

## 1. TELEGRAM TO THE AGA KHAN

SODEPUR,  
*December 7, 1945*

H. H. AGAKHAN  
BOMBAY

MANY THANKS YOUR WIRE. WOULD LOVE TO  
MEET YOU AND LEARN FROM YOU WAY TO  
SOLUTION COMMUNAL PROBLEM. MAULANA IS ILL BUT  
AT WORK. EXPECTING TO REACH WARDHA FEBRUARY.  
WRITING.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 2. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,  
*December 7, 1945*

CHI. JIVANJI,

I got your proof-copy of the pamphlet on constructive work yesterday. I wanted to use that copy here and did so. But I had already gone through the proof earlier. As there is no letter accompanying it, I don't quite understand why you have sent it. You have given a heading to my preface but there is no heading on the page on which the pamphlet itself begins. I infer from this that final touches still remain to be given to the printing. I have of course asked Pyarelalji to write to you about this, but I think it is better to dictate this just now in the morning.

I have the impression that I have already written to you about the cover. My suggestion is that the eighteen headings which you have given in the pamphlet should be reproduced on the cover in their proper order, with the page number given against each. This will help the reader and we shall be able to show what topics have been covered. The topics can also be shown on the cover in the form of a circle. We can have a drawing of the spinning-wheel in the centre and the headings can be printed round it like the planets round the sun. There is one difficulty in this, of course. How can communal unity be repre-

sented as a planet? If it is so represented, my original conception would be vitiated, for the basic conception is that khadi is the chief handicraft and that the other industries take their place and revolve round khadi like planets round the sun. If now we can find a place in this scheme for Adivasis, *kisans*, students and communal unity, then the conception will have been worked out. It might be better, therefore, to give up the idea of the circle, or to form the circle only with khadi and cottage industries. But we need not waste any time over this, for it is essential that the pamphlet should be published as soon as possible. It is also necessary that the translations should be published simultaneously. It would, also, be good if at the end a supplementary list of other books to be read with the pamphlet are given. For example, Rajendra Babu's book, Gulzarilal's essay, etc. You may drop this also, if you cannot recollect the names of the books immediately. Pyarelal will most probably send you a wire today saying, "Send another copy proof." The idea behind this is that if I have to correct the proof, the time which would be taken by an ordinary letter may be saved, for the copy which I have passed on is not likely to come back to me now.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9960. Also C.W. 6934. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

### 3. LETTER TO JATINDAS AMIN

SODEPUR,

*December 7, 1945*

CHI. AMIN,

I got your letter sent with Sushila. She arrived the day before yesterday. You do not seem to have calmed down yet. You can render great service if you calm down. Take up only a little work there. If you bring credit to it, it will be greatly appreciated.

What you write is absolutely correct. Greatness lies in becoming small and smallness in assuming greatness. We should therefore only serve by becoming as small as dust particles.

<sup>1</sup> This was given to R. G. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, *vide* "Letter to R. G. Casey", 6-12-1945

Your camera is to be sent only with somebody going there, is that not so? I am sure you are not in a hurry.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### *4. LETTER TO MANORANJAN CHATTERJEE*

SODEPUR,

*December 7, 1945*

BHAI MANORANJANBABU,

I have your wire. I am writing to Dr. Shyamaprasadji<sup>1</sup> and I shall send either Dr. Sushila Nayyar or Pyarelalji there.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI MANORANJAN CHATTERJEE

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

#### *5. LETTER TO SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKHERJEE*

SODEPUR,

*December 7, 1945*

BHAI SHYAMAPRASADJI,

Why did you fall ill? Dr. Bidhan tells me that you do not take care of your health and that once you take up some work you never let go. This is a virtue as well as a vice. It is good when you persevere in it within a certain limit. It is bad when you go beyond the limit. I hope that, as reported in the newspapers, you will resume work after taking complete rest.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

CALCUTTA

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

## 6. LETTER TO SURENDRANATH VISHWAS

SODEPUR,  
*December 7, 1945*

BHAI SUREN BABU,

I have your informative letter. It will be useful to me.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SURENDRANATH VISHWAS  
1/23 PRINCE GULAM MOHAMMED ROAD  
KALIGHAT  
CALCUTTA

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

## 7. LETTER TO CHARUPRABHA SENGUPTA

SODEPUR,  
*December 7,<sup>1</sup> 1945*

CHI. CHARUPRABHA,

These days I try to write to all Indians in the national language. How long shall we go on writing to each other in English ?

I am occupied with many things up to the 10th. I don't know how long I shall be here after that. Even then I am writing to Aruna.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8710. Also C.W. 1496. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

## 8. LETTER TO ARUNA SENGUPTA

SODEPUR,  
*December 7, 1945*

CHI. ARUNA,

Mother writes to me that I should write to you to come here. I am busy till the 10th. I don't know where I shall be after that. Look up the newspapers and if I am in Sodepur come any day at 5 o'clock

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the letter available in Pyarelal Papers bears the date December 8.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's daughter; *vide* the following item.

for the prayer. I shall have a talk with you for two minutes after the prayer.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIMATI ARUNA SENGUPTA  
93/3/2 HARI GHOSH STREET  
CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8711. Also C.W. 1497. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

## *9. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS*

*December 7, 1945*

Asked whether he would like to say anything about the Congress Working Committee meeting<sup>1</sup>, Gandhiji replied.

No, I am tired.

In reply to another query Gandhiji remarked :

What can I give you? The Maulana is here. You can take whatever you like from him. They have called me here, but they have not given me any food to eat, or water to drink. And after my work has been finished they are sending me back to my place. Your food is being cooked at Maulana's hands and he will give it to you when it is ready.

While waiting for the car Gandhiji turned to Maulana Azad and remarked :

Maulana Saheb, these press reporters and photographers are having a good time and detaining our car.

A hearty laughter followed. A Press correspondent drew Gandhiji's attention to the announcement from New Delhi that the Viceroy had agreed to see Mahatma Gandhi. The correspondent inquired whether it suggested that Gandhiji had sought the interview.

Gandhiji replied the news had appeared in the newspapers and he declined to make any further comment.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8-12-1945

<sup>1</sup> Held at the residence of Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President. According to the source "Gandhiji spoke for over an hour and touched upon the political situation, the Indian National Army, changes in the Congress constitution, Congress prospects in the Central and Provincial elections and other matters. He also reported on his talks with R. G. Casey."

## 10. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
*December 7, 1945*

Gandhiji said that he noticed that the people became quiet only after he arrived at the place. That was not ideal. The place where a prayer was conducted, he said, should be considered as a temple and only in prayerful mind should they present themselves there. They should come silently and maintain calm and should leave the place in the same mood.

If, however, those who joined in the prayer would remain quiet and peaceful he would be only too glad to see the whole of Calcutta assembled there.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that there were incorporated in the service Bengali songs as the majority of those present were Bengalees; but for the benefit of others he wished to get a booklet including all songs and other prayers printed in both Devanagari and Urdu scripts. This proposed booklet which might be priced two pice would be of permanent benefit to the readers who could then be acquainted with the texts whenever they so wished.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-12-1945*

## 11. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I have your letter of 26th November about Shri Yajee.<sup>1</sup> I am thankful for the considered reply. I am now trying to put myself in touch with the gentleman and see what he has to say.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

G. E. B. ABELL, ESQ.

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 61*

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written that the allegations of Sheel Bhadra Yajee about food and inhuman living conditions given to him in the jail were all exaggerated. *Vide* also "Letter to Sir Evan M. Jenkins", 7-11-1945

## 12. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I thank you for yours of 1st instant.<sup>1</sup> I shall send you in due course fuller details about Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and have written to Shri Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi to proceed to New Dehli and report himself.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 63-4*

## 13. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

*Immediate*

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR FRIEND,

I write this with the greatest hesitation. The more I see and hear, the greater is the grief over the happenings in Bengal. Here is a sample demanding immediate attention.

Satish Babu brings me the story that potato-growers cannot get seed potatoes and the planting season will be over in a week's time. Seed potatoes are there in the market under Government control. But the grower cannot get them.

There is evidently something radically wrong if the news brought by Satish Babu is true. I wonder if you can do anything. You were telling me about the clever Mr. Dey whose services you have enlisted for such matters. Can you make him over to me or some other officer who can attend to this immediate affair?

I am having this letter delivered at once. The question is small

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had asked Gandhiji to send directly to the Home Member the details about Vidyarthi and Lohia.

<sup>2</sup> A telegram was however sent on December 9. *Vide* also "Letter to Sir Even M. Jenkins", 25-11-1945

enough on the large Bengal canvas but is all in all to the poor growers whose livelihood is at stake.<sup>1</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 813; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47*, p. 113

#### 14. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
December 8, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have just finished reading your broadcast to be delivered today. It makes interesting and informative reading. If the waters of the rivers can be captured and utilized by the people of Bengal, instead of being wasted in the Bay, it would be a great gain. But it is a long-term proposition. The millions, meanwhile, must be taught to utilize every minute of the working hours for their own benefit. If they learn this art they will make good use of the captured waters. You have well said :

The tens of millions of farmers of Bengal are idle more than half the time. They constitute the biggest problem of unemployment in the world and the biggest waste of potential human effort.

I have provided you with a complete answer which can be worked out today with a very little outlay on the part of the Government. Regard human labour more even than money and you have an untapped and inexhaustible source of income which ever increases with use. If I had been your adviser, before the speech was printed I would have suggested the insertion immediately after, "Let us examine the problem", of a paragraph or two, showing the way of immediate utilization of human effort. You could then have followed it up with your entrancing scheme as a long-range proposition.

Is your peroration right? You say :

The answer to my mind lies not in our politics, our religion or our individual ambition, but in the abiding factors of our environment, i.e., the land and water of Bengal.

<sup>1</sup> In *Gandhi's Emissary*. Sudhir Ghosh writes that the Government, using emergency powers, seized whatever stocks there were with the profiteers and 250 mounds were distributed among the growers that same day.



This is a gross error or thought and consequent action, handed down from generation to generation by the British official element. Your gigantic project will come to nothing until the whole mass of the people of Bengal is interested in the Government of the province. Therefore, religion and even individual ambition are intermixed. They are as much abiding factors of our environment as the land and water of Bengal, and they are equally shifting.

You asked me for my reaction to your thoughtful speech and I have given it as it has come to me.

Very many thanks for your prompt action<sup>1</sup> on my letter of this morning on seed potatoes.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 812; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47*, pp. 107-8

### 15. LETTER TO THE AGA KHAN

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,

SODEPUR (NR. CALCUTTA)

*December 8, 1945*

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your long wire to which I have replied<sup>2</sup> as follows :

Of course, I shall be glad to receive your suggestions. It does not matter to me in the least that in this matter you will be representing nobody but yourself. The only question is how we shall meet, when and where. I have a fixed programme for Bengal, Assam and Madras, which is calculated to take me up to almost the middle of February before I return to Sevagram. If, therefore, I know your movements about February, I shall try to see what I can do.

Maulana Saheb has interrupted his rest for the sake of the Working Committee. He is none too well, but I have no doubt he will be in communication with you himself.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN

BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* footnote on "Letter to R. G. Casey", 8-12-1945

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* "Telegram to the Aga Khan", 7-12-1945

## 16. LETTER TO SATYANAND

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR SATYANAND BABU,

It was a delight to receive your postcard. I am doing all I am capable of for the alleviation of distress. I do not know what God will do through the effort.

I hope you are keeping well.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 17. LETTER TO NOEL BARWELL

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR MR. BARWELL,

I thank you for your cordial note. I am so much fixed up and so embarrassingly besieged wherever I go that I dare not promise myself the pleasure of visiting the society you mention. But I shall certainly be pleased to see you for a few minutes at this place if you and Mrs. Barwell can conveniently come. There is not a moment left open till Monday, but I shall know more fully on Monday where I stand.

Could you please phone on Tuesday next or send a messenger?

