is merit given first consideration in the matter of selection of candidates. Consideration in the matter of selection of candidates. Consideration of caste, community and province come into the picture and are the determining factors. The argument proffered in favour of such action is that none of these interest can be ignored. If the argument holds, what about the interests of women ? . . .

The above is from the letter³ of an esteemed sister. The sister's argument boils down to this, that where everything is on a wrong basis, another wrong will not matter. But, if we go on thus, the evil will grow and we shall be hopelessly caught in a vicious circle. My appeal to women, therefore, is that they should intelligently become the personification of renunciation and thereby not only adorn but also raise the status of their sex and the nation.

So long as considerations of caste and community continue to weigh with us and rule our choice, women will be well-advised to remain aloof and thereby build up their prestige. The question is as to how best this can be done. Today few women take part in politics and most of these do not do independent thinking. They are content to carry out their parents' or their husband's behests. Realizing their dependence, they cry out for women's rights. Instead of doing this, however, women workers should enrol women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them so as to bring about a change in them which will compell men to realize women's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour. If they will do this, they will purify the present unclean atmosphere. So much for women.

As to men, they should consider it their duty to come out of the impure atmosphere wherever it exists. They will not be beguiled by considerations of caste and community, if these are banished from their own minds. The best and easiest way to achieve this is for both men

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as from "Harijanbandhu" published simultaneously with the source.

² *Vide* "Hindustani"

³ Of which only extracts are reproduced here.

and women to stoop to conquer by becoming Harijans and that too of the last class., i.e., Bhangis or Mehtars.

Where capable women have been left out, men should make amends. It is their duty to give such encouragement to women as will enable them to outshine men. If both parties act as suggested, the atmosphere will soon become pure. Whether men do so or not, women's duty is, to my mind, clear.

NEW DELHI, April 12, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

291. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

NEW DELHI,
April 12, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

What I wanted to say and forgot last night was about the States of India. Pandit Nehru is the President of the States' People's Conference and Sheikh Abdullah of Kashmir its Vice-President. I met the committee of the Conference last Wednesday. Their complaint was that they were ignored by the Cabinet Delegation whereas the Princes were receiving more than their due attention. Of course this may be good policy. It may also be bad policy and morally indefensible. The ultimate result may be quite good, as it must be, if the whole of India becomes independent. It will then be bad to irritate the people of the States by ignoring them. After all the people are everything and, the Princes apart from them nothing. They owe their artificial status to the Government of India but their existence to the people residing in the respective States. This may be shared with your colleagues or not as you wish. It is wholly unofficial as our talk last night was.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. HON'BLE SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 182

292. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI

April 12, 1946

When I look at you I find very few people wearing khaddar. It is a sign of our misfortune. It is estimated that we pay over seven

crores of rupees in purchasing foreign cloth. We used to supply cloth to the whole world, but today all of our trade in textiles is gone.

Since 1919 we have been trying to revive it. The Charkha Sangh has chalked out a programme for the revival of khadi. Some people sell away all the yarn they spin because they get money for it, and when asked if they have kept yarn for their own use, they say that they could get cheaper cloth made in Manchester or Japan. Khaddar should occupy a higher status, if we really want to attain swaraj through it. The yarn should be spun and woven into cloth in the villages.

People should go to Khadi Bhandars and get the cloth in return for handspun yarn.

The Hindustan Times, 13-4-1946

293. *FASTING IN THE AIR*¹

Fasting has become a veritable epidemic. The blame lies at your door.

So writes a correspondent and adds :

One can understand the efficacy of a fast for purpose of inward purification as also for the outward. But fasts are undertaken nowadays for an increment in one's own pay or in that of one's group, for being selected as a candidate for the Assembly or for various other causes. You encourage one man for fasting for the removal of untouchability and yet you are willing to let another die who is doing the same for a different cause. Is this not injustice ? Should you not lay down rules as to when to fast and when not to, what should be its duration, should fruit-juices be taken or only water ? You talk of the inner voice where you are concerned. Would it not really be best, if you were to stop undertaking fasts yourself and stop others too?

There is force in the above argument. It is, however, impossible to lay down rules. Experience alone can suggest rules. In particular cases it is open to a person to frame his own law or he can refer to me, if he believes me to be an authority. I have had the temerity to claim that fasting is an infallible weapon in the armoury of satyagraha. I have used it myself, being the author of satyagraha . Anyone whose fast is related to satyagraha should seek my permission and obtain it in writing before embarking on it. If this advice is followed, there is

¹ Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as "from *Harijanbandhu*" published simultaneously with the source.

no need for framing rules, at any rate, in my lifetime.

One general principle, however, I would like to enunciate. A satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. There is no room for imitation in fasts. He who has no inner strength should not dream of it, and never with attachment to success. But, if a satyagrahi once undertakes a fast from conviction, he must stick to his resolve whether there is a chance of his action bearing fruit or not. This does not mean that fasting cannot bear fruit [or is fruitless]¹. He who fasts in the expectation of fruit generally fails. And even if he does not seemingly fail, he loses all the inner joy which a true fast holds.

Whether one should take fruit-juice or not depends on one's physical powers of endurance. But no more fruit-juice than is absolutely necessary for the body should be taken. He probably has the greatest inner strength who takes only water.

It is wrong to fast for selfish ends, e. g. for increase in one's own salary. Under certain circumstances it is permissible to fast for an increase in wages on behalf of one's group.

Ridiculous fasts spread like plague and are harmful. But when fasting becomes a duty, it cannot be given up. Therefore I do fast when I consider it to be necessary and cannot abstain from it on any score. What I do myself I cannot prevent others from doing under similar circumstances. It is common knowledge that the best of good things are often abused. We see this happening every day.

NEW DELHI, April 13, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

294. LETTER TO KALA VENKAT RAO

April 13, 1946

MY DEAR VENKAT RAO,

The inference is wholly unjustified. I have never wavered in my opinion that Shri Prakasam should not become minister, for his own sake and for that of the nation. I have even advised him to retire from

¹ Translated from *Harijanbandhu*; the source, however, has : "that fasting cannot or can bear fruit".

the Legislature.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

295. LETTER TO DR. DWARIKESH JOSHI

NEW DELHI,

April 13, 1946

BHAI JOSHI,

The arrangements you enquire about in 1, 2, 3 do not exist. The efforts suggested in question 4 are surely to be undertaken. It is difficult to say at present what the future will be. We shall think more about it, if you see me when I am near Poona. Please come only by appointment.

Vandemataram from

M. K. GANDHI

DR. DWARIKESH JOSHI

367-8 KALBADEVI

BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

296. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI²

April 13, 1946

Today is the last day of the National Week which I have also called the Sacred Week. It was on this day that the tragedy of the Jallianwala Bagh was enacted. The 6th of April [1919] saw the birth of satyagraha in India. The awakening among the masses resulting from it was so phenomenal that the Government could suppress it only by having recourse to the method of frightfulness. It culminated in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, when Gen. Dyer with a party of fifty sepoy opened fire on an unarmed people and the wounding of thrice that number. There was only one exit and it was held by the firing party so that the innocent men and women who were trapped there

¹ The addressee in his letter had objected to T. Prakasam's inclusion in the Cabinet.

² This was reported under the title "Signs of the Time" by Pyarelal.

had no alternative but to be shot down like rabbits in a hole. It is true some excesses were committed by the mob before the massacre. But they were nothing as compared to the savage reprisals taken by the Government. That is the way of all imperialisms. In no other way could a handful of foreigners maintain their rule over a nation of 400 millions.

Why have I recalled these incidents? Not to stir up bitter old memories or to keep alive the embers of hatred, but only to emphasize the distinction between the old order which they symbolized and the new that is in sight. I have not the slightest doubt as to the *bona fides* of the Cabinet Mission. I am convinced that they have finally made up their mind to withdraw *in toto*. The question which is exercising their mind is how to effect the withdrawal in an orderly manner and to that end their energies are bent. This is not the occasion to rake up old sores.¹ Gentlemenliness requires that if a person is sincerely trying to make amends, he should be thanked and congratulated for it, not that his past should be flung in his face.

You know Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia². Both of them are daring men of action and scholars. They could easily have become rich. But they chose the way of renunciation and service. To break the chains of their country's slavery was their one passion. Naturally the alien Government regarded them as dangerous to its existence and put them into prison. We, however, have different scales to weigh merit, and we regard them as patriots who have sacrificed their all for the love of the country which has given them birth. That they would be found wanting in the scales of non-violence is irrelevant today. What is relevant is that independence of India is today common ground between the British and ourselves. Their freedom, therefore, is no longer considered dangerous by the Government. Viewed in that light, their release as also the release of the I.N.A. men yesterday, must be regarded as an earnest of the honesty of the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy. We must be thankful to them for this earnest, and prayer of thankfulness should ascend to heaven for the wisdom with which God seems to be endowing them.

The Satyagraha Week which is closing today is devoted always to communal unity and khaddar. Communal unity is not confined to Hindus and Muslims only, it extends to all including Englishmen. It

¹ This sentence is from *The Hindustan Times*.

² Ram Manohar Lohia

must not become a menace to anybody or group. That is the message of non-violence.

The National Week is a week of self-introspection and prayer. Prayer is not for the impure in heart.

Harijan, 21-4-1946, also *The Hindustan Times*, 14-4-1946

297. DISCUSSION WITH WOODROW WYATT¹

[April 13, 1946]²

WOODROW WYATT: Do you think we are getting off your backs at last ?

[GANDHIJI:] I have no doubt as to the sincerity of your intention. The question is whether you will have the strength and courage needed for it. It is so difficult to get out of conventional groves of thought and action.

We must not precipitate a solution. We must let India decide for herself. At the same time, one does not want to leave the country to chaos when an unprecedented famine threatens it.

Your difficulty will remain so long as you retain the belief that your rule that benefited India. None of us believes it.

One or two have testified to the contrary.

That is neither here nor there. I too believed it once. Such benefit as has really accrued to India is not part of foreign rule but is the result of contact with a robust people. The good is incidental, the evil of foreign rule is inherent and far outweighs the good. Communal division in India can be demonstrably proved to be a British creation. Even famine as we know it today is your creation.³

Mark the true meaning of my words. Famines may be said to be godsend. But a well-equipped country should be able to pull through a deficiency period and not helplessly succumb. Famines in India today are not due to rain or lack of it merely, but due to the fact that India is ill-equipped to tide over the dry periods. Nothing has been done to safeguard her population against the threat of recurring famines. Take south Africa. There they fight against the locusts, drought, etc., manfully and with infinite resourcefulness. Here famine

¹ The *Harijan* report, which appeared under the title "Heart Searching" by Pyarelal, has been collated with the version in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

² From *The Transfer of Power*

³ Here Pyarelal adds : "The last remark startled the visitor; Gandhiji noted the effect his words had produced."

is simply blamed on the rain gods, and there is nothing to be done for it.

Would India have been better equipped, if Britain had not been here ?

Yes, there would have been no railways.¹ If there were no railways, etc., we would be living in a natural state as they used to in England and Europe in the Middle-Ages when every feudal baron had his castle with its stocks of grain and water. Before the advent of railways in India, every village had its granary. In that sense we were better equipped. Moreover we had our system of domestic crafts to fall backupon, if crops failed. Now railways have depleted the countryside of its stocks and killed the handicrafts. Whatever cash the cultivator gets in return for his produce runs through his fingers like water, thanks to the invasion of his economy by the revenue collector and the imported foreign goods without which he thinks he can no longer do. The British have told him : ‘Do not stock grain, do not hoard silver.’ There is no provision made for a deficit period. Railways have become a snare, cheap transport, a trap. The Princes practised tyranny in olden times too. But it could not go far. The natural means of redress, viz. insurrection, retreat or migration, were still open to the people. They were not then disarmed or emasculated. Odds were even. Today the odds are so heavy that a handful of British soldiers can terrorize millions. That is what British rule has done to us. It is most demoralizing. The British must realize this and leave us in an exemplary manner. If the virus has gone so deep that it cannot be cured without applying a strong blister, even then they must go. A few lakhs might be killed in internecine warfare but, real peace will come at last.

But it is a big responsibility to leave India with anarchy.

Not a bigger responsibility than you were prepared to face during the war out of strategic considerations.²

Supposing we imposed what we considered to be a just solution and went?

All would be upset.

So it must be left to India’s decision ?

¹ Here Pyarelal remarks : “This was another shock to the visitor who . . . with most Westerners regarded railways as the proudest achievement of the British rule in India to combat famine. . . .”

² What follows is from *The Last Phase*. Pyarelal explains : “Mr. Wyatt mentioned the difficulty created by the Muslim League’s demand for Pakistan.”

Yes, leave it to the Congress and the League. Thanks to Jinnah's genius and British co-operation, he had built up a powerful organization comprehending not all but the major part of the Muslims. I will advise you to try him and, if you feel he cannot deliver the goods, take the Congress into your confidence. . . . But in any case the British occupation must end forth with.

And what happens after the British leave ?

Probably there will be arbitration. . . . But there might be a blood-bath. It will be settled in two days by non-violence, if I can persuade India to go my way, or the ordeal may last longer. Even so it would not be worse than what it is under the British rule. . . .

Suppose we set up an Interim Government and went ? If the Congress concedes Pakistan, it will then be their job.

That will be a good beginning. Even if the whole of India goes under the League in this way, it won't matter. It won't be the Pakistan of Jinnah's conception. India would then have something to live for and die for.

Whom shall we put in the place of the present Government?

You can ask the elected legislators to nominate their representatives. Supposing the Congress has an overwhelming majority, she will choose the names for the Interim Government. If the Congress can come to terms with the League, there will be no difficulty. But if Jinnah should ultimately choose not to come in, Congress and you must not be frightened. Or, as I have already said, you let Jinnah nominate out of the present legislators. Supposing the Muslim League starts destruction, will you jail them ?

I won't. But, maybe, the Congress will decide to fight. It will then be a clean fight, not the cowardly hit-and-run that you see today or taking of a hundred lives for one *a la* the British.¹

Harijan, 19-5-1946; also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. 1, Book 1, pp. 191-2

¹ For Woodrow Wyatt's note on the discussion, *vide* "Woodrow Wyatt's Note on Discussion with Gandhiji

298. *A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY*¹

IN TRAIN ON WAY TO MADRAS,

January 20, 1946

Without the maximum possible non-attachment, it is inconceivable for anyone to live up to the age of 125 years.

ON NEARING MADRAS,

January 21, 1946

If there is any hope for a man, whose mind remains impure in spite of himself, it is Ramanama.

MADRAS,

January 22, 1946

Only that work which is done after anger has subsided can bear fruit.

MADRAS,

January 23, 1946

A foreigner deserves to be welcomed only when he mixes with the indigenous people as sugar does with milk.

MADRAS,

January 25, 1946

Mere confession of a wrong does not erase it. Whatever is

¹ Originally written in Hindi, these 'thoughts' were translated and published under this title by Anand T. Hingorani, who explains in Preface that, after the death of his wife Vidya on July 20, 1943, during his eight-week stay in Sevagram from September 30, 1944, Gandhiji would greet him "every morning, after the prayer . . . speak words of sympathy and solace, and . . . write down something to meditate upon . . . From October 13, 1944, onwards, he wrote continuously for a fortnight, and then off and on . . ." Before leaving Sevagram for nature cure treatment at Bhimavaram, Hingorani had requested Gandhiji to write something for him daily, which Gandhiji began to do from November 20, 1944. In June 1946, when Hingorani sought Gandhiji's permission to publish the 'thoughts' in a book form, Gandhiji remarked : "What is there about them that you are so keen on publishing them? If, however, you wish to publish them, do so after my death. Such writings are generally never published during the lifetime of their authors. Who knows I may not be able to live up to what I have written! But if I live up to it till the last breath of my life, then alone will it be worth while to publish these thoughts." Gandhiji, however, discontinued the practice by the end of 1946, which he explained : "For the sake of my Noakhali mission, I renounced practically everything . . . I gave up the Ashram, all my companions and even writing for the *Harijan*. So I said to myself, why not give up writing these daily thoughts as well. . . ."

possible must be done to undo the wrong.

MADRAS,
January 26, 1946

Truth should be accompanied by firmness of purpose.

MADRAS,
January 27, 1946

Superstition and truth cannot go together.

MADRAS,
January 28, 1946

There can be no perception without steadfastness of mind.

MADRAS,
January 29, 1946

It is sin to regard anyone as helpless who had God for his support.

MADRAS,
January 30, 1946

Renunciation is true enjoyment.

January 31, 1946

Real weakness is internal, not outward.

February 1, 1946

A sage has said that it is through silence that we become fit for self-realization, and our outer life keeps in tune with the inner.

MADURA,
February 2, 1946

The same sage observes that where there is peace of mind there is inner strength which is unfailing.

MADURA-PALANI,
February 3, 1946

Man is endowed with intellect and with an inner voice which trans-cends the intellect. Both are, however, necessary in their own spheres.

MADRAS (IN TRAIN),
February 4, 1946

The true mark of success in life is the growth of tenderness and maturity in a man.

February 5, 1946

Man spoils matters much more by speech than by silence.

SEVAGRAM,

February 6, 1946

Silence inspired by fear is no silence.

SEVAGRAM,

February 7, 1946

When the world rejects a man, God befriends him.

SEVAGRAM,

February 8, 1946

The world may call us weak but we must not weaken our ideals.

SEVAGRAM,

February 9, 1946

Outward peace is useless without inner peace.

SEVAGRAM,

February 10, 1946

He who harps on his woes, multiplies them manifold.

SEVAGRAM,

February 11, 1946

We can do nothing right, so long as we are not blessed with inner light.

SEVAGRAM,

February 12, 1946

Only he can be a leader who never loses hope.

SEVAGRAM,

February 13, 1946

Contemplation of an ideal does not broaden its scope, but it certainly increases its depth.

SEVAGRAM,

February 14, 1946

Knowledge of self is an invaluable asset; we want to acquire it without effort. Riches, fame, etc., are worthless; for them we are willing to give anything.

SEVAGRAM,
February 15, 1946

He who has neither peace nor determination, how can he have realization?

February 16, 1946

Without selflessness, how can there be fearlessness?

IN TRAIN,
February 17, 1946

We seek the company of the good, for that is the food for our soul.

BOMBAY,
February 18, 1946

Humility does not work, if it is a mere pretence; nor does simplicity.

BOMBAY,
February 19, 1946

Deeds, like seeds, take their own time to fructify.

POONA,
February 20, 1946

Slavery to the environment dulls a man's mind.

POONA,
February 21, 1946

He whose mind does not remain unruffled in all manner of circumstances is certainly not at peace, howsoever much he may appear outwardly to be so.

February 22, 1946

Music does not proceed from the throat alone. There is music of the mind, of the senses and of the heart.

February 23, 1946

In fact there should be harmony in life. The melody will pervade all activities and behaviour.

POONA,
February 24, 1946

God is omnipresent. Hence it is that He speaks to us through stones, trees, insects, birds, beasts, etc.

POONA,
February 25, 1946

Why seek outside that which is within you?

POONA,
February 26, 1946

We have no existence outside and apart from God.

POONA,
February 27, 1946

There can be no safety for us save in the lap of God.

POONA,
February 28, 1946

The humility of one who is humble by nature, as it is in the nature of water to flow downwards, becomes like water a blessing to the world.

March 1, 1946

We have made ourselves what we are.

POONA,
March 2, 1946

Our faith should be like an ever-burning lamp which not only gives us light but also illuminates the surroundings.

POONA,
March 3, 1946

Selfishness keeps us worrying for ever.

POONA,
March 4, 1946

When will the Ganga go dry? The moment it cuts itself off from its source. Likewise the soul will wither up, if it is cut off from the Eternal Source of Life, i. e., God.

POONA,
March 5, 1946

Whether we have to cover one mile or a thousand, the first step always remains the first, for the second step cannot be taken until the first has been taken.

March 6, 1946

What greater wonder can one wish for than the star-spangled sky

and the inner firmament of the human heart equally adorned with excellences?

March 7, 1946

Reflection shows that heaven is here on earth, not in the sky above.

March 8, 1946

He who talks in tune with the rhythm of life is never weary.

March 9, 1946

He who always treads only the path of Truth never stumbles.

POONA,

March 10, 1946

An egoistical utterance should always be regarded as false.

March 11, 1946

To be guilty of a lapse, small or big, is certainly bad; but to hide it is even worse.

March 12, 1946

He who follows Truth through and through must always hold himself in readiness to die for it and, when the time comes, must lay down his life.

March 13, 1946

Not to own our mistake is to repeat it and to commit the additional sin of concealing it.

BOMBAY,

March 14, 1946

He alone can be a true satyagrahi who knows the art of living as well as of dying.

BOMBAY,

March 15, 1946

There is a limit even to the potency of Ramanama. Can a thief, for instance, ever expect to gain his object by taking to Ramanama?

POONA,

March 16, 1946

True happiness does not come from obtaining what one likes. It comes from cultivating a liking for what one dislikes.

POONA,
March 17, 1946

He whose eye says one thing, his tongue another, and his heart yet another, is a worthless fellow.

POONA,
March 18, 1946

When we know that Death may snatch us away at any time, what right have we to put off till tomorrow what we can do today?

POONA,
March 19, 1946

Good deeds let us do right now; the bad ones let us always keep on postponing.

POONA,
March 20, 1946

He who has God for his companion, why need he be sorrowful or anxious or look for another companion?

POONA,
March 21, 1946

To remember God and forget others is to see God even in them.

URULI-KANCHAN,
March 22 1946

The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that Ramanama, recited from the heart and with realization, is the panacea for all our ills.

URULI,
March 23 1946

Attachment, aversion and so on, are also diseases, and worse than bodily ailments. How can they be banished except by Ramanama?

URULI,
March 24 1946

Uncleanliness of the mind is far more dangerous than that of the body. The latter, however, is an indication of the former.

URULI,
March 25 1946

Who can describe the joy that lies in finding refuge in
God?

URULI,
March 26 1946

A good thought is like fragrance.

URULI,
March 27 1946

All activities that are born of one and the same seed merge into
one another.

URULI,
March 29 1946

When the ego dies, the soul awakes.

URULI,
March 30 1946

When the soul awakes, all sorrow vanishes.

ON WAY TO DELHI,
March 31 1946

He who fears, fails.

DELHI,
April 1, 1946

Man can smile away his sorrows; by crying he only multiplies
them.

DELHI,
April 2, 1946

When a man sleeps under the sky, who can rob him?

DELHI,
April 3, 1946

There is not a single moment in life when man cannot serve.

DELHI,
April 4, 1946

Opposition makes the man.

DELHI,
April 5, 1946

If the inside is clean, the outside is bound to be so.

DELHI,
April 6, 1946

This day deserves to be written in letters of gold for, on April 6, 1919, India discovered herself.

DELHI,
April 7, 1946

When a man empties his heart, God enters it.

DELHI,
April 8, 1946

Ramanama helps only those who fulfil the conditions for its recitation.

DELHI,
April 9, 1946

He who has God on his side, has all.

DELHI,
April 10, 1946

He who has everything but God on his side, has nothing.

DELHI,
April 11, 1946

Living with God there are no difficulties.

DELHI,
April 12, 1946

God is our help as well as the Helmsman.

DELHI,
April 13, 1946

If all become teachers, who will be the pupils? So let us all be pupils.

A Thought for the Day, pp. 427-508

299. A MINISTER'S WOE

Dr. Katju¹ sends the following note² :

Owing to the comparative failure to winter crops. . . rationing has been introduced in many urban areas in the United Provinces. . . The Government of India has suggested to Provincial Governments that in order to ensure continuous supplies, it would be desirable to enforce compulsory levies on agricultural produce in surplus districts. . . This question of a compulsory levy is greatly agitating the public mind. It is said that the control price fixed by the Government is too low and should be raised. The answer to that is, that the price structure is an all-India affair and it is not possible to raise the price in any particular province without affecting the structure as a whole. . . There is bound to be a black market where selfish people can buy foodstuffs at higher prices to satisfy their individual needs. No compulsion would be necessary if cultivators realize that it is their social and patriotic duty to do their utmost to feed their brothers and sisters. . . I ask you to appeal to him at this critical juncture not to hoard, not to sell in the black market but to supply in the greatest measure possible to the Government stores. . . We are doing our very best to encourage the 'Grow More Food' and 'Grow More Vegetables' campaigns in the United Provinces. The various suggestions³ made by you have all been adopted. . .

This note from Dr. Katju is worthy of close attention by the *kisan*⁴ and his guides as also urban people. The impending calamity can be turned to good use. Then it will be a blessing in disguise. Otherwise, curse it is and curse it will remain.

Dr. Katju writes as a responsible minister. Therefore, people can either make or mar him. They can remove him and replace him by a better. But so long as ministers of the people's choice are in

¹ Kaliash Nath Katju (1887-1968); Minister of Justice, Industries and Labour in U. P. in 1937-39 and 1946-47; Governor of Orissa, 1947; Governor of West Bengal, 1948-51; Minister for Home Affairs and Law, Government of India; retired as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

² Of which only extracts are reproduced here

³ *Vide* "Famine of Grain and Cloth", "What Ought to be Done" and "Notes", sub-title "A Useful Pamphlet"

⁴ Farmer

office as their servants, the people have to carry out their instructions. Every breach of law or instructions is not satyagraha. It can easily be *duragraha*¹ rather than satyagraha.

NEW DELHI, April 14, 1946

Harijan, 214-1946

300. INDIAN PRESSMEN v. EUROPEAN

An Indian journalist complains that our great men have a weakness for foreign journalists to the extent of excluding Indians at their Press conferences, and wonders whether I am myself free from this weakness. For myself, I can say without fear of contradiction that I have never been guilty of such partiality. Having suffered to good deal for the crime of being an Asiatic, I am not likely to be guilty of such weakness. And I must say that I know of no such example as my friend adverts to, if only because public men can ill afford to face a boycott by Indian Pressmen. What has happened with me and, so far as I am aware, with others too is that they and I found it necessary at times to give special interviews to foreign journalists when it has been found necessary in the interest of the common cause to gate messages across the seas. It is impossible in the present circumstances to do otherwise. It would be as foolish to invite a boycott by foreign journalists as by Indian. Any industrious person will find out that Indian journalists have been more often than not preferred by Indian public men again for the sake of the common cause. As a fellow journalist I would urge journalists, whether Indian or foreign, to prefer their particular causes to their employers' pockets or to descending to recriminations or personalities.

NEW DELHI, April 14, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

301. GUJARAT HINDUSTANI PRACHAR SAMITI

Shri Amritlal Nanavati, the devoted disciple of Kakasaheb Kalelkar² carried on the propagation of Hindustani in Gujarat even when almost everyone was in jail. His work brings credit not only to himself but to Gujarat also. The propagation of Hindustani is not

¹ Literally 'obstinacy'

² D. B. Kalelkar, President of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha

opposed to the spread of Hindi; on the contrary it supplements it. Pure Hindi laden with Sanskrit words and written in the Nagari script is not the national language; nor is it the language stuffed with Persian words and written in the Urdu script. I have written elaborately on this subject¹ and I will not therefore dwell further on it. Here I may only say that the student of Hindi should learn Urdu and *vice versa*. Then only shall we be able to create the real national language. Hence this note is intended only for recording the forward step taken by Gujarat. The following two letters² would make amply clear the nature of the step which I have referred to.

[From Gujarat]

Harijanbandhu, 14-4-1946

302. WHAT A KHADI-LOVER SHOULD KNOW

The foregoing article³ is full of useful information. Khadilovers will not have read it in vain.

Every day I am getting more and more convinced that we should as soon as possible stop using machine-made slivers. They prevent us from making the villages self-supporting and they will surely let us down at the time of real need. Again, it is not in the least consistent with our way of thinking that these slivers should go to or be sold at Madras or Bombay. Neither the poor nor the rich are benefited thereby. The only purpose served is that somehow khadi is supplied to those who wear it. I do not think that this is the aim of the Charkha Sangh. The experiment being carried on by Shri Vinoba these days is significant and is worth knowing. One of his experiments eliminates carding. In the cotton-growing areas the cotton pods are picked up directly from the fields, the shell is removed, the seeds are separated from the cotton with the help of a roller and the cotton is spun straightway. Shri Vinobaji has

¹ *Vide* "Hindustani", 1-2-1942, Hindi + Urdu= Hindustani", 8-2-1942 & "Question Box", 1-3-1942 and "Ten Questions Regarding the National Language"

² The two letters by D. B. Kalelkar explaining the harmonious blending of Hindi and Urdu, are not translated here.

³ In his letter, not reproduced here, Jugatram Dave had described in detail the enthusiasm and self-sufficiency of the khadi workers in the Surat district as also the new experiment of Dilkhush Diwanji.

coined the expression *punai*¹ to denote this process. But hand-carding has to be there and will remain. There also carding is eliminated, if desired. This process simplifies the work to a great extent. The results so far are encouraging. The yarn spun by this process has already been woven. If this thing works well, much time and labour will be saved. Whatever the count of yarn that is spun by this process, it is found to be strong to that extent. Wherever men like Shri Diwanji are making experiments we should, I think watch the results carefully. Every worker should decide for himself how speedily these improvements can be introduced in his area.

As a general rule, machine-carding should cease immediately and slivers should not be sold beyond the *taluka*.

The second experiment is to reel the yarn in double thread before weaving. This experiment has already proved a success. Shri Vinoba is examining what further improvements are possible in this direction. Double-thread reeling is an easy process and all should learn it. Vinobaji is of the opinion that weaving will become easier and less costly if people who exchange yarn for cloth will give double-reeled yarn. That means, the yarn reeled in this way can compare well with mill-yarn. Such yarn does not need any starching.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 14-4-1946

303. QUESTION BOX²

Q. On what principle is the question of the salaries of ministers in Congress majority provinces going to be settled this time? Does the Karachi resolution in this regard still hold? If the question is to be settled on the basis of the present high prices, is it possible, within the limits of their revenues, for the provincial budgets to increase the pays of all their servants threefold? If not, will it be proper for the ministers to be paid Rs. 1,500 while a *chaprasi* or a teacher is told to make the two ends meet on Rs. 15 and 12 p. m. and not make a fuss about it because Congress has to run the administration?

¹ From *puni*, meaning a sliver

² The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 21-4-1946

A. The question is apt. Why should a minister draw Rs. 1,500 and a *chaprasi* or a teacher Rs. 15 p. m.? But the question cannot be solved by the mere raising of it. Such differences have existed for ages. Why should an elephant require an enormous quantity of food and a mere grain suffice for the ant? The question carries its own answer. God gives to each one according to his need. If we could as definitely know the variations in the needs of men as those of the elephant and the ant, no doubts would arise. Experience tells us that differences in requirements do exist in society¹. But we do not know the law governing them. All therefore that is possible today is to try to reduce the differences as far as possible. The reduction can be brought about by peaceful agitation and by the creation of public opinion. It cannot be done by force or by *duragraha* in the name of satyagraha. The ministers are the people's men. Their wants even before they took office were not those of *chaprasis*. I would love to see a *chaprasi* become worthy of holding the office of a minister and yet not increase his needs. It should also be clearly understood that no minister need draw up to the maximum of the salary fixed.

It is worth while pondering over one thing that arise out of the questions. Is it possible for the *chaprasi* to support himself and his family on Rs. 15 p. m. without taking bribe? Should he not be given enough to keep him above temptation? The remedy for this is that as far as possible we should we our own *chaprasis*. But even so if we need them we must pay them enough for their requirements. In this way the big gulf that exists between a minister and a *chaprasi* will be bridged.

It is another matter as to why the pay of the ministers has been raised from Rs. 500 to 1,500 p.m. But this is nothing as compared with, and does not solve, the main problem. With the solution of the latter it will *ipso facto* be solved.

NEW DELHI, April 14, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

¹ The Hindi here adds: "unlike among ants and elephants. The requirements of different peoples and different communities cannot be the same."

304. NOTE TO SHYAMLAL¹

April 14, 1946

I have read out everything to Poojya Bapuji. He says that in the evening Sarojini Devi should give in writing what she had told him verbally. You should enquire from her what Smt. Gyankumari is going to do and what her scheme is.

From the Hindi original: Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust Papers.
Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

305. "ROMAN URDU"

If there is Roman Urdu, why not Roman Hindi? The next step will be to Romanize the alphabets of all the languages of India. They have done this for Zulu which had no alphabet of its own. The attempt in India would be on a par with the attempt to foist Esperanto on the world. It cannot succeed in the near future. Believers in the Roman script in the place of all the known Indian scripts will have a circle of adherents but the movement cannot permeate the masses. It should not. Crores of people need not become so lazy as not to learn their own respective scripts. A laudable attempt is being made not to replace the alphabets in vogue in India but to teach Nagari in addition in the hope that in course of time millions may learn to read the Indian languages in the Nagari character. And since Urdu characters cannot for well-known reasons be replaced by Nagari, it should be learnt by all the patriots who love their country too well to find the learning of the Urdu alphabet a burden. All these attempts seem to me to be worthy.

With all my readiness to grasp new ideas, I have failed to find a substantial reason for inducing the spread of the Roman alphabet for the purpose of replacing the Nagari or Urdu script. It is true that in the Indian Army, the Roman alphabet has been largely used. I should hope that the Indian soldier, if he is saturated with the national spirit, will not mind learning both Nagari and Urdu characters. After all, amid the ocean of Indian humanity, the Indian soldier is a mere drop. He must shed the Eng-lish mode. Probably the reason for Romanizing Urdu will be found in the English officer being too lazy to learn to read Urdu or Nagari characters.

NEW DELHI, April 15, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

¹ Extracted from Amrit Kaur's letter to the addressee

306. MY ADVICE¹

NEW DELHI,
April 15, 1946

Shri Prakasam² I have known as a worker for many years. He has somehow developed a philosophy that a public worker is entitled to receive purses from the public for his expenses. In pursuance of that philosophy he has received a considerable sum in the shape of purses. Those who collected them have wired or written to me that they saw nothing wrong in so doing or in Shri Prakasam receiving them. Some have gone so far as to say that Shri Prakasam should even become a member of the Madras ministry, if not the Prime Minister.

With the greatest reluctance I must dissent from the whole view. I know that Shri Prakasam says that he has changed his mind. Sudden conversions are not unknown. But they are cast in a different mould. A ministership cannot be the end of genuine repentance and conversion. My advice to Shri Prakasam is that he should retire even from the Legislative Assembly and brood over the bad example he has set. There is ample field open to everyone for silent service which is often much greater than service done in the limelight.

Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol. II, pp. 250-1

307. SWEEPERS' STRIKE³

There are certain matters in which strikes would be wrong. Sweepers' grievances come in this category. I do not want to go into others here. My opinion against sweepers' strikes dates back to about 1897 when I was⁴ in Durban. A general strike was mooted there and the question arose as to whether scavengers should join in it. My vote was registered against the proposal. Just as man cannot live

¹ This was published as a statement.

² T. Prakasam (1872-1957); President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee; Chief Minister of Madras, 1946-47; Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, 1953-54

³ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 21-4-1946.

⁴ The Gujarati here adds: "practising law".

without air so too he cannot exist for long if his home and surroundings are not clean. One or other epidemic is bound to break out especially when modern drainage is put out of action.

Therefore I was perturbed when I read about the sweepers' strike in Bombay. Fortunately it has come to an end. I understand, however, that the sweepers, both men and women, refused to submit their case to arbitration.¹

In spite of my close attachment to sweepers, better because of it, I must denounce the coercive methods they are said to have employed. They will thereby be losers in the long run. City folk will not always be cowed down. If they were, it would mean the collapse of municipal administration. Coercion cannot but result in the end in chaos. An impartial tribunal for settling disputes should always be accepted. Refusal is a sign of weakness. A Bhangi may not give up his work even for a day. And there are many other ways open to him of securing justice.

Towns people should on the other hand, forget that there is such a thing as untouchability and learn the art of cleaning their own and the city's drains, so that if a similar occasion arises they are not nonplussed and can render the necessary temporary service. They may not be coerced. I go so far as to say that the military who know this work should be used for such emergency. If swaraj is round the bend, we can now look upon the military as ours and need have no hesitation in taking all the constructive work we can from them. Up till now they have only been employed in indiscriminate firing on us. Today they must plough the land, dig wells, clean latrines and do every other constructive work that they can, and thus turn the people's hatred of them into love.

Now that the *hartal* ² is at an end, it is the duty of everyone, to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the Bhangis, educate them, see that they are properly housed, permit them, like anyone else, to live wherever they choose, look into the matter of an equitable wage for them and see that justice is meted out to them without their having to

¹ The Gujarati here adds: "And the strike came to an end only after they had their demand accepted without obtaining a decision as to its propriety or otherwise."

² Stirke

demand it. If this is done throughout India we shall definitely prove ourselves worthy of swaraj and be able also to maintain it.

NEW DELHI, April 15, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

308. A NOTE

DELHI,
April 15, 1946

I endorse the above resolution.¹

M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original: Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust Papers.
Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

309. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

DELHI,
April 15, 1946

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have instructed Rajkumari to reply to your letters. I cannot even write letters, because there is no time.

I have been thinking about Dilip. I have talked over the matter. I had a long talk with Usha's father as well. I feel the girl is nice. I even had a talk with her. The father says that the boy and the girl may meet and marry if they feel so inclined. As I am writing this, Sushila gives me your letter. Seeing that your letter is in English, it occurs to me that the matter should be kept from Delhi. I find the talk of dark and fair irksome. And I would not be happy if the decision to marry was guided by consideration of external beauty. Now you may do whatever you think fit. We should not do anything by which the father and daughter may be left in the lurch. Hence write to me a prompt reply.

Are you still having allergy rashes or have they subsided ?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ Which read: "It has been decided that as a special case, this year the time-limit for convening the ordinary annual meeting of the Board of Trustees should be extended by three months and that the meeting should be held before June 30, 1946."

310. NOTE TO BABA RAGHAVDAS¹

NEW DELHI,

April 15, 1946

The suggestion for not accepting office greatly appeals to me. Carry on silently whatever constructive work, you can. These are difficult times. If all want power who will render silent service?

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 16-4-1946

311. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

April 15, 1946³

In a moment of introspection the poet asks himself:

O man, why have you left off taking God's name? You have not given up anger or lust or greed, but you have forgotten truth. What a tragedy to save worthless pennies and to let go the priceless gem of God's love! Why would you not, O fool, renounce all vanities and throw yourself on the grace of God alone?

This does not mean that if one has wealth, it should be thrown away and wife and children should be turned out of doors. It simply means that one must give up attachment to these things and dedicate one's all to God and make use of His gifts to serve Him only. It also means that if we take His name with all our being we are automatically weaned from all lust, untruth and baser passions.

¹ Raghavendra Sheshappa Pachapurkar (1896-1958); popularly known as Baba Raghavadas; hailed from Konkan but settled down in Gorakhpur; joined Congress in 1920; established various institutions for social, moral uplift of the people; started Geeta Press at Gorakhpur.

The addressee, who had just been released from jail, met Gandhiji and apprised him of the scramble for power among Congressmen. It being his silence day Gandhiji replied in writing.

² Reproduced from Pyarelal's report "Prayer Discourses"

³ From *The Hindustan Times*, 16-4-1946

In the first *shloka* ¹ of *Ishopanishad* that is repeated every day at the beginning of the prayer, one is asked to dedicate everything to God and then use it to the required extent. The principal condition laid down is that one must not covet what belongs to another. These two maxims contain the quintessence of the Hindu religion.

In another *shloka* which is recited during the morning prayer it is said:

I do not ask for temporal power, nor do I ask to go to heaven, nor even to attain *nirvana*². What I ask for is that I may be able to relieve the pain of those who are in pain.

The pain might be physical, mental or spiritual. Spiritual pain due to slavery to one's passions is sometimes greater even than physical.

But God does not come down in person to relieve suffering. He works through human agency. Therefore, prayer to God to enable one to relieve the sufferings of others must mean a longing and readiness on one's part to labour for it.

The prayer, you will note, is not exclusive. It is not restricted to one's own caste or community. It is all-inclusive. It comprehends the whole of humanity. Its realization would thus mean the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Harijan, 28-4-1946

312. MESSAGE FOR I. N. A.³

[Before April 16, 1946]⁴

Gandhiji's reply covered not only the I. N. A. but all Indian army men. Although the I. N. A. men had declared open rebellion under Netaji's⁵ lead the spirit of rebellion was not confined to them. It had permeated even the

¹ Stanza

² Salvation

³ Reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" dated New Delhi, 16-4-1946. According to the source, Sardar Ramsing Rawal met Gandhiji and asked for a message for the Indian National Army.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945); General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, 1927, its President, 1938 and 1939; resigned from Congress and founded the All-India Forward Bloc. He was placed under house arrest but escaped to Germany 1941; organized Indian Independence League in South East Asia and the Indian National Army.

Indian Army ranks. Some of the latter had seen him at Poona and sought his advice¹. Gandhiji had told them that it was open to them to give notice to the authorities that though they were in their pay their loyalty was mortgaged to India, not to the King of England. Hitherto they had yielded obedience to military orders and been prepared even to shoot down their countrymen to order. But now that the spirit of independence had taken possession of them they would do so no more under a foreign Government's order.

For the I. N. A. men there were two alternatives. They could serve free India as soldiers-in-arms or they could convert themselves into soldiers of non-violence if they were convinced that non-violence was the higher and the more efficacious way. They should make use of their training and discipline to introduce non-violent organization among the masses, learn spinning and become veteran constructive workers. If they did that, they would set a glorious example to the whole world.

The I. N. A. men have shown great strength, heroism and resourcefulness. But I must confess that their achievements have not dazzled my eyes. To die without killing requires more heroism. There is nothing very wonderful in killing and being killed in the process. But the man who offers his neck to the enemy for execution but refuses to bend to his will shows courage of a far higher type.

Troublous times lie ahead of us. Our non-violence has brought us to the gate of independence. Shall we renounce it after we have entered that gate? I for one am firmly convinced that non-violence of the brave, such as I have envisaged, provides the surest and the most efficacious means to face foreign aggression and internal disorder just as it has done for winning independence.

The British were going to quit. What place would India have in the comity of nations? Would she be satisfied with being a fifth-rate power like China? China was independence only in name. India would have long to wait before she could become a first-class military power.

And for that she would have to go under the tutelage of some Western power. A truly non-violent India will have nothing to fear any foreign power nor will it look to British navy and air force for her defence. I know that we have not as yet the non-violence of the brave.

Harijan, 21-4-1946

¹ *Vide* "Extract From Talk With A Soliders"

313. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 16, 1946

Speaking after prayers on Tuesday evening Gandhiji explained the meaning of swadeshi. It hurt him deeply to see that after 25 years of repeated exhortations the people had still not taken to swadeshi. Some people regarded Indian mill cloth as swadeshi. In his opinion, khadi alone was real swadeshi. The machinery in the mills was not made in India. Supposing in a free India they had their own engineers and were able to produce the machinery in India, he would still not call it swadeshi. He did not want anything that might ruin the villages. Honest servants of the people would devote themselves to the service of the villages and to that purpose become poor with the poorest.

Gandhiji expected all of them to take at least to khadi. What was the use of their attending the prayers, if they did not follow what they heard there? He had cried himself hoarse over khadi for the last 25 years. But his non-violence taught him that he was to go on proclaiming what he considered to be the truth. It was not for him to lose temper or feel disappointed if the people did not listen to him.

They might well ask him how they were to wear khadi when they could not get it in the khadi bhandars. Lack of khadi in the bhandars was of his doing. Just as foreign cloth even if it appeared to be cheap was not cheap in reality, similarly khadi produced at one place and sold at another could not serve the purpose that it was intended to serve. It was no use their wearing khadi without grasping the spirit behind it. Khadi had been called the livery of swaraj. It gave the wearer a certain respectable status.

But if khadi was to be the symbol of non-violence and the livery of swaraj it had to be produced and used locally. Therefore he had asked the bhandars not to import khadi from other provinces. He had also asked them to sell it in exchange for yarn and to see that those who spun for wages also wore khadi themselves. They were not to accept the yarn from those spinners who spun for wages but did not wear khadi themselves even though it might result in a temporary shortage of khadi. People were taking to the idea, but during the transition stage, some inconvenience might be experienced. The remedy was that they should spin for themselves and even engage handloom-weavers for weaving khaddar. There were many rich people in Delhi who could easily undertake this work.

The Hindustan Times, 17-4-1946

314. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

GANDHIJI'S CAMP, NEW DELHI,

April 17, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

I am writing to you on behalf of Shri Haridas Mitra.¹ You may remember that H. E. stayed the sentence of death on this young man a few months ago.²

I enclose a copy of a communique³ which appeared recently in the newspapers. In view of this it would appear that Haridas Mitra should be eligible for pardon and release. I enclose a short note on Shri Haridas Mitra's case which his young wife has sent me.

I do hope he may come under the category indicated in the communique.⁴

Yours sincerely,

AMRIT KAUR

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 51

315. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

GANDHIJI'S CAMP, NEW DELHI,

April 17, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

Thank you for yours of the 16th instant. To me it seemed clear that the

¹ Husband of Subhas Chandra Bose's niece Bela. He was sentenced to death in Bengal under the Enemy Agents Ordinance for helping or harbouring agents landed from enemy submarine. Consequent upon Gandhiji's intervention and appeals the death sentence was commuted to transportation for life. For Gandhiji's earlier correspondence.

² *ibid*

³ Which said that the British Government had decided "as an act of clemency not to institute further criminal proceedings against persons alleged to be guilty of collaborating with the enemy in the British territories of South East Asia where no atrocity or brutality is involved".

⁴ The addressee, however, replied on April 22 that "the policy referred to in the communique. . . relates to cases which occurred in territories actually under Japanese occupation. It does not cover the case of Haridas Mitra who was convicted for assisting the enemy in India."

Havildar¹ had been executed but the poor widowed mother refuses to believe it. Hence my troubling you.

I now enclose a telegram² received last evening from Sialkot. This is the only intimation Gandhiji has and he knows nothing about the man sentenced to death. In case, however, a precious life should go which should have been reprieved, I send you the wire of immediate kind enquiry.³

Yours sincerely,

AMRIT KAUR

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 82-3

316. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

DELHI,

April 17, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I have your letter. I do not wish to criticize you. I accept what you have done. I plead guilty to your complaint that I stopped [you]⁴ from going. I also understand your accepting money from Brother. I want to tel you only one thing. Build up excellent health and live as you wish to.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 510

¹ Havildar N. M. Mukherjee was executed on September 27, 1943.

² From Deshraj, a condemned prisoner in Sialkot Jail, entreating Gandhiji to ask Lord Wavell to stay his execution so as to give him a chance to prove his innocence.

³ The addressee's reply of the same dated read: "Deshraj was convicted by the Sessions Court for taking part in a series of five murders. The sentence was confirmed by the High Court, and a petition submitted to His Excellency was considered and rejected in February. I am afraid there is nothing further that can be done about it."

⁴ The source has "her", obviously a slip. *Vide* also "Letter to Amtussalaam", 25-3-1946

317. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI¹

[April 17, 1946]²

I got your and Chi. Dhuru's beautiful letter. Continue to write to me and give details. Admit only as many patients as you can easily look after. The most important thing is prevention of disease, and if we can teach people that art, I will regard our mission of nature cure to have fully succeeded. Please, therefore, teach it to all, boys and girls and grown-up people.

No matter from what infectious disease a patient may be suffering, if the tub has been cleaned with burning-hot ash after that patient has bathed in it, I would, if asked, unhesitatingly bathe in it. For breakfast, I think it will be better if you eat home-made crisp biscuits which require to be chewed, together with fruit, instead of eating *ghensh*³. This may be followed with milk. Or you may drink milk at noon. This is only by way of suggestion. I am glad that Joshi has arrived there. Ask Gokhale to write to me. I am here up to the 24th at any rate⁴. I do not know what will happen after that.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 2754. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

318. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

DELHI,

April 17, 1946

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. I have not deliberately omitted to answer any [question]. Tell Viramma to be cautious. I will write to her if I get the time.

¹ Manager in charge of general administration at the nature cure clinic at Uruli Kanchan

² From Pyarelal Papers

³ Porridge cooked in water or whey

⁴ Gandhiji had arrived in New Delhi on April 1 in response to a invitation from Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander—Members of the British Cabinet Mission—and the Viceroy. *Vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 23-3-1946. He left for Simla on May 1.

You may engage a music teacher if it is right. Chimanlal¹ should decide it.

Do not undertake a three-day fast. You should observe silence,² talking when work demands.

It seems that Kambleji has stayed on with Dastanji³. Ask me if anything has been left out.

You can give this to Viramma to read. I had proposed to write more letters, but I find I cannot.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 91034. Also C. W. 9158. Courtesy: Prabhakar

319. LETTER TO RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

DELHI,

April 17, 1946

BHAI RAMMANOHAR⁴,

Bhai Humayun⁵ is bringing this letter. I had thought that you would proceed further after meeting me in Delhi. And when you went to Calcutta I thought that you did so because you regarded it your foremost duty to perform your father's *shraddha*. I am sure that we shall meet somewhere at some mutually convenient time. Does anyone attend to the social service programme of your father?

Blessings from

BAPU

DR. RAMMANOHAR LOHIA

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Chimanlal N. Shah, Manager, Sevagram Ashram

² The Hindi original of what follows can also be interpreted to read 'and stop talking'.

³ V. V. Dastane

⁴ (1910-67): one of the founders of the All-India Congress Socialist Party; Secretary of the Foreign Department of A.I. C. C. (1936-38); resigned from Congress in 1948; General Secretary, Praja Socialist Party (1953-54); Member, Lok Sabha (1963-67). He was released from jail along with Jayaprakash Narayan on April 12.

⁵ Humayun Kabir (1906-69); Minister of education in the Government of India, 1957-65; Chairman, University Grants Commission; later resigned from Congress and founded the Bangla Congress

320. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

April 17, 1946²

It was the fault of the parents, Gandhiji remarked.³ He had never seen children playing in a church or a mosque.

True culture requires that there should be perfect peace in the prayer ground at the time of the prayer.

There should be an atmosphere of solemnity as in a church, a mosque or a temple. He knew that many of the temples were full of clamour. It had hurt him deeply.

We go to the temple to worship not the stone or the metal image but God who resides in it. The image becomes what man makes of it. It has no power independently of the sanctity with which it is invested by the worshipper. Therefore everyone, including children, should observe perfect silence at the time of prayer.⁴

Harijan, 28-4-1946

321. HE LIVES

Death has removed not only from us but from the world one of India's best sons.⁵ That he loved India passionately, everyone who knew him could see. When I saw him last in Madras, he could talk of nothing but India and her culture for which he lived and died.⁶ I am sure that he had no thought of himself even when he seemed to be on his death-bed. His Sanskrit learning was as great if no greater than his English. I must not permit myself to say more, save this that though we differed in politics, our hearts were one and I could never think that his patriotism was less than that of the tallest patriot. Sastri the man lives though his body is reduced to ashes.

NEW DELHI, April 18, 1946

Harijan, 21-4-1946

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's report "Prayer Discourses"

² From *The Hindustan Times*, 19-4-1946

³ A couple of children who had been romping about had disturbed the prayer meeting, which upset Gandhiji.

⁴ As a result of his criticism there was a marked improvement in the behaviour of children from the next day.

⁵ V. S. Srinivasa Sastri had passed away on April 17, 1946, in Madras.

⁶ Vide "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 22-1-1946, "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 30-1-1946 and "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 4-2-1946

322. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

HARIJAN MANDIR,
NEW DELHI,
April 18, 1946

DEAR PRAKASAM,

I wrote the enclosed note¹ for *Harijan*. It absolutely represents my confirmed view which I told you personally. But the members of the Working Committee were here last night, among them Pandit Nehru and others. They had seen a copy of my note and they all thought that I should not publish it. I defended it strenuously but on turning it over in my mind last night I came to the conclusion that I would be taking perhaps an undue advantage of my public position to air my personal view. Instead, therefore, of allowing the note to be published in *Harijan*, I feel I should satisfy my conscience by sending a copy to you and letting you make what use you like of it. I would, however, like to emphasize the fact that if you allow yourself to be chosen as Prime Minister or hold any office or even be a member of Parliament, it will be bad for the country and of course for yourself.

As I have said in the note, it will be apparent to you that your reconsideration against your minstership of your philosophy will be perfectly valueless and ludicrous.

Yours,
BAPU

SHRIT. PRAKASAM
RAJAH STREET
THYAGARAYANAGAR
MADRAS

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ *Vide* "My Advice", 15-4-1946

323. TELEGRAM TO V. S. SANKARAN¹

April 18, 1946

REGARD ME EQUAL SHARER IN YOUR LOSS BUT CAN MAN LIKE SASTRI
DIE. HE LIVES IN HIS WORK.²

GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

324. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

DELHI,

April 18, 1946

CHI. KISHORELAL,

Why does Gomati³ persistently fall ill? How is it that none of you can resist illness? It appears as though you had made illness a darling visitor! Why so? I am sending this to the Ashram as I learn from Krishnachandra's letter today that you are likely to have reached there.

I have carefully gone through your writing on the Roman script. I appreciate the pains you have taken over it and also the erudition that is behind it. But the thing does not seem to me to be opportune. We are not immediately seized of the subject. If it is being discussed the discussions are confined to pundits. I see no use of it for the people. Besides, I have already expressed a contrary opinion,⁴ which has nothing to do with your pamphlet. It was with reference to a venture they had planned here, which, I believe, never came off. Anyway, for the present, I have time to dictate not more than what I have done.

Blessings from

BAPU

SJT. KISHORELALBHAI MASHRUWALA

SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ In reply to the addressee's telegram of April 18, 1946 which read : "Regret inform you my father V. S. Srinivasa Sastry expired tonight ten forty five."

² For Gandhiji's tribute to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, *vide* "He Lives"

³ Addressee's wife

⁴ *Vide* "My Advice", 15-4-1946

325. TALK WITH MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA¹

April 18, 1946

You would have covered me with shame if you had come to me instead of my going to you.

Why do you lend a ready ear to such gossip?² Why can't you take a leaf out of my book? If someone comes to me and talks to me about the Indian States, I send him off to Pandit Nehru. If it is about internal politics of the Congress, I give him Azad's address. In this way I have rigorously restricted my ambit of work. Even so, I have hardly a moment's respite. Unless I did that would have to give up the desire to live up to the age of 125 which I must not do, if any dream of non-violence as a world-conquering force is to be realized. You are a man of religion and purity of soul. It should need no argument on my part to convince you that if you completely empty your mind of outward things and fixing all your thoughts on Him inwardly pray, you will have more than contributed your share to the struggle for independence. You must complete your century. It is perfectly feasible if you will listen to my advice.

Malaviya followed Gandhiji's remarks with a . . . smile. . . "I must not engage you in talk any further," he remarked, "I know you are always busy."

Harijan, 28-4-1946

326. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

April 18, 1946⁴

As a result of his remarks⁵ children had ceased to play about in the prayer ground today and this quick response from parents and children evoked congratulations from Gandhiji and he emphasized the necessity of children coming to prayers in clean clothes and with clean bodies. Next he drew their attention to the growing number of newspapers and the undue importance that was being attached to

¹ Reporting this in his article "Young at Eighty-five" Pyarelal writes: "On reaching Delhi he wanted to come and see Gandhiji in Bhangi Nivas, but Gandhiji anticipated him by meeting him at 5, Canning Road."

² Gandhiji had heard that a lot of people came and disturbed Malaviya's peace by retailing all kinds of idle rumours.

³ Reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter"

⁴ From *The Hindustan Times*

⁵ Vide "Speech At Prayer Meeting", 17-4-1946

them by the people.¹

The newspaper man has become a walking plague. In the East as in the West newspapers are fast becoming the people's Bible, Koran, Zend Avesta and *Bhagavad Gita*, rolled into one. All that appear in the papers is looked upon as God's truth. For instance, a paper predicts that riots are coming, that all the sticks and knives in Delhi have been sold out and the news throws everybody into a panic. That is bad. Another newspaper reports the occurrence of riot here and there and blames the police of taking sides with the Hindus in one place and the Muslims in another. Again, the man in the street is upset. I want you all to shed this craven fear. It is not becoming of men and women, who believe in God and take part in the prayers, to be afraid of anyone.

What if riots do actually take place and some people get killed? Everyone must die one day. I will expect you to go in the midst of the fracas and tell the rowdies to be sensible. A friend remarked in the course of the conversation the other day that whilst it was poor rowdies that killed and got killed in the riots, the real responsibility lay not with them but with educated people, real responsibility lay not with them but with educated people, some of them occupying respectable places in society. It is they who incite others to violence from behind the scenes. It is for these educated and cultured people to stop the riots by laying down their lives in the process if necessary. Even a little girl can go up to the hooligans and tell them to desist. Most probably they will. But supposing they do not and kill her, it will be well with her all the same. She will live through her pure sacrifice. It is always well with those who believe in God and try to do His will to the best of their ability.

Independence is coming. But our lungs appear to have lost the capacity to breathe the air freedom. But when freedom actually comes, you will find that the loss of the capacity was only apparent. Maybe, the first impact of freedom will give you a rude shock, and before you regain your equilibrium some undesirable things might take place. All that you need to do is to keep yourselves on the alert and undaunted and it will be well with you in the end.

The Hindustan Times, 19-4-1946, and *Harijan*, 28-4-1946

¹ This paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*.

327. TALK WITH A FRIEND¹

[Before April 19, 1946]²

In talking to a friend the other day who was suggesting an expedient to solve the political tangle, contrary to his inner conviction of the wrong of it, Gandhiji told him that it was unworthy for a man of faith ever to believe that anything but evil could be born out of a poisonous germ. The friend replied, "The Cross was poisonous, full of hatred and ill will and yet redemption came out of it."

That is not my interpretation of the Cross. There was no poison there, no hatred, no fear. It was the way of self-suffering and therefore of love and hence the story of redemption.

Harijan, 28-4-1946

328. SOVEREIGN REMEDY

. . . Your new note in nature cure—reciting of Ramanama as the sure remedy—leaves me completely bewildered. The modern youth refrains from challenging some of your views out of toleration. Their attitude may be summed up in the following : 'Well, Gandhiji has taught us a whole lot of things; he has elevated us to unimaginable heights; he has, above all, brought swaraj within our reach; why not 'suffer' his Ramanama 'fad'?

Inter alia you have said the following :

"No matter what the ailment from which a man may be suffering, recitation of Ramanama from the heart is the sure cure" (*Harijan*, 3-3-'46)³

"Man should seek out and be content to confine he means of cure to the five elements of which the body is composed, i. e., earth, water, *akasha*⁴, sun and air" (*Harijan*, 3-3-'46).⁵

"And my claim is that the recitation of Ramanama is a sovereign remedy for our physical ailments also" (*Harijan*, 7-4-'46).⁶

At first, when you introduced this new note in the system of nature cure, I thought you were merely putting in other words a kind of psycho-therapy or Christian Science based on faith. . . . I interpreted my first quotation above in that light. The second sentence quoted above is difficult to grasp. After all, it

¹ Reproduced from Amrit Kaur's report entitled "The Lesson of the Cross", dated "New Delhi, Good Friday, 1946". Good Friday fell on April 19, 1946.

² *ibid*

³ *Vide* "Nature Cure Treatment"

⁴ Ether

⁵ *Vide* "Nature Cure Treatment"

⁶ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting, Bombay", 15-3-1946

is physically impossible for medicines to be composed of anything but the five elements to which you refer, and which you say must be the sole means of cure.

If faith is what you insist on I have no quarrel; it is necessary for the patient to co-operate in getting well also by faith. But it is difficult to accept that faith alone would cure "our physical ailment also". Two years ago, my little daughter was struck by infantile paralysis; it was the most modern treatment that saved the child from becoming a cripple for life. You would agree that it would not avail to ask a two-and-a-half-year-old child to recite Ramanama to be rid of infantile paralysis; and I would like to see you persuade any mother to do the recitation (and recitation alone) on her child's behalf.

The authority from Charka¹ that you have quoted in the issue of March 24,² leaves me cold; you have taught me not to accept anything, however ancient and however authoritative it may be, if it does not appeal to my heart.

Thus writes a teacher of youth.³ While I am eager to be in the good graces of the student world, my eagerness has well-defined limitations. For one, I must please them with the rest of the world, which is admittedly much larger. In no case should a servant of the public pander to any person or class.

If those whom my correspondent represents really think that anything I have done has taken India to unimaginable heights, they should extend to my so-called fads slightly more than toleration. Toleration by itself will do them and me no good. It may easily promote laziness in them, and false self-assurance in me. Let them think well before rejecting even a fad. Faddists are not always to be despised. Fads have before now made owners mount the gallows.

Ramanama has the flavour of faith-healing and Christian Science; yet, it is quite distinct from them. Recitation of Ramanama is a mere symbol of the reality for which it stands. If one of knowingly filled with the presence of God within, one is that moment free from all ailments, physical, mental or moral. That we do not see the type in life is not to disprove the truth of the statement. My argument is admittedly useless for those who have no faith in God.

Christian scientists, faith-healers and psychotherapists may, if they will, bear witness somewhat to the truth underlying Ramanama. I cannot take the reader a long way with me through reason. How is one to prove to a person who has never tasted sugar, that sugar is sweet, except by asking him to taste it?

I must not reiterate here the conditions attendant upon the heart

¹ One of the principal exponents of the Ayurvedic system of medicine

² *Vide* "Letter to Sir Frederick Burrows", 10-3-1946

³ Only excerpts from the letter are reproduced here.

recitation of the sacred syllable.

The authority of Charka is good for those who have some belief in Ramanama. Other may dismiss the authority from their consideration.

Children are irresponsible. Ramanama is undoubtedly not for them. They are helpless beings at the mercy of their parents. They show what tremendous responsibility parents bear to them and society. I have known parents who have trifled with their children's diseases even to the extent of trusting them to their (the parent's) recitation of Ramanama.

Lastly, the argument about everything, even medicines, being from *panch mahabhutas*¹ betrays a hasty confusion of thought. I have only to point it out to remove it.

NEW DELHI, April 19, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

329. LETTER TO UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM

NEW DELHI,
April 19, 1946

MY DEAR UTTIMCHAND,

This I must write to you in English. You are wrong. When you say you are right and I do not understand you, I go to my betters and seek confirmation of your prop[osition]. If they do not confirm you, I pass their opinion on to you.

What you will have to do is to teach me your conundrums when I am free to take a few lessons from you. Heaven knows when that time will come.

Receipt of the money sent by you was acknowledged on 11-3-46. It is to be found in my register book.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Thanks for the interesting puzzle.

SHRI UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM

BOMBAY BAKERY, HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Pyarelal

¹ The five elements

330. *LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

DELHI,
April 19, 1946

CHI. JIVANJI¹,

I saw the sample slips printed with blocks for the Urdu edition of *Harijan Sevak*. They are all right. I shall have nothing to say regarding the different sizes, for you will be using them according to your requirements. It is true that you had shown them to me before proceeding further.

How bad it would be if we could not publish in book form the writing received from Ashadevi² ! I think we must if necessary, make arrangements with some other printer and publish them. If even that is not possible, let me know.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9966. Also C. W. 6940. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

331. *LETTER TO SURENDRA B. MEDH*

[April 19, 1946]³

CHI. MEDH,

It would be unreasonable of you to expect a letter from me. I can do service and live long only if all people spare me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4977

¹ Manager, Navajivan Press

² Wife of E. W. Aryanayakum

³ The letter is written below another of this date.

332. *LETTER TO JAYAKRISHNA P. BHANSALI*

DELHI,

April 19, 1946

CHI. BHANSALI,

I have gone through your letter three times—twice word by word and the third time for dictating a reply. By clinging to the letter of the pledge we often come to observe it only in form. The spirit is the real thing which alone makes us aware of our understanding of it. Flawless observance is possible only after we achieve a harmonious blend of the letter and the spirit. It has always been painful to me because I have expressed such an opinion in the context of my vow to abjure milk. I see there is a subtle pride in being content with the observance of a vow in its spirit. I therefore do not deceive myself. Literally according to my vow I gave up animal milk for all time, but since by milk is generally meant buffalo's or cow's milk and also because at the time of taking the vow I was not at all aware of any other milk, I took advantage of my own ignorance and started taking goat's milk. Even then it did hurt my soul but somehow I consoled my mind. Had I been able to stick to my resolve of abjuring all animal milk, possibly I might have been freed of this body. Nevertheless, my heart bears testimony to the fact that I have fulfilled my vow in letter as well as in spirit. If I were to apply the same rule to you, and I ought to, you should observe your pledge literally and stick to the Ashram. And by staying on you will also be observing it in spirit.

Whereas other people felt that the movement¹ had been in vain I never had any such feeling. Failure has no place in the vocabulary of satyagraha. Satyagraha has endless time [to operate]. It may not therefore care for [any outside] help. There is much more to it than I have said here. If I begin to expound it I will have to devote a lot of time to it, which you also would not want me to do. Let me therefore be quite having shown you what your dhrama is.

¹ The "Quit India" movement of 1942

I think you have raised a very good point. I am not shocked by it at all.

Blessings from

BAPU

BHANSALIBHAI

ASHRAM, SEVAGRAM

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

333. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

NEW DELHI,

April 19, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I have your letter. My order is that you will do as you like. I am not Almighty. So you can go wherever you want. Zohra¹ is [like] your daughter. You can take her wherever you wish. Badshah Khan² is here. For the present he will stay here. Till now I have not been able to talk to him. I shall be glad if you keep good health. I find myself very busy. I shall be here up to the 25th.

Blessings to Zohra.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 511

334. *LETTER TO A. K. BHAGWAT*

NEW DELHI,

April 19, 1946

BHAI BHAGWAT³,

I have your letter. Everything will be all right if you remain content with yourself. There is scope for change of point of view regarding whole cereal meal. About this later. As regards the tubs I shall try to obtain more. Till then do what you can. You must have been what I wrote about infection.⁴ By all means go to help Appa if

¹ Wife of Akbar Chavda

² Abdul Ghaffar Khan

³ Chief Medical instructor at the nature cure clinic at Uruli Kanchan

⁴ *Vide* "Letter to Dr. B. Pattabhai Sitaramayya", 22-1-1946

you can get away [from there]. See that work which has been started do not suffer. I look upon this work as too important to be interrupted.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 2752. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

335. *LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI*

GANDHI CAMP, NEW DELHI,

April 19, 1946

DEAR BROTHER ANAND,

Pujya Babu has your telegram. He wishes happiness to you both and hopes you will serve the country. He hopes that marriage¹ might improve your hearing. Babu did not think it necessary to send a wire. Hope you are both well.

Yours,

AMRIT KAUR

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Courtesy: National Archives of India and Anand T. Hingorani

336. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

April 19, 1946

Speaking after prayers on Friday, Gandhiji referred to his latest love—nature cure. He had believed in it for years. He felt that what he had shared with his friend and close associates so far should be shared with the masses poor villagers. He had been thinking of the villagers in particular in connection with the Kasturba² work.

Medical help had become an elaborate and costly affair nowadays. Those who could afford it called in a doctor who wrote out a prescription in a language unintelligible to the layman. The latter carried the prescription to the chemist, took the medicine and counted upon it to cure him. Apart from the utility of this method of treatment, it was beyond the reach of the masses.

During his recent tour of Bengal and Madras lots of people had joined the prayers and in the mass singing of *Ramdhun*. He had since introduced Ramanama in

¹ The addressee's second, to Gangi. His first wife, Vidya, had passed away in 1944.

² Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

nature cure as a panacea for all ailments whether physical, mental or spiritual.

Physical ailments, Gandhiji continued, were not always the most serious. Those born of anger, lust, greed, infatuation, etc., were worse.

Bad as is the loss of a limb, the loss of reason would be worse. Ramanama when it is uttered not merely by the lips but proceeds from the heart is the sovereign remedy for the triple woes¹ to which man is subject. Reason follows the heart. It does not guide it. A pure heart is thus the most essential requisite not only for mental health but for physical too, and that could be had only through waiting on God—repeating Ramanama.

No remedy on earth, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded, could cure all physical ailments. But Ramanama enabled one to put up with suffering bravely and calmly when it could not cure. Ramanama also stood for the natural and right way of living. That was why he had taken to nature cure in the evening of his life and thereby added another to his numerous burdens.

The Hindutan Times, 20-4-1946

337. TALK WITH S. A. AYER²

[Before April 20, 1946]³

Shri S. A. Ayer of the Azad Hind Government came to discuss with Gandhiji the other day the question of issuing a news bulletin in the Roman script for the I. N. A. as proposed by the central I. N. A. Relief Committee. . . . “The men had got used to the Roman script while they were in the Indian Army and so retained it when they were operating in South East Asia.”

You forget that you are not working in South East Asia today, but in India. May I ask if these men ever write to their wives and children in the Roman script?

Never, they write one and all in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil or any of the other Indian scripts.

This means that they all know one or the other Indian script. I could understand your wanting to adopt the Roman script as a temporary makeshift if we had no script of our own. But to adopt the Roman script for Hindustani which has got two acknowledged scripts

¹ Viz., physical, mental and spiritual

² Reproduced from Pyarelal’s report entitled “Cultural Conquest and Roman Script” dated “New Delhi, April 20, 1946”

³ *ibid*

is only a sign of the psychological conquest that the English have made over us. In order to conquer the English who had conquered you, you adopted the English garb, i. e., Roman script, for your bulletins in South East Asia. You should have discarded this symbol of the cultural conquest and insisted on having your bulletin in the two Indian scripts rather than in Roman. The latter was primarily adopted for the sake of the British officers and men who had to learn Hindustani in order to rule over us. They solved the difficulty presented by the permutations and combinations of the Urdu alphabet and tempted us by their typewriters, telegraph and printing machines which use Roman script. We succumbed. We may not hark back to the symbol of our cultural conquest when we are out to end India's slavery *in toto*. When you served in the British army it was with the prospect of getting rewards in the form of decorations, comfortable pay and pensions, grants of land, etc. But now you don't want such temptations. You serve only for the independence and honour of your country. You do not want the easy way.

India will soon have independence. Do not think that there will be one script for Hindustani all at once. It will come when you and I have honestly and diligently learnt both the scripts—not before. That is the least price we have to pay for independence.

In support of his argument he cited the parallel of South Africa where they have everything in two languages. The Government gazette is published in two languages and so are the textbooks for use in schools.

And it is not called partition, but Union of South Africa. To maintain this union they have four capitals one for each province. That is the way of a free and freedom-living people.

Shri Ayer agreed and said, "We shall have the Hindustani bulletin in Nagari and Urdu scripts, not in Roman.

Harijan, 5-5-1946

338. GOSHALAS AND PINJRAPOLES

The following condensation from a scheme propounded by Sardar Sir Datar Singh¹ will be of general interest:

It is estimated that there are at present 3,000 *goshalas* in the country with a population of over six lakh head of cattle. These organizations, besides taking up the improvement of their institutions as envisaged by the Government of India, in the

¹ Agricultural expert and pioneer of animal husbandry in the Punjab

present threatened famine conditions can come to the country's help by production of more milk in the institutions. The number of well-organized *gashalas* and *pinjrapoles* can be taken as half, i. e., 1,500. The cattle may be classified as:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. Good dairy type 20% | 1,20,000 |
| 2. Fair type—good for breeding, though not highly productive 20% | 1,20,000 |
| 3. Old, infirm and unfit for further breeding 60% | 3,60,000 |

It is the first and second class that could be exploited for milk production and breeding. Out of these 2,40,000 half will be milch and half dry.

Better feeding, management, organization, etc., would mean an increase in production of 1,20,000 seers or, say, 3,000 maunds of milk per day.

In order to achieve this end immediately, a skeleton plan is suggested below:

1. Productive animals should be separated from those that are aged, infirm or otherwise useless. The latter should be removed to rural areas, preferably to forest *rakhs*¹ in order to relieve congestion and allow better feeding of productive. Their care, as well as that of dry stock farms, may be in the hands of a committee.

2. For the achievement of this end, the stock should be divided in the following manner:

- a. Milch animals about to calve should be kept at the *goshala* premises.

- b. Dry animals fit for breeding should be kept on the lands, if any, belonging to the *goshala* in the neighbourhood or may provided for at a place from where they could be returned when about to calve, and the animals which go dry in the *goshala*, should be sent there.

3. The congestion relieved, *goshalas* and *pinjrapoles* will have enough space to house cattle properly, feed them scientifically and carry out other improvements.

4. To further help, encourage and stimulate these institutions in this direction, it is suggested to help them financially by giving them 50% reduction on concentrates and fodder on the condition that these institution will increase their

¹ Reserves

milk production immediately either by keeping milch cattle of the owners who not able to keep them during the famine days or by buying cattle where their finances permit. The Government will have the option of purchasing one-third of their milk supply for the needy people of the locality and in the neighbourhood, if required.

5. Attempts should be made to feed cattle more on feeds which are not generally required for direct human consumption such as oil-cakes, cotton seeds, etc.

6. It may also be stated here that by feeding by-products of grains to the cattle, not only can the production of available food be increased the form of additional milk from these animals as compared to the food value of these by-products of food in case they are directly consumed, but it will also be more economical method of using the latter. Within limits, it will have double effect. It will help in the production of human food and will also protect the cattle from being underfed during the scarcity period.

7. All possible facilities should be provided for transport and supply of concentrates and other cattle-feeds to these institutions. Collection of data as to the requirements of the *goshalas* and the available stocks in these organizations should immediately be taken in hand. Provision should be made well in advance for the supply of these essential requirements from surplus to deficit zones. All this must be done in advance through Goshala Development Officers, who will be responsible for the working of the whole scheme.

The Sardar suggests to every province the appointment of Goshala Development Officers, training of workers and the supply of bulls. He rightly says that for real success there must be genuine co-operation between Government and the public. He has no doubt that *goshalas*, humanitarian and cattle welfare and such other bodies will give the co-operation if approached.

Another friend of cattle writes as follows: ¹

I want you to consider one or two suggestions for saving our cattle during the coming famine. . . .

My concrete suggestion is that well-to-do people.. . should be generous enough to permit cattle belonging to less fortunate people to graze

¹ Only excerpts from the letter are reproduced here.

in their compounds.

Provincial government should establish a chain of *goshalas* where owners of cattle, who are unable to maintain them during the period of famine, may leave them to be fed and maintained at State expense until the crisis is over.

NEW DELHI, April 20, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

339. *SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FOOD SHORTAGE*¹

The more I study the food crisis the more convinced I feel that people are being starved not for want of food, but for want of the co-operative effort of the experts and a national Government at the Centre bent upon meeting the crisis and inspiring the masses with confidence.

NEW DELHI, April 20, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

340. *NOTES*²

‘SILK KHADI’

If particle payment in yarn is necessary for buying cotton khadi why should the same not apply to ‘silk khadi’?

There can be only one answer to this question. Silk khadi too is khadi and its purchase should, therefore, also be contingent on the requisite payment of yarn.

WHY ONLY YARN?

Since spinning is a part of the constructive programme, why should not all constructive workers be exempt from paying for khadi in yarn?

There is some confusion of thought in this question. The reason for part payment in yarn, instead of in money, is to give khadi its rightful place, and in time make yarn current coin. That yarn is a part of the constructive work has no bearing on the present argument. Let us leave aside for the moment the fact that the wheel is the central

¹ In the article, not reproduced here, Sushila Nayyar had suggested how the research institutions could help ward off the famine by “finding out alternative food”, “efficient husbanding of the available food resources” and proper storage of grain and by working out austerity meals.

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-4-1946.

sun of the solar system of our constructive programme. If we believe that swaraj hangs by the hand-spun thread, then it is clear that the value of yarn will be far greater than gold and silver currency. Constructive workers are not exempt from spinning. How can there be any such exemption from *yajna*? Spinning is the necessary *yajna* for everyone.

NEW DELHI, April 20, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

341. WHY NOT?

You say that if Kasturba Agents are also members of the legislatures, it will be setting a bad example to the villagers². I can understand this being applicable to the present Assembly, but when we have swaraj the position will be changed.³ Will it, therefore, not be an advantage for us to be there? Will not such work as we want done be done in one session of the legislature, whereas ordinarily it would take years to do?

So writes a sister. But there seem to be three flaws in her line of argument.

Firstly, I have not made any distinction between the present and the future Assembly under swaraj. It is unnecessary for my argument.

Secondly, it is an illusion to think that M. L. A.s are the guides of the voters. Voters do not send representatives to the Assemblies in order to be guided by them. On the contrary, they are sent there loyally to carry out the people's wishes. The people are, therefore, the guides, not the M. L. A.s. The latter are servants, the former masters. The illusion is due to the present system of government. When the illusion disappears, the existing unseemly competition to get into the legislature will also be much less. There will be a few whose duty it will be to go there, and they will go to do the people's will. Today they go to the Assembly in order to fight there for swaraj, but it has now dawned on most people that they cannot achieve much there even in this line.

The third mistake in the argument is that Assemblies are best fitted to guide the people. If we look around the world we shall find

¹ The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 28-4-1946.

² *Vide* "Kasturba Smarak Trust"

³ The Hindi here adds: "The M. L. A.s will be the guides of the voters."

that the best guidance is given by those outside. If that were not so, a rot would set in all governments, because the field for guidance is vast and the Assembly is a very small thing. Parliaments are, after all, a mere drop in the ocean of national life.

NEW DELHI, April 20, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

342. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS¹

DELHI,

*April 20, 1946*²

With regard to a Press report in which Mahatma Gandhi was reported to have stated that the Madras Congress Legislature Party was free to elect any leader it liked and he had no objection to Mr. Prakasam of anybody being elected leader, Gandhiji stated today that he said nothing of the kind to anybody but he had written a private letter to Mr. prakasam, which Mr. Prakasam was at liberty to publish and which should be read out to the persons concerned in case of doubt.³

The Hindu, 22-4-1946

343. LETTER TO H. M. HYAT

NEW DELHI,

April 20, 1946

MY DEAR HYAT,

I have your letter. I noticed your absence but how was I to know that your illness was the cause ? Now get well soon.

If the luck is hard, who can rectify it ? I am doing all I can. But who can understand God's ways ?

Young Shaukat⁴ will never fight against his brothers.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ This appeared under the date-line, "Delhi, April 20, 1946".

² *ibid*

³ T. Prakasam told the Associated Press of India on April 22 that he had not received Gandhiji's letter referred to in the news agency despatch from Delhi. *Vide*, however, "Speech at Public Meeting, Visakhapantam", 20-1-1946

T. Prakasam was elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party, Madras, on April 22.

⁴ Addressee's son

344. LETTER TO RAJA SURYAPAL OF AWAGARH

NEW DELHI,
April 20, 1946

RAJA SAHEB,

Your letter is good but it is next to impossible for me to go anywhere for the present. Once the work here is finished I shall have to go directly to Poona. I am not in a condition any more to break journey anywhere on the way. The best course for you would be to read and ponder what I have written and then put into effect as much of it as you can digest in your own life and in the affairs of your state. The moment *Ramarajya* has been established in Awagarh, I am certain it will attract me like a magnet. You should also have that faith.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

345. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

HARIJAN MANDIR,
NEW DELHI,
April 20, 1946

MAULANA SAHEB,

Read the enclosed clippings. Whatever is written about me is without foundation. I have not expressed my opinion to anybody. When one or two members of the Committee asked me about it I told them that it is not proper to have the same president. In fact I feel unhappy that a Muslim should remain president at this juncture. If you agree with this view I would like you to read the enclosed clippings. You should issue a statement announcing that you do not wish to remain the president. It would be appropriate if some other person becomes the president. Badshah Khan's name had already been proposed but I strongly opposed it. I even had a discussion with Badshah Khan.

If my opinion were sought this time, I would prefer Jawaharlal. There are several reasons for it. I do not want to go into them.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Urdu : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

346. SPEECH AT KASTURBA BALIKA ASHRAM¹

April 20, 1946

I attach far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary². Culture is the foundation, the primary thing which the girls ought to get from here. It should show in the smallest detail of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you walk, how you dress, etc., so that anybody might be able to see at a glance that you are the products of this institution. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitor and guests, and behave towards one another and your teachers and elders.

I was pleased too that you walked all the distance to and from Bhangi Nivas, when you came to see me. But if you came only to please me, your trudging had no merit. It will do you no good. You must make it a rule to prefer walking to using a conveyance. Motor-car is not for the millions. You will therefore shun it. Million cannot afford even train journey. Their world is their village. It is a very small thing but if you faithfully adhere to this rule it will transform your entire life and fill it with a sweetness that natural simplicity carries with it.

Education here won't qualify you for luxurious living. I want the Harijan girls here to show such a degree of culture that everybody should feel ashamed to regard them as untouchables. That is the goal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh's activities. This institution should demonstrate to the whole world the heights to which Harijans can rise, if they are free from the incubus of untouchability and conversely the sacrilege and inhumanity of the institution of untouchability itself. I look forward to the day when this institution will fill the whole country with its fragrance and become a centre of attraction for girls from near and far.

Harijan, 5-5-1946

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's report entitled "A Light in Darkness". Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani. The Ashram was being run by the Harijan Sevak Sangh under the personal guidance of Rameshwari Nehru and Amritlal V. Thakkar.

² The training at the Ashram included house-keeping, crotchet work, cooking, kitchen-gardening, spinning and allied processes, *batik* work, embroidery, singing of *bhajans* and recitation of Sanskrit verses.

347. SPEECH AT JAMIA MILLIA¹

[April 20, 1946]²

I have proved my claim to being a member of the family by coming without previous notice,

Gandhiji remarked, touched by the spontaneous welcome. He then invited questions.

One student asked, "What can the students do to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity?"

The way is simple. Even if all the Hindus turn rowdies and abuse you, you may not cease to regard them as your blood-brothers and *vice versa*. Is it impossible? No, rather the contrary. And what is possible for the individual is possible for the mass.