*Yours sincerely,*

NOEL BARWELL ESQ.  
6 MIDDLETON ST.  
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 18. LETTER TO BALWANTBHAI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,  
December 8, 1945

CHI. BALWANTBHAI,

I got your postcard. I am really very glad. Get rid of alldoubts.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SJT. BALWANTBHAI DADUBHAI DESAI  
DAKOR

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

## 19. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

SODEPUR,  
December 8, 1945

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I have your letter. I am certainly going to ...<sup>1</sup> Tara. Her letter reflects her character. The work which she is doing now will not clash with the work of K. G. N. M. Trust. She will also have some help from Sushilabai.<sup>2</sup> If she would rather not stay at the Mahila Ashram, she can live in Akola and there can be no hitch even if she has to be paid a salary. I am passing on Chi. Tara's letter to Bapa. I strongly feel that you two should go and stay at Bombay for a time.

How strange that I myself never knew that my car had met with an accident. Still it made a story. People might be escaping hundreds of such accidents daily. If the papers were to take note of them we would have to stop travelling by cars, etc. If Prabhu Dayal is there please ask him to stay on.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SJT. KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA  
SEVAGRAM

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

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

<sup>2</sup> Sushilabai Mukundrao Joshi, a teacher at the Mahila Ashram, Wardha

## 20. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. I think the kind of questions asked by Vishnudatta's friend ought not to be encouraged. Had I been conducting *Harijan* I might occasionally answer such questions. Generally those who ask such questions are idlers.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 21. LETTER TO SHANTILAL TRIVEDI

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

CHI. SHANTILAL,

I have your letter. Saralabehn spoke at great length of your courage and service. I am glad.

I am pleased with what you write about wool. It may be useful if you have your experiences during the journey published. You should be concise and to the point.

SJT. SHANTILAL TRIVEDI  
GOVIND NIWAS  
ALMORA

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

## 22. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

CHI. TARI,

I read your letter to Kishorelal. How will you continue to be so diffident? Your name will be announced as an Agent. Thakkar Bapa will write to you the details. You will no doubt take all the help you can from Sushilabai. It would certainly be better if she could be spared from the Mahila Ashram and stay with you in Akola. I think her salary can be paid from the K. G. N. M. Trust. Write to me at

length, or write to Bapa.

I take it you are all well. Sushilabehn and the children are not with me; Manilal is.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 23. *LETTER TO ATMARAM*

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

BHAI ATMARAM,

It is certainly a bad thing that during prayer undesirable thoughts come. But you should not worry. Take any *sloka* of the prayer and concentrate on it. If even this is not possible repeat Ramanama from the depths of your heart with such concentration that there is no room for any other thought. It is no doubt difficult but it can be done. Such has been my experience and the experience of other people as well. That is why Ramanama is said to be the panacea for all ills.

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

### 24. *LETTER TO KHUSHIRAM*

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

BHAI KHUSHIRAM,

Bhai Jairamdas has told me how generous you are. It is good to give whatever you want to give without laying down unnecessary conditions. And the trust is being made. All this makes me very happy.

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

### 25. *LETTER TO MRS. S. R. DAS*

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I was happy to see you, but it also made me unhappy. I was not prepared to see you in such broken health. Urmiladevi has given me

a cheque for Rs. 500. I will spend that money on the Adivasis. You know who the Adivasis are, don't you? Thakkar Bapa and Khersaheb are working among the Adivasis.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

MRS. S. R. DAS  
1 AUCKLAND PLACE  
CALCUTTA

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

## 26. LETTER TO UDDHAV

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

BHAI UDDHAV,

On the death of your brother you performed only the yarn sacrifice and no religious rites. I liked it very much. It will bring great benefit if all do so.

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

## 27. LETTER TO V. V. SAXENA

SODEPUR,  
*December 8, 1945*

BHAI SAXENA,

Kishorelalji has forwarded here your letter addressed to him. I shall not be able to reach Sevagram before February in any case. It will be best if you write to me what you want to discuss with me. In this way both of us will save time—and money of course.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. V. V. SAXENA  
VANASTHALI VIDYAPITH  
VANASTHALI (JAIPUR)

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

## 28. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

December 8, 1945

Congratulating the congregation on its maintaining an ideal condition for proceeding with the prayer straight away as soon as he reached the place, Gandhiji explained the significance and gradual development of the system of mass-prayer at Sodepur Ashram.

In 1936 about a dozen Japanese monks paid him a visit when he was staying at Maganwadi, Wardha. The leading monk suggested to him that he intended to send one or two of his disciples to the Ashram, a proposal which he approved. First came one and later on another. Of the two, one was staying with him till the war with Japan broke out and as a result he was taken into custody. This Buddhist monk used to do all the tasks he was given very punctually and methodically. In between his work he used to spend the time at his disposal in singing religious songs in the Japanese language all the time beating a little drum. This he did while taking his rounds. This was a Buddhist religious song in praise of the Infinite. Gandhiji said that he incorporated the song in his prayer. This was the first item of the prayer.

The second item of the prayer was a Sanskrit *sloka* and was, according to him, universal in its appeal. This was an invocation to Mother Earth, sustainer of man. If there was any objection to it on any score he would plead that he was helpless. To him all faiths were welcome. He believed in all faiths but he saw no reason to give up his own faith. Possibly, said Gandhiji, this Sanskrit *sloka* was symbolic, but, according to him, many noble thoughts and ideas were couched in symbolic language.

Thirdly, there was the prayer quoted from the Koran. It was incorporated at the instance of daughter<sup>1</sup> of Abbas Tyabji, the well-known Congress leader. She possessed a gifted voice. When on a visit to the Ashram she expressed the desire to propagate the teachings of the Koran to the Ashramites, he readily agreed. She suggested a verse from the Koran for inclusion in the prayer and it was done.

The fourth item of the prayer was taken from the Zend-Avesta written in the Pahlavi language. When he was fasting in the Aga Khan's Palace, Dr. Gilder was there as were also Dr. Bidhan Roy and some other medical men. Dr. Gilder was a Parsi and from him the verse from the Zend-Avesta was taken and included.

So far as *bhajan* songs were concerned, said Gandhiji, there was no hard and fast rule. It all depended upon the time and place of the prayer. As the prayer was for the moment being held in Bengal and Bengalees in larger numbers were present, Bengali songs had to be included in the prayer daily.

It was Gandhiji's desire to get all the prayers included in a booklet with their meanings given in Hindustani. He wished it to be printed both in Devanagari and

<sup>1</sup> Raihana Tyabji

Urdu scripts and, if possible, in Bengali too.

He asked the assembled people to follow the prayer in a proper spirit and to live up to the lofty ideals it inculcated.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9-12-1945

## 29. TELEGRAM TO PRABHU DAYAL VIDYARTHI

CALCUTTA,  
*December 9, 1945*

PRABHU DAYAL  
ASHRAM  
SEVAGRAM, WARDHA

PROCEED NEW DELHI AND SEE DEVDAS WHO HAS  
INSTRUCTIONS.

BAPU

From a photostat G.N. 11673

## 30. LETTER TO SAMARENDRANATH ROY

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

DEAR SAMARENDRA

It grieved me to learn from Satis Babu that your great father<sup>1</sup> was no more. You may know that your father and I were friends. We often met and exchanged views. My condolences to you all.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SAMARENDRANATH ROY  
33/2 BEADEN ST.  
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Kalinath Roy, editor in charge of *The Tribune*, who died on 9th December, 1945



### 31. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter. It is enough that your aspiration is pure. I don't think there is anything special in staying with me. When you serve people wherever you are, I shall take it that you are with me. I do not feel that you are losing anything by not being with me. The air is humid and it is cold, too.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4967

### 32. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

CHI. SITA,

You seem to be demanding too much. How can you expect a letter from me unless you write to me? I know that you are keeping well and are working hard. Pass the examination. Come to me when you can. I am glad to know that you do rowing. It is a good exercise. Row the boat of India, too.

Take care of your health while studying.  
Blessings to all.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4968

### 33. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I got your letter today. I made very few changes. I am sending it back.

I am happy to hear that Madalasa is all right. Tell her that I think of her every day.

Do not give any importance to my cold. I did have a touch of it but am I not a “mahatma” after all ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, pp. 307-8

### 34. LETTER TO BHAGWATI PRASAD

SODEPUR,

*December 9, 1945*

CHI. BHAGWATI,

How will the marriage be performed in Gondia? You have not said whether there will be any rites or it will be a civil marriage before a magistrate. I wish both of you well. I cannot have any objection to marriages which are intended not for indulgence but for observance of self-control, for enhancing the spirit of service and widening its sphere. On the contrary I encourage such marriages. And therefore I would like to have your reply to the above question.

What is the girl's brother doing? Why doesn't the girl write to me? What has she been doing these years since she visited the Ashram? I am keen to know all these things.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI BHAGWATI PRASAD

C/O DEVIPRASAD DAMOHE

RANGE OFFICER, GENTRAL EXCISE

GONDIA

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

### 35. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA

SODEPUR,

*December 9, 1945*

BHAI LAKSHMI NARAYAN,

I have your letter. Personally I liked it very much. I intend to show it to Sharmaji. You have not asked me not to do so. Similarly, if it becomes necessary I shall also want to show it to Jajuji and Vichi-tra Narayan. The whole episode seems strange to me.

I will find out more about khadi because I have received complaints from other people also in this regard.

SHRI LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA  
P. O. BOX NO. 17  
DELHI

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

### *36. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

CHI. SHARMA,

I had sent a copy of your letter to Gadodiaji. I have a long reply from him, saying that whatever you have said is all fabrication and where it has any truth it has never been hidden nor is it a matter of shame. I only hope that you have not done anything improper and if you have you must frankly confess it. I enclose a copy<sup>1</sup> of Gadodiaji's letter.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI H. L. SHARMA  
KHURJA

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

### *37. LETTER TO SARASWATI GADODIA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

CHI. SARASWATI,

What is there in your letter that makes it confidential? Still, since you want it, I shall treat it as such. Of course I shall not take it to mean that it is to remain confidential from those who work for me. For instance, I did not read the letter, but Kanu read it out to me while I ate.

You would want me to show it to Sharmaji, wouldn't you? If I don't do that, the letter, which I like and which I find clean and pure will become useless. Even then I shall wait for your reply. My advice

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

is that not only the above-mentioned letter but anything we do or write should not be kept secret. We should do nothing which has to be kept secret or hidden. That is the main thing.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

C/O SHRI LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA

P. B. NO. 17, DELHI

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

### 38. LETTER TO RADHAKANT MALAVIYA

SODEPUR,  
December 9, 1945

BHAI RADHAKANT,

I have gone through your letter. I do not take any interest in the elections. I know that the Congress must win.

Babuji has formed a separate association. I did not like it. But who was I to prevent him from doing so? I think it is improper for you to run it. It is a different thing if Babuji does so. Have a talk with the Working Committee about the role of the Hindu Mahasabha. I personally do not like it. I am returning the two letters.

*Blessings from*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

### 39. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

SODEPUR,  
December 9, 1945

CHI. SHYAMLAL<sup>1</sup>,

You are going ahead very fast. If it is in keeping with your strength, it is good. The work of Kasturba Memorial can progress only with such self-sacrifice. We cannot always measure the strength of self-sacrifice. What does it matter? May God preserve your strength.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Kasturba Memorial Trust

#### 40. LETTER TO VASUDEV

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

BHAISHRI,

Your letter is written in a very bad hand. And that too in English. Can't you express your views in Hindustani?