Today the whole atmosphere is poisoned. All kinds of wild rumours are circulated by the press and are indiscriminately swallowed by the people. Panic results and both Hindus and Muslims forget their humanity and behave towards one another like wild brutes. It behoves men to act decently, irrespective of what the other party might or might not do. If one returns decency for decency, it is a bargain. Even thieves and dacoits do that. There is no merit in it. Humanity disdains to calculate profits and losses. It enjoins on one a unilateral obligation to put up decent behaviour. If all the Hindus listened to my advice, or in the alternative the Muslims listened to me, there would be peace in India which neither daggers nor lathis would be able to shatter. The mischief-maker will soon be weary of the sorry business of stabbing, when there is no retaliation or counter-provocation. An Unseen Power will arrest his uplifted arm and it will refuse to obey his wicked will. You may throw dust at the sun, it won't dim his lustre. All it needs is to hold one's soul in faith and patience. God is good and does not allow wickedness to proceed beyond a certain length.

I had a hand in the building up of this institution.¹ It, therefore,

¹ Reporting this in his "Weekly Letter" Pyarelal writes: "Gandhiji had thought of returning to his residence from the Balika Ashram, but a number of students and some members of the staff from Jamia Millia came and requested him to pay a visit some time, to their institution too. "Some time must mean now", replied Gandhiji. "Having come so far I cannot go back without going to you."

² Gandhiji visited the Balika Ashram on this date.

¹ Jamia Millia was founded at the commencement of the non-co-operation movement in 1920 with the joint efforts of Hakim Ajmal Khan, M. A. Ansari and the Ali Brothers.

gives me much pleasure to be able to pour out my heart before you. I have said the same thing to the Hindus. May yours be a shining example to India and the world.

Harijan, 280-4-1946

348. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 20, 1946

Addressing the gathering after the prayers on Saturday evening Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the fact that Ramanama recited from the heart was the never-failing remedy for all the ills—physical, mental or spiritual. He watched them taking part in the *Ramdhun* but whether they did it from the heart God alone knew. They themselves might know. But self-deception was quite possible. It was so very easy. One thing was clear. If a man or a woman who claimed to recite Ramanama from the heart was always ailing or was given to outbursts of anger the claim was eventually unproved.

Tolstoy had said that if man dismissed God from his heart even for a single moment Satan occupied the vacancy. Ramanama would expel Satan. Honest men and women had said to him that with all their efforts they could not say the Ramanama came to them from the heart. His reply to them was that they must go on and have infinite patience. A boy required at least 16 years' hard study in order to become a doctor. How much more time must be necessary to establish Ramanama in the heart?

While he was endeavouring to enthrone God in the heart and believed in nature's way he would confine to the five elements as curative means. He would give first place to pure air. It was the prime necessity. That implied that their houses and social surroundings should be perfectly clean. They must not live in air-tight boxes misalled houses. They should live as free practically as they were on the prayer ground.

The Hindustan Times, 21-4-1946

349. DEPLORABLE

Shri J. C. Kumarappa, writing in the *Gram Udyog Patrika*, says that to rely on or encourage imports from abroad is wholly wrong in principle. In the matter of the expected shortage of sugar owing to the failure of winter rains in the U. P. and Bihar and by frost in the Punjab and N. W. F. P., he suggests that the deficit in sugar should be made good by tapping palm trees in jungle areas for *nira*¹ and

¹ Unfermented palm juice

preparing *gur*¹ and sugar from it.

In regard to the import of a primary necessity like kerase oil, he suggests further extraction of vegetable oils to meet our needs. Imports will entail export of some of our own production to pay for them, and will only cause further distress in the long run.

He also draws attention to the insidious scheme for the development of Virginia cigarette tobacco in Bihar sponsored by Sir Herbert Stewart (Vice-Chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research). Under the scheme a number of research stations on tobacco are to be opened in various places and the places and the Imperial Tobacco Company have given two studentships of £500 per annum for training in tobacco cultivation abroad. At such a time the obvious duty of a government should have been not to waste good money or time on tobacco research, but to devote both to reclaim all available land for food cultivation. But Imperial Council can only think in terms of either tobacco, long staple cotton or thick rind sugar-cane for mills and ground-nut for export, and thus serve foreign business masquerading as "India, Ltd."

NEW DELHI, April 21, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

¹ Jaggery

350. "HARIJAN" IN URDU SCRIPT

Harijan is variously described as 'Harijan Sevak' when it is the Hindustani and *Harijanbandhu* when it is the Gujarati edition. Hindustani was Hindi when it was Nagari type only. Now, for reasons already known, it is Hindustani in the two scripts—Nagari and Urdu. The Urdu edition would have been published simultaneously, if the arrangement could have been completed. But there were difficulties of official permission and type to be surmounted. Litho printing became well-nigh impossible, and expert advice favoured Urdu type. The type could not be had for the wanting. But it is now hoped definitely to bring out the Urdu edition on 5th May next.

Whilst the matter in the three editions is not as a rule mere translation, one of another, and to an extent differs in the three editions, the Nagari and Urdu will be the same, word for word. An endeavour will be made to produce Hindustani which will neither be Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu. Whether the Hindustani will be popular or not will depend as much upon the writers for the Hindustani *Harijan* as upon its readers.

NEW DELHI, April 21, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

351. IS IT GENUINE?

Q. In one of your post-prayer discourses last week you stressed the use of khadi to the exclusion of all other cloth.¹ I love the very touch of khadi as it links me, in my heart and thoughts, to my poor sisters and brothers, to whom it brings a well-earned morsel of food. I love it from every point of view—on hygienic, aesthetic, humanitarian, moral and spiritual grounds. But I have so far never been able to take to spinning, much as I like the soothing hum of the wheel, and thanks to our system of education, my hands are utterly untrained and unfit to learn spinning at this stage. I am, therefore, unable to comply in a straightforward manner with the condition now imposed on the sale of khadi, and it is galling to me to have to go in for mill cloth.

A. If the love for khadi is so genuine as to cover moral and spiritual values, surely the writer should be able to learn spinning easily at his age. The late Pandit Motilal Nehru learnt it, after he was

¹ Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 16-4-1946

fifty. The late Ali Brothers learnt it, though they did not practise it regularly. And all these three learnt it for its national and political value in the highest sense of the term. As a matter of fact most of the public workers learnt it late in life.

The writer should learn spinning without delay. There is nothing wrong with his fingers. All who can write can spin. And spinning for swaraj is any day more valuable than writing.

I agree that for one like the writer the only straight forward way to give his quota of yarn for buying khadi is self-spinning. If he was incapable for any cause, it would be perfectly right for him to get his many friends or relations to spin the required quota for him.

As an earnest student of affairs, he should know, too, that while khadi is good for the poor as an honourable occupation for earning bread, it has an additional and far greater value as an instrument of winning swaraj through non-violent means. Let it not be said of men like him that they could write eloquently about moral values without realizing the implications of the statement.

NEW DELHI, April 21, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

352. *MERCY v. RUTHLESSNESS*¹

The virtues of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested only when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth.

If this is true, then it is incorrect to say that ahimsa is of no avail before a murderer. It can certainly be said that to experiment with ahimsa in the face of a murderer is to seek self-destruction. But this is the real test of ahimsa. He who gets himself killed out of sheer helplessness, however, can in nowise be said to have passed the test. He who when being killed bears no anger against his murderer and even ask God to forgive him is truly non-violent. History relates this of Jesus Christ. With his dying breath on the cross, he is reported to have said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." We can get similar instances from other religions but the quotation is given because it is world-famous.

It is another matter that our non-violence has not reached such heights. It would be wholly wrong for us to lower the standard of

¹ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-4-1946.

ahimsa by reason of our own frailty or lack of experience. Without true understanding of the ideal, we can never hope to reach it. It is necessary for us, therefore, to apply our reason to understand the power of non-violence.

NEW DELHI, April 21, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

353. LETTER TO ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR

NEW DELHI,
April 21, 1946

BHAI ALAGAPPA CHETTIAR¹,

Bapa² tells me that you have been ailing for some time. Why is it so? Do you recite Ramanama? Ramanama will bring you peace if nothing more. Bapa is staying here. He had been rather unwell. He is all right now.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

354. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 21, 1946

Gandhiji had noticed that several men and women did not take part in beating time with *Ramdhun*. He pulled them up in his after-prayer discourses on Sunday. There was nothing to be ashamed of in repeating the name of God and in beating time with it. Modesty was an admirable virtue, but out of place it became a fault.

Reverting to the subject of the previous evening, i. e., nature cure, Gandhiji spoke about pure water, the second in importance among the five natural elements, the first one being air about which he had spoken on Saturday³. Large numbers of men and women in this country drank impure water and washed their clothes with and bathed in water which made the body and the clothes dirtier than before.

¹ Of Karaikudi

² Amritlal V. Thakkar (1869-1951); joined Servants of India Society in 1914; established Bhil Seva Mandal in 1923; President, Gujarat Antyaja Seva Mandal; Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh; General Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust; established Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh

³ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 20-4-1946

Will any of you care to bathe or wash your clothes in the gutter water? Yet many of the small tanks where people bathe and wash and even drink from are no cleaner than the gutter. Nature is lenient. It often does not punish us for our sins immediately. Thus we can go on breathing impure air and drinking impure water over long periods without any dramatic ill effects. But there is not the slightest doubt that such a thing lowers the vitality and makes one fall an easy prey to disease.

Gandhiji told the audience what he had seen on the banks of the sacred Ganges at Hardwar. People went there to wash off their sins, but they made the place so dirty that it could not even wash their bodies clean. He used to find it difficult to bathe at Har-ki-Pauri if he was at all late. People evacuated on the banks and did not even care to cover it up with sand. They made the bathing-ghat filthy, strewing flowers were trampled under the feet and so on. It was a painful state of affairs, a thing of which Indians had real cause to be ashamed.

He had taken up the new job of advising people on nature cure. A doctor had to go through five years of hard studies before he could begin to treat patients. Not so the nature-cure man. Speaking about himself he said he had picked up the essentials of nature cure by reading a few books and talking to experts in the line. Experience and experimentation had made up the rest. They could all do the same and become their own doctors. People had a notion that what was simple was no good. A spinning-wheel was simple. It was, therefore, condemned as primitive and crude. A mill cost a lot and was elaborate. It was an indication of progress. If this was their view, he was afraid they would have no use for him as he was but a simple-minded villager and a believer in the philosophy of simplicity. But he knew that most of them were simple-minded men and women like him and though they lived in a city, they had not lost all contact with the villages. Therefore, he felt emboldened to place nature cure before them.

Pure air and pure water were the first essentials, and of course Ramanama was there all the time. A man who repeated Ramanama and thereby cleansed his inner being could not tolerate the filth outside. If millions took to Ramanama in real earnest there would be no riots, which were a social malady, and there would be no illnesses. The Kingdom of Heaven would come on earth.

The Hindustan Times, 22-4-1946

355. *MINISTERS' DUTY*

It is legitimate to ask what Congress ministers will do for khaddar and other village industries now that they are in office. I should broaden the question and apply it to all the Provincial Government of India. Poverty is common to all the provinces and so are means of alleviation in terms of the masses. Such is the experience of both the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. A suggestion has been made that there should be a separate minister for the work, as, for proper organization, it will occupy all the time of one minister. I dread to make the suggestion, for we have not yet outlived the English scale of expenditure. Whether a minister is separately appointed or not, a department for the work is surely necessary. In these times of scarcity of food and clothing, this department can render the greatest help. The ministers have experts at their disposal through the A. I. S. A. and the A. I. V. I. A. It is possible to clothe today the whole of India in khadi on the smallest outlay and in the shortest time possible. Each Provincial Government has to tell the villagers that they must manufacture their own khaddar for their own use. This there will undoubtedly be a surplus for the cities at least to a certain extent which, in its turn, will reduce the pressure on the local mills. The latter will then be able to take part in supplying the want of cloth in other parts of the world. How can this result be brought about?

The Governments should notify the villagers that they will be expected to manufacture khaddar for the needs of their villages within a fixed date after which no cloth will be supplied to them. The Governments in their turn will supply the villagers with cotton seed or cotton wherever required, at cost price and the tools of manufacture also at cost, to be recovered in easy instalments payable in, say five years or more. They will supply them with instructors wherever necessary and undertake to buy surplus stock of khaddar, provided that the villagers in question have their cloth requirement supplied from their own manufacture. This should do away with cloth shortage without fuss and with very little overhead charges.

The villages will be surveyed and a list prepared of things that can be manufactured locally with little or no help and which may be required for village use or for sale outside, such for instance, as *ghani*¹ pressed oil and cakes, burning oil prepared through *ghanis*, hand-

¹ Oil-press

pounded rice, *tad gud*¹, honey, toys, mats, hand-made paper, village soap, etc. If enough care is thus taken, the villages, most of them as good as dead or dying, will hum with life and exhibit the immense possibilities they have of supplying most of their wants themselves and of the cities and towns of India.

Then there is the limitless cattle wealth of India suffering from criminal neglect. Goseva Sangh, as yet not properly experienced, can still supply valuable aid.

Without the basic training the villagers are being starved for education. This desideratum can be supplied by the Hindustani Tamil Sangh. The experiment was already commenced by Congress Governments but it was interrupted by the resignations of the Congress ministries.² The thread can be easily resumed now.

NEW DELHI, April 22, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

356. QUESTION BOX³

SUGAR AND SWEETMEATS

Q. The suggar ration in Bombay has just been reduced by 25 per cent. Would it not have been fairer to reduce sweetmeat shops' rations rather than cut down the individual's?

A. It is always well to cut down the ration of sweet vendors rather than that of individuals. In these hard times I would not mind if sweet-making were even prohibited. Sweetmeats are not a necessary part of a wholesome diet.

WHITE BREAD AND BROWN

Q. Up till January it was obligatory to mix ten per cent of bran with wheat flour. Later the rule was abolished. Should it not be reinforced?

A. I am a witness to the age-old rivalry between white and whole-meal brown bread. People are attracted by whiteness. I nurse the belief that Negro is not drawn by it. Be that as it may, it is a fact that special effort is made to make bread look white. Fortunately, only city-dwellers indulge in such fads. Doctors say that one chapati of whole-meal *flour* is more tasty and contains more nourishment than two to five *chapatis* made out of refined flour. And in these days it

¹ Palm jaggery

² The Congress Ministries which were formed in 1937 had resigned in October-November 1939.

³ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-4-1946.

is our duty to use whole-meal, because all flour saved is flour gained. From one point of view it is even more than that. Wheat stored in villages is far more useful than sacks of it lying in ports. Therefore, it is desirable to make the mixing of bran with wheat flour compulsory. The war is over but post-war conditions are worse for us than during the war, and the situation is daily deteriorating. God alone knows when it will improve.

ROWDYISM IN ELECTIONS

Q. You are no doubt aware of the rowdyism resulting in severe damage during one of the recent elections in Bombay. Does it become the teacher of ahimsa to keep silent on such an occasion?

A. I do not want to enter into the question of whether silence becomes me or not. If the rowdyism is not a forerunner of what the future holds, it will be wrong to take note of it. Such sporadic clashes should not worry us. The education of the masses in ahimsa can make way gradually. It may be that it will develop from the lessons learnt from such happenings. But it may be that this rowdyism is symptomatic of an epidemic. Many people imagine that they alone are right and everyone else wrong, and they do not consider that there is anything unworthy in forcing their point of view down others' throats. This error has to be rectified. If we are in the right we must have infinite patience.

Just now we seem unable to see our own mistakes. Those who lack the faculty of reason, or who desire to live for the sake of enjoyment, can never see the error. If there are many such, then we must conclude that our non-violence has been a weapon of the weak, *himsa* masquerading in the guise of ahimsa. If this weakness continue we shall have to go through rivers of blood once the British rule goes. We may even come under the sway of some other foreign power or it may be that with internecine warfare the weaker side will have to submit to the one that has the mightier weapons. If we are unfortunate enough to witness such strife, believers in non-violence will joyfully die in the effort to stop it and thereby live.

My hope is that the masses have sufficiently imbibed the spirit of ahimsa and that when the British go there may be a little fight here and there and then we shall settle down as brothers giving a lesson of peace to the world.

Only those who fought in Bombay know what good they achieved by fighting. I am ignorant of who fought and what the fight was about and what were the gains if any.

NEW DELHI, April 22, 1946

Harijan, 28-4-1946

357. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR¹

[April 22, 1946]²

You are right.³ As it goes forward, it becomes progressively lifeless. I shall try to do what is possible.

From the original: C. W. 4210. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7846

358. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
April 22, 1946

Why not get your hair cut by Kanu? Do you remember my having cut your hair? I must not give the time now. But if you have patience, I would gladly cut it. I do not like your going to a hair-dresser. But if you feel like it, you should go.

From the original: C. W. 4224. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7860

359. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
April 22, 1946

If Matthai⁴ had only agreed, he would have been finance minister. It is wrong always to think of ministership. It is wrong to seek to satisfy all interests. Why should not a Christian think that he is represented if a good man is a minister?

From the original: C. W. 4227. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7863

360. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

NEW DELHI,
April 22, 1946

CHI. PREMA,

Your silly letter in Marathi addressed to Sushila⁵ was read out and translated to me. It is good to be clear about one's goal. Forget

¹ Apparently a silence-day note, this is written on a telegram dated April 20, 1946. The silence day, i. e., the following Monday, fell on April 22.

² *ibid*

³ The addressee had written: "For *Gita* [recitation of *Gita*] can I suggest that those who are able to read should read, say, three chapters each in turn? They seldom keep together. The pace increases as the reading progresses. Sometimes, as today, the key changes. Words become a jumble after the first five chapters or so, partially because of the pace and partially because of fatigue. Someone or other drops out to take breath. It is jarring for the listener. I won't know if you have noticed the thing. If you have you will understand what I mean."

⁴ John Matthai

⁵ Sushila Pai

the person who has become the symbol of your goal. But the difficulty is that the person himself has become your goal. That happens to many and they suffer in consequence. When we make the person symbolizing our goal himself our goal, the result is that we feel happy when his actions and words are such as please us, but get offended when they are otherwise. One should, therefore, keep one's goal independent. Until you can do that, you will suffer, and so will your work. You have been educated, but learnt no wisdom!!! Learn it now. Learn it from me if you don't have it. In doing this there will be no conflict at all between your goal and the symbol of your goal, for learning wisdom means acquiring knowledge of practical affairs. But remember that practical affairs may be conducted either truthfully or untruthfully. Wake up.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10444. Also C. W. 6883. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

361. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

NEW DELHI,

April 22, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Bhansali¹ can do what he likes. It is not necessary to obtain my permission for giving up ginning.

Did the thunderstorm cause any damage? Or did it do any good?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4552

362. *TALK WITH A ZAMINDAR*²

[Before *April 23, 1946*]³

"Where shall we stand when India is independent?" asked a friend representing the landholders' interests, the other day during his visit to Gandhiji."

You will be as free as any scavenger, but whether you will be able to retain all the privileges which you are enjoying under the British Government is a question you can answer for yourself.

¹ Jayakrishna P. Bhansali

² This and the following item are reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" dated "New Delhi, April 23, 1946".

³ *ibid*

We realize that we shall secure our salvation at the hands of Indian leaders, not the British Government.

Everybody believes that today. Even the British Government feel that they cannot do otherwise than to leave India to settle her own affairs.

The landholders derived their charter of rights and privileges from the Permanent Settlement which was of the nature of a contract between the British and the zamindars, but they are quite willing to negotiate an agreement with the leaders of the country on the future of their rights.

Being a non-violent man by nature I cannot countenance the usurpation of anybody's just rights. But some of the extraordinary privileg that pass muster under the British rule are themselves in the nature of an usurpation. The history of British rule is a history of usurpation. Those who helped the British Government in this process got certain rights as a reward for their services. These cannot be insisted upon.

Many ancient *zamindaris*¹ existed long before the advent of the British and were exercising sovereign power, as a produce of indigenous social and economic system of long standing. Don't you think they have a title to continue their existence? They are trying their best to discharge a philanthropic function in the shape of founding educational and social institutions.

Anything that is ancient and consistent with moral values has a title to be retained. *Per contra* anything that does not conform to more values has to go. Wrong has no prescriptive right to exist merely because it is of long standing. If those who are on your *zamindaris* feel one with you and you with them, like members of a family, you have nothing to fear from anybody.

We want even-handed justice. We have no objection to an independent Indian Government abolishing all manner of vested interests. But let there be no discrimination against the zamindars especially. We only want a conciliatory gesture, an assurance that you won't wipe us out as a class, without giving us a sporting chance to vindicate our existence.

A just man need have no fear of any kind from an independent. India may, however, fall into unjust hands. Every Congressman is not an angel, nor is everyone who is not a Congressman a devil. Let us hope that, if Congress comes into power, it will try to be more than just. Otherwise all the good that it might have done would disappear in the twinkling of an eye.

I do not deny that there are bad boys amongst us. But you can cure us. We

¹ Absentee landlordism

only wish that nothing should be done without consulting us.

That goes without saying.¹

Harijan, 28-4-1946

363. TALK WITH MISSIONARIES

[Before April 23, 1946]

Another group of friends presented Gandhiji with a poser: "Could he guaranteed that under independence the right of proselytization would be guaranteed by a statue?" This provoked the counter question, "Did they really believe in the ideal of independence or was their support to the independence ideal only for a consideration?" In the latter case, he would say, remarked Gandhiji, that they believed neither in independence nor in religion. Who could suppress the voice of truth if it filled one's being? And of what avail was a statutory guarantee if there was not the fire within to bear witness to truth?

"It is true, no one can suppress the voice of truth," interpolated one of them. "We want a guarantee from you that no attempt would be made to suppress it."

I cannot give you that guarantee because I have no authority.

It was the function of religion, he continued, to save the temporal power from losing its soul; religion did not depend upon it for protection. And he cited to them the illustration of Daniel, the servant of God, who used to pray behind closed doors. But when Darius the King issued a decree prohibiting the worship of any God or man save himself under a penalty, he began to pray to God publicly, the windows of his chamber being open so that all could see him praying. He was thrown into the hungry lion's den but came out unscathed. The result was that the King rescinded his former decree which was 'unalterable' under the laws of Medes and Persians and made another decree to the effect that in every dominion of his kingdom, "men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God and steadfast as ever." And "so Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus." That was the only true way of proselytization and it needed no guarantee, statutory or otherwise. It was its own seal and sanction.

To take a leaf from the history of our own times, remember the words of the late Lord Salisbury who, when in office, had told a missionary deputation about [*sic*] China that they were a poor specimen if for their mission they sought the protection of British guns.

Harijan, 28-4-1946

¹ Gandhiji concluded the interview, pointing in a mute petition of mercy, as it were, to the heap of papers in front of him awaiting disposal.

364. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

DELHI,

April 23, 1946

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. Yes, it will be possible to give my blessings to both couple¹, but won't that have to be after the wedding? I don't feel the slightest inclination now to give my blessings to marriages within the same caste, but I also see that I must give them.

Your letter regarding a peace brigade is excellent. I have discussed the matter with someone, but I don't remember with whom. I am keeping the letter with me. If possible I will discuss the suggestion.² I have finished writing the articles for the next Sunday's issue of *Harijan*. Whatever I write now will have to wait for the issue after that. This is an inconvenience which must be endured as long as I do not settle in Ahmedabad, and that does not seem possible during the present life.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI NARAHARI PARIKH

SABARMATI ASHRAM

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 9141

365. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

DELHI,

April 23, 1946

CHI. KAKA,

I have both your letters. What you say about textbooks is correct. It will be good if the Adhyapan Mandir can be opened in Mahila Ashram. It will be equally good if you wish to open it in Bhagalpur. But we shall have to consider whether we have the capacity.

¹ Mohan, Addressee's on, and Anasuya; Sushila and Navaneet Desai

² Vide "Non-Violent Volunteer Corps"

Bal¹ arrived here yesterday and I am giving him both your letters to see, so that he may ask me if any point has been left out and tell you if and when he meets you.

We can make the study of Hindustani compulsory in non-government institutions. I see danger in trying to make it compulsory through the Government. The latter's duty will be to reward, by way of encouragement, persons who know both the scripts. In this way study of both the scripts can be introduced. This whole question of Government policy requires careful consideration.

You must have seen what Kishorelal has written regarding the Roman script. I have given my opinion against his suggestions.² Go through his pamphlet if you have not done so and communicate your opinion to Kishorelal. Write to him regarding the *vidyut*³ script also. How long I shall have to stay in Delhi will depend on acts of God and the King (King Cabinet Mission).

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10970

366. *LETTER TO GAGANVIHARI L. MEHTA*

DELHI,
April 23, 1946

BHAI GAGANVIHARI,

You did well in sending me the three cuttings. I have seen them. The news regarding Burma is startling. Have you or have you not written to Dr. Khare⁴ about it?

I am sure you are interested in the Gujarati language. Is the word *katran*⁵ neuter or feminine?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI GAGANVIHARI MEHTA
CALCUTTA

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Addressee's son

² *Vide* "Letter to Kishorelal G. Mashruwala", 18-4-1946

³ Shorthand

⁴ N. B. Khare, ex-Premier of C. P., 1937-38; Member-in-Charge of Commonwealth Relations in the Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46

⁵ Cutting

367. LETTER TO MANJULA M. MEHTA

April 23, 1946

CHI. MANJULA¹,

I have your letter. I had no idea about an earlier letter. Before I can offer a categorical answer to the question you have asked I should know what the other party has to say. I have seen that it is dangerous to express an opinion on the strength of a statement made by one party. I write this to you so that you understand this matter correctly. I should certainly like to see you all when I go to Bombay but you rightly say that you will write to me if you have anything to ask, because I find that as the days pass I am growing increasingly unfit for personal discussions. I just cannot spare the time.

Blessings from

BAPU

SMT. MANJULABEHN MAGANLAL MEHTA

82 GHORBUNDER ROAD

ANDHERI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

368. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 23, 1946

Speaking after the prayers, Gandhiji thanked the Maulvi Saheb for the recitation.² The selections³ were not all made by him. For instance, the Koranic prayer had been introduced by Raihanabehn Tyabji⁴. She came and recited it herself in the beginning and then taught it to others. The prayer from *Zend Avesta* was introduced by Dr. Gilder⁵. May be there were mistakes in the recitation. But God cared for what was in men's hearts rather than what was produced from their mouths. It would be best if a Muslim recited the Koranic prayer and a Parsi recited the Parsi prayer and so on. But in the absence of such an arrangement one did the best one could.

¹ Wife of Maganlal, the late Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta's son

² Of the *al fateh*, from the Koran

³ Which included a Buddhist prayer, some Sanskrit *shlokas* from the *Gita*, a Hindustani *bhajan* and *Ramdhun* and verses from the Koran and *Zend Avesta*

⁴ Daughter of Abbas Tyabji

⁵ M. D. D. Gilder, Minister of Health and Excise in the Government of Bombay, 1937-39

Next he drew the attention of the people to the need for discipline. Shri Kanu Gandhi had made it his profession to teach people *Ramdhun* and through it discipline in every walk of life. They should all sit in regular rows instead of in a disorderly and haphazard fashion.

He had come to know that Harijan collections at the prayer meetings were very meagre nowadays. That was bad. They should all contribute their bit according to their capacity.

Finally, he reverted to the question of nature cure. He had talked to them about air and water.¹ Today he wanted to talk about earth, the earth which the human body is made of and to which it must return.

Whether the dead are buried or cremated, dust returns to dust. Like air and water, earth is God's creation and we must not soil it.

People were in the habit of spitting anywhere, throwing orange skins and bits of paper here and there. All that was sin. To put anything out of place was equivalent to soiling the earth. A man of prayer could never do that.

Death might claim us at any moment. Let us then be on the alert and recite Ramanama all the time. We must cleanse if we can, never soil, His creation.

The Hindustan Times, 24-4-1946

369. NOTE TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

[Before April 24, 1946]²

Write and tell him that my blessings are given only when one of the parties to the marriage is a Harijan. This is a marriage they need my blessings?

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8396

370. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

April 24, 1946

CHI. BALKRISHNA³,

Take whatever steps may be necessary regarding your need for milk. If you can keep a cow for that purpose, that of course will be the best way.

¹ Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 20-4-1946 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-4-1946

² From the postal cancellation stamp

³ Also known as Balkoba, younger brother of Vinoba Bhave

How is your health? It seems you are experiencing difficulty in getting land there. Discuss the matter with Bhai Bhansali and others.

Other things seem to be going on well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 816. Courtesy : Balkrishna Bhav

371. LETTER TO PUSPHA N. NAIK

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

CHI. PUSHPA¹,

I have your letter. I did not wish that you should attend the wedding, but thought it desirable that you should pay a visit to Bombay.

You should not stop taking interest in the kitchen all at once. But it is of course desirable that you should train others to take your place. It is necessary to arrange frequent visits to villages. Slowly start doing some work in the hospital there. When you learn to see God in service, all doors of service will open to you. As regards the cooking of food, in addition to what you have mentioned you should learn what will constitute wholesome and balanced diet, and how it can be popularized.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9271

372. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

You wish to be addressed as 'thou' and to have 'lal' dropped, but leave that to the future. Does not a man who rises very high run the risk of falling, too? Ultimately what difference does it make whether one is addressed as 'you' or as 'thou' ?

It will be better if the Panchayat spends the money on boards,

¹ Daughter of Shankarbhai Patel

etc. If a rich man offers either money or the boards, you may accept them. You can take, instead of boards, bamboo poles, two if they are thick, or more, depending on the size, tie the ends with strong ropes and make a support for the feet. This would be quite inexpensive. If you tie bamboo poles together, they make a sort of bridge. Without a support for the feet made of boards or bamboo poles, you may be sure that the pits will be useless. If you can get discarded railway sleepers, they also will do. I am sorry that you have not been able to secure the land. Discuss the matter with the *mahajan*¹ there.

You are getting a good number of patients now. We may accept from Dr. Bhagwat only such services as he willingly offers. The equipment belonging to the Trust, too, is intended for service. Do whatever you can gently.

If it is necessary, purchase a cow for Balkoba. See that he does not go without milk. That must not be allowed to happen. It is desirable in any case that you should have a good number of cows there.

I suppose Kanchanbehn also has come there.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C. W. 2754. Courtesy : Manibhai Desai

373. LETTER TO JAYAKRISHNA P. BHANSALI

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

CHI. BHANSALI,

You will admit that it is alarming that you fell ill critically. Man ought not to strain his powers to the utmost. It is indeed desirable that your whole life should be disciplined. It is better if you yourself decide to live such a life, not because I say it. Ultimately we have to live as God wills.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Community leader

374. LETTER TO BHAGWADACHARYA

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

BHAI BHAGWADACHARYA,

I have your letter after many days. I must admit that I don't like it. Firstly, why should you involve yourself in the ritual sacrifice which is more or less a fraud? I can understand those who are ignorant of the true nature of dharma or are downright hypocrites busying themselves with it, but why a man like you should concern himself with it is something beyond my comprehension, especially because I don't want to look upon you as a hypocrite and because I am not prepared to believe that you are so sunk in abysmal ignorance. And if there was a sacrifice, wherefore all the discrimination? Those who do not want to come may not; those who want may come. Hence, in no way can my heart accept either your act or your justification of it. I would wish you to devote yourself single-heartedly to what is straightforward and truthful, rather than indulge in mere casuistry.

I am strongly opposed to sacrifice as it is currently interpreted. I consider it a sin to throw ghee into the sacrificial [fire] in our age. Sacrifice really means an act of service. I had therefore hoped that you would follow only that which is truthful even by giving up your position as a swami.

Blessings from

BAPU

SWAMI BHAGWADACHARYA

RAJKOT

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

375. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I have your letter. Write to Jiten Babu what you think proper and do what you like.

I shall return Jiten Babu's letter after showing it to Pra[fulla] Babu.

It will be very good if your health improves.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 512

376. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

DELHI,

April 24, 1946

CHI. K. C.,

Rajkumari will write about the tents.

I do not like what you say about Bhansalibhai.

As for Anna¹ he may look after things.

It is good that Shakaribehn² and Champabehn³ have taken up
ginning.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4553

377. LETTER TO AFTAB IQBAL

NEW DELHI,

April 24, 1946

KHAN SAHEB,

I have your letter. I do not wish to enter into a prolonged
correspondence with you.

I possess no sword, nor do I wish to possess one. Those whom I
can persuade will never use the sword.

As for the advocates of Pakistan, they say "we shall fight and
have it." If that is the case, it is they who will draw the sword.

The despatch in the *Barq* supports my case.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and
Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ Harihar Sharma

² Chimanlal N. Shah's wife

³ Ratilal Pranjivandas Mehta's wife

378. A TALK¹

NEW DELHI,
April 24, 1946

Ply charkha and spin as much as you can. There lies your highest duty.²

Lay down your lives for Hindu-Muslim unity.³

Gandhi's remedy is easy and inexpensive too; everyone knows it. His prescription, which hardly costs anything, is recitation of Ramanama.⁴

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 25-4-1946

379. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING⁵

April 24, 1946

Speaking after the prayers on Wednesday evening Gandhiji reverted to the place of earth, which in nature cure was only next to air and water. One of the curative uses of earth was an earth-bath. Dry, finely powdered earth rubbed on the body cleansed the skin. Mud applied to the body and allowed to dry could cure many skin diseases. More than 40 years ago a little nephew of his had boils all over the body. They were slow to respond to any treatment. Finally he took the case in his hands, covered the boy's body with mud and made him run about naked. The boy was cured in eight to ten days.

Gandhiji said that earth was full of miraculous properties and it was as useful in man's life as any other thing could be.

We are born of earth and return to earth after life's journey. In the morning prayers there is a *shloka* in which the devotee invokes

¹ Yamunadutt Brahmachari, Purnachandra Azad, Basantsingh Bhiring and Raghubir Singh Tyagi, four workers from Meerut, who had been released from prison after three and a half years, met Gandhiji and asked him three questions.

² The question was : "In the present age of party strife, what is the duty of the workers who have been released recently?"

³ The second question was : "What is their duty in the panic-stricken areas where there are strong rumours about riots?"

⁴ The last question was : "What is the remedy in nature cure for dysentery, a common disease among those who have been released from prison?"

⁵ The Hindi report in *Hindustan* has been collated with the version in *The Hindustan Times*.

mother earth and asks her forgiveness for treading upon her. If we expect our prayer to be heard, we must show our reverence in practice. We must not soil the earth or dirty it as many of us do today. If somebody soils the earth through ignorance or oversight by spitting or in any other manner, we should cover up the filth with dry earth.

The Hindustan Times, 25-4-1946, and *Hindustan*, 25-4-1946

380. *THE MONKEY NUISANCE*¹

People get weary of the trouble caused to them by monkeys. In their hearts they wish them dead. They are inwardly pleased if anyone kills them. At the same time they will oppose their slaughter. A friend who is well acquainted with the scriptures writes that monkeys ruin the crops, they even kidnap children, carry away articles, and eat up fruit, etc. Their number is daily increasing. I am asked as to what non-violence dictates in the matter.

My ahimsa is my own. I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the lives of animals which devour or cause hurt to man. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore, I will not feed ants, monkeys or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs.

Thinking along these lines I have come to the conclusion that to do away with monkeys where they have become a menace to the well-being of man is pardonable. Such killing becomes a duty. The question may arise as to why this rule should not also apply to human beings. It cannot because, however bad, they are as we are. Unlike the animal, man has been given the faculty of reason.

NEW DELHI, April 25, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

¹ The Hindi original appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 5-5-1946 with the dateline, "New Delhi, 26-4-1946". The translation has been touched up.

381. DRAFT AND NOTE ON PROPOSED PROCLAMATION ON SALT¹

(A) THE PROCLAMATION

In order that the poorest in the land may feel that independence is coming and as an earnest of their *bona fides*, the Government of India declare that the Salt Tax is abolished from today. To that end the inspectors of . . .² shall withdraw from their scenes of activity and the villagers will be notified by beat of drum and otherwise that they are at liberty to manufacture salt wherever they can for themselves or for sale. Other instructions about the State manufacture and sale of salt will be issued in due course.

(B) NOTE ON THE PROPOSED PROCLAMATION ON SALT

When the Salt Tax is abolished the monopoly goes likewise. Individuals should be free to manufacture salt for consumption or sale. Therefore, while there would be no monopoly in law, the Government will by their better organizing power and scientific skill be able to create a virtual monopoly. They will not allow private corporations to make manufacture and sale of salt a source of profiteering. It will be a legitimate paying business in the hands of the State. Consumption of the article is so universal that the profit of even a pie on every seer would bring in a natural income to the State. Every dealer in salt will be required to take out a licence for selling salt in his shop. [A] dealer is not to be confused with a hawker. A hawker who carried salt on his person will be free to sell without a licence. This will free the individual manufacturer and seller from interference.

Government will add to the revenue also by putting a heavy, though not a prohibitive, customs duty on foreign salt, whether British or otherwise.

Whilst anxiety has been shown in this note to show how salt may be made to yield legitimate revenue to the State, equal if not greater

¹ In response to Gandhiji's suggestion about the abolition of the Salt Tax Sir Archibald Rowlands, Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, had met Gandhiji on April 5, 1946. The draft and the note were sent to Sir Archibald in compliance with his request. *The Transfer of Power*, however, places the proclamation just after Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy dated April 6, 1946. For Gandhiji's correspondence in this connection *vide* "Letter to Lord Pethoick-Lawrence", 2-4-1946 and 374-5.

² Omission as in the source

care has been taken no make salt free like air and water for the individual who wants to labour for its manufacture and sale.

NEW DELHI, April 25, 1946

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 316

382. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

HARIJAN MANDIR, READING ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

April 25, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

I am writing on Gandhiji's behalf.

He was under the impression that all I. N. A. prisoners were going to be released in batches. Meanwhile he gets from Shri Raghunandan Saran a paper with reference to three trials.¹ A copy thereof is enclosed.

Before Gandhiji offers any further remarks he would like to know, if you do not mind, why these impending trials and consequent irritation, seeing that independence is imminent?²

Yours sincerely,

AMRIT KAUR

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 45

383. LETTER TO PADMAJA NAIDU

April 25, 1946

MY DEAR LOTUS-BORN,

Your congratulations wanted for my exemplary patience in deciphering your indecipherable love-note. You robbed me of my precious 15 minutes. Have I done sufficient penance for my not

¹ The three I. N. A. men to be tried by Court Martial were Col. Kasliwal, Col. Inayat Hassan and Rasul Bux on a charge of "cruelty" to Maj. Durrani, "also of the I. N. A.", to extract a confession from him in an investigation instituted by the I. N. A. High Command.

² In reply the addressee wrote : "The I. N. A. policy is, as you know, to bring to trial only those against whom there is evidence of brutality. The new trials are, I understand, in this category.

I am, however, sending a copy of your letter with a copy of its enclosure, to War Department, and if there is any other point that ought to be made, they will write to you direct."

knowing in time that you were behind Indu last Sunday ?

Of course Lotus will have some time from me on 29th although it is my silence-day.

Love.

BAPU

LOTUS-BORN

NEW DELHI

From the original : Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

384. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 25, 1946

Speaking after the prayers, Gandhiji introduced Badshah Khan as a fakir and a man of God. He had come to Delhi in connection with the meeting of the Working Committee of which he was a member. But he was essentially a man of God. His company was *satsang*, hallowed company for them as it was for him.

Gandhiji told the audience of a letter he had received from a correspondent criticizing Mr. Kanu Gandhi and the way he led *Ramdhun*. *Ramdhun* should be in the heart; where was the need for all the external show, the correspondent had asked. There was no doubt, observed Gandhiji, that Ramanama should come from the heart. But the external things were an indication of what was within. Supposing everyone struck a different note while reciting prayers in the mosque or during the chanting of hymns in the church, it would utterly ruin the solemnity of the service. There was a right way of doing everything and prayers were no exception.

A gentleman, Gandhiji proceeded, had sent him a book describing how *namaz*¹ should be offered. While turning over the pages of that book he came across a sentence in it which was to the effect that prayer said in congregation was 27 times as effective as prayer said by oneself. If they all joined in the prayer whole-heartedly and methodically it would gather momentum in geometric progression and so transform the atmosphere that riots in Delhi would become an impossibility.

The Hindustan Times, 26-4-1946

¹ Prayer as offered by Muslims

385. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,

April 26, 1946

Mr. Hoover's¹ flying visit to India has excited considerable interest and possibly hope. Whilst all the help that America and other countries can send to India, struggling against starvation, must be welcome, my endeavour has been to find ways and means to make ourselves self-supporting. the moment people give way to panic, starvation is a certainty in spite of a continuous line of steamers off-loading grain from outside on India's wharves. Conversely, every grain from abroad sent as a matter of duty to self-reliant India, honestly and manfully braving the threatening danger, will be twice blessed. Let Mr. Hoover's visit serve as a reminder to Government servants, monied men and grain merchants that they must think all the time of their duty to the masses. Nature never fails those who will help themselves.