I have gone through the printed statement. I did not like it. Its is pompous and lacking in humility. There is also exaggeration in it. Read what I have written about students. Writing will not help. Only work will. Constructive work is easy as well as difficult. Meet Rajendra Babu. Do what he says.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

VASUDEV  
YOUTH LEAGUE  
PATNA

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

#### 41. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

SODEPUR,  
*December 9, 1945*

BHAI MOTI BABU,

How long should I go on writing to you in English? These days, as far as possible, I write to everybody in the national language or the mother tongue. Perhaps you may not be having anyone who can read the national language, so I am enclosing a Bengali translation of the letter also. Amtul Salaam will deliver this letter to you and also have a talk with you. She has complained a lot to me about the khadi policy of the Pravartak Sangh. Amtul Salaam has stayed with me for years as a daughter. She is very industrious and very knowledgeable. Hence, she has been doing the khadi work at Borkamta for the last few years. Now the Pravartak Sangh is also functioning there. Amtul Salaam's work is purely altruistic and for service of the people.<sup>1</sup> Amtul Salaam says that the [Pravartak Sangh]<sup>2</sup> is not for selfless service but . . .<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A few words are indistinct here in the source.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> A few words are indistinct here in the source.

ends. She also says that its work is against the policy of the Charkha Sangh and may cause harm to it. I refuse to believe that you are aware of these things and allow them to continue. And so I am sending Amtul Salaam to understand the situation. She will ex-plain things in greater detail.

It is a matter of regret that the money advanced by the Charkha Sangh has not been returned so far. They should get it back now. It belongs to the Trust. And how can the Trust write it off ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 11058

#### 42. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

SODEPUR,

*December 10, 1945*

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

The newly-opened account in the United Commercial Bank, as per papers herewith, is to be operated by you or by me. I am thinking of two more signatures, though I have not decided who the persons should be. If you can think of any names, let me know. Perhaps two names may suffice for the present. The question will arise when one of us dies.

Send your specimen signature on the accompanying form. I have given mine in Hindustani and intend to sign in that language in future. You also can do the same. Think over this and do as you like. Preserve the other papers relating to the account sent with this. Send the specimen signature to me.

I shall be here for some time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10648

### 43. LETTER TO SHITIKANTH JHA

SODEPUR,  
*December 10, 1945*

BHAI SHITIKANTH,

I have your letter. If you want to sit by my side, come over some day. But what is so special in sitting near me? Doing the work suggested by me amounts to sitting near me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI SHITIKANTH JHA  
KHADI PRATISHTHAN  
GRAM SEVA KENDRA  
THAKURDANDI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7477. Also C.W. 4923

### 44. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
*December 10, 1945*

When we are making a supreme effort for the realization of our goal let nobody have any opportunity of pointing it against us that we are not disciplined and therefore not fit for swaraj. Either today or tomorrow the power must come to our hands. But how are we going to exercise that power unless we are disciplined ?

The British Government, he reminded the people, was not the last hurdle to be got over. If the people were not disciplined then even if power came to their hands they would not be able to retain it and someone else would be there to snatch it away from their hands.

It was only wild animals which were not disciplined and took recourse to unreasonable and meaningless climbing. But if men also took recourse to such tactics how could drivers and guards of trains manage their affairs.<sup>1</sup> It was also often found that small boats which had only limited capacity often gave way and sank because of overcrowding. They were crores and perhaps for that reason they did not notice the loss they sustained in such catastrophes. If they could not board a train they should just wait for the next to travel instead of overcrowding the first and thus make it impossible for the driver and the guard to run it.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the conduct of passengers who boarded engines and guards' compartments on the previous day to travel to and from Sodepur.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that they must learn discipline. There were two ways of learning it. The soldiers learnt it by having drill exercises. But there was the prayer to teach them the other way. Prayer not only secures for them their salvation for the next world but also in this world. If they failed to secure their salvation in this world, could there be any possibility of securing the salvation for the next? In the circumstances, concluded Gandhiji, they should conduct themselves as thinking men.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-12-1945

#### 45. SPEECH AT CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>

*December 10, 1945*

Addressing the gathering outside Government House, Gandhiji said that when he entered Government House in the evening he found a crowd of people around his car. Hence he had come this time walking to them.

He asked them to be calm and peaceful. He was an old man and could not bear the strain of demonstrations. If they did not allow him to go by car, he would have to walk on foot to Sodepur.

Gandhiji added that he had come there to serve them and the country. He urged on them the need for discipline. India had attained a great position in the past because of her great message of *shanti*. They could attain freedom only by peace and discipline.

Referring to the prayer meeting at Sodepur Ashram, Gandhiji said that thousands and thousands of people came there to join the prayer, but perfect silence was maintained.

Gandhiji then asked the gathering whether they would allow him to go by car. The crowd respectfully replied in the affirmative and Gandhiji got into his car while a corridor was made for him to pass through. Sitting with his hands folded in salutation, Gandhiji then moved out in the car to his Ashram at Sodepur.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-12-1945

<sup>1</sup> At 8-40 p.m., after his talk with the Viceroy. For the Viceroy's version of the talk *vide* "Lord Wavel's Version of His Talk With Gandhiji"



#### 46. CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION <sup>1</sup>

[On or before *December 11, 1945*]<sup>2</sup>

After the arrest of the principal Congressmen in the August of 1942, the unguided masses took the reins in their own hands and acted almost spontaneously. If many acts of heroism and sacrifice are to their credit, there were acts done which could not be included in non-violence. It is, therefore, necessary for the Working Committee to affirm, for the guidance of all concerned, that the policy of non-violence adopted in 1920 by the Congress continues unabated, and that such non-violence does not include burning of public property, cutting of telegraph wires, derailing of trains and intimidation.

The Working Committee is of opinion that the policy of non-violence as detailed in the Congress resolution of 1920, since expanded and explained from time to time, and action in accordance with it, has raised India to a height never attained before.

The Working Committee is further of opinion that the constructive activities of the Congress, beginning with the spinning-wheel and khadi as the centre, are emblematic of the policy of non-violence and that every other Congress activity including what is known as the parliamentary programme, is subservient to and designed to promote the constructive activities as explained by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Working Committee is of opinion that civil disobedience, mass or any other, meant for the attainment of freedom, is inconceivable without the adoption of the constructive programme on the widest scale possible by the masses of India.

*The Hindu*, 12-12-1945

<sup>1</sup> The resolution, drafted by Gandhiji, was passed by the Congress Working Committee on December 11, the concluding day of its five-day session held in Calcutta.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

#### 47. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 10th instant, for which I thank you.

I have not discounted<sup>1</sup> your irrigation scheme. I have only suggested an addition to it so as to bring almost immediate individual relief to the crores of villagers by occupying their admitted leisure hours. In your written note you seem to be in entire accord with my proposition. Where then is the difficulty in the Government of Bengal sponsoring the scheme and at once creating a hopeful situation so far as the shortage of cloth is concerned? I have never suggested that attainment of happiness is possible without the control of physical surroundings. But I have no desire to enter into any argument. If you have immediate regard for home-spinning and weaving and other village crafts, I have suggested a way out. That each cultivator should grow his own cotton is not a *sine qua non* of my scheme and certainly no cultivator should be compelled or even advised to grow cotton to the detriment of any staple crop. The question is one of utilizing waste labour, as under your scheme it is one of utilizing waste water.

If you favour the idea as practical and capable of immediate application, I could furnish you with a detailed scheme which, as I have told you, can be worked with the help of the various khadi organizations controlled by the All-India Spinners' Association.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 110*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to R. G. Casey", 8-12-1945

#### 48. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your kind letter of 10th instant regarding the Gope Palace.<sup>1</sup> This is a matter of such a delicate nature that I do not think I can usefully interfere. And why should there be any hurry if a popular government is shortly to replace the present regime?

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p.112*

#### 49. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

CHI. PREMA,

Chi. Sushila<sup>2</sup> has addressed the following letter<sup>3</sup> to Shyamlal:

I had assumed that Sushila would readily take up this work and had, therefore, welcomed Shyamlal's suggestion that he himself should write to her. But Sushila suggests your name and has declined to join while you are there. So I ask your advice as to what should be done. Shouldn't we do what would help the work and bring credit to it? If you want to give your reply after consulting Sushila, do that. You may make any suggestion you like. If you address your reply as above, I shall get it wherever I am at the time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10441. Also C.W. 6880. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

<sup>1</sup> The palace, which was on the outskirts of Midnapore, housed a British Military Hospital and the Health Department of the Bengal Government was anxious to acquire it permanently for a T. B. sanatorium. The addressee had suggested to Gandhiji to use his influence with the owner who was a Congressman.

<sup>2</sup> Sushila Pai

<sup>3</sup> Not translated here. She had declined to be the Agent of Kasturba Memorial Fund Committee for Maharashtra and suggested the addressee's name instead.

## 50. LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE <sup>1</sup>

SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

BHAI KHARE,

I think that you are anxious to meet me.<sup>2</sup> It will be all right if you can come tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4869. Courtesy: N. B. Khare

## 51. LETTER TO RADHAKANT MALAVIYA

SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

BHAI RADHAKANT,

I received your letter last night. The meeting of the Working Committee is over. Please understand my limitations and also my unwillingness concerning what you write.

SHRI RADHAKANT MALAVIYA  
16 TARACHAND DUTT STREET  
CALCUTTA

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

## 52. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
December 12, 1945

Gandhiji said that an individual, even if a snake might be lying on his way, would pass by it, assuming that it was not a snake but a piece of rope. He would not be frightened then. But if his companion then drew his attention to the fact that it was not a piece of rope but a living snake that he passed by, he would at once be frightened. Was it not curious, asked Gandhiji, that although the same conditions prevailed, at one time the individual had no trace of fright in him and at another he would be awfully frightened and would thank God for his miraculous escape.

Drawing the moral from the illustration, Gandhiji concluded that the source of

<sup>1</sup> (1884-1967); Congress Premier of C. P., 1937-38, and member of Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46

<sup>2</sup> Some of Khare's supporters wanted him to explore possibilities of rejoining the Congress and to see Gandhiji in this connection.

happiness and woe, therefore, did not lie elsewhere but in one's own mind. In his reply to Arjuna as to who had attained illumination, Krishna explained the nature of such a man by stating that he only was self-illuminated (*sthitaprajna*) who was not affected either by a feeling of happiness or woe.<sup>1</sup> This was possible only on the part of that individual who was self-controlled. To a self-controlled man life becomes simple and salvation easy.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika* 13-12-1945

### 53. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

SODEPUR,

*December 13, 1945*

No knowledge conducive to the real good of the world could be attained without purification of heart, said Mahatma Gandhi. Those who attended these meetings should derive some benefits from them; otherwise, it would be useless for them to attend prayer meetings. They must concentrate their minds and only then would they realize the existence of God in their hearts. But if they kept quiet because he (Gandhiji) had asked them to do so, they would derive no benefit from the prayer. By concentration, their hearts would be purified and their inner knowledge would grow. Everybody should think that they were going to the prayer meeting for self-purification. Only then would their intellectual progress be uninterrupted and they would get real peace by controlling their passions.

*The Hindu*, 14-12-1945

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 54 and 56

<sup>2</sup> According to the source a large number of women and over a hundred Harijan boys attended the meeting.

#### 54. LETTER TO THE AGA KHAN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 14, 1945*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your kind telegram. I do not return from Madras *via* Poona. The probability is that I shall return *via* Bezwada to Wardha in February, when a date mutually convenient can be agreed upon either in Bombay or Poona, wherever it is convenient for you at the time.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE AGA KHAN  
BOMBAY

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

#### 55. LETTER TO BISHOP FOSS WESTCOTT<sup>1</sup>

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 14, 1945*

DEAR FRIEND,

Your kind letter (undated) from Ranchi has been received.

I thank you for the book Sudhir has given me. I shall try to make time to read it.

I entirely agree with you that the spirit of hatred can never solve India's problem, for I believe in the general proposition that the spirit of hatred has never solved and never will solve any problem in the world. But I also believe that the causes for such hatred have to be discovered and removed. The removal of these, in India's case, lies first in the superior, i.e., the ruling party, undoing the wrong it is doing. My method, by which I swear, is calculated to do it in the quickest manner possible.

I am glad you will bear in mind the thought of passing some time with me in the quiet of Sevagram.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. REV. BISHOP FOSS WESTCOTT  
C/O THE BISHOP'S HOUSE  
RANCHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan Bishop of India

## 56. LETTER TO KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

*December 14, 1945*

DEAR KAMALADEVI,

Your letter of 2nd instant came into my hand only this morning. When, after the conference<sup>1</sup>, you find that you have to go to Mysore for Kasturba work, after due notice of your proposed entrance and that you will proceed to Mysore for that definite purpose, you should enter the State and take the consequences. If the State presumes to interfere with your activities, it might be worth while to test the legality of such action. But of that nothing need or can be said at the present moment.

About those who will be thrown out of work,<sup>2</sup> is not Jawaharlal developing some central scheme or, it may be, the Congress? I have only a hazy notion. But I know this much clearly that it is a big problem not to be tackled by any single individual. The Talimi Sangh can only take in the smallest number possible, and then they are to be specialists having love for the work. The A. I. S. A. can absorb some more but such have to appreciate the dignity of village life and village simplicity. Can those whom you have in view take to it?

Of your future activity I understand what you say and I would much like to see you settle down in a village and put your hand not to the plough which may be too hard for you but to the wheel which is hard for nobody.

Love

*Yours,*

BAPU

SHRIMATI KAMALADEVI

C/O WOMEN'S CONFERENCE OFFICE

LAMINGTON ROAD, BOMBAY ?

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> All-India Women's Conference to be held in 1946 over which the addressee was to preside

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the demobilization of army personnel and labour engaged in war service. The A. I. C. C. which met at Bombay from September 21 to 24 passed a resolution expressing its concern.

## 57. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,  
*December 14, 1945*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your long letter. I was taken aback a little. I was not unaware that meat, and even beef, is cooked in the kitchen there. This is a problem which can be solved only with patience. You need not get alarmed and run away. It should be enough that you yourself do not eat either meat or beef. But you cannot prevent others from doing so. It would be good if they thought about it and stopped on their own. I would, therefore, advise you to have patience and go on doing the work I have suggested.

I do not want to keep you too long. But I shall be satisfied if you start writing up the accounts and set them in order and bring the sanitation work within manageable limits. The other changes can be introduced only after my return. Jehangirji must have arrived there by now.

Kanchan remains engrossed in work. She has not recovered complete strength, but I am hopeful that she will. Has Durlabhbhai left for good or only temporarily? If you know anything about this, write to me.

Blessing to all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 810. Also C.W. 7193. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah



## 58. LETTER TO ATUL CHANDRA GHOSH

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 14, 1945*

BHAI ATUL BABU,

What can I do? I cannot be young for ever. Therefore be content with whatever service I can render from one place. Please tell the people of Manbhumi that we can achieve everything through ahimsa and the symbol of ahimsa is the charkha.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

BABU ATULCHAND GHOSH  
NIVARAN ASHRAM  
PURULIA (MANBHUMI),

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

## 59. LETTER TO V. G. GAVANDE

SODEPUR,  
*December 14, 1945*

BHAI GAVANDE,

Ramkrishna has given me your statement. When you send something to someone, whether it is long or short, it should always be legible. What you have sent is illegible. Unless one gives it concentrated attention one can't read it. Where do I have so much time? I am sorry to say I have not been able to read it. In writing this my intention is to tell you that anything, any statement you send, should be in a clear and legible hand.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI V.G. GAVANDE  
MAHAL, NAGPUR

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

## 60. TELEGRAM TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 15, 1945

YOUR LETTER. DO ALL WORK YOU CAN SECURING  
NECESSARY ASSISTANCE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 8614. Also C.W. 7194. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 61. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
December 15, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

A correspondent writes from the United Provinces to the effect that manufacture of *gur*<sup>1</sup> is prohibited there. *Gur*-making is a village industry. It is manufactured on their fields by cane-growers from juice extracted by means of village *kolhus*<sup>2</sup> and boiled in village pans. I, therefore, thought that my correspondent must be mistaken and asked him to send me a copy of the order on which his observations were made. He has sent me a copy of the enclosed startling order.<sup>3</sup> Cane-growers have since passed resolutions protesting against the order and threatened to disobey it if it was not withdrawn. As a result the authorities relaxed the order. A copy of the relaxation order is also herewith enclosed. I doubt not that you realize what this means to the poor people. The original order could not have been issued for the protection of sugar mills but must have been meant to secure judicious use and distribution of sugar as *gur* or refined. If so, it defeats the purpose. The modified order, though less bad than the first, does not really serve the purpose, considered in the light of the villagers. There should be no licence for *gur* made in village.

As this is not a mere provincial matter but applies to all India

<sup>1</sup> Jaggery

<sup>2</sup> Cane-crushers

<sup>3</sup> The notification was to the effect that in certain specified areas no person should "manufacture *gur*, introduce or set up any *kolhus* for crushing cane" or "move sugar-cane.....to any place outside such areas except to sugar-cane factories listed".

wherever cane is grown, I venture to approach H. E. the Viceroy for relief.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

G. E. B. ABELL, ESQ., I.C.S.  
PRIVATE SECRETARY TO H. E. THE VICEROY  
THE VICEROY'S HOUSE  
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 70-1

## 62. LETTER TO C. K. NARAYANASWAMI

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NR. CALCUTTA),  
[December]<sup>2</sup> 15, 1945

DEAR NARAYANASWAMI,

I am afraid that, owing to my movements after leaving Poona, I have not been able to be up to date with my correspondence. I hope that Menon is making good progress with his work.

As to the constructive programme I can say this much that it is doing better than before. But have you any workable suggestions to make? What you have said in your letter is good enough for city mentality. What you and I have to do is to think out suggestions in terms of village mentality unless, of course, you have reached the conclusion that the village and village mentality are to go if they have not already gone. My conclusion emphatically is that if the world is not to end, the village and village mentality alone will save it. In spite of their glamour the city and city mentality are going before our eyes. Therefore, I have left for me no other alternative but to think of ways and means for sustaining the village life.

What is your concrete suggestion about Muslim unrest?

*Yours,*  
BAPU

SHRI C. K. NARAYANASWAMI  
5 HIDAYAT HOUSE  
BOMBAY 19

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The addressee in his letter of January 4, 1946, said that *gur*-making was not prohibited except in a small area of the United Provinces and that too in order to plan production and distribution of sugar and *gur* in the Province.

<sup>2</sup> The source has October but Gandhiji was then in Poona.

### 63. LETTER TO J. C. GUPTA

SODEPUR,  
December 15, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your letter.<sup>1</sup>

I am doing all I can about the prisoners.<sup>2</sup> I do not think I need trouble you to see me about them.

It was a pleasure to see your blind son and his wife.

*Yours sincerely,*

SHRI J. C. GUPTA  
23 CIRCUS AVENUE, CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 64. LETTER TO UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM

SODEPUR, CALCUTTA,  
December 15, 1945

DEAR UTTIMCHAND,

Though the receipt for the 4th instalment has, I presume been sent you, I have not been able to acknowledge your p. c. of 22nd ultimo. I have been travelling.

Your puzzles baffle me and my clever friends. I must therefore give up hope of getting prizes from you for Harijans. I must rely solely on your love of Harijans and Khadi, perhaps also Adivasis.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM  
BOMBAY BAKERY  
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers: Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> According to *The Hindu*, 26-12-1945, the addressee who was chairman of the All-Parties Political Prisoners' Release Campaign Committee had said in his letter that "43 pre-Reform political prisoners between themselves had undergone imprisonment for no less than 600 years....."

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to R. G. Casey", 16-12-1945

## 65. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 15, 1945*

CHI. HARJIVAN,

I got your letter of the 10th yesterday. You seem to be very impatient. You ask my blessings by wire. We are after all poor people and trustees of those much poorer than we. And how can we so much as wish for blessings? Even if we have such a desire, how can we have it met telegraphically? So thinking I refrained from sending a wire. Why should you need any blessings? Here is the secret of blessings. When we are engaged in a work which is worthy of blessings, then the work itself is a blessing; it does not wait for blessings from others. Seeking blessings from other people is, therefore, meaningless; it is nothing but self-deception. It no doubt has a meaning in that blessings act as a stimulant from which a weak person derives momentary encouragement. But this kind of encouragement is not of much help. If you understand this and still really need my blessings, you certainly have them for your work of producing the tools necessary for making khadi provided it is done intelligently. When I say intelligently I mean that we should not manufacture spinning-wheels, winding frames, *taklis*, etc., just to sell; we should make only as many as are needed and see that they are so perfect that no one may find fault with them. Our aim should be—and is—that all the things are produced locally. Only then will the villages prosper. What I am now saying is covered by the new line of thought on khadi that I am propounding. Whatever I have not elaborated may be deduced from the aforesaid.

Yesterday Sardar was here. He wanted to know why he was not informed about your leaving the khadi shop. I could not give him a satisfactory answer. I take it that you must have gone through all the formalities since you are so alert. However, if you have anything to say in this regard, write to Sharda. I see from your letter that Sharda is with you. Is she doing anything ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

HARJIVAN KOTAK

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

## 66. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 15, 1945*

BHAI RAJENDRA PRASAD

I have your letter. I shall start working on Mahendra Chaudhary's case after receiving other opinions on it.

You should be perfectly fit.

I am going to Santiniketan on the 18th. I shall return on the 20th.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD  
SADAQUAT ASHRAM  
DIGHAGHAT  
PATNA

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

## 67. LETTER TO KHWAJA NAZIMUDDIN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR, CALCUTTA,  
*December 15, 1945*

BHAI SAHEB,

Amtussalaam has given me your letter inviting me to your place on the 4th. How nice it would have been if I could come to your place. But circumstances do not permit me to do so. Does it mean that we shall not be able to meet? If that happens I shall be very sorry.

SIR NAZIMUDDIN  
CALCUTTA

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

## 68. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
December 16, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have insistent complaints about goondaism and favouritism at the elections.<sup>1</sup> We had a talk about these. But they seem to persist. I know you do not want these things. Can something be done in the matter ?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 113-4*

## 69. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
December 16, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

Literature about your prisoners is pouring in on me.<sup>2</sup> According to the papers in my possession, you have over twenty-five pre-Reform prisoners, all of them having undergone sentences above ten and most of them above fifteen years.

Then you have untried detenues, detained only on one-sided secret evidence which they have not seen, and some convicts, all of them political.

Among these prisoners are two women cooped up in a small cell.

I am told that there is no terrorism to be feared. The prisoners are all likely to be public-spirited. But that can be no reason for keeping them behind prison bars.

I submit that they should all be discharged without the slightest ado.

I plead for a little grace before, as you and I hope, the transference of power comes.

I have offered, and still do, to see these prisoners, if it is thought

<sup>1</sup> It was Fazlul Haq, ex-Premier of Bengal, who had brought the matter to Gandhiji's notice. The goondaism was resorted to by supporters of the Muslim League.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to J. C. Gupta", 15-12-1945

desirable.

I leave for Santiniketan on 8th instant, returning here on the 20th evening.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 132-3*

## 70. LETTER TO DHUNDIRAJ

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

*December 16, 1945*

BHAI DHUNDIRAJ,

I have been receiving the figures sent by you. I glance through them as they arrive. According to the new policy, you are also required to indicate the number of people who go there to learn or to spin, how many of them know all the processes, whether those at the shop have learnt them and so on. All these particulars should be shown in figures.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. DHUNDIRAJ

KHADI BHANDAR

395 KALBADEVI

BOMBAY

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

## 71. LETTER TO SARALADEVI A. SARABHAI

*December 16, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I came to know of your brother's passing away from a letter of Chi. Mridula. I also learnt that you had been to Rajkot in this connection. Such things are part of life. All of us have to go—some sooner, some later. That being so expression of condolence would only be folly. Why should I then indulge in it? And why should you expect me to? So the purpose of writing this letter is only to let you know that you are not out of my thoughts.

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



## 72. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SODEPUR,  
*December 16, 1945*

CHI. MRIDULA,

Sushilabehn gave me news of the death of your maternal uncle and told me how calm and unperturbed you were in your bereavement.

Badshah Khan left yesterday. He was telling me that in the event of Akbar<sup>1</sup> being prepared to go to him, you would take up his work at Samau or make some arrangement. If this is correct, talk it over with Akbar and finalize the arrangement. If Akbar is still not satisfied then let me know who is willing to take up the work at Samau and how it can be done, so that I can write to Akbar. If some dependable worker is not available, do tell me so frankly.