Harijan, 5-5-1946

386. NON-VIOLENT VOLUNTEER CORPS²

Some time ago an attempt was made, at my instance, to form *shanti dals*³ but nothing came of it. This lesson, however, was learnt, that the membership, in its very nature, of such organizations could not be large. Ordinarily, the efficient running of a large volunteer corps based on force implies the possibility of the use of force in the event of breach of discipline. In such bodies little or no stress is laid on a man's character. Physique is the chief factor. The contrary must obtain in non-violent bodies in which character or soul force must mean everything and physique must take second place. It is difficult to find many such persons. That is why non-violent corps must be small, if they are to be efficient. Such brigades may be scattered all over; there may be one each for a village or a *mohalla*⁴. The members must know one another well. Each corps will select its own head. All the members will have the same status, but where

¹ Herbert Hoover, Chairman of the United States Famine Emergency Committee

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 5-5-1946.

³ Peace Corps

⁴ Locality

everyone is doing the same work there must be one person under whose discipline all must come, or else the work will suffer. Where there are two or more brigades the leaders must consult among themselves and decide on a common line of action. In that way alone lies success.

If non-violent volunteer corps are formed on the above lines, they can easily stop trouble. These corps will not require all the physical training given in *akhadas*¹ but a certain part of it will be necessary.

One thing, however, should be common to members of all such organizations and that is implicit faith in God. He is the only Companion and Doer. Without faith in Him these peace brigades will be lifeless. By whatever name one calls God, one must realize that one can only work through His strength. Such a man will never take another's life. He will allow himself, if need be, to be killed and thereby live through his victory over death.

The mind of the man in whose life the realization of this law has become a living reality will not be bewildered in a crisis. He will instinctively know the right way to act.

In spite, however, of what I have said above I would like to give some rules culled from my own experience :

1. A volunteer may not carry any weapons.
2. The members of a corps must be easily recognizable.
3. Every volunteer must carry bandages, scissors, needle and thread, surgical knife, etc., for rendering first-aid.
4. He should know how to carry and remove the wounded.
5. He should know how to put out fires, how to enter a fire area without getting burnt, how to climb heights for rescue work and descend safely with or without his charge.
6. He should be well-acquainted with all the residents of his locality. This is a service in itself.
7. He should recite Ramanama ceaselessly in his heart and persuade others who believe in it to do likewise.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why then is it necessary to recite His name? It is true that if

¹ Gymnasiums

God is, He is, irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences !

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him but also from the hearts of others.

NEW DELHI, April 26, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

387. WHITED SEPULCHRES?¹

I am a woman but feel I must write to you about this matter. About three months ago a man who said he was . . . 's servant came here. . . . One evening he brought a car and asked me if I had ever been in one and if not, would I not go with him for an outing? It never entered my head to suspect him and I acceded to his request. I was first taken to . . . where I was gagged and later we proceeded to a house in. . . . For some days every effort was made to commit an outrage on me. . . . Then one day a wealthy merchant and Congress leader of . . . came and asked me to go and enjoy life with him in

Later one day I was rescued by a friend of my father's with the help of the police.

I have received more than one such letter² accusing some Congressmen of immorality. It would not be wisdom to believe that they are all untrue and ignore the complaint. It has never been claimed that every Congressman is a model of virtue. But it is a matter of pride that the public expect a high standard of morality from Congressmen. All kinds of immorality are prevalent among us. It is a reformer's duty to try to wean from error those who are justly accused of misbehaviour. There are limits to immorality, if any can be claimed to pass muster. If what has been related is true, every man has to ask himself how far he is justified in seeking to satisfy his lust at the expense of innocent girls.

NEW DELHI, April 26, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

¹ The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 5-5-1946.

² Of which only extracts are reproduced here

388. SWARAJ THROUGH SPINNING¹

An A. I. S. A. worker writes thus :²

You have said that we must make the spinners self-sufficient and that to obtain swaraj through their activity is the aim of the A. I. S. A. . . . This way lies swaraj, you say. I admit it is right for spinners to learn well all the processes. . . . The quality of yarn and cloth will also improve. But how can we win our freedom this way? How are we to bring home this lesson to the spinners?

Imagine, if all the spinners understood the inner meaning of the wheel and span willingly and not under pressure, what an India there would be! The awakening of crores of women spinners would *ipso facto* produce lakhs of khadi-weavers. Imagine too the numbers of men and women workers needed to bring about this awakening! If such a time comes, textile mills, even if any were working, would have to rely on foreign countries for the sale of their produce. They would not, as they do today, hold imperialistic sway over the villages and cities. There would be Hindu-Muslim unity, all would be truthful, there would be no need to tell anyone to wear khadi, for no cloth other than home-spun would be available. That swaraj is hidden in this revolutionary change should be self-evident to seeing eyes. The question may imply that such a consummation is impossible. If such is the question, it means that swaraj through non-violent means is impossible.³

Another question asked is how the spinners are to be given the requisite education. To seek out the right answer is the main work of the A. I. S. A. Enough research has not so far been done. It is the duty of every A. I. S. A. worker to try to solve the puzzle. Now that we have Congress ministries in several provinces the work should be easy. Let the workers throw themselves heart and soul into it. They will never succeed if they look all the time to the Central Office for help and guidance.

NEW DELHI, April 26, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

¹ The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 5-5-1946.

² Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

³ The Hindi here adds : "In other words the questioner betrays his lack of imagination."

389. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

DELHI,

April 26, 1946

CHI. PREMA,

I have gone through your long letter. there is nothing private in it. I have given it to Sushila Pai to read.

I was not pained by your letter. I see, however, that my vanity is disappearing. I thought I understood a large number of people. But I can now see my ignorance more clearly. I welcome this.

I do not know when I shall be able to see your activities with my own eyes.¹ But I do wish to see them some time.

It seems to me that you remain excited and tense. If so, that must cease.

I had written a letter² to you, but Sushila had held it back. Now that also will go with this.

I have put no pressure on you or anybody else, nor wish to. If I have made any mistake in regard to your work, I am ready to rectify it. Keep your promises³. I will discuss this subject with Bapa.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10445. Also C. W. 6884. Courtesy :
Prema Kantak

390. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING⁴

April 26, 1946

Nobody knew who the miscreant⁵ was, said Gandhiji, nor would it be right to venture a guess.

It might be presumed at first flush, that because the victim in this case was a Hindu boy the assailant must be a Muslim and *vice versa*.

¹ The addressee had invited Gandhiji to visit a camp she had organized at Pimple, a village in Maharashtra.

² Presumably the reference is to the letter dated April 22, 1946; *vide* p. 49.

³ To the trainees, *vide* "Letter to Prema Kantak", 27-4-1946

⁴ The report in *The Hindustan Times* has been collated with Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*.

⁵ A Hindu boy had been stabbed in New Delhi on April 24, 1946. The injuries, however, were not fatal.

Such speculation, in my opinion, is not only idle but mischievous. We should rather ask ourselves as to how we would have or should have acted, if we were present on the scene.

To remain passive witnesses to the dastardly attack would cowardly. Should they, then, whip out a knife and pay back the miscreant in his own coin? Both these courses would be wrong, observed Gandhiji. The only becoming course, he told them, would be to plead with the miscreant not to stain his hands with innocent blood. If in doing so they themselves become victims of the miscreant's anger, they should not mind but should rather welcome it. Such an occasion should provide them with an opportunity to test the sincerity of their daily attendance at the prayer meetings.

When passions rise high and panic and mass hysteria lay hold on the people, it is up to the man of prayer to keep his head above the storm and refuse to sink to the level of the brute. We should pray to God to help us to keep down the hatred and anger in the heart. To be able to conquer anger and hatred and all other baser passions is the fruit of prayer. It is braver far to disarm the miscreant with cool determination devoid of anger than to counter him with a dagger, to prevent an angry word from escaping one's lips than to indulge in abuse.

He recalled another instance of assault on a harmless German during the Victory Day disturbances in Delhi that had been brought to his notice the day before. The madness at the time was directed against Englishmen and Europeans. In his opinion, it was not less cowardly.

We should pity the ruffian. A Maulana who saw me just before I started for the prayer was telling me how a number of newspapers were fanning the flames of communal hatred day after day and week after week. They are the real culprits. To incite murder is as bad if not worse than the murder itself. The actual murderer is very often an ignorant tool, victim of mischievous propaganda.

But even such propaganda could take effect only in a vitiated atmosphere. In a healthy atmosphere it would be sterilized.

Panic is the result of fear after all. But a man of prayer knows no fear. Your prayer is vain repetition if it does not clear the atmosphere of fear, panic and mass hysteria.

The Hindustan Times, 27-4-1946, and *Harijan*, 5-5-1946

391. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

DELHI,

April 27, 1946

CHI. PREMA,

You have raised three issues in your letter.

1. After completing their training in the camp the women are bound to give their services to the Kasturba Trust.

2. The Trust is bound to give them work and pay them.

3. In every district one mature and experienced woman and one comparatively younger woman should be posted.

Though these points are not included in the rules of the Trust, as I had promised you before the rules were framed, all the three demands have been accepted.

At the same time it is also recommended that :

1. Efforts should be made to collect as much money as possible from the place concerned and the district.

2. Where work can be done through one mature and experienced woman, only one should be posted, for, posting two women of the same age and experience at the same place is likely to result in conflict between them. There should be no objection, however, to posting two women if one of them is elderly and the other young. This should be treated as an exception. Care should be taken to see that the exception does not become the rule.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10446. Also C. W. 6885. Courtesy : Prema Kantak

392. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

April 27, 1946

Speaking after the prayers . . . Gandhiji dwelt on the danger of giving credence to panicky reports. Newspapers had reported that Bombay was full of panic, Hindus dared not go into Muslim quarters and *vice versa*, the shops were closed early in the evenings, the streets deserted and the people did not venture out at night for fear of riots breaking out. All that had proved to be a Press canard. Gandhiji said that these

¹ The report in *The Hindustan Times* had been collated with Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*.

false reports had reached him only today. There was neither any panic nor disturbance worth nothing in Bombay. Hindu women and children freely visited and went about in Muslim quarters and *vice versa*. The whole story was faked. In Delhi itself a Hindu woman was being driven by a Muslim *tonga*-driver only the day before. The driver had expressed amazement and horror at what taking place. "Why should there be any quarrel between Hindus and Muslims?" he had asked, and added, "God turns his back on those who quarrel amongst themselves." That showed, remarked Gandhiji, how dangerous it was to give credence to panicky rumours.

The lesson to be learnt from all this is, that we should not be afraid, because people will always frighten the timid, not the brave.

But it was no use making a show of bravery when there was fear in the heart. Probably they had all heard about a child playing with a snake without coming to harm. But if a grown-up person who was afraid of snakes tried to play with one, it would detect fear in the very touch and probably bite him. But supposing they were afraid and wanted to shed fear, the first condition was that they must not carry any arms. They should put faith in God and depend upon Him to protect them. The man who was afraid and carried arms repudiated God and made the arms his God.

Later, Gandhiji reverted to the theme of nature cure and talked about ether. Man was made of clay but even clay was predated by ether. The cavities in the human body, the pores in the human skin were all filled by ether. The stars, the sun and the moon were suspended in the void. The astronomers said there were many a heavenly body, like the sun and the stars which the human eye could not see. Gandhiji wanted them to stretch their mental vision so as to grasp the infinity of ethereal space. Ether was the most intangible thing known to man, but it was occupied by something still more intangible, namely, God.

In nature cure they had to establish contact with ether as with the earth. They could sleep under the sky and have as much empty space around them as possible. If they attuned themselves to ether they would realize what insignificant little creatures they were and how ill-becoming it was for them to quarrel amongst themselves.

Gandhiji referred to his visit to the Bhangi quarters on Saturday morning. He lived on the outskirts of the Bhangi quarters. But his was a clean and airy place, where he could live all his life. The Bhangi quarters were dirty and filthy. Their rooms were dark and ill-ventilated. There was just one little ventilator in the room, so that he felt suffocated as he entered it. It was a shame that their brethren should live in that state. Gandhiji told the gathering to visit the Bhangi quarters. The Harijans had a right to feel that his claim to be one of them was more than mere idle talk.

We are all made of earth, ether and the rest of the five elements.

God makes no distinction between man and man. By ourselves we are insignificant worms. We become great when we reflect His greatness. If we are attuned to Him, illness will not touch us. And if perchance we do fall ill, we shall be content to seek cure only through His grace by the application of the simplest means provided by nature and not run about hither and thither to find ways and means to prolong our lives.

The Hindustan Times, 28-4-1946, and *Harijan*, 5-5-1946

393. QUESTION BOX

CRIMINALS AND NON-VIOLENCE

Q. What would be the treatment meted out to criminals in free India in the light of your non-violence?

A. In independent India of the non-violent type, there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease. Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.

NEW DELHI, April 28, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

394. TELEGRAM TO DHIRUBHAI B. DESAI

April 28, 1946

JUST LEARNT FATHER¹ SINKING. HOPE PATIENT WILL RALLY. IF
CONSCIOUS TELL HIM THINK OF GOD AND NOTHING ELSE.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ Bhulabhai Desai who died on May 6, 1946; *vide* "Telegram to Dhirubhai B. Desai", 6-5-1946

395. *LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE*

NEW DELHI,
April 28, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

Your kind note of yesterday is characteristic of you.

I reciprocate the hope expressed in the last sentence of your note.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 184

396. *LETTER TO M. K. SYED AHMED*

HARIJAN MANDIR,
READING ROAD, NEW DELHI,
April 28, 1946

DEAR SYED AHMED SAHIB,

Your letter to Gandhiji has come. Export of cloth is not possible these days. We cannot meet our own requirements. But you should arrange for spinning and weaving in Ceylon itself. This should not be beyond your powers. I showed your letter to Shri Rajaji² also. His view too is the same.

Yours sincerely,
AMRIT KAUR

JANAB M. K. SYED AHMED SAHIB
C/o M. & M. BUCHARI ESQ.
BAZAAR ST.
BATTICOLOA
CEYLON

From a photostat : G. N. 8961

¹ Thanking Gandhiji for his continued presence in Delhi, the addressee had written : "Critical days lie ahead but I venture to hope and believe that it will not be so very long now before the matter will be concluded and you and we will be able to leave Delhi with a sense of our labours satisfactorily ended."

² C. Rajagopalachari (1878-1972); member of Congress Working Committee, 1922-42, 1946-47 and 1951-54; Governor of West Bengal, 1947-48; Governor-General of India, 1948-50; one of the founders of Swatantra Party

397. ADDRESS TO CONGRESS SEVA DAL VOLUNTEERS¹

NEW DELHI,
April 28, 1946

Gandhiji said that it would have been better if the report had been sent to the Congress leaders.

The volunteers had been in attendance in his camp. Mahatma Gandhi thanked them for the service they had rendered him and his party. He knew the volunteers had worked hard and had been doing night-and-day duty. He felt grateful for the love and diligence with which they had served him and his party. But what was the use of their serving him if they served not the lowest among the low who were his next-door neighbours. They kept his place spotlessly clean but the sweepers' quarters next door were extremely dirty. It was their shame as it was his. He would not be satisfied till they served the sweepers as they had served him. They should rather go and serve the Bhangis who lived next door to him in filth and squalor. Such service carried with it its own reward. He had come to live in the filth in which they lived. The fault was not theirs but of those who had reduced them to that state. The quarters provided for them were worse than the worst prison cell that he had seen in India or in South Africa.

Mahatma Gandhi recalled how he had written to Mr. Birla², Mr. Viyogi Hari and Mr. Brijkrishna Chandiwala to make arrangements for his stay in sweepers' quarters. They had done it. He was Mr. Birla's guest even here, as the management and the expenses were Mr. Birla's. The result was that he was neither in Birla House nor in the Bhangi quarters.

Gandhiji said he had identified himself with the Bhangis mentally, but he could not live like them. The Bhangis had a right to feel that his claim was an idle one. He would like them to go and work in the Bhangi quarters so that the place became as clean as where he was staying.

If they went to the Bhangi quarters, not as their patrons or teachers but as their true servants, they would be able to reach their hearts and transform the look of things in no time. The volunteers were not to do this by ordering the Bhangis. They were to be their humble and silent servants. Today those who became volunteers had a lurking desire to be counted as leaders. This, he added, was bad. Their one ambition should be to serve those whom we have made the lowest of the low.

The Hindustan Times, 29-4-1946, *Hindustan*, 29-4-1946, and *Harijan*, 5-5-1946

¹ The *Harijan* version has been collated with *The Hindustan Times* report and the Hindi report in *Hindustan*. The volunteers had gathered to seek Gandhiji's blessings and advice. A report of their work was readout by Radharaman.

² G. D. Birla, President, Central Board of Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1932-59

398. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 28, 1946

Gandhiji reminded the gathering that that was the last Sunday of the month. It was customary to have flag salutation on that day and render more service than usual. Those who believed in spinning spun more than usual on that day. He had been to see the volunteers in the morning. From the report that was read out he had gathered that they were doing a lot of good work. Volunteers who would really and truly be servants of the people were required in their millions.

There was hardly any merit in their serving him. To serve the so-called big people in order to gain importance or in order to earn their blessings should not be their ideal. Real selfless service carried with it its own reward. They should go and serve the Bhangis who lived next door to him in filth and squalor.

If sincere selfless workers came forth in their thousands, swaraj would be theirs for the having. The Cabinet Mission would find itself without any job. Britons would quit India or decide to stay on as her servants. Two hundred spinning-wheels were plied on the prayer grounds for one and a quarter hours. But Gandhiji said that this demonstration did not come up to his requirements. If swaraj was to come through the spinning-wheel, everyone of them, young and old, had to spin regularly. To those who easily lost their temper his prescription was to spin in silence.

The late Sir Prabhashanker Pattani¹ used to suffer from insomnia. Gandhiji advised him to spin before going to bed, avoiding all talk of politics. He did it for a year round and wrote to him saying the prescription worked wonderfully well.

The Hindustan Times, 19-4-1946

399. CASTE CORROSION

Soil corrosion eats up good soil. It is bad enough. Caste corrosion is worse, it eats up men and divides men from men. Letters continue to come from Christians, Parsis, naturally, from Scheduled Castes and women. They require representation in the ministry. Provincial competition is already there. The makers of ministries are not free from the taint and even when they do not favour it, they will lose caste if they dare to do the right thing and restrict their choice to merit only. Democracy can only represent the average, if not less than the average. Therefore, a democratic institution to be pure has to attend to the all-round education of the humblest and the lowliest. It

¹ Dewan of Bhavnagar State

must take in its sweep all superstition and social abuse. In such a society there will be no Christian and non-Christian, there will be no distinction of sex. If best persons are women all ministers will belong to that sex, if Parsis they will be all Parsis. That good day may be far off. What is to be done in the meanwhile? Those who feel that they are left out should have patience and rise by dint of service and merit. Those who happen to be ministers should mete out even justice which must include extra effort to raise the neglected and the downtrodden. They should make all feel at every step that they are servants, not masters, of the nation.

NEW DELHI, April 29, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

400. MARCH OF CIVILIZATION

Q. On page 91 of *Harijan* 14-4-'46,¹ it has been argued that the bullock is a living machine and that contact with such harmless animals is a potent factor in the onward march of human civilization. The animals are however, made 'harmless' by making them 'impotent'. Is this the correct method of the onward march of civilization? If we have cows, we must have bulls. The bullock is a creation of human selfishness and cruelty. If not in thinking man, in the lower animals at any rate, all the force of their nature rages in the fury of the generative desire. Therefore, to turn the noble animal, the '*Vahana* of Mahadev'², into a beat of burden is sad.

A. The writer is logical. But such logic would prevent the domestication of the cow. For there is probably more cruelty in domesticating the cow than in castrating the bull. It is a question of degree. Further march of civilization seems to imply increasing domination of man over beast, together with a growingly humane method of using them.

There are three schools of humanitarians. One believes in replacing animal power by the use of any other. Another believes in treating animals as fellow-beings and making such use of them as a brotherly spirit will permit. The third will not make use of lower animals for man's selfish purpose but will employ instead one's power and that of fellow-beings to the extent that the latter give intelligent and willing use. I belong to the third school. It is possible

¹ In V. G. Desai's article "The Case for the Bullock"

² Mount of Lord Shiva

by human labour, judiciously and humanely employed, to do fruit culture to a large extent and even corn culture. Indeed, as prisoners we civil resisters in the Transvaal dug up stony ground for converting it into a municipal garden. No ploughing would have answered the purpose. The ground could yield only to the pickaxe.

The first I hold to be useless and even injurious in the end to mankind. A judicious combination of the other two seems to me to be the goal. I can see no escape from castration. The only thing to be done is to make it progressively humane.

A correspondent has brought forward in this connection the question of branding animals. Does the pain caused by branding compensate for the benefit it confers upon the owner and the animal? If it confers none on the animal, naturally, branding must be taboo.

NEW DELHI, April 29, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

401. INDEPENDENCE

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that the independence of my dream means *Ramarajya*, i.e., the Kingdom of God on Earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

‘Political’ necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

‘Economic’ means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterparts. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

‘Moral’ means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of *Ramarajya* excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the war for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech uttered words of wisdom from the standpoint of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. In another column I reproduce the summary of his speech as reported in the public Press.¹ Only I must warn the public against the pessimistic note underlying the speech. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The bloodletting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other people's blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission 'delivers the goods', India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.,

NEW DELHI, April 29, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

402. KANU GANDHI'S CAMP²

This issue contains an abridged account of Kanu Gandhi's second camp³. How the candidates⁴ were selected, how there was no financial loss, how beginning with cleaning latrines they carried out all the other work, what they ate, etc., are all matters worthy of attention. The smallest detail was not neglected. The running of this camp will serve as a guide to others who wish to organize or attend training camps.

The secret of Kanu Gandhi's camp lay, in my opinion, in the fact that the organizers knew their job and were there as workers rather than for issuing orders. Where the organizers are mere superintendents the work is often apt to be lifeless or slack.

¹ Vide "Winston Churchill's Speech"

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 5-5-1946.

³ Not reproduced here. The first camp was held in 1945.

⁴ Twenty-two men and four women

It is sad that the camp had to be of short duration¹. There were strong reasons for this being so. Let us hope that those who came for training will utilize in their own lives the lessons they learnt and thus make progress towards becoming perfect servants of the people.

NEW DELHI, April 29, 1946

Harijan, 5-5-1946

403. NOTE TO G. D. BIRLA²

[April 29, 1946]³

I want to leave it to the Government, but only after I have come to a decision.⁴ Has his letter been received ? I got a reply to yesterday's letter.

If a Bhangi also could not clean it, then? A Bhangi's work is the most important and also the most difficult. Let us see what happens. You may go there. Do not send me. The job has grown so dirty that I do not at all want to go there. If I go, is there any place where I can stay? I cannot stay at Rajkumar's. The party is large. I cannot reduce it.

From the Hindi original : C. W. 8078. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

404. NOTE TO SUDHIR GHOSH

[April 29, 1946]⁵

Tell Cripps that my party will be large. All of us cannot stay at Manor Ville⁶. I do not want to go anywhere. I would be willing to go if a place can be found in Simla where we could comfortably stay. In my heart I feel I should not go.⁷ I would rather that they left me out. Talk all this over with Blaker⁸.

There is a moral aspect, too. They say one thing to the world

¹ Viz., three weeks

² Apparently a silence-day note, this is written on the reverse side of a letter dated April 28, 1946. The following Monday was April 29; *vide* also the following item.

³ *ibid*

⁴ *Vide* "Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps", 29-4-1946

⁵ According to the source this was written prior to Gandhiji's departure for Simla on a silence day, which was April 29.

⁶ Amrit Kaur's house

⁷ *Vide* footnote 1 to the following item.

⁸ George Blaker, Private Secretary to Sir Stafford Cripps

and another thing to me. Why get mixed up in all this? I have faith in you. I believe that your faith in God is a living faith. Think over this and if you want to ask me anything further about it, do so.

From a facsimile of the Hindi : *Gandhi's Emissary*, facing p. 212

405. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

NEW DELHI,
April 29, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

You do not understand how uneasy I feel. Something is wrong.¹ But I shall come to Simla.² I cannot take my necessarily big family to Rajkumari's house. I have to fall back upon the Government for quarters for about 15 people. Hardly any service will be wanted. But utensils and food stuffs will be necessary. Goat's milk and train accommodation and the lift from Kalka. All this is strange for me but it has become true.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 184-5

¹ According to the source "The reference is to the postponement of negotiations at Delhi and the decision to hold a meeting instead with the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League at Simla. In the letter of invitation to the Conference to be held at Simla, the Congress and the Muslim League were asked to send representatives to enter into negotiation about a scheme based upon certain 'fundamental principles'. Acceptance of the invitation thus implied acceptance of the proposed basis. This basis, Gandhiji felt, contained in it 'the seeds of Pakistan'. When he expressed his apprehension about this, the members of the Cabinet Mission explained to him that by accepting the invitation the invitees committed themselves to nothing, but the Mission had to word the letter of invitation as they had done to bring in Jinnah. To Gandhiji this smacked of 'double talk'. He immediately alerted his Congress colleagues and insisted upon their obtaining a clarification in writing from the Cabinet Mission before they accepted the invitation. This was done by an exchange of letters between the Maulana Saheb and Lord Pethick-Lawrence on the 28th and 29th April, 1946."

² The addressee and Lord Pethick-Lawrence had met Gandhiji the previous day to persuade him to go to Simla.

406. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR

[April 29, 1946]¹

If you don't eat here out of cussedness, you are wholly wrong, and you have not understood me. This is not the way of obedience and resignation. Think well and act as your inner voice dictates, not as I tell you. If you want to do as I tell you, then it should be willing and intelligent obedience.

From the original : C. W. 4214. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7850

407. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI²

NEW DELHI,
April 29, 1946

CHI. MRIDULA³,

I got your letters. I am overburdened with work.

I showed your letter to Sucheta⁴. She will go to Jharia and work there. I see that at present your presence in Ahmedabad is necessary.

I hope you are taking care of your health. Do continue the hip-bath and the friction-bath. Have the mud-packs at night. I hope Saraladevi⁵ is maintaining good health. What is the news about Nimubehn ?

Regarding me nothing is definite. I shall know in a day or two.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

408. LETTER TO A. K. BHAGWAT

NEW DELHI,
April 29, 1946

BROTHER BHAGWAT,

I have your letter. Amtulbehn⁶ has come over. I have already

¹ Apparently a silence-day note, this is written on the reverse side of a letter dated April 25, 1946. The following Monday was April 29, 1946.

² The letter is in the Devanagari script.

³ Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai

⁴ Wife of J.B. Kripalani; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946; member, Congress Working Committee, 1950-52; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-62; Chief Minister of U. P., 1963-67

⁵ Addressee's mother

⁶ Amtussalaam

written that you should go to Appa if you can. Yes, it is true, he may not be able to send for you often.

Your work there is going on well and it is very important. At present it is only a beginning. For making progress you will have to confine yourself to it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : C. W. 2750. Courtesy : Manibhai Desai

409. LETTER TO SRIRAMULU RAJU

NEW DELHI,

April 29, 1946

BROTHER SRIRAMULU,

I am not publishing your notice. Caste Hindus who associated themselves were not many. You must not try to gain publicity. Render silent service.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 108

410. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

NEW DELHI,

April 29, 1946

DEAR MAULANA SAHEB,

Lawrence told me last night that you had written to him suggesting some alterations in his letter and that he had sent you a reply.¹ What is all this ? I could not say much in the matter but I did not like it. I am perplexed. It looks like I shall have to go to Simla. The mind shrinks from the thought. I feel somewhere in some way we

¹ Pethick-Lawrence in his letter of April 27 to Abul Kalam Azad had invited Congress for discussions on the basis of a scheme which, *inter alia*, envisaged “two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim Provinces” with residuary “sovereign rights”. Azad had objected to the classification of the Provinces in terms of “predominantly Hindu and predominantly Muslim” and also to the term “sovereign” being applied to the residuary rights. Pethick-Lawrence in his reply of April 28 expressed his inability to make any “textual alterations” in the proposal as conveyed in his letter.

are committing a mistake.

You must also consider what you intend to do after the British army withdraws. I cannot quite see what you could do.

You have announced that the present Working Committee will continue till November and you will continue as president till then. If you must continue, it does not seem proper that you should do so by a ruling. Giving such a ruling seems to me dangerous thing to do. If it becomes a duty to continue this can be done only through fresh elections. This matter deserves consideration.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

411. TALK WITH MADAN MOHAN MALVIYA¹

[April 29, 1946]²

In reply to Gandhiji's question as to what he proposed to do since the venue of the Cabinet Mission talks was going to be shifted to Simla, Malaviyaji said he would be returning to Benares. That relieved Gandhiji as he was half afraid lest in his irrespressible enthusiasm this *enfant terrible* should decide to venture up the heights of Simla. That would be courting disaster at his age and in his present state of health. Gandhiji asked him, marvelling at his perennial freshness :

How long are you to continue to worry over the country's affairs ?

"So long as the country's affairs continue to cause worry," he replied, with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

Won't you leave something to a youth like myself ? It will make me even younger.

"This young man," replied Malaviyaji in an audible whisper, his eyes beaming at his visitor, "is going to remain young for many a day yet."

You can entrust any of your burdens to me. The only condition is that you must cease worrying and bless me with some of your strength.

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's report entitled "Seeking Blessings". Gandhiji paid a visit to Malaviyaji before his departure for Simla and communicated in writing as it was his silence day.

² *ibid*

The name of God is the strength of our strength.

That is true. The recitation of Ramanama is there all the time. But where from shall I bring your learning ? I am not flattering. I have neither your erudition nor your knowledge of the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* lore.

But you have God's name which is the quintessence of all knowledge. Is it not ?

That is true, but all the same I do feel jealous of your learning. But now you must get well and make use of all your learning to that end.

I will get well.¹

It is a national menace, this spread of vegetable ghee, on the one hand, and the slaughter of the cows on the other. Between the two the vitality of the people is being sapped. I feel so happy over what you have done and are doing for the milk supply.

Gandhiji agreed with him as regards the menace of vegetable ghee and added :

My efforts to solve the milk problem, of course continue, but success is not possible without the full co-operation of our commercial and trading class. But I must now take leave of you.

Malaviyaji smiled leave and blessings in reply, making *namaskara* at the same time. As Gandhiji rose from his seat he (Malaviyaji) slowly recited the following verse :

Forget not yourself,

But continue to spread your fragrance wherever you are,

Even like the rose.

Harijan, 12-5-1946

412. A TALK²

*May 1, 1946*³

The Government had thoughtfully placed at Gandhiji's disposal a big bungalow at Simla and made transport arrangements for him and his party. Should he avail himself of these without stint? His faith in God and his detachment, he felt, were on trial. Further reduction in the staff seemed hardly feasible. But did he hope to

¹ Pyarelal mentions that "at this stage . . . Radhakant told Gandhiji that he had read out his article 'Vanaspati and Ghee' to his father and it had pleased him immensely."

² Reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji had this talk with the members of his party who were to accompany him to Simla.

³ From "Statement to the Press", *vide* "Statement to the Press", 4-5-1946

cope with the situation through unaided human effort? And if he was to be merely an instrument for carrying out the Divine Will, were outward trappings necessary for his purpose ?

We are up against heavy odds. There is so much corruption, falsehood and deceit all round. How can I cut my way through it and come out of it unscathed, except by the use of the sharp axe of detachment. In this hour of trial I wish to put myself entirely in God's hands and proceed to Simla all alone. But I do not want to do so unless I can carry you with me. To force my will upon you would be the negation of detachment.

None or all, faith cannot be divided. You cannot trust me to God in part. As the poet says, "What of faith in aught is want of faith in all."¹

Harijan, 12-5-1946

413. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 1, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the British Cabinet Mission and said that the Mission had come with good intentions, but that the extent of the Mission's success would depend on the people's own strength and purity. If they did not have these, they were bound to be disappointed.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed regret that he had to leave for Simla. Human nature was such that one became attached to the environment. The people of Delhi had been very good and had joined the prayers whole-heartedly. He said he was going to Simla out of a sense of duty. During summer his heart was at Mahabaleshwar. Doctors had advised him to spend two or three months in the hot weather at Mahabaleshwar or Panchagani. But he had to go to Simla instead, and he had to go by a special train which was a matter of shame for him and for them.

Gandhiji said people crowded at stations, and their noisy affection embarrassed him. He wished to live up to the age of 125 years, yet he was an old man and could not bear the din and the noise. What did it matter if the Government paid

¹ According to the source, the party members could not take upon themselves the tremendous responsibility of letting Gandhiji go altogether unattended. After a hurried deliberation they communicated their unanimous decision to Gandhiji that if he took with him three only, or Pyarelal along they would be satisfied. However, the whole party accompanied Gandhiji to Simla but was sent back to Delhi soon after their arrival.

the fare for the special train? The money came from the pockets of the poor. Special trains were used for high officials or dangerous prisoners. He had to use them to escape the loud expressions of affection. It was their duty perhaps to go to stations to see their leaders, but their affection must be subdued and disciplined.

The Hindustan Time, 2-5-1946

414. CERTAIN QUESTIONS

A London friend has put seven questions on the working of non-violence. Though similar questions have been dealt with in *Young India* or *Harijan*, it is profitable to answer them in a single article, if perchance the answers may prove helpful.

Q. 1. Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder? Or is it necessary that people wanting to offer non-violent resistance should first of all divest themselves of State-authority and place themselves vis-a-vis the opponent entirely in a private capacity?

A. It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i. e., it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits.

Q. 2. Do you think that it would be possible for a Congress government to deal with foreign aggression or internal riots in an entirely non-violent manner?

A. It is certainly possible for a Congress government to deal with "foreign aggression or internal riots" in a non-violent manner. That the Congress may not share my belief is quite possible. If the Congress changes its course, the change will prove nothing save that the non-violence hitherto offered was of the weak and that the Congress has no faith in State non-violence.

Q. 3. Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully?

A. The bully has his opportunity when he has to face non-violence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger

than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. 4. What policy would you advocate if a section of the Indian people tries to enforce by sword a selfish measure which is not only repugnant to others but also basically unjust? While it is possible for an unofficial organization to offer non-violent resistance in such a case, is it also possible for the government of the day to do so?

A. The question assumes a case which can never exist. A non-violent State must be broad-based on the will of an intelligent people, well able to know its mind and act up to it. In such a State the assumed section can only be negligible. It can never stand against the deliberate will of the overwhelming majority represented by the State. The government of the day is not outside the people. It is the will of the overwhelming majority. If it is expressed non-violently, it cannot be majority of one but nearer 99 against one in a hundred.

Q. 5. Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong more effective than that by the militarily weak?

A. This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents. Those who are strong in non-violence will not mind whether they are opposed by the militarily weak people or the strongest.

Q. 6. What should be the training and discipline for a non-violent army? Should not certain aspects of conventional military training form a part of the syllabus?

A. A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag-hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

Q. 7. Is it not better under the existing circumstances that countries like India and England should maintain full military efficiency while resolving to give non-violent resistance a reasonable trial before taking any military step?

A. The foregoing answers should make it clear that under no

circumstance can India and England give non-violent resistance a reasonable chance whilst they are both maintaining full military efficiency. At the same time it is perfectly true that all military powers carry on negotiations for peaceful adjustment of rival disputes. But here we are not discussing preliminary peace parleys before appealing to the arbitrament of war. We are discussing a final substitute for armed conflict called war, in naked terms, mass murder.

SIMLA, May 2, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

415. A SURE AID

A correspondent suggests three aids to self-control, of which two are outward and one is inward. The inward help he describes as follows :¹

There is no doubt that Ramanama is the surest aid. If recited from the heart it charms away every evil thought, and evil thought gone, no corresponding action is possible. The outward helps are all useless if the mind is weak. They are super-fluous if the mind is pure. This must not be taken to mean that a pure-minded man can take all the liberties and still keep safe. Such a man simply will not take any liberties with himself. His whole life will be an infallible testimony to the inward purity. The *Gita* truly says that the mind makes the man and unmakes him. Milton paraphrases the same thought when he says:

The mind is its own place and in itself

Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.²

SIMLA, May 2, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

416. RAMANAVAMI CELEBRATIONS³

They get the best talent from the South at enormous cost for the sake of amusement. The artists who preside are of questionable morals. All this at a religious festival.

This is a condensation of a correspondent's letter. When a man begins a downward career, it is difficult to say where the deterioration

¹ The extract from the letter is not reproduced here. The third aid suggested by the correspondent was Ramanama.

² *Paradise Lost*, "Letter to Amritlal V. Thakkar", 31-5-1946

³ This appeared under "Notes".

will end. Intoxication of wealth is often as bad as that caused by liquor. The only way to stop this degradation of religious or for that matter any celebrations is for the public not to patronize them.

SIMLA, May 2, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

417. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

SIMLA,

May 2, 1946

I did not know that I would have to come to Simla this time. If we have faith in God we simply would not care to know beforehand how He may dispose of us. It is enough for us to hold ourselves perfectly in readiness for whatever happens. We are not allowed to know what tomorrow has in store for us and our best conceived plans have a knack very often of going awry. The highest wisdom therefore is never to worry about the future but to resign ourselves entirely to His Will.

I do not propose to say anything here about the Cabinet Mission. And I would like you, too, for your part, to repress your curiosity about it. Let us all mutely watch and pray. As I told the people, who attended the evening prayer gathering at Delhi yesterday, the Cabinet Mission will not be able to go beyond what is warranted by our strength. We shall be fools to think otherwise. Even if they tried to go beyond, it would only cause us surfeit and we would not be able to take advantage of it. Therefore, even if the Mission should prove infructuous I would not blame them for it. Rather I would blame ourselves for our weakness. It would enable us to measure our strength. By strength I mean non-violent strength. We are pledged to gain swaraj non-violently.

Many people today share the belief, and I am one of them, that this time the Cabinet Mission will do the right thing by India and that the British power would finally and completely be withdrawn. Time alone will show how far this belief is justified.

Now to take up the question I want to talk to you about. Last time also I had mentioned it. But truth is such a thing that one may repeat it from the house-tops any number of times without

¹ The version from Pyarelal's report, published under the title "Introspection", is reproduced with alterations to bring it in conformity with the Hindi original.

getting tired of it, just as one is not tired of repeating the name of God. Hypocrites too have the name of God on their lips but what we use is it if they carry a knife under their arms? If Ramanama comes out of the heart one would never feel tired of it. So never mind if I repeat endlessly whatever I want to say. It is bound to have its impact on you. The first *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad* says that God pervades the universe and it is man's duty to surrender his all to God in the first instance. There is nothing which he can call his own. Having made the surrender man is to take out of it what he may require for his legitimate needs but not a whit more. He must not covet what belongs to others. Take my instance. I have been housed here in a palatial building. For fear of your embarrassing affection I had to seek Government's hospitality and they put me up here. That however does not mean that since the Government have placed a big bungalow at my disposal I am free to make use of the whole of it. Tolstoy, in one of his inimitable parables, has answered the question, how much land a man requires. The Devil tempts a man by granting him a boon that all the land that he can circumscribe by running around shall be his. The man runs and runs, goaded by his greed and in the end when the sun is just sinking below the horizon, he reaches back the starting point only to drop down dead. Six feet of the earth is all the land that he requires for his burial. If, therefore, I were to delude myself with the belief that I needed the whole of this bungalow and took possession of it, I would be set down as a fool. Only a perverse nature can interpret the verse to mean that after making a ceremony of offering everything to God one can indulge oneself in the good things of life to an unlimited extent. That would be a travesty of its true meaning. I would far rather like to see a man dressed in old, mended clothes than in gaudy new ones. To wear torn clothes is a sign of laziness and therefore a matter of shame, but to wear patched clothes proclaims your poverty or renunciation and industry. Similarly, if someone gives me Rs. 25,000 and I spend it on my person I am a robber and thief. I can use only enough for my bare needs. That would be the teaching of the *Ishopanishad*. If you understand this you will achieve great things.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 12-5-1946

418. LETTER TO SUSHILA PAI

[After May 2, 1946]¹

CHI. SUSHILA,

Why do you fall ill ? Are you careless about the diet ? Do you take no vegetables other than potatoes ? Write to me in detail. Read this letter² and return it to me when I come.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

419. IS KHADI TOTTERING?

To those who have no faith khadi is tottering. In reality it is gaining ground. From being the poor man's staff of life, it is trying to become the non-violent means of gaining independence. The difficulty is fairly clearly expressed in the following paragraphs³ from a letter from Tamil Nadu.

The A. I. S. A. is faced with two problems now. The one is to keep on the khadi production on the present methods. The other is to give re-orientation to our activity related to artisans and their villages where we seve.

The commercial production as it is, is seriously affected in the last few months owing to competition of the uncertified merchants in khadi. The uncertified merchants buy the yarn from our spinners who spin with better cotton supplied by us. They buy khadi woven by the weavers... for by giving extra wages The khadi thus bought is sold . . . at higher prices.