I have not yet written to Saraladevi regarding her appointment as Agent because I had a letter from Mavalankar that he would be seeing her. Write to me if you know anything more. I hope you are well. I shall go to Santiniketan on the 18th, and return on the 20th. 24th Midnapore. It is correct to regard Sodepur as my camp for the present.

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

## 73. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,  
*December 16, 1945*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Your second letter written on the 12th arrived here on the 15th. You must have received the following wire which I sent you yesterday :<sup>2</sup>

The description you have given is quite good. I am sure that as the problem about beef was solved so will the other also be solved through patience and love.<sup>3</sup> I entrusted certain jobs to you

<sup>1</sup> Akbarbhai Chawda

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 15-12-1945

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 14-12-1945

as being the most important, but since I have already accepted responsibility for all other arrangements except medical attention I should certainly like you to take up that work also. So do take up whatever work you can without coming into conflict with anybody.

Though I shall not be there on January 1, from that day the institution<sup>1</sup> will be run only for the poor and on behalf of the poor. From that day the management of all departments except the medical will be considered to have become my responsibility. I trust you will take up the responsibility on my behalf. But you must assume the responsibility for only as much work as you can easily attend to. Let me know what jobs you are not able to take up.

After January 1, there will be no wealthy patients there. If there are any, they will not be treated as wealthy men.

Dr. Dinshaw had said that he would himself see about the furniture. He wanted it for his clinic in Bombay. There will be very few poor indoor patients for the present. Maybe there will be none. Hence, though we shall keep facilities ready for a large number, the hospital is not likely to get filled in the immediate future. We shall have to use our judgement in the matter of furniture. Ascertain Gulbai's<sup>2</sup> wishes. Don't insist on ordering things which the two do not want.

From among the patients there, those who wish to leave may be permitted to do so. From January 1, really speaking, the only patients will be Balkrishna<sup>3</sup>, Vanu<sup>4</sup> and Zohra. You will have no difficulty in looking after them. You must have realized by now that it is no easy job to shoulder the responsibility of that institution. The task would easily test the capacity of any man.

I wish you not to worry about Kanchan.

Blessings to everybody there

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8614. Also C.W. 7194. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Nature Cure Clinic

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Dinshaw Mehta

<sup>3</sup> Balkrishna Bhawe

<sup>4</sup> Vanamala Parikh

#### 74. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

SODEPUR,  
*December 16, 1945*

CHI. RAMACHANDRAN,

Why should I now write to you in English? If you have to write in English, you may do so. However, I should like you to make an attempt to write in Hindustani.

How can I explain to you how much harm we are causing to India by being unable to write except in English.

I have seen to the matter of the Rs. 100. You do not have to worry.

I hope your work is going on well. Write to me whatever you want to. I shall be going to Santiniketan on the 18th for two days. After that I shall return here.

I hope Saundram is well.

SHRI RAMACHANDRAN  
GANDHI ASHRAM  
SALEM DISTT.

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

#### 75. LETTER TO JASWANTRAI CHURANI

SODEPUR,  
*December 16, 1945*

BHAI JASWANTRAI,

I had your letter dated the 20th. Ever since I have been touring. You have done well in sending the receipts of the deposits. If there is anything more, Mukherjee will write to you.

SHRI JASWANTRAI CHURANI  
15 LAKE RAOD  
LAHORE

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

## 76. LETTER TO KUMAR BABU

SODEPUR,  
December 16, 1945

BHAI KUMAR BABU,

You have spared me from having to visit Vasudevapur. Thanks. I am indeed sorry that I cannot go there.

Yours,  
M. K. GANDHI

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

## 77. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
December 16, 1945

The tendency of learning English rather than one's own language was deprecated by Mahatma Gandhi. "If we could stop this tendency we would be free from one of our slaveries," said Mahatma Gandhi, adding that he could not express how this tendency of some people talking and writing in English damaged them and the country. But in England, whenever a good book was published anywhere in the world, within a few days it would be translated and would reach the hands of the English-speaking public. Mahatma Gandhi asked :

Should we not do the same thing in India? Although it would take time for all people to understand the *rashtrabhasha*, there were languages of the locality and any good book could be translated and presented to the public in their mother tongue.

*The Hindu*, 18-12-1945

## 78. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

December 17, 1945

I see that I have overstayed my time in Calcutta. I found I had more work in Calcutta than I had expected. And then events compelled me to work more strenuously than I had counted upon. The result is that, much to my and my fellow-workers' disappointment, I have been compelled to cut off the places I had originally conceived and tentatively discussed with friends who were arranging

the tour. But let no one think that the curtailment will affect my study of the Bengal situation. The visit to Santiniketan is more by way of a friendly visit than study. I do not expect to see or meet visitors. They will oblige me by abstaining from wishing to see me during my very short stay there.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-12-1945

### 79. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SODEPUR,  
*December 17, 1945*

CHI. MIRA,<sup>1</sup>

This is merely a love letter written on the silence day. I have read your descriptive letter with much interest. But I do not know when I shall reach the Kisan Ashram. Is your account to the English Press quite accurate ?

Love.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABAI  
KISAN ASHRAM, MULDASPUR  
BAHADRABAD POST, *via* JWALAPUR  
SAHARANPUR DT.

From the original: C.W. 6513. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Aslo G.N. 9908

### 80. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SODEPUR,  
*December 17, 1945*

MY DEAR C. R.,

Your letter. You have not much to do for deserving what I said about you to the friends. For my observation was based on the past performance, not on the promise of the future.

Let my thought work, if it is true and well thought. The spoken word may spoil matters. Wait, watch and pray. Let us see.

You should write regularly or, if you are too busy, ask someone to write. How are you? The account given to me was none too good.

Things here are as bad as could be imagined. I am trying. I go

<sup>1</sup> The superscription in this and other letters to Mirabehn is in Devanagari.

on 18th to Santiniketan, return on 20th and go to Midnapore on 24th for a week. Your letters should be addressed to Sodepur.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 2114

*81. LETTERS TO MAKHANLAL ROY-CHOWDHURY*

SODEPUR,

*December 17, 1945*

DEAR RPROFESSOR,

If you can come at 5.45 p. m., i. e., just after public prayer on 22nd instant you can talk to me while I am having my walk.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

PROF. SHRI MAKHANLAL ROY-CHOWDHURY

12 SITARAM GHOSH ST.

CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*82. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ*

SODEPUR,

*December 17, <sup>1</sup> 1945*

JANAKIMAIYA,

It was good that I got your telegram.

I was a bit worried. You must have got Sushila's wire and letter. I hope you remember about the cow. You are coming to Madras, aren't you ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5851. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.

### 83. LETTER TO MADALASA

SODEPUR,  
December 17,<sup>1</sup> 1945

CHI. MADALASA,

It is good that you have undergone the second operation. I hope you are well. You are learning your lesson all right. Write to me when you are fit enough to do so. Ramakrishna<sup>2</sup> is fine. He does some work of service. Kamalnayan<sup>3</sup> has come today. I hope the child is well. Is he growing normally ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 37. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal.

### 84. LETTER TO ARUN GANDHI

SODEPUR,  
December 17,<sup>4</sup> 1945

CHI. ARUN<sup>5</sup>,

I think of you every day, but especially today during silence. Do you spin carefully at least 160 rounds daily? Is the yarn even? Do you yourself fix the spinning-wheel? Do you keep a daily account? If you keep this one promise, you will learn a lot.

Are you all right ? How is Ila<sup>6</sup>? Has she become a little wiser?

*Blessings to all of you from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4969. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's brothers

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.

<sup>5</sup> Son of Manilal Gandhi

<sup>6</sup> Addressee's sister

## 85. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

SODEPUR,  
*December 17,<sup>1</sup> 1945*

BHAI KUMARAPPA,

Your work has come to my notice. Look after your health and do not tempt God. If you have understood what I have said, then you need not move about a lot. It is a question of your being ready. What is required is mastery over one vocation and working knowledge of the others. It is very necessary to have good knowledge of Hindustani.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

KUMARAPPA

WARDHA

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10406. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 86. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

SODEPUR,  
KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
*December 17, 1945*

BHAI RAM MANOHAR,

I am sorry that your father passed away suddenly yesterday. We used to meet often. I had sent Pyarelalji and Prabhavatibehn to see his charkha activity. In my view he died in the manner he wanted. He had been engrossed in his work.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

AGRA

From the Hindi original: C.W. 11065. Courtesy: Hardev Sharma. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.



## 87. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU

SODEPUR,  
*December 17, 1945*

BHAI JAJUJI,

I have your letter about the appointment of Ramdhanbhai in Kashmir in place of Vichitrabhai. I agree.

I have sent my signatures on the authority letter for opening accounts in banks.

I have sent the letter after signing it to the Bihar Charkha Sangh.

The reply sent to Badshah Khan is all right.

Do whatever you can about.....<sup>1</sup> khadi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

JAJUJI

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

## 88. LETTER TO DR. SYED MAHMUD

SODEPUR,  
*December 17,<sup>2</sup> 1945*

BHAI MAHMUD,

How was it that you came and went away? I kept on waiting? It was much easier for you to come to Sodepur. How can any arrangement be made now ?

*Blessing from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5092. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> A word is illegible here.

<sup>2</sup> In Pyarelal Papers the date is 18.

## 89. LETTER TO VEENA PATEL

SODEPUR,  
December 17,<sup>1</sup> 1945

CHI. VEENA,

I have your beautiful letter. Let me know to what extent you had been suppressing yourself. Khimji is no doubt a good man and you will be happy there. Keep on writing to me. I am going to Santiniketan tomorrow. Father meets me quite often. He will go to Wardha. He will take Swadhina with him. Dhiren is well.

*Blessings to you and Khimji from*  
BAPU

VEENA

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

## 90. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

SODEPUR,  
December 17, 1945

We have come so close together and you have been observing such exemplary silence that it will give me a wrench to be away from you. God willing I shall be leaving for Santiniketan on Tuesday. I hope to return and again join you in the prayer on the 21st.

The hymn that has been sung on Monday is particularly appropriate. It says that he who gives his all gets all without asking. As against this he who grabs what he has no right to, loses all.

I have been told that some of you travel without ticket on trains and even stop trains by pulling the alarm chain at will. The report has pained me. Both these things are illegal. But I do not want to dwell upon the legal aspect. These practices are contrary to the spirit of the prayer. All I can say is those who indulge in these practices have not grasped the meaning of prayer. If they will reflect on the hymn that has just been sung they will realize that they may not travel

<sup>1</sup> Although the date in the source is 18, it would appear from the contents that the letter was written on the 17th, for Gandhiji left for Santiniketan on the 18th.

<sup>2</sup> The speech, written in Hindi, was read out by Kanu Gandhi, it being Gandhiji's silence day.

without ticket or pull the alarm chain without legitimate cause. I hope that such things will not occur again. If we continue to indulge in this kind of behaviour it will neither bring us independence nor enable us to retain it after it has been won. May God guide us aright.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-12-1945

### 91. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),

*December 18, 1945*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

In continuation of the correspondence<sup>1</sup> about the alleged ill-treatment of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, I am now able to send as requested a copy of the statement made by Dr. Lohia to his legal adviser.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1944-47, p. 66

### 92. LETTER TO G. L. CROSS

CAMP: KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),

*December 18, 1945*

DEAR MR. CROSS,

I have very carefully read your letter of the 15th and the note you left with me when we last met. Dr. Sushila Nayyar added that after best thought you had come to the conclusion that it would not be proper to worry me in the matter, at least for the time being. If this last news is accurate, I need not say anything more. However, I want to say that in popular estimation anything which the Government either directly or indirectly supports is considered to be anti-Independence and there is, at some stage or other, a clash between the people and the power that keeps the former from their cherished goal. This has happened often enough within my own experience. Therefore, 'non-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Sir Evan M. Jenkins", 25-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> Acknowledging this in his letter dated December 20, the addressee said that the statement had been forwarded to the Home Member.

political' has come to mean non-Indian, i.e., anti-Independence. Hence the unpopularity of movements connected with the Government. This is the crux. Association with war has a meaning with me but not with the average man. Everything British is certainly not bad if it is not synonymous with the Government; as C.F. Andrews, from top to toe British, was not bad. There are many organizations under Democracy which are not themselves run democratically but are not anti-democratic. Thus, a bank or a hospital would require experts to run it even though they may be run by democrats in the interest of democracy.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

G. L. CROSS, ESQ.  
C/O FRIENDS' AMBULANCE UNIT  
1 UPPER WOOD STREET  
CALCUTTA

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

### *93. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI*

SODEPUR,

*December 18, 1945*

CHI. PUSHPA,

Owing to my many preoccupations, I have not been able to write to you of late. I hope you are getting on well. You must be learning Hindustani.

Enclosed is a letter from Vrajlal. Read it and preserve it. Give it to me when I return. I have replied to Vrajlal and told him that if he finds it convenient he may go to Sevagram even in my absence. If he can persuade you to marry him, he may by all means do so. As I understand you, you do not even countenance the idea of marrying. But my judgment of you may be wrong. Can any man or woman really know his or her heart? Does not God alone know it? If, therefore, you change your mind after meeting Vrajlal, believe yourself to be absolutely free to do what you like. Don't be obdurate through a false sense of shame. Obey the promptings of a pure heart. I shall welcome your writing to Vrajlal, and if you do write, send the letter to

me. I will forward it to him. If you are not very eager to write, I shall not press you to do so.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9267

#### 94. *LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

CHI. DINSHAW,

Though I am here I keep thinking of matters there. Please train Munnalal well. He is hard-working, honest and accomplished.

What did you do about the furniture? We will not take in any new patient from the new year. We might admit some who are poor. I hope you are calm. I am enclosing the wire from Met Manage. Let him come when he can. Those who stay on should do so after careful consideration. Those who want to leave may go. Write to me at the address given above.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

#### 95. *LETTER TO GULBAI D. MEHTA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

CHI. GULBAI,

You must now be due for confinement. How are you? You are calm, aren't you? Write to me whatever you like. You are not going to fight shy of me. How is Mother ?

How is Ardeshir<sup>1</sup> ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's son

96. *LETTER TO ANASUYABAI KALE*

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I was happy to read your letter. Your Hindi is not in any way inferior to mine.

Everyone should do some constructive work over and above parliamentary work. And the aim of parliamentary work should also be to advance constructive work.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI ANASUYABAI KALE  
ANAND BHAVAN  
DHANTOLI  
NAGPUR

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

97. *LETTER TO B. P. SINHA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

BHAI SINHA,

I have received the statement<sup>1</sup> of Dr. Rammanohar which you have sent. Thanks.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI B. P. SINHA  
KASHI VIDYAPITH  
BENARAS CANTT.

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 18-12-1945

## 98. LETTER TO N. G. RANGA

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

BHAI RANGA,

I have gone through your letter. I will read your pamphlet.  
You are doing a lot of work.

*Blessings to you both from*  
BAPU

PROF. RANGA  
NIDULBROLU

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

## 99. LETTER TO H. C. DASAPPA

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

BHAI DASAPPA,

I have your letter. Meet me in Madras when I go there. I doubt  
whether I shall be able to go to Mysore. Be in Madras, both of you.  
Blessings to Yashodhara.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIH. C. DASAPPA  
SHRI KASTURBA SHIBIR  
PADURAVALLY  
V. V. MOHALLA POST  
MYSORE

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

## 100. LETTER TO SANKARAN

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

CHI. SHANKARAN,

I have your letter. I understand. I have already written for the  
expenses of [your] son and sister being paid.

Come here after improving your health. Write to me about everything there. Let me know how many patients there are and what treatment they are being given and so on.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRISANKARAN  
BALESHAWAR SINGHJI  
JIVAN SAKHA, LUKERGANJ  
ALLAHABAD

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

### *101. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL*

SODEPUR,  
*December 18, 1945*

BHAI SHYAMLAL,

I have your letter about Durgabai. You may accept her services. I am not however fully satisfied. How will she be able to do the work of Kasturba Memorial Trust while practising law? Let us see whether she learns Hindustani. I have your letter about Shri Panajikar, but I have not received his letter.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHYAMLAL  
SECRETARY, KASTURBA GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI  
WARDHA

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

### *102. LETTER TO PURNIMA BANNERJEE*

SODEPUR,  
ON THE TRAIN,  
*December 18, 1945*

CHI. PURNIMA<sup>1</sup>,

You must be knowing that from January onwards the Kasturba Smarak Nidhi will function through its Agents instead of the commi-

<sup>1</sup> Purnima Bannerjee of Allahabad, sister of Aruna Asaf Ali



tees. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the resolution passed in this connection. Will you become an Agent? It will be easy for you to fulfil the conditons laid down. I had a talk with Jawaharlalji. He says neither he nor Pantji has any objection to your taking up this work. That is to say, they will relieve you from other activities. Someone told me—I cannot remember his name—that you might try to get into the Assembly. One going into the Assembly will not be able to do the work of Kasturba Memorial Trust well because an Agent will have to give a lot of time to the work if she wants to bring credit to it.

Now write to me at the Sodepur address. I wanted to write to you a few days back but forgot about it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

PUERNIMA BANNERJEE

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

### *103. LETTER TO MANGALDAS PAKVASA*

[CAMP] SODEPUR,

ON THE TRAIN [TO SANTINIKETAN],

*December 18, 1945*

BHAI MANGALDAS PAKVASA

I have your letter and the opinions. It was good that you sent copies of the opinions to Jajuji. I shall now see what can be done.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4784. Courtesy: Mangaldas Pakvasa

### *104. LETTER TO OM PRAKASH*

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

ON THE TRAIN,

*December 18, 1945*

CHI. OM PRAKASH,

I have your letter. If you have to go to your brother and do the work there, you should spare some time and come back after finishing the work. Take care that you do not devote too much time to it.

It is necessary to have a good knowledge of Urdu but why should you crave for a degree ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### *105. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA*

SODEPUR,

ON THE TRAIN TO SANTINIKETAN,

*December 18, 1945*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have received all your letters. The letter written on rough paper is also lying with me. Today I shall answer whatever I possible can.

I am doing quite a bit of work here.

As for hand-carding I believe that this makes the cotton very clean. It is not so well cleaned either by machine or by any other means. By all these other means the fibre does become somewhat weak. In my view land-carding is a grand process. Combing should be given a place in it. Hand-carding teaches us cleanliness and patience. Adding the time spent in hand-carding [to that of the whole process] the speed of spinning the yarn seems slow. But that does not matter. Hand-carding of course cannot provide a livelihood. But it has a very significant part in self-reliance. As the process of hand-carding has not been very much in vogue, we have not had a real estimate of its power. We shall have an idea of its power if large numbers of people take to hand-carding. Show this letter to Vinoba also Hand-carding is his discovery. He has also had a wide experience. I would like to know if I am mistaken in this.

Because the sadhu had gone away, it was quite proper that he was asked to leave the Ashram. In my view this does not mean that it was quite wrong to have kept him in the Ashram. This will enable you to understand my argument.

I have no doubt that there should be separate classes for women. As for Om Prakash I shall be content with whatever you think right. It would not be proper for me to write anything about this.

I think the proper thing would be for me not to lay down limits as to the expenses of the people who are staying in the Ashram and

who come as visitors. For my experience these days should be regarded as limited. In my view you have all gone too far ahead. And when one has left a thing behind, one's view of it becomes less acceptable. The same applies to me. A doctor, however great a specialist he may be, does not regard himself as a specialist when he has given up practice. Others, who have acquired degrees later would be considered more competent. Hence, if it is decided to limit the expenses, let me first know the amount now being spent. Then I shall provide whatever light I can.

As for quarters for workers in the Ashram, I have discussed the matter at length with Shantabehn. But I am neutral. Shantabehn must be well now.

I shall not write anything from here about the work of Kamle and Om Prakashji. It would be improper for me to write. But I shall be ready to write to them when you write to me that I can place your views before them.

I understand what you say about Kailasbehn. It would have been better if I had asked you to be present when I spoke to her. I admit that what happened was improper. But I was dealing with things under such pressure that, much as I should have wished it, I could not have kept you with me all the time. This does not imply that I should not be warned again. Even a cautious person is likely to commit mistakes. Hence, it is a good policy to give a discreet warning.

It seems to me that however much we may get to know Vinoba, there is still more to learn. Do take the girls and the boys with you. Let there be one rule in this matter, that is, there should be no undue pressure on Vinoba. We should value his time.

Do you want a wall clock or a timepiece ?

As a general rule, the new entrants should bear their own expenses. If it is decided to keep anyone free of charge, it should be done after recording the reason for doing so. I hope you have kept some such book there.

What decision did you want from me with regard to Chakrayya? What do you want now ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

On the train. Have not revised.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4536

## 106. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SANTINIKETAN,  
December 18, 1945

Gurudev (Rabindranath Tagore) was like a great bird, wide and swift of wings, under which he gave protection to many.<sup>1</sup>

Under the warmth of his wings Santiniketan has been nurtured to its present size. Bengal is full of his songs. He has glorified the name of India throughout the world not by his songs only but also by his pen and brush. We all miss the warmth of his protecting wings. But we must not grieve. The remedy lies in our own hands.

True monuments to the great are not statues of marble, bronze or gold. The best monument is to adorn and enlarge their legacy. A son who buries underground his father's legacy or wastes it will be adjudged unworthy of his inheritance.

Whilst on Rathi Babu<sup>2</sup> and his colleagues must primarily rest the sacred duty of making Santiniketan truly worthy of Gurudev's great tradition, that duty rests no less upon all those who, though they may not be directly connected with Santiniketan, received the warmth of Gurudev's wings.

All mortals must quit this world one day. Gurudev has gone, having achieved all that a human being can expect to in life. His soul now rests in peace. It is for you now, the workers and inmates of Santiniketan—as indeed all those who are imbued with Gurudev's spirit—collectively to represent his ideal.

Santiniketan has been the abode of peace to me and since my family was given shelter on arrival from South Africa it is a pilgrimage to me and whenever I got the opportunity I came here to seek peace and tranquility.

It is indeed sad that we no longer have his protective wings on us. But I find solace in the fact that he has left own memorial in the form of many gifts that he has bequeathed to the nation.

It is our duty to receive those gifts with humility and gratitude and to see that they go on increasing. If we can continue his work and prove ourselves true to the task he has left us, I do not see why we should mourn his passing away. I feel in my heart that his soul is

<sup>1</sup> The following four paragraphs are reproduced from *Visva-Bharati News*.

<sup>2</sup> Rathindranath Tagore, son of Rabindranath Tagore

somewhere in this Ashram and in perfect peace.

His songs that you have sung to me, although their meanings are not accessible to me just now, were full of sweetness and inspiration. I very much wish I could prolong my stay here in your midst, but I am afraid it is not possible this time, because I have other urgent duties to attend to.

Druing the last few years, India has passed through a great ordeal and none has suffered so greatly as this province of Bengal. The news of Bengal's agonies reached me when I was in jail—powerless to do anything. I all along prayed to God to send me to serve Bengal and to help the distressed people. My visit this time, therefore, was undertaken with a view to serve and to work for Bengal. That is why I am very sorry that I shall not be able to prolong my stay. I shall take my sustenance of peace and inspiration from this place and then go away. I hope you will understand and forgive me.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19-12-45, and *Visva-Bharati News*, Vol. XIV, No. 7

### *107. TELEGRAM TO AGA KHAN<sup>1</sup>*

SANTINIKETAN,  
*December 19, 1945*

AGA KHAN

THANKS YOUR WIRE. PLEASE ADDRESS SODEPUR.

GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> In reply to the addressee's telegram of December 17, 1945, which read: "I would like to write fully about Yeravda. Where can I address letters?"