There are more than fifty uncertified khadi dealers in this area. Among these are Congressmen also, who occupy places in the Congress Executive.

We are not able to influence the artisans against being exploited by the uncertified merchants. They simply say that they are not able to resist the temptation of higher wages for inferior labour and with no conditons that we impose with regard to quality and their wearing khadi, etc.

This tendency among the artisans is a great impediment and obstacle in approaching them with our ideal of village reconstruction through the charkha.

The present method of khadi production has to be sacrificed if

¹ This is written on a letter from Premabehn Kankar dated May 2, 1946.

² *ibid*

³ Of which only extracts are reproduced here

it hinders re-orientation. This requires faith and alertness which faith brings. Faith never accrues to the lazy.

Uncertified khadi dealers are a powerful menace to khadi whether from the standpoint of the poor man or of non-violence. For the dealer knows only his own pocket and nothing else matters to him. Of course, he goes to the weaver and the spinner and makes all kinds of promises, not knowing that if he killed the A. I. S. A. he would kill himself.

The pity of it all is that Congressmen become willing tools in the hands of these uncertified dealers. They have brought into being an association of specialists. Yet they do not know that they are willingly or unwillingly killing the goose that lays the golden egg. They have a right to do so in any case, more so if they do not believe in khadi as the non-violent instrument of swaraj.

It has been suggested to me that the policy of the A. I. S. A. can be changed only after consultation with Congressmen. This is wrong in the nature of things. The A. I. S. A. is composed of Congressmen. Though created by the Congress, it is an autonomous body. It can be disowned by the Congress at any time but while it is owned it must be trusted to do the right thing in terms of swaraj. Part payment in yarn is a potent cause of worry to Congressmen. This should not be so, if they believe that khadi is a symbol of non-violence and all that it implies. If such is not the belief the clause about compulsory wear of khadi should be given up.

Moreover, khadi furnishes the acid test of public honesty. It is a great effort to find the best way of inducing honesty in public dealings, for it means coming in close and selfless touch with the millions of men and women in the villages.

The upshot of it all is that workers like the writer have to carry on their work with full faith in their mission and leave the result in the hands of God.

SIMLA, May 3, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

420. *THE SO-CALLED DECIMAL COINAGE*

The Central Legislative Assembly having decided to circulate the Cent Bill for eliciting public opinion, as one, perhaps, partly responsible for influencing this decision, I owe it to the public to explain more fully my views about this measure. . . .

Shri K. G. Mashruwala's¹ note² is a fairly conclusive argument

¹ Kishorelal G. Mashruwala

² Of which only an extract is reproduced here

to show that there should be no hurry over the proposed change. Let such things await a full-fledged national representative government.

SIMLA, May 3, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

421. *USEFUL HINTS*

The following excerpts are taken from Prof. Kumarappa's¹ notes.²

SIMLA, May 3, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

422. *LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL*

CHADWICK, SIMLA WEST,
May 3, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

Salt is not off my brain.³ For the sake of English honour I say that there should not be a day's delay about the abolition of this monopoly.

It is to impress upon H. E. what the monopoly has meant that I enclose herewith an additional note⁴ prepared by Shri Pyarelal.⁵

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

G. E. B. ABELL, ESQ.

SIMLA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 158-9

¹ J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary of the All-India Village Industries Association

² The extracts, not reproduced here, contain suggestions regarding co-operative societies, agriculture, irrigation, etc. The concluding part of the notes appeared in *Harijan*, 19-5-1946.

³ *Vide* "Draft and Note on Proposed Proclamation on Salt", sub-title "The Proclamation.

⁴ Which appeared in *Harijan*, 19-5-1946 under the title "An Exaction and Oppression"

⁵ The reply from the addressee, dated May 6, 1946, read; "H. E. has personally studied the problem since you first mentioned it to him, but is not in a position to anticipate the results of the enquiry which is taking place. He realizes how deeply interested you are in the matter, but feels that he must make a full examination of the consequences which would follow any [reduction or] abolition of the tax, and might bear heavily on any new Government."

The same day, however, another letter followed, inviting Gandhiji for "a short talk" with the Viceroy at 7 p. m.

423. A TALK¹

[May 3, 1946]²

“Unless the Lord build the house, they build in vain who build it.”³ Why not let me take my chance with God?

It was not too late yet to perform that act of faith, he told us.

Now retire within yourself and seek the answer there. Do not consult others. And let me know the result.⁴

Harijan, 12-5-1946

424. TALK WITH AGATHA HARRISON⁵

[May 3, 1946]⁶

The world will laugh at me and say, ‘Here is a theatrical man.’ I do not mind it. When one is used to human aids it is not easy to tear oneself away from them all of a sudden. I very conservative in my feelings. I have spent half a day in searching for a small bit of pencil which had been with me for a long time. I could not reconcile myself to its loss. And here I have to detach myself from my entire surroundings and send away a party whom I have trained and seasoned for my work for years—no easy job.

It should not be so. All should be same to one who has surrendered his all to God. My Ramanama will be vain repetition and I would be a wretched guide for the Congress, the Cabinet Mission and others, if I allowed that feeling of attachment to weigh with me. If they follow my advice it might be like a plunge in the dark. As seasoned politicians they cannot afford to take that risk. My guidance must, therefore, be unalloyed.

If you are surrounded by your family, they divide your attention in however small or subtle a measure. I wish in this crisis to

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter”. Gandhiji had this talk with the members of his party.

² From “Statement to the Press”, *vide* “Statement to the Press”, 4-5-1946

³ *Psalms* 127, Bible (Old Testament)

⁴ This was addressed to Pyarelal.

⁵ Reproduced from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter”

⁶ According to the source this and the talk reported in the preceding item took place on the same day.

give my undivided self to God.

“You feel you have to deal with an extraordinarily acute crisis?” asked Agatha Harrison.

Yes, there is a crisis within a crisis. Not only is there the outward crisis, which you see, but a crisis within myself.

It remains to be seen how I come out of the test. So far people around me had attended to every little thing for me. If anything went wrong they were responsible. From tomorrow I shall have to do all that myself and blame myself only, if anything goes wrong. With all that I must feel at ease with myself. I shall have to watch myself. It will be a great thing if I survive that detachment and feel the inner joy—not start running high blood-pressure. It is a big experiment in my life and a necessary stage in my spiritual growth.

Harijan, 12-5-1946

425. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SIMLA,

May 3, 1946

I am grieved to know about the immorality prevalent among the people of Simla and its surrounding hills. Simla is the summer capital of the British Government and immorality is a feature common to all capitals. But it does not absolve us from our responsibility. Those who follow immoral ways can be nowhere near God. As in other places, in Simla as well, there is a wide chasm separating man from man. Harijan huts are situated adjacent to the Viceregal mansion.

I do not believe in having separate quarters for Bhangis. Those who make it possible for us to live (in sanitary conditons) should have the opportunity to live in open and in the best of localities to enable them to set an ideal in sanitation. But out of sheer callousness we treat them cruelly. Their condition will certainly improve provided every one of us treated them as our own kith and kin.

Mahatma Gandhi urged the people of Simla to eradicate corruption and to give up the desire to do evil things.

Gandhiji said they were probably wondering why he was living at “Chadwick”. He had come to simla at the instance of the Cabinet Mission, who had arranged for his accommodation. He would, however, assure the people that he or any member of his party was using no more room in that big building than they did elsewhere. That was why he had asked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and others to stay with him.

Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for amelioration of the living conditions of Harijans and said if everyone decided to take one Harijan to live with him the problem could be solved.

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 4-5-1946 and 5-5-1946

426. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

SIMLA,

May 4, 1946

Pressmen are inquiring already why my large party is going back. This is a personal question. I would rather avoid answering it, but in these days of publicity and speculation the question can not be evaded. The reason is purely moral, if it may not be described as spiritual. My task as a self-appointed adviser to all the parties concerned is the most delicate at the present moment. The Simla venue was declared all of a sudden. It dawned on me that if I was to go to Simla, I must go without the usual party, even though *Harijan* work might suffer. Had I succeeded in carrying conviction to the members of my party, they would have remained behind in Delhi.¹ The time within which the decision was to be taken was only a few hours on the 1st instant. They were anxious for my well-being. The whole moral purpose would be defeated, if I did not carry their mind with me. They, therefore, came to Simla. But the matter was still agitating me. So I conferred with Pyarelal yesterday.² He felt convinced that I should be left free to put myself solely in God's keeping, if I was to work under as much detachment as was possible for me. The best part of the afternoon was devoted to prayerful discussion that the party should go back to the heat of Delhi and await me there to rejoin me when I descended. This is the sole reason without reservation.

The Hindustan Times, 5-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 12-5-1946

427. LETTER TO MAJOR SHORT

May 4, 1946

DEAR MAJOR SHORT,

I have your letter and the note on procedure.

¹ *Vide* "A Talk", 1-5-1946

² *Vide* "Talk With Agatha Harrison", 3-5-1946

The note is something quite different from what you said yesterday. For one thing it does not contemplate independence. It seems to take Pakistan for granted. As I said yesterday nothing can be done so long as the British Army of occupation remains. The people can't be natural so long as their territory is occupied. Therefore there is no meeting ground in the note.

You wanted my reaction to what you have sent me and I have given it in the briefest terms possible.

I am sorry to dissappoint you. But it is the best thing for both of us that you and I should speak frankly to each other.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

TO
MAJOR SHORT
SIMLA W.

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

428. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SIMLA,

May 4, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Rashid¹ has passed away. All of us have to go the same way. I hope, therefore, that you are not grieving. I have sent a wire to Amtul².

Wheter or not to go to Indore rests entirely with you. I have no courage at all to guide you. I cannot judge in what your good lies. You must not feel any hesitation in doing what you like.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 503

¹ Abdul Rashid Khan

² This is a slip. Brgum Rashid's name was Hosa.

429. LETTER TO DEVPRAKASH NAYYAR

SIMLA,
May 4, 1946

CHI. DEV,

Daily I think of you. Now all would be reaching there. They have realized that it is better to leave me alone at Simla. When I come down from Simla I shall be with you all. Pyarelal will give you all the news.

Hope Satya¹ is all right and her operations have been successful.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Prakash must be keeping fit.

From a microfilm of the Hindi : Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy :
National Archives of India

430. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

May 4, 1946

Gandhiji explained to the audience how his permanent staff had shortly before left Delhi with smiling faces and his blessings. His task was very hard. But all difficulties could be overcome by leaning on God. Ever since he had reached the years of discretion he had felt that God is always with those who wait on Him.

In reality He is everywhere but because He is formless and invisible, man cannot always sense His presence. But if we have listening ears, God speaks to us in our own language, whatever that language be.

Badshah Khan had just explained what prayer was. God was all-powerful. Man lives at His will. It was because Gandhiji wanted in these crucial days to rely solely on His help that he had asked his people who looked after his every need and helped him to edit the *Harijan* weeklies to leave him to God. Yet he was not quite without human help. He had the Fakir Badshah Khan with him, the Sardar and his daughter³, who was as his own daughter, Dr. Dinshaw Mehta and Shri Brijkrishna and Shri Sudhir

¹ Addressee's sister

² Pyarelal's report in *Harijan* has been collated with the Hindi report in *Hindustan*.

³ Manibehn Patel

Ghosh. Birlaji had sent some of his staff too.

The British have to end their rule and quit India. They have promised to do so. Yet we should recognize the fact that a handful of Englishmen have been ruling over us. It is shameful not only for us but also for Englishmen. It is because of this feeling of shame that they have resolved to quit and go. That is why I say that their task is the hardest.

I have come here to advise the Congress and I am well aware of the fact that the Congress has always respected and listened to my counsel. If the Muslim League seeks my advice I shall gladly give it to them. I have to guide the Cabinet Mission as well. I know my task is difficult and equally arduous is the task of the Congress and the Muslim League. But the task of the Cabinet Mission is even more difficult. There are a few persons who are suspicious of the Cabinet Mission and who are afraid that the Mission might betray us. In my opinion it is quite wrong to think so. I have faith in the sincerity of the Cabinet Mission and in their avowed intention of giving up power.

Gandhiji warned people against believing that Britain was crumbling.

It is a great power.

Hindustan, 5-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 19-5-1946

431. A HARIJAN'S LETTER¹

A Harijan friend complains bitterly about my article on sweepers' strike².

His first complaint is that I have given up the sweet name 'Harijan' and used "Bhangi" instead. The criticism shows the sensitive nature of the correspondent. It was a Gujarati untouchable in the first instance, who suggested the name 'Harijan' to me and I willingly adopted it. This does not, however, mean that a current word for any sub-caste may never be used. I count myself a Harijan and it pleases me to call myself a Bhangi among them, because that is the lowest caste of Harijans. When I stayed recently in the sweepers' quarters in Delhi, the Harijans there too complained against the use of the word 'Bhangi'. They suggested 'Mehtar'. I tried to make them understand that it mattered little as to which of the current words was used for the same occupation. In spite of being considered the lowest occupation, it was in fact the highest inasmuch as it protected health and they should be indifferent to the name. Whatever the origin of the word may be, 'Bhangi' is, in my opinion, another name for 'Shivji'³. Whether you call a sweeper a Mehtar or a 'Bhangi', like 'Shivji' he

¹ The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 12-5-1946.

² Vide "Sweepers Strike"

³ Lord Shiva

brings health to man. The one brings it by keeping the home clean, the other cleanses the mind of man.

The second criticism is more serious. Prejudice are responsible for misunderstandings. If we take by force even that to which we are entitled, the action is likely to lead to a quarrel. We may not even be able to digest what we get by force. The strikers got what they did by coercion. At least, that is my belief. If my occupation is to keep latrines clean and I refused to do the work, can it be termed anything other than coercion? Of course, I am not bound to take up the job of cleaning latrines and I may be said to have every right to lay down my conditions of service. But according to my way of thinking, the laying down of conditions is not an absolute right. Even if such an absolute right were to be permitted, it might not be proper to use it under certain circumstances. But I do not want to enter into the justification of this reasoning. I tried to show in my article the duties of Bhangis as well as of citizens. I have often said that every kind of injustice is meted out to Bhangis. I have no doubt that citizens do not fulfil their obligations to them.¹ Thus it is their duty to see that Harijan dwellings are built properly, the means employed for cleaning are decent, that they have a special working uniform given to them, that they and their children have facilities for education, etc. These and other problems should be solved without loss of time. The Bhangis may not go on strike for lack of these amenities but it is up to all citizens to raise their voice on behalf of them.

Yet another criticism is directed against my suggestion of the use of the military to do sweepers' work. I do not see any wrong in what I said. I have reread my article and am not willing to withdraw one single word of it. I do not regret having written as I did. I advise Harijan friends to read it in the proper spirit. If they do so, they will see that my feelings on their behalf have undergone no change.

SIMLA, May 5, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

432. *THE CHARITY OF THE RICH*

The following is the gist of what a friend writes :

You accept many donations from the wealthy. There can be no doubt that the money is well spent. But the question is as to

¹ The Gujarati here adds : "Hence, whether the Bhangi brethren go on a strike or not, citizens ought to fulfil their duty independently. I have already explained what their duty is."

² The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 12-5-1946.

whether these donations should be accepted for your work. The donors certainly get a name thereby and among them might even be black marketeers. Can such charity benefit the poor?

The question really boils down to whether donations are in themselves wrong. I have no doubt in my mind about their being so. But the world works differently. The author of the *Gita* has said that all undertakings are tainted.¹ Therefore, all action should be performed with complete detachment. The *Ishopanishad* begins by saying that all action must be preceded by a full surrender of everything to God. It must, however, be admitted that even if everyone ceased to receive charity, the rich would not cease to amass wealth. It is also a fact that some rich people are stingy enough never to give anything in charity. Some even give money for nefarious purposes. Therefore, all that one can say is that certain principles should be observed in the matter of receiving charity. Not one pie should be taken for selfish ends and all should be received with God as witness.

I do, however, hold that it would be wrong to receive money from any group or individual whom the recipient considers to be unworthy. The discussion is naturally relevant only for those who are troubled by conscientious scruples.

SIMLA, May 5, 1946

Harijan, 12-5-1946

433. LETTER TO PUSHPA N. NAIK

SIMLA,
May 5, 1946

CHI. PUSHPA,

Your letter. With God's grace, everything is working out well. I personally liked your going to Chi. Mukta's wedding with the consent of all the elders there. You are on test. You will be pleasing your parents and other relations. Chi. Vrijlal also will be happy. Return to the Ashram after satisfying them all and then throw yourself heart and soul into service and see God therethrough. Remember that God has no form or shape.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9272

¹ XVIII. 48

434. LETTER TO PRAMOD MEHTA

SIMLA,
May 5, 1946

CHI. PRAMOD¹,

I have your letter. I am not writing a separate letter to Chi. Champa. You did well in sending more money. It would be good if you find Ratilal in Ahmedabad. You must see that he does not starve for want of food.

I hope that all you brothers and sisters will keep good health, study well and devote yourselves to service. Champa has suffered so much that her only duty now is to shape you brothers and sisters into dedicated workers.

May you all be happy there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8763. Also C. W. 1047. Courtesy : Champa R. Mehta

435. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SIMLA,
May 5, 1946

CHI. MRIDULA,

I have your two letters. I am not in a position to take up any outside work. Let us see what happens there. Sucheta has undertaken the work at Zaria. Look after your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C. W. 11258. Courtesy : Sarabhai Foundation

436. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SIMLA,
May 5, 1946

Addressing the vast audience² assembled for prayers, Gandhiji said that he had to cut short the time of his evening prayers because he had to go to consult the

¹ Ratilal P. Mehta's son

² It being Sunday, people in thousands had assembled to attend the prayers.

Congress leaders on some urgent matters in connection with the present political deliberations.¹

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 6-5-1946

437. TO CORRESPONDENTS²

My daily post may be said to have increased fourfold since the *Harijan* weeklies started. It is impossible to answer every letter. Every communication is read but not by me. If I attempted to do so I would be unable to render any service. My staff put before me only what I should see. Much of the post does not merit replies, but questions of public interest are answered in *Harijan*. Personal correspondence has to be rigidly restricted. I receive a large number of requests for blessings on the occasion of marriages which I am hesitant to send. I have already stated publicly that my blessings should be asked for only such marriages where one of the contracting parties is a Harijan. But in reality where is the need for blessings? Those marriages which are undertaken for the sake of joint service carry their own blessings. Those entered upon for self-satisfaction are wholly unworthy of any. In any event, in these days of famine, no money should be spent on feasts and enjoyment. Weddings will continue, but is it not possible for the event to take place quietly and without fuss?

SIMLA, May 6, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

438. TELEGRAM TO DHIRUBHAI B. DESAI³

May 6, 1946

NO	CALL	FOR	SORROW.	BHULABHAI ⁴	HAS	GONE
FULL	OF	HONOUR.	HE	IS	RELIEVED	OF

¹ The meeting with the Congress leaders lasted an hour.

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-5-1946. This appeared in *Harijan* under "Notes".

³ Bhulabhai Desai's son

⁴ Bhulabhai Desai (1877-1946); leading lawyer of Bombay; Leader, Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly for nine years; President, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee; member of Congress Working Committee

PAIN BY FRIENDLY DEATH¹. YOU SHOULD BOTH
FOLLOW THE BEST IN BHULABHAI.

The Hindu, 7-5-1946

439. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS²

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

It was the heroism and travail of Bardoli that brought to public life men like Shri Bhulabhai Desai. He might otherwise have remained a distinguished Government servant and ended his career as a judge of the Bombay High Court. He reached the heights of fame when his forensic talents resulted in the release of the I.N.A. prisoners. His son and daughter-in-law have in me, like many others, a co-sharer in their grief which it is to be hoped they will turn into joy by inheriting the deceased's love for the country's service, which alone makes life worth living.

The Hindu, 7-5-1946

440. DRAFT LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE³

Confidential

THE RETREAT,
SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

DEAR LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE,

My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the Conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading us to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not deceive ourselves, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the Conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28. We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. We realize that some

¹ Which occurred on May 6

² This appeared in *Harijan* under "Notes", 12-5-1946.

³ This was drafted for Abul Kalam Azad by Jawaharlal Nehru and was revised by Gandhiji.

assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which *ignore or run contrary to*¹ fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.

In my letter of April 28, I stated that the basic issue before us was that of Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India, for there can be no independence so long as there is foreign army on Indian soil. We stand for the independence of the whole of India now and not in the distant or near future. Other matters are subsidiary to this and can be fully discussed and decided by the Constituent Assembly.

At the Conference yesterday I referred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the Conference, accepted independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the Constituent Assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now and that is, the acceptance of Indian independence now.

If that is so, then certain consequences inevitably follow. We felt yesterday that there was no appreciation of these consequences. The Constituent Assembly is not going to decide the question of independence; that question must be and, we take it, has been decided now. That Assembly will represent the will of the free Indian nation and give effect to it. It is not going to be bound by any previous arrangements. It has to be preceded by a Provisional Government, which must function, as far as possible, as a Government of free India, and which should undertake to make all arrangements for the transitional period.

In our discussions yesterday repeated references were made to 'groups' of provinces functioning together, and it was even suggested that such group would have an executive and legislative machinery. This method grouping has not so far been discussed by us but still our talks seemed to presume all this. I should like to make it very clear that we are entirely opposed to any executive or legislative machinery for a group of provinces or units of the Federation. That will mean a sub-federation, if not something more, and we have already told you that we do not accept this. It would result in creating three layers of executive and legislative bodies, an arrangement which will be cumbrous, static and disjointed, leading to continuous friction. We are not aware of any such arrangement in any country.

We are emphatically of the opinion that it is not open to the Conference to entertain any suggestions for a division of India. If that is to come, it should come through the Constituent Assembly free of any influence of the present Paramount Power.²

Another point we wish to make clear is that we do not accept the proposal for

¹ The words in italics are in Gandhiji's hand.

² This paragraph is in Gandhiji's hand.

parity as between groups in regard to the executive or the legislature. We realize that everything possible should be done to remove fears and suspicions from the mind of every group and community. But the way to do this is not by unreal methods which go against the basic principles of democracy on which we hope to build up our constitution.

Yours sincerely,

From a facsimile : *Reminiscences of the Nehru Age*, p. 33

441. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI

SIMLA,

May 6, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter, in fact, two letters. I see that your work is progressing well. No good work is accomplished in a day. A job that can be finished in one day cannot be of much value. We must, therefore, cultivate patience, and for that we should learn non-attachment. Non-attachment implies faith that only good results can follow from good actions. This firm faith should make us indifferent to the results. We are certain that the sun will rise tomorrow and do not worry. We should have still deeper faith about the results of good works. There is bound to come a day when the sun will not rise; but there can be no time when a good deed will not bear good fruit. Hence you should go on with your work in the faith that the people will one day see its merit. Sanitation comes first, because it covers most of the other things.

I do not have your letter before me while writing these lines. If, therefore, I have missed any point, ask me again.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati. C. W. 2749. Courtesy : Manibhai Desai

442. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

CHI. KANCHAN¹,

You are now left alone. I do not worry about that. You are brave. But I do worry about your health. If you can become mistress of your health in the atmosphere there, I would consider it a great achievement.

I have deliberately isolated myself. The others understood my need and have returned to Delhi. I need to be left alone at the present moment. Rajkumari, however, is here and so is Dr. Mehta². Hence I am not having as much solitude as I should have. But is it not true that we can do only what God permits us to do? Munnalal also will remain in Delhi. I think I shall meet them within a fortnight.

It is not possible to say anything about the position here.

Please convey the contents of this letter to all.

Write to me a detailed letter. I left Amtussalaam and Sohra at Delhi but they were to go to Sevagram with Sushilabehn.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8258. Also C. W. 6982. Courtesy :
Munnalal G. Shah

443. LETTER TO MOHAN AND ANASUYA PARIKH

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

CHI. MOHAN AND CHI. ANASUYA,

I knew the date of your wedding³, but I wished to say nothing on that occasion. May you both lead shining lives, dedicate yourselves to service and live up to the age of 125, serving till the end.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 9191

¹ Wife of Munnalal G. Shah

² Dr. Dinshaw Mehta

³ May 4, 1946

444. LETTER TO DHIRU

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

CHI. DHIRU,

I got your letter. I am glad that you are doing a lot of work. If Dr. Bhagwat dispenses pills and so on, one cannot call it nature cure. It would be more polite if you settled the matter in consultation with Dr. Bhagwat himself. For my part I am prepared to write to him. But where work proceeds harmoniously it is better to have mutual discussions.

I shall be here for another few days. Then we shall see. Our entire party has left for Delhi. It was necessary for the work I have to do here.

Blessings from
BAPU

DHIRU

URULI KANCHAN

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

445. LETTER TO VINOD

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

CHI. VINOD,

I read your letter to Pyarelal. The best course I can suggest for both of you is that you should both devote yourselves to my work of education or nature cure. If you can stand the heat, you may settle at Sevagram or in a village nearby. If you want a place less hot, you may settle in some village near Poona. Take it that fresh air and open atmosphere go with any activity of mine. You may take up the Nayee Talim work if you like it.

I should welcome it if you or both of you did some writing. I am sure it will be worth printing since both of you will write only after careful thought.

Ayurveda has not been making progress. No doubt, much of the therapy that it offers is sound, and it certainly is cheap.

The sovereign [therapy] is of course nature cure, since it includes Ramanama, the unfailing remedy.

Please write to me what both of you together will need, in case you join in my activities.

Blessings from

BAPU

Enclosed with letter to Pyarelal, Delhi

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

446. LETTER TO VISHWAMITRA N. VAIDYA

SIMLA,

May 6, 1946

BHAI VISHWAMITRA,

You rightly employ the term “culprit”. If Ayurveda is in a poor state the fault lies with the vaidyas, and they alone can remedy it. Other help will follow as a matter of course.

Vandemataram from

M. K. GANDHI

VAIDYASHRI VISHWAMITRA NANALAL

GHEEVATO

KHODANO PADO

PATAN

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

447. LETTER TO SUSHILA NAYYAR

[May 6, 1946]¹

CHI. SUSHILA,

I am enclosing this in the cover for Pyarelal who will pass it on to you. It will save a day's delay.

There has been no letter from you till now. There should be one. Of course I have not received today's mail.

I am now fairly free but that is welcome.

The Conference here is going on, but what will come of it one cannot tell. Take it that all I can do is to wish it will. Rajkumari, Mani and Brijkrishna are here to help me. So much for today.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ In the source this letter is placed among those of this date.

448. *LETTER TO U. N. DHEBAR*¹

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

BHAI DHEBARBHAI²,

I have your letter. I see no way of improvement for the small principalities of Kathiawar so long as they are concerned only with themselves. Their subjects have no strength. I shall congratulate you and Kathiawar if you can find a way.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. UCHHARANGARAI DHEBAR
RAJKOT

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Payarelal

449. *LETTER TO CHIMANBHAI*

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

BHAI CHIMANBHAI,

I have your bank draft for Rs. 1,000. I shall credit it to the public funds account that stands in my name. Congratulations to all the friends.

Vandermataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ This was sent for the Kathiawar Food Conference which was to be held under the Presidentship of Mangaldas Pakwasa, at Rajkot on May 11, 1946.

² (1905-77); actively associated with Kathiawar Political Conference; President of the Indian National Congress, 1955-59; Chairman of Scheduled Tribes Areas Commission; President of Bharatiya Adim Jati Sangh; 1962-64; Chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission, 1963; Chairman of Primary Education Commission

450. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

CHI. PYARELAL,

Brajkisan has written to you. I shall keep a regular diary. I started it the very day you left. I see now that it was for the best that all of you went.

You will have received the two items I sent yesterday—one Gujarati and the other Hindustani.

See that the family left there works together in harmony. Let no one be a burden on the Harijan colony. Let everyone be of help. Let all participate in all activities there—at least in such work as washing the vegetables or grinding the corn or cleaning.

Where will Sushila's engagement take place ?

Blessings from
BAPU

[P.S.]

I am sending Vinod's letter on to you. Post it. I think it is only right that you go through it before it is posted.

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

451. LETTER TO A. K. BHAGWAT

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

BHAI BHAGWAT,

I got your detailed letter. There is nothing wrong in including milk and ghee in a balanced diet. It would be another thing if you can do without milk, and a great thing it would be. [But] I very much doubt [that you can].

How can tub-bath be arranged? If you arrive at something definite regarding the land your work will proceed faste.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : C. W. 2748. Courtesy : Manibhai Desai

452. LETTER TO GURUNATH JOSHI

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

BHAI GURUNATH JOSHI,

I have your letter. I am glad. It appears that everything is going on well there. I hope that you will fully acquaint yourself with the method we have adopted in Uruli Kanchan and point out any defects that you may notice. I hear that Father is likely to fully recover. If this happens it will be fine. I am enclosing the letter received in this connection.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

453. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

SIMLA,
May 6, 1946

Noise is not erased by making greater noise. It can only be stilled by people making mute signs and never pushing forward. Peace and order are necessary at all gatherings, but are especially so at prayer gatherings. People come together for prayers in order to obtain peace, to hear God's name and to recite it. Therefore, those who come should really attune themselves even as they start from their homes. Let them be silent and let their thoughts dwell as they walk, on prayer. Otherwise coming to prayers is useless.²

Mahatma Gandhi hoped that, in future, all would try to follow what he had said and thus derive full benefit from attending prayers.

The Hindu, 8-5-1946; and *Harijan*, 19-5-1946

454. TOTAL PROHIBITION

National Provincial Governments are now in full swing in India. Happily on the question of prohibition, there can be no differences of

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's report "A Simla Diary" in *Harijan*. As Gandhiji was observing silence this was read out at the meeting.

² The following paragraph is from *The Hindu*.

opinion between the Congress and the Muslim League. And if all followed a concrete policy and the States too joined in, India would be dry in no time and earn the blessings of lakhs of homes. To the discredit of the Governments under virtual martial law, Governors and their Advisers had the shamelessness to reverse the policy which had been already adopted in some provinces and misappropriate the revenue which was raised by the provinces in question. Let them now take up prohibition with prohibition legislation. They have to devise methods of educating the drinking public in the harm that drink does and provide them with innocent recreation and health-giving drinks. Every bar or, failing that, a place next door to it, should, so far as possible, be utilized as a refreshment and recreation room. If this constructive activity is taken up, it must prove a source of revenue for the State, besides prohibition, benefiting and reconstructing thousands of ruined homes.

Moreover, toddy-tapping should be replaced by *nira*-tapping for the purpose of converting *nira* into *gur*, much to the advantage of the nation which needs cheap sugar. These columns have shown how in some ways *tad-gur* is preferable to cane-*gur*.

These reflections are suggested by the following paragraph from a circular letter addressed by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (Fyzabad Road, Lucknow) to the Press. From it, I take the following items¹ addressed to the students under the heading "What Can Youth Do?"

1. Pledge themselves to total abstinence from all intoxicants and habit-forming drugs, which includes tobacco. . . .
2. Demand a thorough alcohol and narcotic drugs education, to be a part of the school curriculum.
3. Demand while under training a part in social service, including temperance work, educating the public of the harm done to them through the use of the intoxicants.
4. Recommend that in the scheme for small savings campaign for rural population, total abstinence from all intoxicants be stressed.
5. Ally themselves against the awful waste of precious foodstuffs for liquor in breweries and distilleries.
6. Join up with a temperance society. . . .
7. Make use of temperance literature. . . .

¹ From which only extracts are reproduced here

8. Holidays, a good time for this service.

9. . . . to learn the lesson of how much they can give to the country . . .

SIMLA, May 7, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

455. LETTER TO EMILY KINNAIRD

SIMLA,

May 7, 1946

DEAR MOTHER,

So you will be going back! Wish you well on the voyage. Let neither your will nor mine but His will be done.

Love.

Your son,

M. K. GANDHI

HON. EMILY KINNAIRD

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

456. LETTER TO HASAN ALI¹

SIMLA,

May 7, 1946

BHAI HASAN ALI,

It is beyond me to answer your letter. Yours is a typical letter illustrating that even things done with the best of motives can be perversely interpreted.

M. K. GANDHI

KARACHI

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

457. LETTER TO BHAGAVADACHARYA

SIMLA,

May 7, 1946

BHAI BHAGAVANDAS,

I have your letter. You were right to point out my error, although I do not quite see it as such.

¹ The letter is in the Devanagari script.

Ramanama is very dear to me. I can easily give it up if I feel that it is an infatuation.

What you write about *Harijan* is correct. The fault ought to be removed. I am sending on to Jivanji the relevant portion of your letter.

It should not be a subject for complaint that I cannot see the friends from Kathiawar. I am perpetually faced with the question whom I should see and whom need not.

Blessings from

BAPU

SWAMI BHAGAVADACHARYA

RAJNAGAR SOCIETY ROAD

AHMEDABAD 7

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

458. *LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU*

SIMLA,

May 7, 1946

BHAI JAJUJI¹,

Your letter. I am still under the impression that there is no [sales tax] on khadi. But whom shall we fight? Now the work is in the hands of the ministers. Whom should I write to? It would be better to ask Annada. He may do as he wishes. Can they not sell Borkamta khadi in Borkamta itself? Many questions arise. Ask Satis Babu² as well. And then leave it to them. I don't want to claim that I have pondered fully over it but I have helped others to think about it.

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

459. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

SIMLA,

May 7, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi, in his speech at today's prayer meeting, commended the quiet which prevailed after his appeal to the audience on the two previous evenings.

¹ Secretary, A. I. S. A.

² Satis Chandra Das Gupta

He asked them all if they could sing in tune and keep proper time to join in the *Ramdhun*. It was a good habit to cultivate and if they did it from the heart and intelligently they would realize that God's blessings were in it. If they co-operated in a pure thing it would help them to co-operate with their neighbours in all that pertained to the common weal.¹

Strange rumours had come to him, he said, in regard to his permanent staff having left. Some people were foolish enough to believe that there had been some domestic quarrel. Those who lived with him were not made of such stuff. Others imagined that because his staff had left, the negotiations had broken down. This too was wholly untrue. They left, as Gandhiji had said before², because they understood that he wanted to be alone with God as his only help. Even so he was not without help. It had been so throughout his life. In South Africa, too, all kinds of people had helped him including Boers, Africans and Europeans.

The address . . . contained a scathing denunciation of the speculation fever which had seized Simla. He interpreted it as a sign of cowardice. He tried to impress upon them that it arose from fear. He himself was a coward in his early youth. He had learnt to shed his cowardice through the recitation of Ramanama.³ It was cowards who died many times before their death. Fear of disease killed more men than disease itself. He appealed to newspapermen also not to spread false news. It was their duty to teach people to be brave and not instil fear into them. The Cabinet Mission had come with the blessings of the Prime Minister, who had said they were coming here to part with power whether Indians agreed among themselves or not. It was not right to distrust or disbelieve anyone so long as there was no cause to do so. Were those who had had the courage to put up a non-violent fight against a mighty empire for 25 years going to yield to frustration if the British Government failed to perform its duty today?⁴

That would be unworthy of those who had vowed their all to serve the country. They had said the country was theirs and they were going to make her free. If they had fear in them, freedom could never be theirs. The strength that withstands all fear is derived from God. When Gandhiji said he knew no fear, it was not because he was a *mahatma*. He was not different from any of them. The only difference that there

¹ This paragraph is from *The Hindu*. What follows is reproduced from Pyarelal's "A Simla Diary" in *Harijan*.

² Vide "Statement to the Press", 4-5-1946 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-5-1946

³ *The Hindu* here has : "Gandhiji himself had never known what fear was."

⁴ What follows is from *The Hindu*.

might be between him and them was that he had, perhaps, more faith, more spirit of service, of sacrifice and of renunciation. All those would come to those who believed sacrifice and fear nothing, relying solely on God.

The Hindu, 9-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 19-5-1946

460. NOTES

NON-VIOLENCE AND KHADI

The Congress Constitution is undergoing a radical change. The supreme change that is desirable for the sake of avoiding untruth and hypocrisy is to remove the words “legitimate and peaceful” from the first article of the Congress Constitution as also the clause about khadi.¹ Experience shows that the people who form the bulk of Congressmen are not wedded either to truth and non-violence or to khadi. As an ardent lover of truth and non-violence and khadi as their symbol, I make bold to suggest that these clauses should go. It will be open to anyone to be truthful and non-violent and to wear khadi if he or she chooses to. Only there will be no deception practised on India or the world. Paradoxical as it may appear we shall be more truthful², more non-violent and better khadi-lovers with the suggested amendment than without. It should be remembered that I myself had at one time moved the removal of these clauses. I was glad I was defeated. It was wrong to be glad. I shall be sorry if my suggestion is rejected even now. Let it not be said of us that we prize hypocrisy above truth.

COCKTAIL PARTIES

We seem to be on the eve of attaining independence! Should we ape bad European manner and customs and still prize independence? It would be a sad day for India and the world, if the price we are to pay for independence is cocktail parties and the like. What do the famishing millions know of such parties? Let it not be said of us that our monied men were gay whilst those from whom they made money were famishing for food.

HARIJAN COOKS

A correspondent suggests that at the next session of the Congress all the cooks should be Harijans and to that end a corps of

¹ *Vide* “Constitution of the Indian National Congress”, 28-10-1934 and “Constitution of the Indian National Congress” sub-title “Qualifications

² The source has “healthful”.

Harijan cooks should be trained in the observance of cleanliness and the art of cooking scientifically and as behoves a poor country like ours. He would have this privilege and duty given to the Congressmen in the province in which the Congress session is to be held. After the session these cooks should be taken over by those Congressmen who can afford it and keep cooks. Any suggestion like this which shows in practice that untouchability is a thing of the past is to be welcomed. I would only add that Congressmen who endorse it need not wait for the session. They should from now take up Harijans not merely as their cooks but have them in all other capacities. What is more, let those who can afford it take Harijans in their families as their own children and give them proper training. All this can only happen if men and women are sincere in their professions and if the truth had gone home that under the garb of religion Hinduism is said to have consigned to untouchability their own kith and kin for no fault of theirs.

SIMLA, May 8, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

461. QUESTION BOX¹

Q. The Congress Constitution makes it incumbent on all its candidates standing for election to be habitual wearers of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. Does this not imply that they can only use that khadi which is certified by the A. I. S. A?

A. In my opinion it cannot be otherwise.

Q. Is a dealer in uncertified khadi eligible to hold office in a Congress committee?

A. It is beyond my conception as to how a dealer in uncertified khadi can be a Congressman, leave alone an aspirant, for holding office in any Congress Committee.

Q. You say that a dealer in uncertified khadi cannot even be a Congressman much less an office-holder. But what about those who are office-holders in the Congress and who deal in mill cloth and even sell foreign cloth?

A. My answer to the second question is equally applicable to the persons referred to in the third. It is for these very reasons that I have recommended the removal of the relevant clauses from the Congress Constitution.² Experience has taught us that we are unable

¹ The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak* 19-5-1946.

² *Vide* "Notes", sub-title "Non-Violence and Khadi"

to adhere to the rules in question.

SIMLA, May 8, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

462. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

CHADWICK, SMILA WEST,

May 8, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

The four Congress delegates¹ had a warm debate over the Cabinet Mission's suggestion². The foremost was that if the delegates accepted it, it was binding on them and its terms were binding on them and therefore the Congress unless the latter repudiated them. The same would be the case with the League. On the strength of what you told me last night³ I said they were binding on no one. The Constituent Assembly would be free to throw out any of the items and the members of the two delegations were equally free to add to or amend the suggestions before the Constituent Assembly. I added that they were meant only as a scaffolding by means of which the two institutions could be brought to the Constituent Assembly adumbrated in the draft. If you are able to confirm the above and are free to make a public declaration to that effect, the main difficulty would be over.

As to merits, the difficulty about parity between six Hindu majority Provinces and the five Muslim majority Provinces is insurmountable. The Muslim majority Provinces represent over nine crores of the population as against over 19 crores of the Hindu majority Provinces. This is really worse than Pakistan. What is suggested in [its] place is that the Central Legislature should be framed on the population basis and so too the executive. If this is considered unfair, an impartial non-British tribunal should award on this as on many other matters of difference otherwise incapable of adjustment. If these two points are cleared my way would be clear.⁴

¹ Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan

² *Vide* "Suggest Points for Agreement Between the Congress and the Muslim League"

³ For the report of the talk, presumably by Agatha Harrison, *vide* "Talk with Horage G. Alexander and Agatha Harrison", 7-5-1946

⁴ To this the addressee replied : "As to your first point the position as I see it is this : If the Congress and the Muslim League delegates agree to a certain basis for the new constitution they will be bound as honourable men to do their utmost to see

Instead of running down to you, I thought I should send this note, leaving you to decide whether we should meet before the Conference¹ or whether an exchange of letters should suffice. I am in your hands.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 187

463. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

SIMLA,

May 8, 1946

BHAI VITYOGI HARI²,

I have your letter. I do not remember what I had said. Those who were with me then are with you now; ask them. I do not recollect having said anything about those who get Rs. 50 and dearness [allowance] but there were some who got very little, say, Rs. 15. About them I can say something. It is possible that I am confusing Bhangi Niwas with something else. My memory should not be trusted. Would not Ramdas have written something about himself even at that time?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

that the form agreed upon is that adopted by the Constituent Assembly. To do less than that would be to go back upon their word.