## 108. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

SANTINIKETAN,  
*December 19, 1945*

Santiniketan is no new place to me. This Mandir too is familiar to me by old association. On more than one occasion I have come here and addressed the inmates. Santiniketan is like a home of my own. The world is in need of the ideal of peace which is the ideal of Santiniketan. That is why I expect a great deal from this place.

Gurudev lives on in his own creation. He has fulfilled his mission. It is we who have certain duties which we owe to him. If we fail to fulfil them we shall be failing in our duties.

The message of Santiniketan is urgently needed for the world in travail. Gurudev travelled from one quarter of the earth to another to bring about peace and conciliation. In a way he has designed Santiniketan for bringing peace to the whole world. His father founded the Ashram and it was left to the son to bring its benediction to the whole world.

When we come to a place of worship of our minds should be calm so that our hearts can be receptive. That is why we close our eyes during prayers. But today I would rather keep my eyes open to see the vision how the students of this place are getting ready to carry the message of peace as couriers of goodwill and brotherhood of the world.

Students of Oxford, Cambridge and other well-known seats of learning carry their own hallmark. I would like to see the students of this Ashram invested with that hallmark of peace and fellowship. I would like to see, moreover, how alert they are to receive the world and how unperturbed and calm they are in the face of difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was one of the weekly ones held every Wednesday morning. Gandhiji spoke at the request of Kshitimohan Sen.

<sup>2</sup> According to Pyarelal "Gandhiji had noticed that during the prayer some of the boys did not sit erect. Some were fidgety, others listless. He pulled them up for this as he had done before on the previous evening."

The world has now grown a small place. England is no longer seven seas away. It takes hardly three days to reach the heart of England. We have come so near that we can share our joys and grief with all. The War has ceased. The Allies have won, but turmoil is still there, the pain and sufferings are on a very large scale. Winter is coming. We who belong to the tropics cannot even imagine what hardships will have to be endured by the people of the West in the face of dire winter there. Thousands have died and there is death staring in the face of many other thousands. They die of the severe cold and we of famine. What further suffering is in store for humanity nobody knows.

In the midst of this world-wide turmoil this Ashram should carry out its ideal of peace. All of you should carry the message of peace and brotherhood and dedicate yourselves to the cause of removing pain and suffering of the poor. You should prepare yourselves for that task from now on. You should be resolute and at the same time unperturbed. It is for you to fulfil the hope and trust that Gurudev left upon you.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20-12-145*

## 109. SPEECH AT FOUNDATION-LAYING CEREMONY <sup>1</sup>

SANTINIKETAN,  
December 19, 1945

Birth and death are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. They are not distinct. They are different aspects of the same thing. But out of our ignorance we welcome the one and shrink from the other. This is wrong. Mourning over the death of dear ones, especially those like Charlie Andrews and Gurudev who have done their part so nobly and well has its root in our selfishness. Deenabandhu is blessed in death as he was in life. Death of people like him cannot be an occasion for sorrow. Speaking for myself, I may say that I have almost forgotten to mourn the death of friends and dear ones and I want you to learn to do likewise.<sup>2</sup>

Between Deenabandhu and me there existed love like that between two brothers. I remember how Deenabandhu came out to South Africa at the instance of Mr. Gokhale and with the blessings of Gurudev, and how he repeated from place to place with deep feeling the *mantras* Gurudev had given him. Today I have laid the foundation of the hospital in memory of Deenabandhu Andrews—a title which has been bestowed on him by the grateful poor who need hospitals.

Being situated midway between Sriniketan and Santiniketan, it will serve not only these two places but also the villages round about. I have been very much touched by the cordial welcome given me by the representatives<sup>3</sup> of the villagers. It is symbolical of their blessings with which are joined the blessings of you all.

Gandhiji referred to the high prices of building materials and said that it might take some time before the hospital could be erected.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20-12-1945, and *Visva-Bharati News*, Vol. XIV, No. 9

<sup>1</sup> Of Deenabandhu C. F. Andrews Memorial Hospital. The function which was held in the evening was attended by the staff and students of Sriniketan and Santiniketan as also a good number of local peasantry.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is reproduced from *Visva-Bharati News*.

<sup>3</sup> On his arrival Gandhiji was welcomed by a Santhali headman, who applied sandal paste on his forehead, while a Santhali girl garlanded him.



*110. DISCUSSION WITH HEADS OF DEPARTMENT,  
SANTINIKETAN<sup>1</sup>*

*December 19, 1945*

Regard me as a blank slate. So far I have had only hearsay and hearsay has very little place in my life. Solid facts are what I want. Without a full knowledge of facts I shall be able to do little to help you.

It is not that you have nothing to say. That would mean that the institution is perfect. But nothing in this world is perfect. Speak to me freely about the shortcomings. Good things speak for themselves, not the bad things, at any rate, not to me.

I have followed every word of what you have said with the keenest interest and I have learned a lot from it. I do not propose to make detailed observations on what has been said or to give expression to all that is welling up in me just now but shall confine myself to one or two remarks of a general character.

As I listened while Nanda Babu<sup>2</sup> and Kshiti mohan Babu were speaking, I said to myself: 'Here is a real difficulty; but it is a difficulty of our own making.' If a person conducts a big department he is expected to transmit what he stands for to someone who can be termed as his successor. Yet it is the dominant cry of the two stalwarts that they are unable to find a suitable successor for their respective departments. True, these are departments of a special character. I know these departments and I know too Gurudev's views about them. Speaking generally, may I venture to suggest that there is no difficulty but can be overcome by *tapascharya*? It is almost an untranslatable word, the nearest approach to its true meaning being perhaps 'single-minded devotion'. But it means much more than that. When-ever, in the course of my multifarious activities, I have been confronted with a difficulty of this character, this single-minded devotion has solved my difficulty in a manner which I had never expected. During my twenty long years in God-forsaken South Africa, where under cir-

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's article "The Santiniketan Pilgrimage". The heads of the various departments had met Gandhiji in the evening informally to place before him their difficulties.

<sup>2</sup> Nandalal Bose, who was in charge of Kala Bhawan, Santiniketan.

cumstances of the worst kind conceivable I found my God, it was my invariable experience that the right helper appeared at the right moment.

It is my conviction, which I arrived at after a long and laborious struggle, that Gurudev as a person was much superior to his works or even this institution where he soared and sang. He poured his whole soul into it and nurtured it with his life's blood and yet I dare say that his greatness was not fully expressed by it or through it. That is perhaps true of all great and good men—they are better and greater than their works. If, then, you are to represent that goodness or greatness for which Gurudev stands but which he could not express fully even through this institution, you can do it only through *tapascharya*.

There is a remarkable string of verses in the Tulsi *Ramayana* to the effect that what is not possible through other means becomes possible through *tapascharya*. This is said with reference to Parvati. Narada had prophesied that she would have for her companion-in-life one who answered to the description of Siva. If instead of Siva those characteristics were met in the person of a rogue, her life would be ruined. How to avert such a calamity was the problem and it is in that context that the verses to which I have referred come. I commend these verses to you for your careful perusal. Only you will have to strip them of their orthodoxy.

Finances were mentioned by you in the course of discussion. I will plead with you to dismiss from your thoughts the word 'finance' altogether. I am convinced that lack of finances never represented a real difficulty to a sincere worker. Finances follow—they dog your footsteps if you represent a real cause. Here, let me utter a warning. A worker may be real and yet the cause he represents may not be real. His handicap in that case will continue. There are, of course, seeming exceptions. The world is full of fools and successful rogues. But speaking of sincere men and women, it is my faith that if their cause is as worthy as their means, the handicap of finance need never deter them or damp their ardour. It is a big thing you have undertaken and in future you may have to undertake still bigger things and the question will be raised, 'What about the finances?' and you will find that the difficulty lies somewhere else rather than in the lack of finances. Set it right and the finances will take care of themselves.

Yours<sup>1</sup> is a common difficulty. You cannot ride two horses at the same time. If you mix day-scholars with full-time students, the former will overshadow and spoil the training of the latter. Your institution was not designed for the mixture.

Then it was said by Krishna Kripalani that they did not know what they were aiming at or stood for, what the sum total of the energies of Santiniketan and Sriniketan signified. My answer is that the ideal before you is not to represent Bengal or even India; you have to represent the whole world. Gurudev's claim was not smaller than that. He stood for humanity as a whole. He could not do that unless he represented India with its destitute, dumb millions. That should be your aspiration as well. Unless you represent that mass mind of India you will not represent Gurudev as a man. You may represent him as a singer, as a painter, or as a great poet but you won't represent him, and history will say of Gurudev that his institution was a failure. I do not want history to give that verdict.

I agree that if my claim that I am one of you is to be fully vindicated I ought to be here in your midst for a longer time.<sup>2</sup> I would love to do so. But my future dispositions are in the hands of God.

*Vishva-Bharati News*, Vol. XIV, No. 9

### *111. DISCUSSION WITH WORKERS AND STAFF MEMBERS<sup>3</sup>*

SANTINIKETAN,  
*December 20, 1945*

I want to hear from your lips what inspires you to be here and what are the difficulties that confront you.

Q. Should Santiniketan allow itself to be drawn into political work ?

A. I have no difficulty in saying that Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati ought not to be mixed up with politics. Every institution has its limitations. This institution should set limitations upon itself

<sup>1</sup> Bibhutibhushan Gupta's; he had mentioned the complication arising from the admission of day scholars.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to Rathindranath Tagore's request that Gandhiji should give more time every year to Santiniketan.

<sup>3</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "The Santiniketan Pilgrimage". As some members did not know Hindi, Gandhiji replied in English with the warning that they would have to speak in Hindi when they met next, at least he would not speak in any other language but Hindi.

unless it is to be cheap. When I say that Santiniketan should not get mixed up with politics, I do not mean that it should have no political ideal. Complete independence must be its ideal, as it is that of the country. But that very ideal would require it to keep out of the present-day political turmoil. I was asked this question when I was here thirty years ago and the reply I then gave was the same as I have given today. In fact it applies with even greater force today.

Q. In order to make Visva-Bharati really an international university, should we not try to increase the material resources of the university and provide greater facilities and ordinary comforts of life to attract scholars and research workers of outstanding merit from all over the country ?

A. By material resources I suppose you mean finance. Let me then say that your question is addressed to person who does not swear by material resources. 'Material resources' is after all a comparative term. For instance, I do not go without food and clothing. In my own way I have tried—more than perhaps any other man—to increase the level of material resources of the average man in India. But it is my firm conviction that Visva-Bharati will fail to attract the right type of talent and scholarship if it relies on the strength of the material resources or material attractions that it can offer. Its attraction must be moral or ethical, or else it will become just one out of the many educational institutions in India. That was not what Gurudev lived and died for. I do not mean that creature comforts should not be provided to the staff and workers who work here. There are ample material comforts in evidence here already. If I stayed here longer and had my way they might be considerably reduced. As Visva-Bharati progresses and more and more gifts and donations begin to pour in, in due course it will be able to provide more attractions to scholars and research workers, if it wants to. But if I were asked for advice I would say: 'Do not yield to this temptation.' Visva-Bharati must take its stand on the advancement or moral worth. If it does not stand for that, it is worth nothing.

Q. What must be done so that the institution might not lose its high moral appeal? What remedy do you suggest for it ?

A. Every one of you should understand the significance of moral worth. Moral worth is easily distinguished from material worth. The one leads to devotion to moral value, the other to Mammon-worship. What distinguishes man from the four-footed beast is merely the recognition of moral worth, i. e., the greater the moral

worth of a person the greater his distinction. If you believe in this ideal, you should ask yourselves why you are here and what you are doing.

Every worker must have, of course, food, clothing, etc., for himself and his dependants. But you do not belong to Visva-Bharati merely because Visva-Bharati feeds, clothes and finds creature comforts for you. You belong to it because you cannot do otherwise, because your moral worth increases day by day by working for its ideals. Therefore, every defect that crops up, every difficulty that obstructs its working, will be found to be ultimately traceable to some defect in your outlook in regard to moral worth. I have been connected with many institutions for over sixty years and I have come to the conclusion that every difficulty in their working was traceable to a defect in the understanding of moral values.