As to the second point—equality at the Centre, I appreciate your difficulty though not that ‘it would be worse than Pakistan’. If this can be overcome by some form of international arbitration by agreement with the League there is of course nothing whatever to prevent such an agreement.”

¹ Which was being held from May 5 to May 12, 1946

² Editor, *Harijan Sevak*, 1933-40; Manager, Harijan Udyogshala, Delhi; President, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Karachi, 1946; Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1951-59

464. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SIMLA,
May 8, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi said at the outset that as it was Gurudev's¹ birthday he could speak on nothing but him.²

A picture of the poet had been put on the dais at the prayer gathering. Drawing the attention of the gathering to it, Gandhiji said that the inscription under it was the motto 'The light that never failed'. Gurudev's body was reduced to ashes but the radiance that had been within him was like the sun which would shine so long as life on this earth lasted. But the light he shed was for the soul as the sun's was for the body.

He was a poet and a literary star of the first magnitude. He wrote in his mother tongue and all Bengal is able to drink deep at the fountain of his poetry. Translations of his works exist in many languages. He was a great writer in English too, perhaps almost without knowing it. He had school education but he could boast of no university degree. He was just Gurudev. Our Viceroy had called him the Poet of Asia, a title that no one before him had had. He was also a world poet and, what is more, a *rishi*³.

He has left up the *Gitanjali*, the poems which brought him world fame. The great Tulsidas left us his immortal *Ramayana*. The renowned Vedavyasa left us a history of mankind⁴. They were not mere poets; they were teachers. Gurudev too wrote not only as a poet but as a *rishi*. Writing, however, was not his only gift. He was an artist, a dancer, a singer, with all the sweetness and purity that art in its finest sense should contain. His creative genius has also given us Santiniketan, Sriniketan and Visvabharati. These breathe his spirit and are a legacy not only to Bengal but to India. Santiniketan has become, as it were, a place of pilgrimage to us all. He was not, in his lifetime, able to make of these institutions what he had dreamed for them. What man can? Fulfilment of man's purpose is in God's hands. But they are monuments to his endeavour and are a constant reminder to us of

¹ Rabindranath Tagore

² This paragraph is from *The Hindu*. What follows is reproduced from Pyarelal's report "A Simla Diary" in *Harijan*.

³ Seer

⁴ Viz., the *Mahabharata*

the passionate love he had for his country and the service he rendered to her. You have just heard the national song he wrote, a song which has found a place in our national life. How often is the inspiring refrain heard from thousands of voices! It is not only a song but is also like a devotional hymn.

Gandhiji ended by exhorting the people to learn the lessons of love of the country, love of the world and selfless service from the noble example which Gurudev had left.

The Hindu, 10-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 19-5-1946

465. AYURVEDA AND NATURE CURE¹

Vaidya Vallabhram, Professor of Ayurveda and Vanaspati Shastra² writes :³

Cure through Ayurveda is based on the five elements. . . . *Pathya* (diet cure) is a scientific term of the greatest importance in Ayurveda. Its real meaning is that freedom from disease depends on a proper observance of the laws of nature.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the repetition of Ramanama and pure living are the best and the cheapest preventives of disease. The tragedy is that doctors, hakims and vaidyas do not make use of Ramanama as the sovereign of cures. There is no place given to it in current Ayurvedic literature except in the shape of a charm which will drive people further into the well of superstition. Ramanama has in fact no connection with superstition. It is nature's supreme law. Whoever observes it is free from disease and *vice versa*. The same law which keeps one free from disease applies also to its cure. An apt question is as to why a man who recites Ramanama regularly and leads a pure life should ever fall ill. Man is by nature imperfect. A thoughtful man strives after perfection, but seldom attains it, for he stumbles on the way, though unwittingly. The whole of God's law is embodied in a pure life. The first thing is to realize one's limitations. It should be obvious that the moment one transgresses those limits one falls ill. Thus a balanced diet eaten in accordance with needs gives one freedom from disease. How is one to know what is the proper diet for one? Many such problems can be imagined. The purport of all this is that everyone should be his own doctor and find

¹The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-5-1946.

² Botany

³ Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

out his limitations. The man who does so will surely live up to the age of 125.

Vaidya Vallabhram asks whether well-known home drugs and condiments can be included in nature cure. Doctor friends claim that they do nothing more than investigate the laws and act accordingly and that therefore they are the best nature-cure men. Everything can be explained away in this manner. All I want to say is that anything more than Ramanama is really contrary to true nature cure. The more one recedes from this central principle the farther away one goes from nature cure. Following this line of thought I limit nature cure to the use of the five elements. But a vaidya who goes beyond this and uses such herbs as grow or can be grown in his neighbourhood purely for service of the sick and not for money may claim to be a nature-cure man. But where are such vaidyas to be found? Today most of them are engaged in making money. They do no research work and it is because of their greed and mental laziness that the science of Ayurveda is at a low ebb. Instead of admitting their own weakness they throw the blame on Government and public men. Government is powerless to help those who through their own fault become helpless and thereby drag the name of Ayurveda in the mud.

SIMLA, May 9, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

466. HOW CAN VIOLENCE BE STOPPED?¹

Q. Some time back a military officer in Poona, who is about to return to England, said to me that violence was on the increase in India and would further increase as people were gradually turning away from the path of non-violence. "We in the West", he said, "not only believe in violence but our society is based on it. Several subject races have won their independence through violence and are today living in peace. We have discovered the atom bomb for stopping violence. The last great war is a case in point."² Continuing, the military officer said, "Gandhiji has shown your people the way of non-violence. Has he discovered any such power as the atom bomb which will at once convert people to non-violence and bring about a rule of peace? Cannot Gandhiji's 'atom bomb' stop people from following the path of violence? Ask Gandhiji to exercise his power over the people and tell them to give up all

¹ The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 19-5-1946.

² The Hindi here adds : "The world has seen how with the help of the atom bomb we stopped the bloody war in no time."

thoughts of violence and adopt his creed. If he cannot wean his people today from the terrible violence that is spreading all over the country, I tell you that he will live a disappointed man and his life's work will be ruined."¹

A. There is much confusion of thought in this question. The atom bomb has not stopped violence. People's hearts are full of it and preparations for a third world war may even be said to be going on. While it would be absurd to say that violence has ever brought peace to mankind it cannot either be said that violence never achieves anything.

That I shall have to repent if I cannot stop violence does not enter into the picture of non-violence. No man can stop violence, God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in His hands. Here material means cannot stop violence but this does not mean that material means should not be employed for the purpose. The deciding factor is God's grace.² He works according to His law and, therefore, violence will also be stopped in accordance with that law. Man does not and can never know God's law fully. Therefore we have to try as far as lies in our power. I hold that our experiment in non-violence has succeeded to a fair extent in India. There is, therefore, no room for the passivism shown in the question. Finally ahimsa is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal but ahimsa will never die. And the gospel of ahimsa can be spread only through believers dying for the cause.

SIMLA, May 9, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

467. KHADI SCIENCE SCHOOL IN BOMBAY³

Shri Vitthaladas Jerajani is one of those who will do his utmost to put into practice what he is once convinced is the right thing to do. When I returned home in 1915 from South Africa after 20 years' exile, he was at that time running a large swadeshi store in Bombay. I explained to him that he was dealing in what was 'swadeshi' only in name. It was not difficult for him to understand that he had been

¹ The Hindi here adds : "I hope you will clear the British officer's doubt."

² The Hindi here adds : "Even when it stops while material means are employed it will have stopped by God's grace. Yes, I will concede that God's grace is a conventional phrase."

³ The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-5-1946.

labouring under a delusion but it was not clear to him what he should do. Beyond pointing out the flaw I too was unable to give him practical guidance straightaway. But I could not remain content without making efforts to put into practice what I believed. As soon as possible I threw myself heart and soul into producing khadi and Shri Viththaldas started business in khadi sales. At that time all the khadi that was produced was sold in Bombay. Khadi weavers in the production areas could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The history of the gradual growth of khadi is very interesting but I may not dwell on it here.

Now that it has been realized that khadi merely as a commercial commodity has been a mistake, Shri Viththaldas has taken another step forward. I give below the gist of his account of his doings which he has described in a Gujarati letter to me :

I have already informed you that two out of the original four Khadi Bhandars in Bombay have been converted into teaching centres. Instead of windows dressed with attractive khadi for purposes of sales, people are treated to look at all the implements of khadi production beginning from cotton right up to yarn. Those who are tempted to gain practical knowledge enter the showrooms and are given instruction should they so desire. Up till now there are 209 pupils and the attendance is fairly good for learning all the processes. Shri Kakubhai has taken up the work with zest and is devoting all his time to it.

For weaving we could only get one place in Andheri where we have put up looms. Owing to the difficulty of procuring accommodation in Bombay, half the shop on Kalba-devi Road has been turned into a weaving centre also. The services of an expert have been obtained. It remains to be seen how far we can progress in this line.

During the war khadi sales mounted high owing to cloth shortage. Today also cloth for everyday needs is hard to get and other cloth has gone into the black market and fetches fantastic prices. Khadi is, therefore, still considered cheap and if it weren't for the fact that yarn currency even to a limited extent is in vogue we simply could not have met the demand nor could have coped with the rush on our stores. The danger of khadi going into the black market might even have been there.

Political awakening has always connoted a *pari passu*

increase in the demand for khadi and it is good that those who really believe in it and yet have been lazy about spinning will now have to take to the wheel. Conditions for teaching spinning are therefore favourable.

There is nothing striking about the figures given by Shri Jerajani. Those who think that the world is full of crazy people have every right to say that Bombay has its full quota of such folk. Men of faith believe that the world is the better for them. The man who strives for the impossible may be looked upon as a burden. But the crazy man who is possessed by some special idea is the crazy man who is prized by society. I place Shri Viththaldas in this category. To find even a few people in a pleasure-loving city like Bombay who realize the power of khadi is no small matter for satisfaction. Khadi will grow to its full height of course only when it is manufactured in every village and in every home and used there.

Just as Bombay is the foremost city where giving money in charity is concerned, so it can play a leading part in the difficult task of producing khadi. Who would not like Bombay to hold this coveted position? Shri Viththaldas and his colleagues are working hard for this goal. If they die in the attempt to bring their dreams to fruition their death will be worth while. They must, however, hasten slowly in order to avoid mistakes. They must, however, hasten slowly in order to avoid mistakes. If they are watchful and mend their errors at once all will surely be well with their work.

SIMLA, May 9, 1946

Harijan, 26-5-1946

468. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

SIMLA,
May 9, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your letter. Parting is such a sweet sorrow. I did feel moved to tears when bidding good-bye to you all, but soon calmed myself. My step, however, was perfectly right. I am experiencing its sweet fruits. I have no time to write at length about it.

Personally I would prefer Sita¹ and you going to Bombay. You

¹ Addressee's daughter

should now start making preparations. Your dharma is to return to South Africa. If you can but have faith that I am in God's hands, you will not even think about the matter.

I hope you don't find the heat there unbearable. I may know more today about what is going to happen now and how long I shall have to stay here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4948

469. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

SIMLA,
May 9, 1946

CHI. SITA,

I have your letter. I did feel sad to send you back; I did not like it at all, but that was my duty. So what has happened is good. You are sure to pass the examination. Why should you worry about the division? Is not the day for your departure to Kashi drawing near?

How is your health? What is the condition of your foot? It must not get bad. You should see to that. And you can.

How are your studies progressing? Do you read anything? How else do you pass your time?

You ought to master Urdu.

How is Sushila¹? Where is she? What are Ila² and Arun busy with?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4978

¹ Addressee's mother, sister and brother

² *ibid*

470. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SIMLA,
May 9, 1946

CHI. PYARELAL,

I am caught up in a lot of work. Whatever has happened is for the best. You should not work at the cost of your health.

I have understood about Vinod. Let us see what she does now.

I remember all about Mahuva. You need not send the letters to me. You had seen the letter I wrote, hadn't you ? There is no reply to that letter. Vinod can do a lot if she gets to understand. But let us leave everything in the hands of God. Let us make the best possible efforts. You did well to send me the Gujarati weekly. I shall not be able to read it before this letter is posted.

Let me know how many copies of the Urdu issue have sold, if any figures have been received. How did you like the types ? How did Dev react ?

I am enclosing with this a letter to Sushila. Read it and send it to her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

471. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SIMLA,
May 9, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I got your letter. I have had a long talk with Badshah Khan also. If my ordering you about could do any good I would do it right now. I can do no more than offer you advice. If you like it act on it; if you don't do as you please.

You must go to see Amtul. Your brother has died and if you do not go [to her] it would not be right.

Now there is no need for you to go to the Frontier Province. Akbar should go when he is completely free from his work at Samau.

Khansaheb says that Akbar should go only when he wants to go. Khansaheb is of course convinced that Akbar can do better work in the Frontier Province. You will write to me when you go to Indore how things stand there. Then I can advise you further.

I have written to you about Borkamata, haven't I?

Akbar's letters to me and Zohra are enclosed herewith. The envelope was addressed to Zohra. Inadvertently, my assistant here opened it. I read both the letters and gave them to Khansaheb to read. Now pass them on to Zohra.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 514

472. INTERVIEW TO U. P. I.

SIMLA,
May 9, 1946

As Mahatma Gandhi returned to his camp . . . after his $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours' interview with Sir Stafford Cripps, the United Press of India representative accosted him and asked for news relating to the latest development in the political situation. Gandhiji smilingly pointed to the weather outside and said :

Don't you see there is no more rain? The sky is clear of clouds and the storm which was raging has stopped.

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-5-1946

473. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SIMLA,
May 10, 1946¹

Mahatma Gandhi congratulated the audience again on the perfect quiet they had maintained during the prayer hour. He hoped that they would be as disciplined wherever they went, whether for prayer or for any other gathering. If after leaving here they became disorderly, noisy, and quarrelled with each other, then their quiet, he said, was but a mockery.²

He told them that the spirit of prayer must abide with them all the twenty-four hours, if it was a heart prayer and came not merely from the lips. The real peace of prayer could come to their hearts only if God entered therein. Then they would be the

¹ From *The Hindu*

² This paragraph is from *The Hindu*. The extracts from *Harijan* are reproduced from Pyarelal's report "A Simla Diary".

same outwardly as they were within. They would be honest, they would harbour no enmity against anyone, they would be truthful, they would cheat no one if they were in business.¹

Relating an incident of his youthful days, Mahatma Gandhi said how as a young man he had once gone into a small shop in Bombay and asked for a pen-knife. He was shown one priced at Re. 1-8. He thought Re. 1-8 was too much and bought the article at half that price. But on testing it, he found that it was not worth even a pice. He could not even sharpen his pencil with it.

If people are dishonest and cheat others in this or in any other way, they do not understand the meaning of prayer.

Gandhiji said he would like more and more persons to come to the prayer gatherings but only if they came in the right spirit and with listening ears, so that they may live up to weather good they might take from the worship.

It may take time for recitation to come from the heart even as a seed sown has to be nurtured and bears fruit only in due season. If the desire to have God within us is there, progress, however slow, is bound to be. Man cannot be transformed from bad to good overnight. God does not exercise magic. He too is within His own law. His law, however, is different from the law of the State. There may be mistakes in the latter but God cannot err. If He were to go beyond the limits of His law, the world would be lost. He is changeless, unchanging, unequalled, the same yesterday, today and for ever. His law is written on the tablets of our hearts.

They could become changed men and women, only if they had the desire of reform and if they were prepared for ceaseless endeavour.

The Hindu, 12-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 19-5-1946.

474. LETTER TO LORD WAVELL

CHADWICK, SIMLA WEST,

May 11, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 10th instant about salt.²

This is a fine instance of how the irresponsible mind works. You were good enough to tell me last Monday³ when I was silent that the British did not care for credit. When my silence was broken, the Cabinet Mission had come and we plunged into high politics. The

¹ The following paragraph is from *The Hindu*.

² *Vide* "Letter from Lord Wavell", 10-5-1946

³ On May 6. For an official version of the meeting *vide* "Letter with Lord Wavell and Cabinet Mission", 6-5-1946

corollary to your dictum seems to be that the British would not mind the discredit of any action.

In my opinion the notice¹ you have been good enough to send me is a discreditable affair. The only straight answer from my mind which thinks ever of the masses and is responsible and responsive to them would be to abolish the hateful monopoly and tax especially in these days of famine. But according to you this simple act of justice must be left to be done by your successor, the independent Government of India, whenever it comes into being.²

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 160-1

475. LETTER TO HAMPT

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

DEAR MR. HAMPT,

I have your long letter. It is difficult to give precise advice through communications. All I can say is that you should have a judicious fast under some medical observance, living when you feel really hungry on glucose-water with an ounce of juice of fresh limes, as often as your system requires it. Dates are contra-indicated. If you are able to take sufficient glucose you will sustain your strength and go through your work. Nothing else should be taken. The fast can be continued for a fortnight or longer under medical advice.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ *Vide* "Press Note"

² In response to this the addressee invited Gandhiji for a talk the same evening at 7 p. m.

476. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

SIMLA,
May 11, 1946

CHI. MANUDI,

I have your letter after many days. Were you busy or just lazy?

You are again blaming me for your own lack of confidence. If you have grown wise and never cry, if you don't care for what others say, who could stop you from coming here alone? Have you not yourself put the condition, "Who will teach me, and what?" If you have confidence in yourself, why need you ask that question? I do wish, of course, that Jaisukhlal¹ should be with you. I understand your explanation. It is sad that Jaisukhlal should take this view. Why should a person dedicated to public service care for sweet or bitter experiences? It is enough if one's heart is clean.

You may now do what seems best to you. I got J.'s letter about rationing. I am thinking of forwarding it to Bhavangar.

First send your annual report and then talk about a message.

I am glad that both of you keep good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of Gujarati : M.M.U./XXIV

477. LETTER TO AKBAR CHAVDA

SIMLA,
May 11, 1946

CHI. AKBAR,

I got your letter. I am enclosing Badshah Khan's letter. If you can find nobody to take charge of the work at Samau, you cannot leave the place. If, however, you think you can do better service in the Frontier Province, and if you have the courage, you should get ready to go there and that as early as possible. Do whatever is proper after taking into account all factors. What has happened to Mridulabehn's idea of deputing somebody?

Zohra has gone to Sevagram.

¹ Addressee's father

Amtussalaam was in Delhi but is now likely to have gone to Indore. Her brother Rashid Khan has expired.

Badshah Khan is with me. He will stay for some days more. The work here is not yet over.

I hope you are keeping good health. Do you find any time to read?

I have sent our entire family back to Delhi. Only Rajkumari is here, for her home is here.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 3239

478. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

CHI. A. S.,

I got your letter. Herewith a letter from Badshah Khan.

I had sent two telegrams to Begum Rashid. In my letters to you¹ I referred to her as Amtul. I had an impression that her name was Amtul. What is her name?

I have written to Akbar and advised him that he may go to the Frontier Province when he can free himself completely from Samau and if he really feels eager to go there. To start with, he should go alone. Afterwards, when he has settled down, he may send for Zohra.

You must have received my letter containing advice about [Begum] Rashid. I hope you are in good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 515

479. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

CHI. LILI,

Your postcard and letter are lying with me. I could not send you my blessings, for the card came too late. I have your letter of the

¹ Dated May 4 and May 9; *Vide* "Letter to Devprakash Nayyar", 4-5-1946 and 131.

6th today, the 11th. I am glad that you sat for the examination. Do not worry at all. Nothing is certain about me. Big people's affairs are always slow. I hope your health is good. All the people have left this place and gone back to Delhi and are awaiting me there.

Blessings from

BAPU

SMT. LILAVATIBEHN UDESHI
G. S. MEDICAL COLLEGE, LADIES' HOSTEL
PAREL, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 1024. Courtesy : Lilavati Asar

480. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. The fever seems to have left you completely. If you pass blood, you should take both hip-bath and friction-bath. Apply a mud-pack on the abdomen at night. As regards food, eat green leaves, cabbage, gourd, etc. Avoid *bajra*. Eat *rotlis* made from whole wheat flour and chew them thoroughly. Avoid salt. Eat whatever fruit is available. Avoid ghee and curds. You may have milk, but must avoid pulses. If you do this, you are bound to get well. Repetition of Ramanama must of course be kept up.

As regards Kanchan, I do believe her complaint to be justified. I clearly see that it is your dharma to settle down somewhere with her. If your self-control breaks, it will be you who will break it. She will neither resist nor tempt you. What more can you desire? What will it profit you to be afraid of yourself?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8393. Also C. W. 7212. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

481. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI¹

SIMLA,
May 11, 1946

CHI. KANAM,

I have your letter. Your handwriting is bad. Can't you at all write your Gujarati characters?

It is not good that you have no interest in spinning. If you read some literature on the subject you will come to feel that you may not neglect his dharma.

God alone knows when I shall be able to get away from here. No one else does.

I hope you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarlal

482. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SIMLA,
May 11, 1946

CHI. PYARELAL,

I receive your letters regularly. I have received two articles today. I have slightly corrected one of them. See the changes. I am sending the matter about salt as it is. Print it in two instalments or all in one go. That will then take up all the space. There is a short article by Shriman. Print that also.

A note about salt was to be issued from here, but it was bad. I wrote a letter. As a result, I have to go and meet someone today. I send you a copy of the letter.

The conference is also meeting today. Something more will be known.

Sushila's address is of course c/o Pyarelal Gupta. But now

¹ The letter is in the Devanagari

letters will not reach her. She will be leaving Bombay on the 13th, won't she ? Give her the letter when she arrives.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy : Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

483. *LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter about the theft. If you suspect Gopalarao take him aside and speak to him. It is certainly good to be independent of all servants but you will not be able to achieve it. After all we cannot carry on like this. The life of an ascetic is not for us. We try to approximate to it. Yes, it was a lapse on your part that you did not carry the key with you. To keep a cash-box and not to carry the key with you is as good as not keeping a cash-box. Hasn't Bhartrihari written that the rich live in fear of being robbed? I do not like your idea of undertaking a fast. It is another thing if we undertake one for our own lapse. But a lapse can be counteracted not by undertaking a fast but by not repeating the lapse. Secondly, the one who undertakes a fast in order to purify another who has committed a theft ought to be absolutely pure. There was no doubt negligence at the root of this incident. Find out what Kishorelal thinks about this.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 4554

484. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

SIMLA,

May 11, 1946

Interpreting the *bhajan* sung by Sucheta Kripalani Gandhiji said :

It is good to sing devotional songs in tune. But if we come to the prayers with the attraction of listening to good music alone we may overlook the meaning underlying the prayer. The best *bhajan* is one that is sung from the heart even if the style of singing is not

perfect.

Today's *bhajan* tells us that we are all citizens of the land in which there is neither sorrow nor suffering. You should not imagine that the reference is to heaven. The poet himself says that he is singing of the land in which we are living. This does not mean we have to wait for attaining perfection. Every one of us can create such a land within oneself if only one enthrones the God within. The world is after all made up of individuals. True, there are people of different races and colours, speaking different languages. How to live in such a world is exactly what the *bhajan* tells us. I do not know the composer¹ of this *bhajan* but I would advise those who have been truly moved by it to make a copy of the *bhajan* not for singing but to translate its ideas into practice in their own lives.

Those who come to attend prayers ought to carry something with them from here. Yesterday I was hurt to hear the noise created after prayers. It only means that my advice goes unheard. Such noise leads to scuffles and riots. Afterwards I felt that either I should stop speaking after prayers or the prayers should be conducted silently.

Silent prayer is the best prayer. It is only through peace and calm that we can establish communion with God. It was only during my tours in Assam and Bengal that I started speaking after prayers. People ought to contribute generously for Harijans.

Gandhiji asked people not to follow him to his residence for it hampered the task for which he had come there.

What is there to see in places which are all bound to perish. An earthquake may raze a palace to the ground whereas a hut may stand intact. You should remain calm even if others are restless. A person who has the strength of truth and non-violence, need not fear anyone. Peace and discipline alone can suppress unrest.

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 13-5-1946

¹ For the text of the *bhajan*, vide "Statement of Cabinet Delegation and Viceroy", 16-5-1946

485. *A MESSAGE*¹

[Before *May 12, 1946*]²

India and Ceylon should strive together for each other's
mancipation.

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 15-5-1946

486. *NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR*

CHADWICK, SIMLA,

May 12, 1946

Of course you join me when I leave Delhi. But I would not like
you to boil in Delhi.

From the original : C. W. 4215. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7851

487. *LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI*

SIMLA,

May 12, 1946

CHI. SUSHILA,

I suppose I must count it a favour that you wrote to me after so
many days. I understand about Durban. I don't think anything can
be done about it.

About marriage my views are definite. A girl must be allowed
to study till she attains the age of 20. She may then be married when
she feels the desire. If she wants to marry earlier and has grown
big enough for her age, we may help her. You may discuss the
matter often with Sita and not marry her till she herself wishes to get
married. The big mistake parents make is that they do not discuss this
matter with their children. I think they should talk with them as with
friends. It would be better if she draws no lesson from the experience

¹Appearing under the date-line "Colombo, May 14", this message was read out
by Somavir Chandrasiri "the day before yesterday" at the Indo-Ceylonese Cultural
Conference organized under the Ceylonese Poets and Writers Congress.

² *ibid*

of your family. One must observe and think for oneself. Tari¹ is undoubtedly a devoted worker. It is good that she keeps herself engrossed in that work.

Manilal must have arrived there now. I got his letter as well as Sita's.

A letter from Nagadi [*sic*] is enclosed. Manilal should do the needful about him. I am quite well.

It is not certain when I shall leave this place.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4949

488. *LETTER TO MANGALDAS*²

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI MANGALDAS,

I got your cheque for Rs. 100 which I am sending on to Sevagram.

M. K. GANDHI

MANGALDAS

SURAT, B. B. & C. I. [RLY.]

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

489. *LETTER TO PIROJSHAH P. DUMRI*

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI PIROJSHAH,

I got all that you sent. You know that I have dismissed my family. You could say I am left alone here. Rajkumari is here and some other friends. I see no point in publishing the correspondence regarding prohibition. You may, if you want, write independently.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

BHAI PIROJSHAH PALLONJI DUMRI

BHAVANAGAR

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ Addressee's younger sister

² The letter is in the Devangari script.

490. LETTER TO BABULAL SHANKARLAL¹

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI BABULAL,

You will find in *Harijan*² the reply to your letter. You must not accept defeat. When you go to collect slivers you can do spinning, carding and sliver-making and bring enough slivers to last a week. Find the rest in my article.

Blessings from
BAPU

BABULAL SHANKARLAL
BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

491. LETTER TO DURGASHANKAR

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI DURGASHANKAR,

Your letter is good. I am sorry that I cannot take your help from Jaora. I know the shortcomings. You will help me if you check the issues and continue to point out the errors to me.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

LALA DURGASHANKAR VAKIL
BAR ASSOCIATION
JEEVAN BASERA
JAORA, MADHAYA BHARAT

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ The letter is in the Devangari script.

² *Vide* "Slighting Swaraj"

492. *LETTER TO M. S. ANEY*

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI BAPUJI ANEY¹,

I have read your pamphlet with great relish and am glad to note your keen love for Sanskrit. Things are getting along fairly well here.

BAPU

SHRI M. S. ANEY, AGENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
11 STANMORE CRESELEY
HAVELOCK TOWN
COLOMBO, CEYLON

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

493. *LETTER TO P. N. BAJPAYEE*

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI BAJPAYEE,

I have your letter. How can the Boy Scouts work for the Shanti Sangh if they do not have complete faith in non-violence? If we can meet somewhere when I am a little free, we can have a further talk.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI P. N. BAJPAYEE
SCOUTS ASSOCIATION
WANLESS WADI
Via MIRAJ

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ (1880-1968); popularly known as Lokanayak; President, Barar Pradesh Congress Committee, 1921-30; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1941-43; resigned over Gandhiji's fast and Government's refusal to release him; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-48; Governor of Bihar, 1948-52; member of Lok Sabha, 1959-66

494. LETTER TO CARIAPPA

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI CARIAPPA,

I have your letter. I am not definite where I shall be staying. You will tell me everything whenever you happen to meet me. I hope your health is all right. I hope Veeramma¹ too is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

495. LETTER TO OMKARNATH

SIMLA,
May 12, 1946

BHAI OMKARNATH,

I have your letter and also the cutting about. . . .² I shall find out about it.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

OMKARNATH
LAHORE

From a copy of the Hindi : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

496. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

May 12, 1946

Referring to the spate of false rumours which filled the air, viz., that there had been a breakdown in the talks, that the Cabinet Mission were returning home without doing anything and Indian leaders would again return empty-handed as they did from the Simla Conference⁴ last time, Gandhiji said that this was not a conference like the one they had last year. If he understood the English language aright, the Cabinet Mission was here to find out how best they could implement their decision to quit, i.

¹ Addressee's wife

² One word is illegible here.

³ Reproduced from Pyarelal's "A Simla Diary"

⁴ Held in June-July, 1945; *vide*

e., remove their power from India. It was their duty, if they could, to try to bring about agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. The Conference was being held for that purpose. If people were united, no power on earth could have ruled over them but the tragedy was that they had their differences. But even if the Conference failed in its purpose, no one need be disappointed. Those who have faith in God must be patient and brave. Supposing they were going to be deceived, they must stand up and face the consequences bravely. Gandhiji said he had no reason to believe that the Cabinet Mission was here to deceive them. They were trying to leave in an orderly manner so that Indians may be able to live in peace. There was no need to worry. Man had to do his duty. God had given him strength and discernment to do so. But results were always in God's hands.

Last in their anxiety for their own future they might forget their duty towards those whom they had condemned as the lowest of the sweepers' quarters. The report which the latter brought him filled him (Gandhiji) with anger and grief. He would have loved to go there himself. Unfortunately he could not now negotiate hills and therefore could not walk so far to see them himself. He thought it a crime to sit in rickshaws especially for an able-bodied man. He disliked even a motor car. He wanted always to use his legs, the means of locomotion that God had given him. Last night he walked, but the hill seemed unending. It was impossible for him, much as he would have liked to do so, to live in the Harijan Nivas here. He had heard of it before and what Badshah Khan told him confirmed it, namely, that the quarters in which they were forced to live were not fit for animals, much less for human beings. Some of them had been to see him in the morning with a long tale of woe. It was the bounden duty of the residents of Simla to look into their grievances and have them redressed.

He had heard too that the Khadi Bhandar at Simla might have to be closed down, because the Simla public were too lazy and too ununderstanding to spin the requisite quota of yarn. He told them that he still maintained that swaraj hung on the thread of hand-spun yarn. Even if they got political swaraj, as they were going to, they would never be able to maintain it without khadi which was the truest symbol of non-violence. If they hoped to maintain swaraj through force, they were hopelessly mistaken. Someone stronger would come and wrest their freedom from them. It was in the hands of the public in Simla to keep the Bhandar going and he hoped they would do so. Punjabi women were the first to offer him yarn in the old days. Let them live up to their reputation. For himself, he would rather lose their money and close down every Bhandar, if need be, but swaraj never.

Harijan, 19-5-1946

497. A GOOD REMINDER

An anonymous friend has taken the trouble of collecting apposite extracts from the Book of Job and Psalms. As they are a perpetual reminder to all of us, I gladly give them below.¹ The moral I draw from the sheaf is that since man is only dust and at best grass, he had better pass the few moments he is on this earth in the service of his fellow creatures. I am hoping that the sender has not collected the Biblical verses to show the futility of all work, which is a doctrine of laziness and parasitism.

SIMLA, May 13, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

498. SLIGHTING SWARAJ?²

Since the decision that khadi could only be purchased by giving a certain quota of yarn came into being, it has become very hard for a man like myself . . . to find the requisite time for spinning. Nevertheless I have been spinning $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours daily in order to be true to my pledge. I had no slivers left the other day and, therefore, went to the khadi Bhandar to buy some. I was asked by the Manager either to come to the Bhandar in order to make my own slivers or do the carding there and make the slivers at home. Now it is impossible for me with my very limited living space to slivers at home nor has a man like me the time to go and make them at the Bhandar. I said, "Either give me slivers or else I shall have to give up spinning." I was told I was at liberty to do what I considered proper. . . .

The above letter³ requires an answer. The plight of the writer is the same as that of the many who live in the slums of Bombay. If our people were not so easily satisfied, the landlords of Bombay would not relegate poor families to one small living room each. Lakhs live in this way and thus make it possible for the rich to have their Malabar Hill and Chowpatty.

The spinning-wheel shows us the way to remedy these conditions. If this were not so, it would have no place in my life. A few people may carve out their way by the sword, but the crores cannot. We must not imagine that slums do not exist in London, or

¹ The extracts are not reproduced here.

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-5-1946.

³ Of which only extracts are reproduced here. *Vide* also "Letter to Durgashankar", 12-5-1946

Paris, or even New York. They do.

What will be the condition in Russia it is too early yet to say.

What then about the writer's difficulty? He says he finds time to spin $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours daily. A man who spins that much every day can accumulate more yarn than necessary for his khadi needs. It was a mistake on his part to want to buy slivers from the Bhandar. The Manager gave him the correct reply. Where there is room for spinning there is also room for '*tunai*' (new carding method) or '*punai*' (simpler than '*tunai*'). If there is no room for the wheel there is always the *takli*. The *Dhanush takli* too takes up less space. Whatever difficulties apply to the individual apply to all. The way to swaraj lies in not going under but in overcoming them. Necessity is the mother of invention.

Again, why should not the facilities for carding, slivering and spinning offered by the Khadi Bhandar be utilized? The new method of making slivers does not require much space and is not difficult.

The main requisite is for the spinner to have the faith that swaraj hangs on a thread of hand-spun yarn. It will not hurt the country's cause if the man who lacks this faith gives up spinning. Khadi does enable many poor persons to earn their living by spinning and weaving. But this cannot do the work for the crores.

SIMLA, May 13, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

499. VALMIKIS OF SIMLA¹

Readers must know that Valmiki is another word for Bhangi. Their living quarters in Simla are deplorable. No one bothers about them. Rajkumari² has tried her best for them for years but how much can a single person do? I am unable to get as far and see things for myself, but I requested Badshah Khan who is staying with me to go there. He gives me a piteous account of their hovels. Some of the Valmikis have been to see me and have placed other woeful complaints before me. I feel that if in the first instance their living quarters were rebuilt many of their other complaints too would be put right. It is the bounden duty of the public and the Municipality of Simla to remove this evil as soon as they can from their midst. They

¹ This appeared under "Notes" in *Harijan*. The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 19-5-1946.

² Amrit Kaur

can be no cleaner than the least clean among them.

SIMLA, May 13, 1946

Harijan, 19-5-1946

500. TELEGRAM TO SETH GOVINDDAS¹

SIMLA,

May 13, 1946

SETH GOVINDDAS

JABALPUR

MY CONDOLENCE. HE HAS GONE TO REST.

GANDHI

From a photostat : C. W. 10528

501. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SIMLA,

May 13, 1946

CHI. MIRA,

Your letters show that you are working away. May God crown your efforts with success.

Herewith is a letter for you to get read. You may send an acknowledgment. You will see also an interesting note about mango seed². It seems to be valuable. You may try the thing at once. I have eaten the seed after roasting it. But I never knew that it had the food value attributed to it.

We may leave for Delhi tomorrow.

Love.

BAPU

2 Encls.³

From the original : C. W. 6517. Courtesy : Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9912

¹ This was sent on the death of the addressee's father, Seth Jeewan Das.

² *Vide* "Mango Seed Kernel"

³ These are not available.

502. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SIMLA,

May 13, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Badshah Khan's letter is enclosed herewith. What does he write about Hanif¹? Sohanlal² had met Badshah Khan.

I hope the Begum is all right. I have forgotten her name. Will she continue to live there? Convey my blessings to her.

I hope your health is all right. I may go to Delhi tomorrow.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 516

503. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

SIMLA,

May 13, 1946

Monday is the last day of my prayer gatherings in Simla because I will be leaving for Delhi tomorrow. Yesterday I had told you that even if the Congress and the Muslim League failed to come to an agreement, it would not necessarily mean that all was over. After all, Hindus and Muslims are brothers. Some day they are certainly going to unite. The British Cabinet Mission has declared their intention to withdraw British rule from India. It is my firm conviction that it should and will be withdrawn. There is no cause at all for us to despair. Freedom is our life's breath and no other power can exercise that freedom on our behalf. We must, therefore, prepare ourselves for freedom. How we should do so, I have been telling you in the course of the talks here. So far we have been fighting for freedom with God as sustenance and support. Only with His help can we attain our freedom and preserve it.⁴

¹ A khadi worker from the Punjab

² A khadi worker associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh

³ It being Gandhiji's silence day, his written speech was read out after the prayers.

⁴ What follows is from *The Hindu*.

Mahatma Gandhi added he knew no other way. Nor had he the desire to know any other. He hoped the people would remain as peaceful and quiet as they had been during these prayer gatherings.

[From Hindi]

Hindustan, 14-5-1946, and *The Hindu*, 15-5-1946

504. LETTER TO LORD WAVELL

SIMLA,

May 14, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I have to thank you for your letter¹ of the 12th instant and for withholding the notice² about salt.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 162

505. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

SIMLA,

May 14, 1946

CHI. AMLA,

I got your letter. I am glad that you are happy at Dr. Khan Saheb's. Get fully restored in Srinagar now. I am leaving for Delhi today.

Blessings from

BAPU

DR. MARGARETE SPIEGEL

PARK HOTEL, NAGIN BAGH

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

From the Gujarati original : Spiegel Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ Which read : "As a result of my talk with you I have arranged that the commune about the salt tax should be held up. The Finance Member will inform the trade organizations who have complained, that there is no prospect of the salt tax being immediately abolished, and that they will receive reasonable warning of any such action. He hopes that this may ensure that adequate stocks of salt will still be available."

² *Vide* "Press Note"

506. LETTER TO SHYAMJI MARWARI

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

BHAI SHYAMJI MARWARI,

My good wishes on the occasion of the wedding. May the bride and the bridegroom be true servants.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 5211

507. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. My blessings to Mohan-Anasuya and to Sushi and her husband. May all four live long and dedicate themselves to service. Bablo¹ must be making progress. I hope Vanamala² is keeping good health. Send directly to Dr. Dinshaw the money on her account and write him a nice letter. I hope you are well. I am leaving today for Delhi. I do not know how long I shall have to stay there. What shall I write about the goings on here?

My blessings to all people there.
Sardar is with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

The arrangement about the money from Jivram Kothari³ may be made as suggested by you. That is, give half to the Vidyapith and half to the Harijan Ashram.

SHRI NARAHARI PARIKH

HARIJAN ASHRAM

SABARMATI, B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 9142

¹ Narayan, Mahadev Desai's son

² Addressee's daughter

³ Who died in June 1941. *Vide* "Telegram to Ishwarlal G. Vyas", 25-6-1941 and "Bhakta Jivram"

508. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

CHI. PRABHA,

At last I have a letter from you after many days. I am in God's hands. I have never been so alone before. The health is all right.

I want Jayaprakash to keep himself fit. It would be good if you could tell him that his speech as reported in the papers was not good. I don't want to involve you in this. I will myself write to him if I have the time.

I am leaving Simla today. I may have to be in Delhi for a week. Thence to Poona.

Newspapers have already reported why everybody went to Delhi.

I am well. How about you?

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. PRABHAVATIBEHN
C/O SHRI M. R. MASANI
ALTA MONT ROAD
CUMBALLA HILL
BOMBAY

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

509. *LETTER TO BALWANTRAI K. THAKORE*

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

BHAI BALWANTRAI,

After wandering from place to place *Panchoterme* reached me yesterday. I am glad you remembered me. Now that the book will travel with me I hope to look into it.

I expect you are well.

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

ACHARYA BALWANTRAI THAKORE
34 CHOWPATTY ROAD
BOMBAY 7

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

510. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

CHI. SHRIMAN,

Received your letter and some of the books of the Adabi Board¹. I have glanced through the books but I can say nothing about them. You will not send copies to all members, will you? Can we not read them at the meeting? If the meeting is called in August I may be able to attend it. You are not likely to call it in Poona or Uruli, are you?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Panchaven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 309

511. LETTER TO MUNSHI ISHWARSARAN

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

BHAI MUNSHIJI,

If a change of name can bring about change in work, you may change the name. Work comes first; and then why fuss about the name?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

MUNSHI ISHWARSARAN
HARIJAN ASHRAM
ALLAHABAD, U. P.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarelal papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

512. LETTER TO SUNDERLAL

SIMLA,
May 14, 1946

BHAI SUNDERLAL,

I have read what you sent me regarding the name 'Hindi'. I

¹ Literary Committee of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha

shall watch what you do.
I leave for Delhi today.

Blessings from
BAPU

PANDIT SUNDERLALJI
37 BAIKA BAGH
ALLAHABAD, U. P.

From a copy of the Hindi: Pyarela Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

513. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
May 15, 1946

MY DEAR AMRIT,

Well, I am having a holiday practically. The weather is not very oppressive. We are in the Bhangi Colony. Of course I miss you and do not. Only you must keep well. P[yarelal] will give you what news there is to give. Sudhir had a long chat with me. He will write to you. Agatha too had.

Love to you all.

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 4174. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7810

514. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

NEW DELHI,
[May 15, 1946]²

Echoing Badshah Khan's word at the end of the prayers, Gandhiji said it was a travesty of true religion to consider one's own religion as superior and others' as inferior. All religions enjoined worship of the one God who was all-prevalent. He was present even in a drop of water or in a tiny speck of dust.

Even those who worship idols, worship not the stone of which it is made; they try to see God who resides in it.

Similarly it was a libel to call the Paris fire-worshippers or sun-worshippers.

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter"

² From the reference to the Cabinet Delegation's announcement being made within "twenty-six hours". The announcement was made on May 16, 1946.

The Parsi hymn which Dr. Dinshaw Mehta had recited corresponded to the *Gayatri*¹ of the Hindus. It was nothing but puree worship of God. The various religion were like the leaves on a tree. No two leaves were alike, yet there was no antagonis between the branches on which they grew. Even so, there is an underlying unity in the varity which we see in God's creation.

Speculation as to the contents of the impending announcement of the Cabinet Mission had reached a feverish height with the return from Simla of the Mission and other members of the Tripartite Conference. Friends had been asking, remarked Gandhiji, as to what the message was likely to contain. He did not know, nor did he speculate. It was no use giving thought as to what it would contain. A man of prayer could not do otherwise. Good or bad, they would know all in another twenty-six hours. It would then be open to them to accept or reject it. Instead of looking outwards let them inward and ask God what their duty was in either event. For him and them in the meanwhile, it should be enough to know that Cabinet Delegation had come all the way leaving their hearth and home to find out in what manner British rule was to end and when the last British soldier was to leave India, and not whether or not to leave India. It was necessary for them to find out whether the Congress and the Muslim League could be brought together. British rule had separate them and if they (the Cabinet Mission) failed it was small wonder. They were bound to come together soon after the British hold on India had demonstrably ceased. The Cabinet Delegation's concern was to quite India without a moment's delay.

But supposing the reverse happens they will be the losers, not we. We have chosen the path of self-suffering. We rise through our suffering. That is nature's law. He who clings to his sordid self or family interests loses. Man is sent into the world to perform his duty even at the cost of his life if necessary. We must therefore be braced for any suffering that may come in the performance of duty.

All of us, Hindus and Mussalmans, constitute an integral whole. If someone errs all must suffer for it. God has so ordered this world that no one can keep his goodness or badness exclusively to himself. The whole world is like the human body with its various members. Pain in one member is felt in the whole body. Rot in one part must inevitably poison the whole system. Let us, therefore, cease to think in terms of individual and think in terms of the whole country. We must put faith in God and be careful for nothing. We hold our destiny in our own hands and no one but ourselves can make or mar it.

Harijan, 26-5-1946

¹ A Vedia *mantra* invoking the creative energy of the Sun

515. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
May 16, 1946

CHI. AMRIT,

Wrote a letter yesterday.¹

Sudhir is down with fever. Shanti² is in attendance. Horace³ and Agatha are in and out. We shall all know tonight what the mountain in labour has brought forth.

Brailsford⁴ and his wife were here at 6 p. m. yesterday and Stevens at 8 p. m. Nothing of any importance.

The weather is not too oppressive today. If you are keeping well, don't try to rush here unless I tell you to. They all need your presence there.

Dr. Dinshaw administered an enema. So after dinner, the remaining water involuntarily came out and spoiled my sheet and *dhoti*⁵ and my sleep in the bargain.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 4175. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7811

516. MESSAGE FOR INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA⁶

[May 16, 1946]⁷

It is my firm conviction that Indians in South Africa must not submit to the latest social legislation⁸ of the Union. They have at their disposal the matchless weapon of satyagraha which was successfully used for the first time in South Africa.

The Pioneer, 4-6-1946

¹ This sentence is in Hindi.

² Sudhir Ghosh's wife

³ Horace Alexander

⁴ H. N. Brailsford

⁵ The source has "dhotar".

⁶ This was sent through Sorabjee Roustomjee Parsi who, according to *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17-5-1946, met Gandhiji on this date.

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Land Tenure Legislation

517. NOTE TO SORABJEE R. PARSI

NEW DELHI,
May 16, 1946

CHI. SORAB,

I have no objection if the amount collected in South Africa for the Kasturba Memorial is utilized to set up a maternity hospital in Johannesburg, if the donors so desire.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

518. LETTER TO MANIBHAI DESAI

NEW DELHI,
May 16, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I have already written and given instructions for sending you the money.

Even if Dhirubhai has to attend to his own affairs from time to time and Paramanand has not settled down to work, [as] his wife remains ill, I hope you will still cling to the place and have confidence that you will be able to manage somehow. Persuade Balkrishna also to consider this.

1. You may give the Trust any name you like. Follow Dinshaw's wishes in the matter.

2. The main activity will remain what it is just now.

3. You need not bother about the future at all.

The budget seems all right. I do not have time to go deeper into it. I have barely been able to find time to write even this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2727. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

519. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,
[May]¹ 16, 1946

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I hope you are calm at Indore. Will the Begum stay on there? Will she receive any pension from the State?

I hope you are in good health.

I came here yesterday. I cannot say how long I shall have to stay here. It may be at least for a week. I am quite well.

Kanaiyo² and Abha³ are with me. Today Munnalal returned from Harijan Nivas. He has no fever now. He had some quinine.

Dr. Sushila will come tonight. Rajkumari has stayed behind in Simla. She will reach here on Tuesday.

Herewith three letters from the Ashram and one from Zohra from Uruli Kanchan. Did you pass on Akbar's to Zohra?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 509

520. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 16, 1946

The after-prayer address on the following day, was devoted to preparing the people's mind for a just and dispassionate examination of the forthcoming announcement.⁴ Gandhiji said he did not propose to say anything about the announcement. It would be in their hands in a couple of hours.⁵ He asked the gathering

¹ The source has "April", obviously a slip. From the references to Gandhiji's arrival in Delhi and to Begum Rashid Khan it is evident that this letter was written in May.

² Kanu, son of Narandas Gandhi

³ Amrita Lal Chatterjee's daughter, married to Kanu Gandhi

⁴ For the Cabinet Delegation's announcement, vide "Statement of Cabinet Delegation and Viceroy", 16-5-1946

⁵ This and the preceding sentence are from *The Bombay Chronicle*. What follows is reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter".

not to allow themselves to be led away by prejudice or hearsay, but to study the document itself carefully and then form their own opinion. He deprecated the habit of borrowing opinions from newspapers.

Newspapers should be for the study of facts. They should not be allowed to kill the habit of independent thinking.

The English language, he warned them, was a difficult medium to master. Even he, after his residence for nearly twenty years among English-speaking people, could not claim to have full mastery over it. They should therefore study the document in Hindustani to be able to grasp its full meaning.

Whether you like the Cabinet Delegation's announcement or not, it is going to be the most momentous one in the history of India and therefore requires careful study.¹

As men of prayer it further behoved them to put themselves entirely in the hands of God and pray to Him to illumine and purify them so as to fit them for understanding the document aright.

The Bombay Chronicle. 17-5-1946, and *Harijan*, 26-5-1946

521. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NEW DELHI,
May 17, 1946

CHI. AMRIT,

The W[orking] C[ommittee] met today, meets again tomorrow.

Sudhir became very ill yesterday. Today he has been taken to Joshi's Cottage Hospital. Nothing serious as yet. Herewith cutting from *The Statesman*!!!

Hope you are well.

Sushila came in last night.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 4174. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7812

¹ This paragraph is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

522. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

May 17, 1946²

Taking as his text the song³ sung by Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani about “the land that was without sorrow and suffering,” Gandhiji proceeded to examine the Cabinet Mission’s pronouncement in the light of the ideal set forth in that song. How far was Cabinet Mission’s pronouncement calculated to enable them to realize that ideal?

The poet says we are citizens of a country in which there is neither sorrow nor suffering. Where is such a country to be found in this world? I confess, throughout my wandering I have not come across such a country so far. The poet has latter described the condition for the attainment of that ideal state. It is easy to observe them individually. For one who really and truly is pure at heart, there is no sorrow or suffering. but it is a difficult state for the millions to attain. Nevertheless we want India to be such a country.

He had asked them on the previous day to examine independently of other people’s opinions the statement of the Cabinet Delegation when they saw it. They should examine it from the point of view of a country which would be without sorrow or suffering. He would give them his own reactions. He, however, did not want to contradict himself by asking them to follow his ideas if they did not appeal to them. Everyone should think for himself and herself. They were to weigh opinions and adopt only those they had assimilated.

He had glanced at the document casually on the previous night as soon as it was received. He had read it carefully in the morning. It was not an award. The Mission and the Viceroy had tried to bring the parties together but they could not bring about an agreement. So they had recommended to the country what in their opinion was worthy of acceptance by the Constituent Assembly. It was open to that body to vary it, reject it or improve upon it. There was no ‘take it or’ business about their recommendations. If there were restrictions, the Constituent Assembly would not be a sovereign body, free to frame a constitution of independence for India. Thus the Mission has suggested for the Centre certain subjects. It was open to the Assembly by the majority vote of Muslims and non-Muslims separately, to add to them or even reduce them. And it was open to the Assembly to abolish the distinction which the Mission had felt forced to recognize. Similarly about grouping. The provinces were free to reject the very idea of grouping. No province could be forced against its will

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal’s “Weekly Letter”

² From *The Hindustan Times*, 18-5-1946

³ Vide “The Hymn”

to belong to a group, even if the idea of grouping was accepted. He instanced only two things to illustrate this point. He had not exhausted the list of things which seemed to him to be open to objection or improvement.

Subject to the above interpretation, which he held was right, he told them that the Mission had brought forth something of which they had every reason to be proud.

There were some, he proceeded, who said the English were incapable of doing the right thing. He did not agree with them. The Mission and the Viceroy were godfearing as they themselves claimed to be. It was beneath their dignity as men to doubt a person before he was proved to be untrue to his work.

The late Charlie Andrews was very much of him an Englishman who had died slaving for India. It would be grievously wrong to doubt in advance every one of his countrymen.

Whatever the wrong done to India by the British rule, if the statement of the Mission was genuine, as he believed it was, it was in discharge of an obligation which they had declared the British owed to India, namely, to get off India's back. It contained the seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering.

Harijan, 26-5-1946

523. INTERVIEW TO U BA PE¹

NEW DELHI,
May 18, 1946

Mahatma Gandhi is assuring him of help from India said:

India cannot breathe freely if her neighbouring countries like Burma or Ceylon are slave countries.

The Hindustan Times, 20-5-1946

¹ U Ba Pe, member, Burmese Legislative Council, told Gandhiji that at the time of the separation of Burma, the Burmese people were made to understand by the British that Burma would get the same measure of freedom as India would, and the Burma would get it at the same time. He sought Gandhiji's help in Burma's struggle.

524. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

NEW DELHI,
May 18, 1946

Pursuing the theme of the previous day's song², Gandhiji asked. . . how they were to convert India, which was today the home of sorrow and suffering into the ideal country about which the poet had sung. The reply he said was furnished by the song about the sermon of the trees which had just been sung.

In the song one is asked to take the lesson from the trees which themselves suffer the fierce rays of the sun and give shade to those who take shelter under them. To those who throw stones at them, they respond by dropping fruit. That is true philanthropy. To learn that philanthropy we are asked in that song to go to Harijan. Today society has condemned Harijans to a life of fifth and degradation. That is not their shame but our shame. Society has treated them as untouchables and condemned them to live in ghettos and yet they continue to render invaluable service to society for a mere pittance. It was open to them to take more lucrative avocations as some of them have done. The fact that vast majority of them have chosen not to, resounds to their credit.

If they could show that spirit of service in spite of their ignorance and backwardness, he asked, how much more spirit of selfless service and sacrifice ought the so-called *savarna* classes to show?

He had remarked in his previous day's address that he saw the germs of the realization of the ideal envisaged by the poet in the song that had been sung on that day, in the announcement of the Cabinet Mission. But it was subject to the condition that it meant what it said. He likened that announcement to a promissory note, whose worth depended entirely on its genuineness and validity.

If the promise inscribed on a promissory note is not honoured, the note is worth nothing and fit only to be torn to pieces and thrown away.

Truth meant everything to him. He had said that he would not purchase even swaraj at the cost of truth, because swaraj so purchased would be illusory. It was his hope and prayer, in which he invited the audience to join him, that the announcement of the Cabinet Mission would be finally honoured in letter and in spirit, and that God

¹ Reproduced help in Burma's struggle.

² Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-5-1946

would help the members of the Mission to discharge their promissory note even as He had done for His devotees in days of old.

Harijan, 26-5-1946

525. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

BETI A.S.,

I have your two letters. I am writing this at 6 o'clock in the morning in the midst of other work.

My advice is, do whatever you think is your duty. You are away from me, so how can I know what is right and what is not? Try and persuade your sister-in-law¹. Your brother is dead; now do whatever you can about it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 517

526. *LETTER TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE*²

May 19, 1946

DEAR LORD,

In order to enable me the better to advise such of those who seek my advice, I venture to put before you my difficulty as follows:

You say in your answer to a question: "If they do come together on that basis, it will mean that they will have that basis, but they can still change it if by a majority of each party they desire to do so."³ You can omit the last portion of the sentence as being superfluous for my purpose.

Even the basis in para 15 of the State Paper⁴ is a recommendation. Do you regard a recommendation as obligatory on any member of the contemplated Constituent Assembly? There is such a ring about the quotation. Can those who enthusiastically welcome the

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 20-5-1946

² Along with his letter dated May 18, 1946, the addressee had enclosed "a transcript from the question and answers" at the Press Conference on May 17.

³ *Vide* "Lord Pethick-Lawrence's Press Conference", 17-5-1946

⁴ *Vide* "Statement of Cabinet Delegation and Viceroy", 16-5-1946

Paper but are discerning enough to repudiate, for instance, grouping, honourably seek to educate the country and the Constituent Assembly against the grouping clause? If your answer is 'yes' does it not follow that the Frontier and Assam province delegates would be free to abstain from joining the sections to which they are arbitrarily assigned?

I know the legal position. My question has reference to the honourableness of opposition to grouping.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 190-1

527. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

VALMIKI MANDIR,

READING ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

May 19, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

I promised to send you a copy of the summary of my speech to the prayer gathering last evening.² This I do now herewith. I enclose herewith a translation of the hymn of the previous evening³. Of course you will share it with Lord Pethick-Lawrence or whomsoever you like.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government 1944-47, p. 191

¹ For the addressee's reply, *vide* "Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 2-5-1946, also "Letter from Abul Kalam Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 20-5-1946 and "Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to Abul Kalam Azad", 22-5-1946

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 18-5-1946

³ *Vide* "The Hymn"

528. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

VALMIKI MANDIR,
READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

CHI. MANILAL,

I have been meaning to write to you for many days, but could not. Today I have decided to dictate a letter. I am dictating this while having warm water and honey. I had a long discussion with Sorabjee. He broke down and cried. He says he can never have, has never had and will never have any share in doing you harm. He looks upon you as a blood-brother. He will, or course, see you. Do what you think best. He wishes that Omar Sheth's son should be taken on the Trust.¹ If you agree, I have no objection at all. He is of the view that it will not look well if there is no Muslim on the Trust. His view does appeal to me. Show him the names which we had considered. I have an impression that you had suggested Medh's² name and that I had accepted it after some hesitation. Sorabjee says that it will produce a very good impression if his name is not included. He says that Medh's having the spirit of service in him does not mean that he is qualified to be a trustee. Think calmly over this suggestion. Sorab must have left by now. The pressure of work is daily increasing here. The heat is sometimes bearable and sometimes unbearable. The same is the condition of the mind.

I hope Sushila is in good health. Sita, Arun and Ila must be fine. Sita's [examination] result must be out. I am sure it is good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4980

¹ Phoenix Trust
² Surendra Medh

529. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Sushila told me all about you. She said that it was highly desirable that you should go to some hill station for the sake of your health. I should of course be glad. It would be good if you could do some such thing. Go to Panchgani or Almora or Mussoorie or Nainital or Abu. I think you can easily get accommodation in Abu. The air and water there are said to be good. I have had no experience of the place myself. I tell you what I have heard.

I am very busy. I am dictating this. There you have to take up a new task.

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

530. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

BETI AMTUL,

No doubt a misfortune has befallen you. Forget it and do whatever service you can.

Blessings from
BAPU

BIBI AMTUL SALAAM
C/O BEGUM RASHID
RASHID MANZIL
INDORE

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 749

531. *LETTER TO HOSA RASHID KHAN*

NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

BETI HOSA,

I have sent you wires in reply to yours. Amtul Salaam says you

are brave. I think you cannot add glory to Rashid Khan's name by shutting yourself in but you can, by rendering service.

Do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 748

532. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

NEW DELHI,
May 19, 1946

Gandhiji said that if they had carefully followed and assimilated Badshah Khan's remarks² they would know that the object of prayer was not to please God, who does not want our prayers or praise, but to purify ourselves.

God is omnipresent. There is not an atom in the universe without His presence. The process of self-purification consists in a conscious realization of His presence within us. There is no strength greater than that which such realization gives.

It had pleased him to see so many of them coming to attend the prayers, he said. But it would hurt him if he found that they had come just for fun, or, what would be worse still, to hear his political views. As a rule politics should not be permitted to intrude upon prayer. He, however, could not avoid referring to current political topics sometimes in the course of his after-prayer discourses because life could not be divided into water-tight compartments. Presence of God had to be felt in every walk of life. If they thought that as soon as they left the prayer ground they could live and behave anyhow, their attendance at the prayers was useless. If that interest in the prayers was genuine, the next day's prayers, he hoped, would be as numerous as on the day he spoke, although he would not be speaking on account of his Monday silence.

Harijan, 26-5-1946

¹ Reproduced from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter"

² Badshah Khan's theme was that the object of prayer was to purge ourselves of all dross and baseness.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM C. RAJAGOPALACHARI¹

MADRAS,

February 21, 1946

MY DEAR BAPU,

What you said about me publicly has, like the churning of the ocean, brought up all the poison, and you have to swallow it like Rudra! I know you can. But it has made my old longing for peace too strong to resist. I haven't the strength to stand it any longer. I bore much all these days. I struggled hard to work without minding the calumniators but I give it up now. I have often asked myself the question : 'Is it worth while?' I feel it is not. I must yield to the longing of my heart not to be misunderstood. Why should I be thought to be seeking 'power' when it is not the case at all? I must prove it, although the proof is one that leaves no good behind but the mere proof.

Now that the urgent job of selections for the legislature is all over, let me leave the scene.

For my place (the University seat) there is Sambamurti available. He has not been given any seat nor did he apply. The position he has occupied in Andhra's public life for over a quarter of a century, the unrivalled manner in which he fulfilled his duties as Speaker and his drive and energy are well-known, and it would be wrong to leave him out. He can easily take my place in the nomination for the University.

I beg of you to approve of my action and pass it on at once to Sardar so that he may do the needful. Nominations must be officially filed before 1st March.

Love.

C. R.

[PS.]

I slept over this last night and am posting it this morning.

C. R.

Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50, Vol. 2, pp. 219-20

¹Vide "Letter to Vallbhbbhai Patel", 26-2-1946 and "Letter to C. Rajagopalachari", 1-3-1946

APPENDIX II

VALLABHBHAI PATEL'S MESSAGE TO FOREIGN PRESS¹

BOMBAY,

March 4, 1946

Being a witness to the recent happenings in Bombay, I can say, nothing like it has happened within this generation. The destruction of property was wantonly thoughtless. There is no doubt that what happened was a direct outcome of the lessons of the war that has only officially closed, and an echo of what is happening in the West.

The inequality which still seems to reign supreme and which it was hoped would die out, was galling for the Indian Ratings and resentment of distinction between Europeans and Indians made them impatient to the point of hurling what was bound to be a futile defiance on the part of an ill-armed few against overwhelming odds fully armed.

The populace, whose sympathy has always been with the fighters against imperialism, readily joined hands and brushed aside the wise counsels of leaders who love liberty no less than they.

It was not without the greatest difficulty that I persuaded the Ratings to surrender unconditionally, giving them at the same time the assurance that whatever was just in their cause would be championed by the Congress, that so far as was humanly possible, full justice would be done and that there would be no victimization. I am only hoping that the authorities will not hark back to old, worn-out methods and senselessly insist on false prestige.

Those who seek to uphold imperialism and perpetuate inequalities can ill afford to talk of prestige, much less of vindicating it in the present awakening and consequent determined opposition of which the recent events were convincing evidence.

As a confirmed believer in the method of truth and non-violence adopted by the Congress for the past quarter of a century, I deplored the destruction of property, incendiarism, stopping of locomotives and insult and injury to whitemen, but they must not be used so as to postpone the declaration of independence even by a day.

The national Congress will, of course, insist on the observance of truth and non-violent ways by the people but insistence on these ways will lie in the mouths of those who have constantly denied both or either in their dealings especially with exploited peoples such as those of India.

We have been looking forward to the coming of the official Deputation and

¹ *Vide* "Message to Foreign Press", 5-3-1946

only hope that it is coming with the determined purpose of withdrawing British rule from all India and laying the foundations for a lasting friendship between Great Britain and India while there is yet a moment left. Let not history record that it was too late.

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-3-1946

APPENDIX III
*SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN DEPUTATION'S MEMORANDUM
TO THE VICEROY¹*

NEW DELHI,
March 12, 1946

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, the undersigned, Sorabjee Rustomjee, Sooba Rama Naidoo, Azumshah Ahmed Mirza and Ahmed Sadek m. kajee, delegates of the South African Indian Congress, duly appointed at its seventeenth session of the Conference held in Cape Town from the 8th to 13th February, 1946, together with members co-opted, being South African Indians at present in India, under authority of the resolution of the Conference, respectfully beg to submit to you this statement on the proposed legislation, as announced by Field Marshal Smuts, in Union Parliament on 21st January, 1946, when he made known the intention of the Union Government to introduce legislation this session adversely affecting Indians in Natal and the Transvaal.

2. We are deeply grateful to Your Excellency for receiving us at short notice in spite of your multifarious pre-occupations.

3. The present intention of the Government of the Union of South Africa will, if carried out, degrade us to a status of inferiority against which we have put up a fight more definitely since 1893, the year in which an attempt was made to disfranchise the Indian community as such in Natal. We then looked upon it as a slur not only on the Indians in Natal but also on the Mother Country. Then there was no Union of South Africa. The Cape had practically no Indian question worth the name. Orange Free State had banished the few Indian traders it had, and prided itself on its thorough anti-Asiatic policy. The Transvaal had a sprinkling of Indian traders, hawkers and others. The "location" system, later known as segregation, had its rise there. The whites in Natal had deliberately, and for their own sake, invited the large number of indentured Indians for their sugar and tea plantations and other industries. In their wake followed the traders and others, and the Indian population today is therefore a composite one.

4. One would have thought that the advent of Union would mean the union of

¹ *Vide* "Draft Memorandum to Viceroy", 8-3-1946 and "Statement to the Press"

all the races of South Africa, i. e., the African (the Bantu), the European and the Asiatics (primarily and principally Indians). What a noble tradition such a union would have been for the world! But it was not to be. On the contrary, the Union became an anti-African and anti-Asiatic combine. Every year of the progress of the Union has definitely marked the progress of this combine, and the strenuous opposition to it by the Indian settlers and their descendants, as will be clearly seen by reference to the Appendix A hereto attached.

5. We ask Your Excellency to approach the question from that standpoint and no other. The threatened legislation adumbrated by Field Marshal Smuts, which has hastily brought the delegation from South Africa, is a very large step, perhaps the largest yet made, in the process of consigning the Asiatics to permanent inferiority. The wedge has now extended into all-round inequality and inferiority. Thus there are zones of segregation, one of which the whites are reserving for themselves in order to force by legal compulsion the segregation of the other races. God has made man "one great human family". The white races of South Africa would make of it three separate parts based on colour.

6. Bad enough as the threatened land legislation is, the prospective franchise legislation is worse. It is a mockery of franchise and a poignant reminder of the low status to be accorded to us—so low that we are not to be deemed even fit enough to choose one of our own as our representative.

7. We have come all the way from South Africa not to seek protection of individual or property rights, dear as both are, but we have come definitely to ask Your Excellency and the people of the Mother Country to appreciate the fight for equality of status, which is theirs as much as ours, and to give us as much help as possible for you and them to give. What is attempted to be done in South Africa is a denial of the brave declarations made by the British and even the Field Marshal himself.

8. It has given us much pleasure to learn that the withdrawal of the British power in India in favour of elected Indian representatives is imminent. Then may we ask whether it is not Your Excellency's double and special duty to enunciate your stand in favour of equality and, so far as possible, enforce it in no uncertain terms?

9. The announcement of the intention of the Union Government to introduce legislation so alarmed the Indian community that the South African Indian Congress at its Conference aforesaid resolved to send a deputation to Field Marshal Smuts. This deputation made representations to him not to proceed with the intended legislation, and to convene a Round Table Conference of the Union Government and the Government of India in fulfilment of the recommendation of the Natal Indian Judicial Commission made in March 1945. This request was refused by him, whereupon the Conference, after deliberating at great length, adopted the following resolution :

CAPE TOWN,

February 12, 1946

This Conference of the South African Indian Congress, after having heard the report of the deputation that waited on the Prime Minister, expresses its grievous disappointment at his refusal to abandon the proposed legislation and to convene a Round Table Conference between India and South Africa.

This conference interprets this refusal as the very negation of the principle of solving human problems by negotiations and mutual discussions and as indicating a legislative design of repressing the community and settling its fate at the altar of political expediency and sacrificing it to appease extreme white-reactionaries in this country. The legislation dealing with land tenure and communal representation to be introduced by the Prime Minister, which is totally unacceptable, is an insult to the national honour and dignity of the Indian nation.

This Conference of the South African Indian Congress, having regard to the Prime Minister's refusal, resolves to mobilize all the resources of the Indian people in this country in order to take every measure possible to secure the lapsing of the Pegging Act and to oppose the proposed legislation of the Government by :

1. Sending a deputation to India :

- (a) to urge the Government of India for convening of a Round Table Conference between the Governments of India and South Africa;

- (b) failing which to request the Government of India (i) to withdraw the office of its High Commissioner in South Africa, (ii) to apply economic sanctions against South Africa;

- (c) to carry out a campaign of propaganda in India to secure the fullest support of India's millions;

- (d) to invite Indian leaders to come to South Africa.

2. Sending deputations to America, Britain and other parts of the world.

3. Proceeding immediately to prepare the Indian people of South Africa for a concerted and prolonged resistance, the details of which this Conference instructs its Executive to prepare for submission and action to its constituent bodies.

10. We would, therefore, ask Your Excellency to use your influence to secure the holding of a Round Table Conference between the two Governments to settle, in the words of the Natal Indian Judicial Commission, "all matters affecting Indians in South Africa". But should your efforts in this connection unhappily fail, then we ask, in terms of our resolution herein before embodied, to withdraw the office of the High

Commissioner for India in the Union of South Africa and to enforce economic and political sanctions. We are not unaware that they may mean very little material loss to South Africa. We know that counter-measures will cause us hardship. But our loss we would count as nothing compared to the moral value of the enforcement of the sanctions.

*We have the honour to be,
Your Excellency's obedient servants,*

SORABJEE RUSTOMJEE (LEADER)

S. R. NAIDOO

A. S. M. KAJEE

A. A. MIRZA

The History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. II, Appendix III, pp.
cxxxviii-cx1

APPENDIX IV

LETTER FROM SECURITY PRISONERS¹

DUM DUM CENTRAL JAIL,

January 17, 1946

MAHATMAJI,

We offer you our allegiance—to you personally for your ideal and methods and to you as the leader of the nation. . . . We had liquidated the Jugantur Party and joined the Congress without any party reservation. . . .

We started working honestly and sincerely; and our doubts and differences melted away particularly in view of the ever-developing policy of the Congress during the War. But we were arrested in May 1941. . . . Just after our arrest we had some correspondence with you. You then wrote : “I have no difficulty in accepting your limitations of non-violence. If worked honestly, it will automatically expand.” Now we can say, we have no difficulty in accepting your non-violence—not only as the best means for achieving Indian revolution but also for saving the common man of the world as against the rising world Fascism based on naked violence. . . .

We have been working in and with the Congress since 1921—of course retaining a second love sometimes dormant and sometimes dominant. In 1938 we outgrew that and made the Congress our only vehicle for serving the cause of Indian independence. Now we believe your method and programme is the only right way to be followed. . . .

¹*Vide* “Letter to Sir Frederick Burrows”, 10-3-1946. Only extracts are reproduced here.

We hope, the moment of the psychological break-away from the past world not be allowed to slip away and, under your inspiration and insistence, every effort would be directed to organizing the masses on the basis of your 18-point programme.

After our release we shall be working with the outlook stated above. We shall try to stay with you for some time before we start work here. In our future work we shall seek your guidance and help. . . .

Before concluding we must say a few words regarding our detention. The Government plea of terrorism is wholly false. Even before our arrest, Sir Nazimuddin, then Home Minister, personally told us his police reports had confirmed his personal information that we were doing nothing but Congress work. This was barely two months before our arrest. In 1943, as Premier, he made almost the same statement in the Assembly. This bogey of terrorism is simply a police trick—to serve a double purpose—to misrepresent us to the public and thus to create difficulties for work, and secondly to keep a broad hint that terrorist groups are still active so that guileless and sincere young men may be duped, and an atmosphere of terrorism kept up to serve imperialist purposes as against the Congress programme. . . . There has been no case of terrorism in Bengal since 1934, and it is simply insulting our intelligence as well as our patriotism to say that we are thinking—or for that matter any other political group is thinking—of terrorism at this hour of the day.

Yours sincerely,

ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

BHUPENDRA KUMAR DATTA

AND FRIENDS

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 311-3

APPENDIX V

CLEMENT ATTLEE'S SPEECH¹

March 15, 1946

I find from our friends in this House who had been out to India and returned, from letters received from Indians and from Englishmen in India of all points of view, complete agreement on the fact that India is today in a state of great tension and that this is indeed a critical moment. At the present moment the idea of nationalism is running very fast in India past to the present position. The temperature of 1946 is not the temperature of 1920, 1930 or even 1942. The slogans of earlier days are discarded. Sometimes words that seemed at that time to Indians to express the height

¹*Vide* "Interview to United Press of India", 16-3-1946 and "Interview to H. N. Brailsford", 17-3-1946

of their aspirations are set on one side and other words and ideas thrust forward.

I would like today, therefore, not to stress so much the differences between the Indians, but let us all realize that . . . there is this underlying demand among all the Indian people It is worth remembering . . . a nation of 40,00,000 people that twice sent her sons to die for freedom . . . should herself have freedom to decide her own destiny (cheers).

My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain that freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide, but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith a machinery for making that decision.

There you have met with the initial difficulty of getting that machinery set up but we are resolved that a machinery shall be set up, and we seek the utmost co-operation of all Indian leaders to do so.

India herself must choose as to what will be her future situation and her position in the world. Unity may come through the United Nations or through the Commonwealth but no great nation can stand alone by herself without sharing what is happening in the world. I hope that India may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantage in doing so, but if she does, she must do it of her own free will, for the British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free people.

If, on the other hand, she elects for independence—and, in our view, she has a right to do so—it will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible. . . .

We want to set up an Interim Government—one of the purposes of the Bill which has been discussed today—to give the Viceroy greater freedom in order that in the period which is to elapse while a Constitution is being worked out, you may have a government enjoying the greatest possible support in India. I would not like to fetter the Viceroy's decision in any way in regard to the choice of portfolios. . . .

I am hoping that statesmen of Britain and of princely India will be able to work out a solution of the problem of bringing together the various constituent parts. . . . I do not believe for a moment that the Indian princes would lag behind in the forward march of India. . . .

I am very well aware of the minority problem in India. I think all Indian leaders are realizing more and more that need for getting a settlement. . . and I believe that due provision will be made for them in the Constitution.

With regard to the treaty, we are not going to hand out for anything for our own advantage which would be to the disadvantage of India. . . .

In the mass of Asia, an Asia ravaged by war, we have here the one country that has been seeking to apply the principles of democracy. I have always felt myself that political India might be the light of Asia. It is most unfortunate at the time when we have to deal with these great political issue . . . we have very grave anxiety over India's food supply. . .

Whatever we can do to assist, we shall do. My colleagues are going out to India resolved to succeed, and I am sure everyone will wish them Godspeed.

The Indian Annual Register, 1946, Vol. 1, pp. 130-2

APPENDIX VI

CABLE FROM J. C. SMUTS¹

CAPE TOWN,
March 21, 1946

MAHATMA GANDHI
POONA

I MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR INTEREST AND YOUR KIND MESSAGE OF FRIENDSHIP WHICH IS WARMLY RECIPROCATED. INDIAN DIFFICULTIES IN NATAL HAVE BECOME MUCH MORE ACUTE IN RECENT YEARS AND NOW HAVE TO BE URGENTLY DEALT WITH TO PREVENT DETERIORATION FROM WHICH INDIANS MAY BE GREATEST SUFFERERS. REPEATED LOCAL CONFERENCES WITH INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PRODUCED NO SOLUTIONS AND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE WITH OUTSIDE POWERS IS NOT POLITICALLY FEASIBLE. AS REGARDS PROPOSED LEGISLATION CONFEREMENT OF POLITICAL STATUS ON INDIANS HAS BECOME HIGHLY EXPEDIENT AND IS GREAT STEP FORWARD EVEN THOUGH REPRESENTATION IS BY EUROPEANS UNDER SOUTH AFRICA ACT. TO ALLAY FEARS OF FURTHER PENETRATION BILL PROPOSES DEMARCATION OF FREE AREAS IN NATAL WHERE INDIANS AND OTHERS CAN BUY AND OCCUPY LAND FREELY AND QUESTION OF INDIAN SEGREGATION DOES NOT ARISE. DEMARCATION TO BE MADE BY JOINT BAOARDS ON WHICH INDIANS ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED. ALTHOUGH BILL CURTAILS RIGHTS OF INDIANS TO BUY AND OCCUPY ANYWHERE IN NATAL IT IS ESSENTIALLY NOT UNFAIR IN

¹*Vide* "Cable to J. C. Smuts", 18-3-1946 and "Cable to J. C. Smuts", 22-3-1946

INTENTION OR EFFORT AND WILL PROVIDE WORKABLE BASIS FOR INDIAN DEVELOPMENT AND RACIAL PEACE FOR MANY YEARS. AS SUCH I COMMEND IT TO YOU WHO KNOW HOW GREAT ARE THE DIFFICULTIES IN MAINTAINING HARMONY AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN[S] OF ALL RACES. I ASSURE YOU OF THE FRIENDLY SPIRIT IN WHICH I AM ACTING IN A SITUATION WHICH MAY EASILY GET OUT OF CONTROL. THIS IS FOR YOUR ENFORMATION AND NOT FOR PUBLICATION. I SEE NO HARM HOWEVER IN STATEMENT THAT YOU AND I HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY IN COMMUNICATION OVER THIS MATTER IF YOU CONSIDER IT DESIRABLE.

SMUTS

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 94

APPENDIX VII

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA¹

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress are of opinion that the disabilities of the Indian settlers in South Africa constitute a blot on humanity and a slur on the civilization of the West. As the submission to His Excellency the Viceroy of the Indian deputation from South Africa shows, the disabilities are an unbroken tale of progressive prejudice against Asiatics defined as “any Turk and any member of a race or tribe whose national home is in Asia but which does not include any member of the Jewish or the Syrian race or a person belonging to the race or class known as the Cape Malay”, and of broken promises and declarations. A civilization that requires for its protection a series of legal enactments imposing political and economic restrictions on Coloured and Asiatic peoples must contain seeds of future wars and its own destruction.

The Committee are of opinion that the contemplated breach of trade relations between India and the Union of South Africa is the mildest step that the Government of India could have taken. The Committee would ask the Government of India forthwith to withdraw their High Commissioner, if the Union Government would not suspend the proposed legislation, pending the convening of a Round Table Conference between the two Governments to consider the whole policy of the Union Government against non-white peoples of the earth.

The Committee are painfully surprised to find Field Marshal Smuts, the

¹ *Vide* “Statement to the Press”

Premier of the Union, dismissing, on the untenable plea of regarding the proposed anti-Asiatic Bill as a domestic affair, the right of the Indian Government and, by parity of reasoning, of the other Allied Powers of friendly intervention. The Committee hold that at this time of the day it is not open to any State, however powerful it may be, to refuse to listen to the public opinion of the world as voiced through its different States with reference to any legislation regarded by them as of an inhuman character or as amounting to a slur on the self-respect of the races comprising such a State.

The Committee venture to advise the victorious Allies to take notice of the contemplated action of the Government of South Africa inasmuch as the late war would have been fought in vain, if now the persistence by the Union Government of South Africa in the bar sinister against Asiatic races and Coloured people inhabiting that sub-continent is maintained.

To the Indian Deputation from South Africa the Committee would say that whilst they (the Committee) and, indeed, the whole of India, irrespective of parties or communities, are with them in their just struggle and would lend them all the moral weight they can, they should realize that the brunt of the unequal struggle will have to be borne by them, and the Committee feel assured that the Indians in South Africa will worthily carry out the example set by them years ago of vindicating their self-respect and that of the Motherland by the noble rule of self-suffering.

The Committee would, however, fain hope, even at the eleventh hour, that in the place of the indefensible law of the jungle, which the policy as revealed by the contemplated legislation enunciates, the Government of the Union of South Africa and its white settlers would listen to reason and the appeal of the moral law by which mankind lives.

Harijan, 24-3-1946

APPENDIX VIII

VICEROY'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW TO GANDHI¹

April 3, 1946

I thought the interview with Gandhi, naked except for a dhoti and looking remarkably healthy, was rather a deplorable affair. The Secretary of State began with his usual sloppy benevolence to this malevolent old politician, who for all his sanctimonious talks has, I am sure, very little softness in his composition. He began with the demand for the abolition of the salt tax, which he led up to by a lot of rather hypocritical sob-stuff. (In the five years I have been in the Government of India, I have never heard from anyone but Gandhi a suggestion that the salt tax was really oppressive, and it brings in nine crores; but Gandhi wants it be removed

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Purshottamdas Thakurdas", 23-3-1946

as a sop to his vanity, because he went to prison over it 15 years ago.)¹ He rambled on in his usual rather vague way, approaching the Pakistan issue, by the way of his drunken son who had become Muslim for a while in the hope that it would cure him of drink; spoke of his efforts to meet Jinnah by Rajagopalachari's formula, and his Bombay talks; and finished with the meant-to-be plausible proposal that Jinnah should be asked to form a Ministry—the catch being that he would be subject to the Hindu majority in the Central Assembly (I had heard this idea put forward before). As usual Gandhi refused to be pinned down to details. The interview closed by a little speech of Secretary of State expressing 'penitence' for Britain's misdeeds in the past !

Wavell—The Viceroy's Journal, p. 236

APPENDIX IX

NOTE ON INTERVIEW TO CABINET MISSION²

Secret

April 3, 1946, 4 p.m.

The Secretary of State said that what the Delegation would like best would be to have Mr. Gandhi's advice as to what he would like to see happen, especially in regard to the position as regards the Muslim League. Mr. Gandhi said that he would rather such a question should be put to the authorized representatives of the Congress. He had come, in reply to the invitation sent to him, to help and not to hinder and what he was most anxious about was that there should be the right atmosphere. He had asked in writing for certain action which would let the people feel that independence was coming.

The Cabinet Delegation would have a much greater measure of difficulty to contend with than any other mission to India. If they meant business, he would advise them to take action which would produce a hearty friendship. This could not be done without the release of the prisoners now in British custody. The flowers of the Indian nation were in prison—whether they were violent or non-violent did not matter, but if the Delegation was sincere, it was bound to release them. Jayaprakash Narayan was one of India's most learned men. For the same reasons, the salt tax should be removed. Salt should be free for the poor man. The humanitarian clause introduced by Lord Halifax as a result of Mr. Gandhi's movement in

¹ In the source, Penderel Moon explains : "The tax on salt, which dated back to long before the advent of the British Raj, was so light that no individual was conscious of it as a burden. But its abolition was one of Gandhi's fads, and he had made defiance of the Salt Laws and illegal manufacture of salt—its manufacture was a Government monopoly and the tax was included in the price at which it was sold to the public—the main feature of his Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930."

² *Vide* "A Note", 3-4-1946

1930 had worked well in some places. But whatever the legal difficulties were, the tax could be removed, and a message of independence be brought to every village in India. He was very sorry, he had received a letter from Mr. Abell saying this could not be done. It had been written, if he might say so, unthinkingly. Much taxation had been introduced by the Viceroy for war purposes, and he could as easily remove this salt tax.

Mr. Gandhi said that he had passed 18 days with Mr. Jinnah. He claimed to be a sincere friend of the Muslims, but had never been able to appreciate the Pakistan which Mr. Jinnah says he means. Mr. Jinnah had never in concrete terms given a definition of Pakistan. His Pakistan was a sin which he (Mr. Gandhi) would not commit. The substance of Pakistan as he understood it was independence of culture and a legitimate ambition. In Rajagopalachari's Formula he (Mr. Gandhi) had given concrete shape to a proposal to meet this demand. He differed from Rajagopalachari, but when the latter produced his Formula, he was on his last legs and said that he accepted it.

If this was what Mr. Jinnah meant, he accepted it and did so in writing. Mr. Gandhi's conception of Pakistan is there in concrete form. If that were put into shape and all the snags removed, it was to form the basis for negotiations and, unless he was reasoned into it, he could not go further because beyond that Pakistan is an untruth.

The two-nation theory is far more dangerous. The Muslim population is a population of converts—only a microscopic minority are not. They are all descendants of India-born people. Jinnah is sincere but his logic is utterly at fault especially as a kind of mania possesses him. He himself was called a maniac and he, therefore, honoured Jinnah for his mania. In 18 days Mr. Gandhij failed to be convinced of this two-nation theory. He asked Jinnah whether his own son who had gone over to the Muslim religion changed his nationality by doing so. Mr. Gandhi's Formula did not solve the difficulty unless we could get agreement. But why should the Delegation worry? They must lie on the bed they had prepared and this situation is a legacy of British rule. Wrong does not become right to give it another lease of life. If you have undone the past, you must write on a clean slate and cannot have two nations or two Constitution-making Bodies. The difficulty would not be solved if the Muslim League refused to join the Constitution-making Body. After having exhausted all friendly resources, if you feel a stage must arrive when you feel you must say that there shall only be one Constitution-making Body, you must take the risks of that. There must be a considerable interim period. What is to happen in the period and what is to happen to your promise? Let Mr. Jinnah form the first Government and choose its personnel from elected representatives in the country. The Viceroy would appoint them formally but, in fact, Mr. Jinnah would choose. If he does not do so,

then the offer to form a Government should be made to Congress. After all, it is no light responsibility. The food situation is most serious, and you will not be able to deal with this famine without producing a psychological effect on the people. The best administrative organization will not help without this.

Mr. Gandhi said, in reply to questions, that there were two formulae of his, one by Mr. Rajagopalachari and the other in his correspondence with Mr. Jinnah which had been published. The Interim Government must be absolutely national. Mr. Jinnah could choose who he liked for his Government. They would be subject to the vote of the Assembly from which they were drawn. He would not mind the Council being responsible to Lord Wavell, if there were honest conventions. The Secretary of State said that, of course, Mr. Jinnah in existing circumstances had not got a majority in most of the Legislatures. If he had to choose Ministers to be responsible to Provincial Legislatures, most of them would have to be drawn from parties other than his own. Mr. Gandhi said, it was inescapable that the Congress had a majority in most of the Legislatures. His idea was that the members chosen from the Provincial Legislatures would be transferred to the Central Legislature, places being made for them by arranged resignations. They would then be responsible to the Central Legislature. The secretary of State said that, even so, the Legislature would be, of course, very predominantly Hindu. If Mr. Jinnah were not prepared to form a Legislature on this basis, the Congress could be called upon to do so.

Mr. Gandhi said, he did not underrate the difficulties of the situation which the Delegation had to face. If he were not an irrepressible optimist, he would despair of any solution.

The Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, pp. 116-8

APPENDIX X

VICEROY'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW TO GANDHI¹

Tuesday, April 9, 1946

In the afternoon, Gandhi came to see me about the salt tax. He professed to be coming purely as a friend of Britain, so that the British would get the credit of removing this unjust tax before the National Government came into power and did so. The old humbug, I wonder whether he suspects that a National Government would do nothing of the sort and that the British are easier to bounce. I refused, naturally, to commit myself in any way, and merely said, I would look into the matter. (He had sent Amrit Kaur to see Q. and try to influence her in helping bounce me.) He then asked for the release of Jayaprakash Narayan, whose wife is apparently one of his followers ('adopted daughter', he called her).

¹ *Vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 8-4-1946

I did not commit myself, though I expect we shall have to release him shortly. Gandhi then started on the I.N.A. and I told him exactly what the I.N.A. were—the weaklings and cowards of those captured in Malaya—and what folly it had been for Congress to make heroes of such men and to neglect those who had remained true in spite of starvation, ill-treatment and torture. When we parted, I gave him a warning that the threat of mass movement by Congress was a dangerous weapon, there were still a great many thousand British soldiers in India who did not subscribe to his doctrine of non-violence, and might be very violent, if British lives or property suffered. He took this with a grin, and was very friendly throughout.

Wavell—The Viceroy's Journal, pp. 241-2

APPENDIX XI

LETTER FROM G. RAMACHANDRA RAO¹

I and my co-workers have been trying this method of residing and eating with the Harijans for the last five or six years. Our experience proves that it is an efficient method to remove the social isolation of the untouchables. But our work is spreading slowly. If a man like Bapuji took it up, as he did at Bombay, it is bound to gain wide publicity and attract more workers to the method.

In this connection, another suggestion might be considered. Side by side with the mixing up, an attempt also might be made to discourage the use of labels of caste and creed which raise imaginary barriers between man and man. Not only should the practice of untouchability go, but the Harijan should not be allowed to continue a Harijan; he should be united with the general stream of humanity. Similarly the Hindu and Muslim differences might be solved by discarding the labels. Such an attempt will no longer keep the form of communal harmony, but it would lead to the growth of one humanity. Communal harmony presupposes the existence of communities. In one humanity no communities exist. Though a powerful personality like Gandhiji might harmonize communities for a while, when the personal influence weakened, the communities would clash again. So a permanent solution of communal differences is the growth of one-humanity outlook rather than communal harmony.

The growth of one-humanity requires the rejection of communal labels. Perhaps even the rejection of the labels of religion would involve a change of the belief in god, for every denominational label is associated with faith in a particular form of god. But, though every religion talked only of one god, in practice, however, belief in god always deteriorated into sectarianism and fanaticism because god is a falsehood. So atheism is the most suitable attitude for the establishment of one humanity.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to G. Ramchandra Rao", 9-4-1946

In order to set up happy human relations, communal harmony is the utmost limit to which the theistic mind can be stretched inasmuch as belief in god has to be somehow preserved. But communal harmony is beset with definite drawbacks; so the desirability of atheism as the best means to establish one humanity and thereby to lay strong foundations for permanent peace in human relations might be considered.

An Atheist with Gandhi, pp. 47-8

APPENDIX XII

WOODROW WYATT'S NOTE ON DISCUSSION WITH GANDHIJI¹

1. He thinks that the Cabinet Mission has come with the intention of getting off India's back. Their function here is to devise a means of doing it gently. He agreed that it should also be their function to precipitate a situation in which Indians must decide the future structure of India themselves.

2. It would be wrong, if the three Cabinet Ministers were to imagine that they could arrive at a just and fair solution of India's problems. They cannot, and it is not their affair.

3. If the British were to make a decision, and impose it, it would be overturned as soon as they had gone.

4. Pakistan is a British creation. (Incidentally, so is the famine.) He agreed that it would be much better for Congress to concede Pakistan than for the British. If Congress conceded it, it would be something much more glorious.

5. He thinks there may well have to be a blood-bath in India before her problems are solved. He would urge non-violence on Congress but does not expect them to observe it. The only thing he expects from Congress in the event of civil war is that they will fight decently and take one tooth for one tooth, and not a hundred teeth for one tooth as the British do.

6. The Interim Government should be formed on the basis of the Central Legislature; members of the Central Legislature should nominate the members of the Executive Council. Nominated members of the official block must be left out of the picture. If the Central Legislature nominated people who were not members of the Central Legislature, then seats would have to be found for them in the Central Legislature.

7. He would urge on Congress that they should offer seats on the Executive Council to the Muslim League.,

8. If the British do not wish to accept the nominations of Congress, then they should accept the nominations of the Muslim League. He would then tell Congress that they must play fair with the Muslim League.

¹ *Vide* "Discussion With Woodrow Wyatt", 13-4-1946

9. He agrees that it might well be unfair for the British to form an Interim Government and not give it its support. They should certainly advise it in any case.

10. He thinks it would be reasonable to announce that after a certain date there will be no British support for the Interim Government so forcing the Interim Government to solve India's internal problems before that date.

The Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, pp. 261-2

APPENDIX XIII

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S SPEECH¹

The world is very ill. This is the time when hatred is rife in the world and when many mighty branches of the human family, victors or vanquished, innocent or guilty, are plunged in bewilderment, distress or ruin. Two fearful wars in our lifetime have torn the heart out of its grace and culture.

Measureless injury has been done to much that the 19th century would have called 'Christian civilization', for all the leading nations have been racked by stresses which have blunted their sensibilities and have destroyed their agreeable modes of social intercourse.

Only science has rolled forward, whipped by the fierce winds of mortal war, and science has placed in the hands of men agencies of destruction far beyond any development of their commonsense or virtue.

In a world where over-production of food was formerly from time to time a problem, famine has laid its gaunt fingers upon the peoples of many lands and scarcity upon all.

The psychic energies of mankind have been exhausted by the tribulations through which they have passed and are still passing. It is not only bloodletting that has weakened and whitened us.

The vital springs of human inspiration are, for the moment, drained. There must be a period of recovery. Mankind cannot, in its present plight bear new shocks and quarrels without taking to altogether cruder and primordial forms.

Yet we do not know that the hatred and confusion which are found will not confront us with even harder trial than those we have so narrowly and painfully survived.

In many countries, where even united efforts would fall short of what is needed, party strife and faction is fomented or machine-made and skeleton fanatics rave at each other about their rival ideologies.

All the while, the ordinary folk of every country show themselves kindly and

¹ *Vide* "Independence"

brave and serviceable to their fellow men. Yet, they are driven against one another by forces and organizations and doctrines as wantonly and remorselessly as they ever were in the ages of absolute emperors and kings.

There never was a time when breathing space was more needed, a blessed convalescence, a truce of God and man.

Harijan, 5-5-1946

APPENDIX XIV

SUGGESTED POINTS FOR AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE¹

1. There shall be an All-India Union Government and Legislature dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications, Fundamental Rights and having the necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects.

2. All the remaining powers shall vest in the provinces.

3. Groups of provinces may be formed and such Groups may determine the provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

4. The Groups may set up their own Executives and Legislatures.

5. The Legislature of the Union shall be composed of equal proportions from the Muslim-majority provinces and from the Hindu-majority provinces whether or not these or any of them have formed themselves into Groups, together with representatives of the States.

6. The Government of the Union shall be constituted in the same proportion as the Legislature.

7. The constitutions of the Union and the Groups (if any) shall contain a provision whereby any province can by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten yearly intervals thereafter.

For the purpose of such reconsideration a body shall be constituted on the same basis as the original Constituent Assembly and with the same provisions as to voting and shall have power to amend the constitution in any way decided upon.

8. The constitution-making machinery to arrive at a constitution on the above basis, shall be as follows :

A. Representatives shall be elected from each Provincial Assembly in proportion to the strength of the various parties in that Assembly on the basis of 1/10th of their numbers.

B. Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps", 8-5-1946

C. The Constituent Assembly so formed shall meet at the earliest date possible in New Delhi.

D. After its preliminary meeting at which the general order of business will be settled, it will divide into three sections, one section representing the Hindu-majority provinces, one section representing the Muslim-majority provinces and one representing the States.

E. The first two sections will then meet separately to decide the provincial constitutions for their Groups and, if they wish, a Group constitution.

F. When these have settled it will be open to any province to decide to opt out of its original Group and go into the other Group or to remain outside any Group.

G. Thereafter the three bodies will meet together to settle the constitution for the union on the lines agreed in paragraphs 1-7 above.

H. No major point in the Union constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the Assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour.

9. The Viceroy shall forthwith call together the above constitution making machinery which shall be governed by the provisions stated in paragraph 8 above.

The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. VII, pp. 452-3

APPENDIX XV

TALK WITH HORACE G. ALEXANDER AND AGATHA HARRISON¹

Strictly confidential

May 7, 1946

[G.] Two sides to talk—may be a favourable side but whole of talk left unfavourable impression on me.

Idea is at any cost to please Jinnah—struggled hard to show this not proper thing.

An attempt to prevent civil war—and civil war at any cost. “We want to prevent civil war coming”—but this can’t be prevented if hearts are not together.

Just now something should be imposed is thought.

Hatred is rampant—I have done the utmost in inducing faith—even if one is not inclined to believe the evidence. Hold that nothing is lost by this belief—in spite of all that is said “I told you so”, etc.

He recounted steps taken to bring conference—Pethick-Lawrence’s 27th letter and the replies of Azad and Jinnah. The formula was only to “start discussion”.

Asked by Horace Alexander, “What did you advice?” Gandhiji said, “Don’t

¹ Notes of which, presumably were jotted down by Agatha Harrison. *Vide* “Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps”, 8-5-1946

think of an award.” Patel had reminded him that Attlee had definitely stated there would be no such thing. He had advised them to pick up one party in which they believed and persuade them whichever party had the greater justice and rightness on its side; then they should deliver the goods and say, ‘We trust you with power.’ This might be the Muslim League. If justice and right not on the Muslim League side then deliver the goods to the major party.

Here the Sardar said he did not know how they would prevent civil war by this method. “They seem to have come to an agreement with Jinnah to do anything to placate him. We took Attlee’s speech [in good faith] otherwise we should not have come.”

Gandhiji said that a better interpretation was they did not want to impose a formula—that they sincerely believed that Jinnah had come round. Patel said they were impressed with fact that Jinnah could create trouble. In effect they were saying, ‘If you want to avoid civil war—you must agree’. This was an incitement.

Gandhiji said the Ministers admitted that they had sinned and that because of this they were here. Gandhiji said he felt this should be publicly stated.

Regarding what Horace and I should do Gandhiji said, “Watch and pray”; that it would be dangerous to build on his account of the talk last night that his conversations were based on a fear. Therefore for us to act on the account he had given would be wrong. He had challenged them and they were sending along [*sic*].

From a copy : Gandhi Nidhi Files. Courtesy : Gandhi National Museum and Library

APPENDIX XVI (A)

LETTER FROM LORD WAVELL¹

VICEROY’S CAMP, INDIA, (SIMLA),

May 10, 1946

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

The Finance Member reports to me that rumours about a possible reduction or abolition of the salt duty are almost certain to cause a salt famine in certain areas unless immediate steps are taken to prevent it. Merchants and wholesale dealers are abstaining from placing orders with the salt manufacturers lest they be caught with large stocks on which they have paid duty, but which they may be able to sell only at a lower duty-free rate. Strong representations have been received from the Bombay salt merchants and Shilotries Association on the subject.

2. To prevent a salt famine, which would of course be a serious matter

¹ *Vide* “Letter to Lord Wavell”, 11-5-1946

for the poor, Government propose to put out a Press Note of which I enclose a copy.

3. I am sure you will appreciate that we cannot avoid taking this action.

Yours sincerely,

WAVELL

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47 pp. 159-60

APPENDIX XVII (B)

PRESS NOTE

Complaints have been received by Government that rumours to the effect that the salt duty may be reduced or abolished have sown doubt and uncertainty in the minds of traders and manufacturers to such an extent as to discourage the purchase of salt, thereby hampering trade and slowing down manufacture and, in view of the present chronic transport difficulties and of the further difficulty of transporting this commodity during the wet months, entailing serious risk of a salt famine in upcountry areas. To obviate these risks, Government desires to make clear that any change would only be made after a full and comprehensive investigation which would necessarily take considerable time, and that ample notice would be given in order to permit the disposal of duty-paid stocks.

Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 160

APPENDIX XVIII

INTERVIEW WITH LORD WAVELL AND CABINET MISSION¹

May 6, 1946

We had decided early in the afternoon that it would be a good thing to see Gandhi at once and enlist his support for the proposed solution, as Cripps was confident he could do. For some reason the Delegation wished him to be asked merely to see the Viceroy, and they would drop in later, which is all rather in a line with their methods of indirect approach. It was Gandhi's day of silence which he could not break till 7.50 p. m. He came at 7.30 p. m. and I spoke a monologue for 15 minutes or so, telling him generally how things were going. Then the Delegation came in, just as his silence was up, and the Secretary of State and Cripps started their explanations and blandishments. The result was a shock to them. Gandhi, who had been living with Ghaffar Khan and Patel, the two malcontents, had adopted entirely their point of view, said the proposed solution was "worse than Pakistan", and he could not recommend it to Congress we must either adopt entirely the

¹ As recorded by Lord Wavell. *Vide* "Letter to Lord Wavell", 11-5-1946

Congress point of view, if we thought it just, or Jinnah's point of view if we thought it juster; but there was no half-way house. Gandhi seemed quite unmoved at the prospect of civil war, I think he had adopted Patel's thesis that if we are firm the Muslims will not fight. Though Cripps and Secretary of State kept at Gandhi for an hour, till 9 p. m., they quite failed to move him.

Wavell : The Viceroy's Journal, pp. 259-60

APPENDIX XIX

*THE HYMN*¹

We are inhabitants of a country
 where there is no sorrow and no suffering
Where there is no illusion no anguish,
 no delusion nor desire,
Where flows the Ganges of love
 and the whole creation is full of joy,
Where all minds flow in one direction
 and where there is no occasion for sense of time.
All have their wants satisfied,
Here all barter is just,
Here all are cast in the same mould,
Here is no lack nor care,
No selfishness in shape or form,
No high no low, no master no slave,
All is light yet no burning heat,
That country is within you—
 It is Swaraj—Swadeshi,
The home within you,
 Victory ! Victory ! Victory !
He realizes it who longs for it.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 355

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 17-5-1946

APPENDIX XX

STATEMENT OF CABINET DELEGATION AND VICEROY¹

May 16, 1946

1. On march 15th last just before the despatch of the Cabinet Delegation to India, Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, used these words :

“My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision. . . . I hope that India and her people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that they will find great advantages in doing so. . . . But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.”

2. Charged in these historic words we—the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy—have done our utmost to assist the two main political parties to reach agreement upon the fundamental issue of the unity or division of India. After prolonged discussions in New Delhi we succeeded in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together in Conference at Simla. There was a full exchange of views and both parties were prepared to make considerable concessions in order to try and reach a settlement but it ultimately proved impossible to close the remainder of the gap between the parties and so no agreement could be concluded. Since no agreement has been reached we feel that it is our duty to put forward what we consider are the best arrangements possible to ensure a speedy setting up of the new Constitution. This statement is made with the full approval of His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom.

3. We have accordingly decided that immediate arrangements should be made whereby Indians may decide the future Constitution of India and an Interim Government may be set up at once to carry on the administration of British India until such time as a new Constitution can be brought into being. We have endeavoured to be just to the smaller as well as to the larger sections of the people; and to recommend a solution which will lead to a practicable way of governing the India of the future, and will give a sound basis for defence and a good opportunity for progress in the social, political and economic field.

4. It is not intended in this Statement to review the voluminous evidence

¹ *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 16-5-1946

that has been submitted to the Mission; but it is right that we should state that it has shown an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India.

5. This consideration did not, however, deter us from examining closely and impartially the possibility of a partition of India; since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu-majority rule.

This feeling has become so strong and widespread amongst the Muslims that it cannot be allayed by mere paper safeguards. If there is to be internal peace in India it must be secured by measures which will assure to the Muslims a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion, and economic or other interests.

6. We therefore examined in the first instance the question of a separate and fully independent sovereign State of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League. Such a Pakistan would comprise two areas; one in the north-west consisting of the Provinces of the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier, and British Baluchistan; the other in the north-east consisting of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam. The League were prepared to consider adjustment of boundaries at a later stage, but insisted that the principle of Pakistan should first be acknowledged. The argument for a separate State of Pakistan was based first, upon the right of the Muslim majority to decide their method of Government according to their wishes, and secondly, upon the necessity to include substantial areas in which Muslims are in a minority, in order to make Pakistan administratively and economically workable.

The size of the non-Muslim minorities in a Pakistan comprising the whole of the six Provinces enumerated above would be very considerable as the following figures¹ show :

NORTH-WESTERN AREA	Non-	
	Muslims	Muslims
Punjab	16,217,242	12,201,577
North-West Frontier Province	2,788,797	249,270
Sind	3,208,325	1,326,683
Br. Baluchistan	438,930	62,701
	22,653,294	13,840,231
	62.07%	37.93%

¹The source carries the note : "All population figures in this Statement are from the most recent census taken in 1941."

NORTH-EASTERN AREA

Bengal	33,005,434	27,301,091
Assam	3,442,479	6,762,254
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	36,447,913	34,063,345
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	51.69%	48.31%

The Muslim minorities in the remainder of British India number some 20 million dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million.

These figures show that the setting up of a separate sovereign State of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League, would not solve the communal minority problem; nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab and of Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan, can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This point would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.

7. We therefore considered whether a smaller sovereign Pakistan confined to the Muslim majority areas alone might be a possible basis of compromise. Such a Pakistan is regarded by the Muslim League as quite impracticable because it would entail the exclusion from Pakistan of (a) the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur Division in the Punjab; (b) the whole of Assam except the District of Sylhet; and (c) a large part of Western Bengal, including Calcutta, in which city the Muslims form 23.6 per cent of the population. We ourselves are also convinced that any solution which involves a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, as this would do, would be contrary to the wishes interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these Provinces. Bengal and the Punjab each has its own common language and a long history and tradition. Moreover, any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary. We have therefore been forced to the conclusion that neither a larger nor a smaller sovereign State of Pakistan would provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem.

8. Apart from the great force of the foregoing arguments there are weighty administrative, economic and military considerations. The whole of the transportation and postal and telegraph systems of India have been established on the basis of a united India. To disintegrate them would gravely injure both parts of India. The case for a united defence is even stronger. The Indian armed forces have been built up as a whole for the defence of India as a whole, and to break them in two would inflict a deadly blow on the long traditions and high degree of efficiency of the Indian

Army and would entail the gravest dangers. The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force would become much less effective. The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient.

9. A further consideration of importance is the greater difficulty which the Indian States would find in associating themselves with divided British India.

10. Finally there is the geographical fact that the two halves of the proposed Pakistan State are separated by some seven hundred miles and the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan.

11. We are therefore unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign States.

12. This decision does not however blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme under which Provinces would have full autonomy subject only to a minimum of Central subjects, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

Under this scheme Provinces, if they wished to take part in economic and administrative planning on a large scale, could cede to the Centre optional subjects in addition to the compulsory ones mentioned above.

13. Such a scheme would, in our view, present considerable constitutional disadvantages and anomalies. It would be very difficult to work a Central Executive and Legislature in which some Ministers, who dealt with Compulsory subjects, were responsible to the whole of India while other Ministers, who dealt with optional subjects, would be responsible only to those Provinces which had elected to act together in respect of such subjects. This difficulty would be accentuated in the Central Legislature, where it would be necessary to exclude certain members from speaking and voting when subjects with which their Provinces were not concerned were under discussion.

Apart from the difficulty of working such a scheme, we do not consider that it would be fair to deny to other Provinces, which did not desire to take the optional subject at the Centre, the right to form themselves into a group for a similar purpose. This would indeed be no more than the exercise of their autonomous powers in a particular way.

14. Before putting forward our recommendations we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed

between the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government. This fact has been fully recognised by those whom we interviewed from the States. They have at the same time assured us that the States are ready and willing to co-operate in the new development of India. The precise form which their co-operation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure, and it by no means follows that it will be indetical for all the States. We have not therefore dealt with the States in the same detail as the Provinces of the British India in the paragraphs which follow.

15. We now indicate the nature of a solution which in our view would be just to the essential claims of all parties, and would at the same time be most likely to bring about a stable and practicable form of constitution for all India.

We recommend that the constitution should take the following basic form :

- (1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which should deal with the following subjects : Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Communications; and which should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.
- (2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and States' representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.
- (3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.
- (4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.
- (5) Provinces should be free to form Groups with executives and legislatures, and each Group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common.
- (6) The Constitution of the Union and of the Groups should contain a provision whereby any Province could, by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly, call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter.

16. It is not our object to lay out the details of a constitution on the above lines, but to set in motion the machinery whereby a constitution can be settled by Indians for Indians.

It has been necessary however for us to make this recommendation as to the

broad basis of the future constitution because it becomes clear to us in the course of our negotiations that not until that has been done was there any hope of getting the two major communities to join in the setting up of the constitution-making machinery.

17. We now indicate the constitution-making machinery which we propose should be brought into being forthwith in order to enable a new Constitution to be worked out.

18. In forming any Assembly to decide a new Constitutional structure the first problem is to obtain as broad-based and accurate a representation of the whole population as is possible. The most satisfactory method obviously would be by election based on adult franchise; but any attempt to introduce such a step now would lead to a wholly unacceptable delay in the formulation of the new Constitution. The only practicable alternative is to utilize the recently elected Provincial Legislative Assemblies as the electing bodies. There are, however, two factors in their composition which make this difficult. First, the numerical strength of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies do not bear the same proportion to the total population in each Province. Thus, Assam with a population of 10 millions has a Legislative Assembly of 108 members, while Bengal, with a population six times as large has an Assembly of only 250. Secondly, owing to the weightage given to minorities by the Communal Award, the strengths of the several communities in each Provincial Legislative Assembly are not in proportion to their numbers in the Province. Thus the number of the seats reserved for Muslims in the Bengal Legislative Assembly is only 48 per cent of the total, although they form 55 per cent of the Provincial population. After a most careful consideration of the various methods by which these inequalities might be corrected, we have come to the conclusion that the fairest and the most practicable plan would be—

- (a) to allot to each Province a total number of seats proportional to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million, as the nearest substitute for representation by adult suffrage.
- (b) to divide this provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in each Province in proportion to their population.
- (c) to provide that the representatives allotted to each community in a Province shall be elected by the members of that community in its Legislative Assembly.

We think that for these purposes it is sufficient to recognize only three main communities in India; General, Muslim, and Sikh, the “General” community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs. As the smaller minorities would, upon the population basis, have little or no representation, since they would lose the weightage which assures them seats in the Provincial Legislatures, we have made the arrangements set out in paragraph 20 below to give them a full

representation upon all matters of special interest to the minorities.

(19) (i) We therefore propose that there shall be elected by each Provincial Legislative Assembly the following numbers of representatives, each part of the Legislative (General, Muslim or Sikh) electing its own representatives by the method of proportional representation with the single transferable vote :—

TABLE OF REPRESENTATION

SECTION A

Province	General	Muslim	Total
Madras	45	4	49
Bombay	19	2	21
United Provinces	47	8	55
Bihar	31	5	36
Central Provinces	16	1	17
Orissa 9	0	9	
	—	—	—
Total	167	20	187

SECTION B

Province	General	Muslim	Sikh	Total
Punjab 8	16	4	28	
North-West Frontier Province	0	3	0	3
Sind	1	3	0	4
	—	—	—	—
Total	9	22	4	35

SECTION C

Province	General	Muslim	Total
Bengal		33	60
Assam	3	10	
	—	—	—
Total	34	36	70
	—	—	—
Total for British India			292
Maximum for Indian States			93
			—
Total			385

Note : In order to represent the Chief Commissioner's Provinces there will be added to

Section A the Member representing Delhi in the Central Legislative Assembly, the Member representing Ajmer-Merwara in the Central Legislative Assembly, and a representative to be elected by the Coorg Legislative Council.

To Section B will be added a representative of British Baluchistan.

(ii) It is the intention that the States should be given in the final Constituent Assembly appropriate representation which would not, on the basis of the calculations adopted for British India, exceed 93, but the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation. The States would in the preliminary stage be represented by a Negotiating Committee.

(iii) The representatives thus chosen shall meet at New Delhi as soon as possible.

(iv) A preliminary meeting will be held at which the general order of business will be decided, a Chairman and other officers elected, and an Advisory Committee (see paragraph 20 below) on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas set up. Thereafter the provincial representatives will divide up into three sections shown A, B and C, in the Table of Representation in the sub-paragraph (i) of this paragraph.

(v) These sections shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces included in each section, and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces and, if so, with what provincial subjects the Group should deal. Provinces, shall have the power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (viii) below.

(vi) The representatives of the Sections and the Indian States shall reassemble for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.

(vii) In the Union Constituent Assembly resolutions varying the provisions of paragraph 15 above or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities.

The Chairman of the Assembly shall decide which (if any) of the resolutions raise major communal issues and shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision.

(viii) As soon as the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation, it shall be open to any Province to elect to come out of any Group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the new legislature of the Province after the first general election under the new constitution.

20. The Advisory Committee on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas should contain full representation of the interests affected, and their function will be to report to the Union Constituent Assembly upon the list of Fundamental Rights the clauses for the protection of minorities, and a scheme for the

administration of the tribal and excluded areas, and to advise whether these rights should be incorporated in the Provincial Group, or Union constitution.

21. His Excellency the Viceroy will forthwith request the Provincial Legislatures to proceed with the election of their representatives and the States to set up a Negotiating Committee. It is hoped that the process of constitution-making can proceed as rapidly as the complexities of the task permit so that the interim may be as short as possible.

22. It will be necessary to negotiate a Treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power.

23. While the constitution-making proceeds, the administration of India has to be carried on. We attach the greatest importance therefore to the setting up at once of an Interim Government having the support of the major political parties. It is essential during the interim period that there should be the maximum of co-operation in carrying through the difficult tasks that face the Government of India. Besides the heavy task of day-to-day administration, there is the grave danger of famine to be countered; there are decisions to be taken in many matters of post-war development which will have a far-reaching effect on India's future; and there are important international conferences in which India has to be represented. For all these purposes a Government having popular support is necessary. The Viceroy has already started discussions to this end, and hopes soon to form an Interim Government in which all the portfolios, including that of War Member, will be held by Indian leaders having the full confidence of the people. The British Government, recognising the significance of the changes in the Government of India, will give the fullest measure of co-operation to the Government so formed, in the accomplishment and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible.

24. To the leaders and people of India who now have the opportunity of complete independence we would finally say this. We and our Government and countrymen hoped that it would be possible for the Indian people themselves to agree upon the method of framing the new constitution under which they will live. Despite the labours which we have shared with the Indian Parties, and the exercise of much patience and goodwill by all, this has not been possible. We therefore now lay before you proposals which, after listening to all sides and after much earnest thought, we trust will enable you to attain your independence in the shortest time and with the least danger of internal disturbance and conflict. These proposals may not, of course, completely satisfy all parties, but you will recognize with us that at this supreme moment in Indian history statesmanship demands mutual accommodation.

We ask you to consider the alternative to acceptance of these proposals. After all the efforts which we and the Indian Parties have made together for agreement, we

must state that in our view there is small hope of peaceful settlement by agreement of the Indian Parties alone. The alternative would therefore be a grave danger of violence, chaos, and even civil war. The result and duration of such a disturbance cannot be foreseen; but it is certain that it would be a terrible disaster for many millions of men, women and children. This is a possibility which must be regarded with equal abhorrence by the Indian people, our own countrymen, and the world as a whole.

We therefore lay these proposals before you in the profound hope that they will be accepted and operated by you in the spirit of accommodation and good will in which they are offered. We appeal to all who have the future good of India at heart to extend their vision beyond their own community or interest to the interests of the whole four hundred millions of the Indian people.

We hope that the new independent India may choose to be a member of the British Commonwealth. We hope in any event that you will remain in close and friendly association with our people. But these are matters for your own free choice. Whatever that choice may be we look forward with you to your ever increasing prosperity among the great nations of the world, and to a future even more glorious than your past.

The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. VII, pp. 582-91

APPENDIX XXI

LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE'S PRESS CONFERENCE¹

[May 17, 1946]

Q. Can the Constituent Assembly be regarded as sovereign in view of three points that are put forward, viz.,

1. Adult suffrage has been ruled out;
2. British troops would continue to remain on the soil;
3. The principle and the procedure of the constitution-making body have been laid down.

A. After dealing with the first two points the Secretary of State said :

The third question was whether, as we had laid down certain provisions, the constitution-making body or Constituent Assembly could be regarded in any sense as sovereign. Well, we only laid these conditions down because Indians did not come to an agreement among themselves. If it had been possible for the two Indian parties to come together to make a constitution, we should have made no stipulations of any kind. But when we got here, we found, what we suspected in advance, that a Constituent Assembly representing all parties could not be acceptable except on certain decisions taken in advance. We then asked the

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 19-5-1946

Indian parties whether they themselves by agreement would lay down certain decisions which would enable the Constituent Assembly to meet together and to function, and we tried our very best to get that agreed to and we went a considerable distance towards getting agreement on that point, but we did not get all the way, and therefore only because of that we suggested this basis and we made these recommendations, because it is only on those that we felt that we could get representatives of all parties to sit together and try and draw up a constitution. But even so, I would point [out] to you that even that basis can be altered but it can only be altered by a separate majority of each party who desire to do so and the reason is this that these representatives of different parties have never agreed to meet together on that basis. That is what we believe is the basis on which they will come together. If they do come together on that basis, it will mean that they will have accepted that basis, but they can still change it if by a majority of each party they desire to do so.

The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. VII, pp. 618-9

APPENDIX XXII

LETTER FROM LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE¹

Confidential

OFFICE OF THE CABINET DELEGATION,
THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
May 20, 1946

MY DEAR GANDHI,

Since receiving your two letters of the 19th and 20th, we have had an official communication from the Congress raising the same points.²

As we intend shortly to reply to this letter I will not in this answer deal with the various matters you raise.³

As some of the paragraphs in your second letter do not accord with my recollection or that of Sir Stafford, I am enclosing a note setting out the matters on which we differ. We confirm as you imply in your paragraphs 6 and 7 that we told you quite definitely that we could not agree with the propositions you there set out. The Delegation wish me in particular to make it plain that independence must follow and not precede the coming into operation of the new Constitution.

All good wishes.

Sincerely yours,
PETHICK-LAWRENCE

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 19-5-1946 and "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 20-5-1946

² *Vide* "Letter from Abul Kalam Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 20-5-1946

³ *Vide* "Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to Abul Kalam Azad", 22-5-1946

ENCLOSURE

1. We gave no such assurance but stated that we were investigating the position on the lines stated.

2. On this matter we said there would have to be consultations as set out in paragraph 14 of the Statement which we read to you and that a part of them would no doubt be between the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and the President of Congress.

3. This was your suggestion. We stated that it was proposed to appoint a person in the best way possible to ensure his representative character.

4. In the second paragraph you are misinterpreting what Sir Stafford said. He stated that he knew the view was held that in the past Paramountcy had been used in certain cases to support the Princes against their people but that in the interim period the Crown Representative would want to help forward the movement towards democracy in the States so as to make it easier for them to come into the Union. It was also stated by us that Paramountcy would be exercised by the Crown Representative and that it would not be in consultation with the Interim Government, though there might be consultation between the Interim Government and the States on matters of common economic interest.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 195-6. Also *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol. VII, pp. 642-3

APPENDIX XXIII

LETTER FROM ABUL KALAM AZAD TO LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE¹

20 AKBAR ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

May 20, 1946

DEAR LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE,

My Committee have carefully considered the Statement issued by the Cabinet Delegation on May 16th, and they have seen Gandhiji after the interviews he has had with you and Sir Stafford Cripps. There are certain matters about which I have been asked to write to you.

As we understand the Statement, it contains certain recommendations and procedure for the election and functioning of the Constituent Assembly. The Assembly itself, when formed, will in my Committee's opinion, be a sovereign body for the purpose of drafting the Constitution unhindered by any external authority, as well as for entering into a treaty. Further that it will be open to the Assembly to vary in any way it likes the recommendations and the procedure

¹ Vide "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 19-5-1946

suggested by the Cabinet Delegation. The Constituent Assembly being a sovereign body for the purpose of the Constitution, its final decisions will automatically take effect.

As you are aware some recommendations have been made in your Statement which are contrary to the Congress stand as it was taken at the Simla Conference and elsewhere. Naturally we shall try to get the Assembly to remove what we consider defects in the recommendations. For this purpose we shall endeavour to educate the country and the Constituent Assembly.

There is one matter in which my Committee were pleased to hear Gandhiji say that you were trying to see that the European members in the various Provincial Assemblies, particularly Bengal and Assam, would neither offer themselves as candidates nor vote for the election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly.

No provision has been made for the election of a representative from British Baluchistan. So far as we know, there is no elected Assembly or any other kind of chamber which might select such a representative. One individual may not make much of a difference in the Constituent Assembly. But it would make a difference if such an individual speaks for a whole province which he really does not represent in any way. It is far better not to have representation at all than to have this kind of representation which will mislead and which may decide the fate of Baluchistan contrary to the wishes of its inhabitants. If any kind of popular representation can be arranged, we would welcome it. My Committee were pleased, therefore, to hear Gandhiji say that you are likely to include Baluchistan within the scope of the Advisory Committee's work.

In your recommendations for the basic form of the Constitution (page 3 of the printed draft, No. 5) you state that provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common. Just previous to this you state that all subjects other than the union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces. Later on in the Statement, however, on page 5 you state that the provincial representatives to the Constituent Assembly will divide up into three sections and "these sections shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those Provinces". There appears to us to be marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions. The basic provision gives full autonomy to a province to do what it likes and subsequently there appears to be a certain compulsion in the matter which clearly infringes that autonomy. It is true that at a later stage the Provinces can opt out of any group. In any event it is not clear how a Province or its representatives can be compelled to do something which they do not want to do. A Provincial Assembly may give a mandate to its

representatives not to enter any group or a particular group or section. As Sections B and C have been formed it is obvious that one Province will play a dominating role in the Section, the Punjab in Section B and Bengal in Section C. It is conceivable that this dominating Province may frame a Provincial Constitution entirely against the wishes of Sind or the North-West Frontier Province or Assam. It may even conceivably lay down rules, for elections and otherwise, thereby nullifying the Provision for a Province to opt out of a group. Such could never be the intention as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the Scheme itself.

The question of Indian States has been left vague and, therefore, I need not say much about it at this stage. But it is clear that State representatives who come into the Constituent Assembly must do so more or less in the same way as the representatives of the Provinces. The Constituent Assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements.

I have dealt above with some points arising out of your Statement. Possibly some of them can be cleared up by you and the defects removed. The principal point, however, is, as stated above, that we look upon this Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body which can decide as it chooses in regard to any matter before it and can give effect to its decision. The only limitation we recognize is that in regard to certain major communal issues the decision should be by a majority of each of the two major communities. We shall try to approach the public and the members of the Constituent Assembly with our own proposals for removing any defects in the recommendations made by you.

Gandhiji has informed my Committee that you contemplate that British troops will remain in India till after the establishment of the Government in accordance with the instrument produced by the Constituent Assembly. My Committee feel that the presence of foreign troops in India will be a negation of India's independence. India should be considered to be independent in fact from the moment that the National Provisional Government is established.

I shall be grateful to have an early reply so that my Committee may come to a decision in regard to your Statement.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. AZAD

The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. VII, pp. 639-41

APPENDIX XIV

*LETTER FROM LORD PETHICK-LAWRENCE TO ABUL KALAM AZAD*¹

May 22, 1946

The Delegation have considered your letter of 20th May and feel that the best way to answer it is that they should make their general position quite clear to you. Since the Indian Leaders after prolonged discussion failed to arrive at an agreement, the Delegation have put forward their recommendations as the nearest approach to reconciling the views of the two main parties. The scheme therefore stands as a whole and can only succeed if it is accepted and worked in a spirit of compromise and co-operation.

You are aware of the reasons for the grouping of the Provinces, and this is an essential feature of the scheme, which can only be modified by agreement between the two parties.

There are two further points which we think we should mention. First, in your letter you describe the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body, the final decisions of which will automatically take effect. We think the authority and the function of the Constituent Assembly and the procedure which it is intended to follow are clear from the Statement. Once the Constituent Assembly is formed and working on this basis, there is naturally no intention to interfere with its discretion or to question its decisions. When the Constituent Assembly has completed its labours, His Majesty's Government will recommend to Parliament such action as may be necessary for the cession of sovereignty to the Indian people, subject only to two provisos which are mentioned in the Statement and which are not, we believe controversial, namely, adequate provision for the protection of minorities and willingness to conclude a treaty to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power.

Secondly, while His Majesty's Government are most anxious to secure that the interim period should be as short as possible, you will, we are sure, appreciate that for the reasons stated above independence cannot precede the bringing into operation of a new Constitution.

The Transfer of Power 1942-47, Vol. VII, pp. 659-60

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence", 19-5-1946