Q. We are trying to serve villagers. We find that at every step our activity is blocked by the social environment in the villages. The joyless routine of life there, the stagnation and the incubus of evil social customs obstruct our efforts. Should we not work for the eradication of these before we can hope for success in our other activities, and if so how can it be done ?

A. Ever since I came to India I have felt that social revolution is a much more difficult thing to achieve than the political revolution, by which I mean ending our present slavery under the British rule. There are some critics who say that India cannot attain her political and economic emancipation till we get social emancipation. I regard it as a snag and a conundrum set to puzzle us, because I have found that the absence of political emancipation retards even our efforts for bringing about social and economic emancipation. At the same time it is also true that without a social revolution we will not be able to leave India happier than when we were born. I can however indicate no royal road for bringing about a social revolution except that we should represent it in every detail of our own lives.

Force has been used to alter the structure of society in some countries. But I have purposely eliminated it from our consideration. So my advice to you is: Try again and again and never say that you are defeated. Do not get impatient and say, 'the people are no good.' Rather say, 'I am no good.' If the people do not respond within the time limit prescribed by you the failure is yours, not theirs. It is thankless and laborious work. But you do not expect thanks for your work. Work that is undertaken for love is no burden—it is pure joy.

Q. In an ashram, does the introduction of salary system raise or degrade the ideal of the institution ?

A. I have no difficulty in saying that it makes no difference whether you pay a fixed salary or your expenses are paid for you. Both methods can be tried. The danger to be guarded against is this: if you pay a man his bazaar price you do not carry out the spirit of the Ashram. We should rather do without talent and ability, be it of the highest order, if it demands its bazaar value. In other words, we should wait till talent is attracted to the institution, not for money but for something else for which the institution stands. Nor should you let the principle of "according to want" take you even beyond bazaar values. The salary system in Visva-Bharati is not a thing to complain of. The difficulties to which you have referred cannot be removed by mere tinkering. You must find out and remove the causes which are at the root of the defects you have in mind.

Q. How can we make headway against cynicism or lack of faith that we find among the youngsters ?

A. I heave a sigh of despair when you ask me that question. When you find that your pupils are without faith you should say to yourself: 'I am without faith.' I have found that again and again in my own experience. And each time the discovery has been like an invigorating bath for me. The Biblical saying 'remove the beam from thine own eye before ye point out the mote in thy neighbour's'<sup>1</sup> is even more appropriate in the case of pupil and teacher. The pupil comes to you to find in you something infinitely better than himself. Rather than complain, 'Oh! he has no faith. How can I implant faith in him,' it would be far better that you resigned from your job.

Q. The intellectual tradition of Gurudev is being fairly well maintained here but I am afraid that the idealism for which he stood does not find full scope. There must be something wrong in an organization that leads to such a result. What is the remedy? Secondly, should our institution only to make culture available to the man in the street? This is your ideal. At the same time should not there be a place where higher culture can be preserved for the initiated? This was Gurudev's ideal. Such an institution will necessarily be exclusive and for the select only. I am a follower both of yours and Gurudev's ideals and I am torn by the conflict between the two.

A. To take the second question first, it is a reflection both on Gurudev and myself. I have found no real conflict between us. I

<sup>1</sup>*St. Matthew*, VII. 5

started with a disposition to detect a conflict between Gurudev and myself but ended with the glorious discovery that there was none.

Regarding your question, all I can say is that the feeling, 'I am all right but there is something wrong with the institution,' betrays self-righteousness. It is a killing thing. When you feel within yourself that you are all right but everything around is wrong, the conclusion which you should draw for yourself is that everything is all right but there is something wrong within you.<sup>1</sup>

*Visva-Bharati News*, Vol. XIV, No. 9

### 112. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

ON THE TRAIN FROM SANTINIKETAN,  
December 20, 1945

I daily write the diary.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Courtesy: National Archives of India

### 113. SPEECH TO CONGRESS WORKERS<sup>3</sup>

RAMPURHAT,  
December 20, 1945

Hindu-Muslim unity can come only by selfless service of Muslims untainted by political motives.

They (Muslims) are just like us and we must be friends with them. The same applies to Harijans. We cannot survive if we are unjust to them. By all means let all those go who want to go to the

<sup>1</sup> When Gandhiji was about to leave, Indira Devi, Rabindranath Tagore's niece, asked him: "Is there not too much music and dance here? Is there not the danger of the music of the voice drowning the music of life?" As Gandhiji had no time then, he replied to the above and some other questions from Calcutta; *vide* "Letter to Rathindranath Tagore", 22-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to "A Thought for the Day"; *vide* the last item. This was a postscript to Sushila Nayyar's letter to the addressee.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji addressed "about 60 Congress workers of Birbhum and adjoining districts in the local town hall. . . . Welcoming Gandhiji, Satyen Chatterjee, Secretary of the Birbhum District Congress Committee, said that Gandhiji's advice would have great effect on all of them and every worker would try to work his constructive programme."

Assemblies but even there they must make it their business to work the constructive programme. In any case, the bulk of the work of Congressmen will be outside legislatures and they must devote themselves whole-heartedly to the new, enlarged programme of constructive work.

In reply to his enquiries Mahatmaji was informed that the population of the district was about eleven lakhs including two lakh Mohammedans and about 73,000 Santhals. He asked the workers to include the Santhals also in their programme of service . . . .

In regard to the shortage of cloth the workers informed Gandhiji that there were 500 spinners in the district before 1942. But cotton yarn had always come from outside, as Bengal had never grown enough cotton for her needs. Gandhiji said that the lack of cloth in any province could not be looked upon as an insurmountable difficulty and cited the example of England, which though it grew no cotton, was the biggest exporter of cloth.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21-12-1945*

#### *114. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING<sup>1</sup>*

RAMPURHAT,  
*December 20, 1945*

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the need for removing untouchability from the Hindu society. It was a terrible blot on Hinduism, he added. They must feel that every Indian was their brother—their own flesh. They must banish from their hearts all distinctions between Hindus and Muslims, Harijans and Bhils and Santhals. If they could learn these lessons they could banish a good many of the evils that beset society.

Mahatma Gandhi regretted that all of them could not understand Hindustani. They must, of course, know the language of their province. But, he pointed out, if they wanted to travel all over India and wanted others to come to them, they must have a common language and that language had to be Hindustani.

Explaining the language, Gandhiji said that Urdu was one form of Hindustani and the other form was Hindi. The difference was that Urdu contained more words of Arabic and Persian origin and was written in Persian script, whereas Hindi contained words of Sanskrit origin and was written in Devanagari script. It was not so always but he would not at this moment enter into the history or the causes of the present division. Gandhiji emphasized that those who wished to serve India must learn both

<sup>1</sup>*The Hindu*, 22-12-1945, reported that Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani and the “speech was explained to the audience in Bengali by Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh”.



the scripts and forms of the language. If they loved their country and its people they would not mind the trouble and it was not a hard task either.

Urging the people to wear khaddar, Gandhiji observed that after 30 years' experience he could say that if they had the will to produce their own cloth they could overcome the scarcity of cloth in no time. It was strange, he remarked, that they could not or did not produce cloth in their country where cotton grew in abundance and did not spin and weave their own cloth.

Gandhiji referred to the prevalence of malaria in the district and said that one reason for this was their terrible poverty. But if they used their leisure hours rightly, Gandhiji thought, they could lessen their poverty also. They must give up their insanitary habits and it was the duty of all their workers to know how to preserve their own health and teach people the way to do so.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22-12-1945*

### *115. SPEECH AT RAILWAY STATION, BURDWAN*

*December 20, 1945*

Gandhiji asked them to be peaceful as, he said, freedom could not be achieved by shouting slogans. Peace was their only weapon for non-violence which alone could bring independence. He advised them also not to think in terms of Hindus and Muslims.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21-12-1945*

### *116. LETTER TO ABANINDRANATH TAGORE*

SODEPUR,  
*December 21, 1945*

DEAR ABANI BABU<sup>1</sup>,

I hope you received my telegram sent to you yesterday from Santiniketan. How I wish it were possible for me, being in Calcutta, to come to you and meet you face to face ! But I know that I must deny myself that pleasure !

I went yesterday morning to see Nand Babu's museum and in it in a glass case he showed me some rare specimens of your producing beautiful art out of almost nothing, even straws !

You must live to give India and the world more of such things.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Nephew of Rabindranath Tagore

### 117. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
*December 21, 1945*

We are all travellers. I had been to Santiniketan for two days. I have returned and will stay here for two or three days and again I will go to Midnapore.

We are all travellers. Sooner or later we will have to undertake a long journey. This is the preparation for the long one. We must not be sorry for any travelling, short or long. But we do feel sorry for the long journey because we do not understand the significance of life and death, which are equal.

Today's song conveys the idea appropriately (*"Ai Korechho Bhalo Nithur, Ai Korechho Bhalo"*). This is a prayer to God to burn our passion. And only when we have succeeded in that, shall we have no sorrow for the long journey.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22-12-1945*

### 118. LETTER TO RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 22, 1945*

CHI. RATHI,

It was a matter of pure delight for me to be in Santiniketan and to study all I could during my very brief stay. I told you that I would put down in writing some of the things I was unable to say there either to you personally or during the conversation<sup>1</sup> with the heads of departments.

1. Just as I do not like day-scholars, I do not like preparing boys and girls for university examinations. Visva-Bharati is its own university. I ought not to be in need of a charter from any Government. As it is you are giving Visva-Bharati degrees side by side with preparing students for the chartered university. You have a high ideal to live for and live up to. University degrees are a lure to which you cannot afford to fall a prey. Concessions that Gurudev

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Discussion With Heads of Department, Santiniketan", 19-12-1945

made to weakness with impunity, Visva-Bharati without him cannot make. Concessions to weakness began with the introduction of the orthodox matriculation examination. I was unable even then to reconcile myself to it and I do not know that we have gained anything by it. I am not now thinking at all in terms of non-co-operation. I am just now anxious for Santiniketan to represent the highest that Gurudev stood for.

2. Music in Santiniketan is charming, but has the professor there come to the conclusion that Bengali music is the last word in that direction? Has Hindustani music, i. e., music before and after Muslim period, anything to give to the world of music? If it has, it should have its due place at Santiniketan. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that Western music which has made immense strides should also blend with the Indian. Visva-Bharati is conceived as a world university. This is merely a passing thought of a layman to be transmitted to the music master there.

One question<sup>1</sup> about music. I have a suspicion that perhaps there is more of music than warranted by life, or I will put the thought in another way. The music of life is in danger of being lost in the music of the voice. Why not the music of the walk, of the march, of every movement of ours and of every activity? It was not an idle remark<sup>2</sup> which I made at the Mandir service about the way in which boys and girls should know how to walk, how to march, how to sit, how to eat, in short how to perform every function of life. That is my idea of music. So far as I know, Gurudev stood for all this in his own person.

3. You will not have real rural reconstruction unless you begin with the basic craft, which is hand-spinning. Weaver's art without hand-spinning is a dead art. You know that I pleaded for it with Gurudev; at first in vain, later on he had begun to see what I was driving at. If you think that I have interpreted Gurudev aright in the matter of spinning, you will not hesitate to make Santiniketan hum with the music of the wheel.

The spinning-wheel and all it means lends itself to the exhibition of all your skill. Do you know that the spinning-wheel is considered to be solace of the poor widow? And it is the *Annapurna*<sup>3</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> Vide footnote 1, "Letter to Anand T. Hingorani", 20-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 19-12-1945

<sup>3</sup> Goddess of plenty Teerth", 26-11-1945

hungry. When you adopt spinning by way of a sacrificial rite you are immediately in tune with the dumb masses.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

SANTINIKETAN

From a copy: C.W. 10553. Courtesy: Visva-Bharati

### *119. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI*

SODEPUR,

*December 22, 1945*

CHL. KANTI,

I got your letter. It is quite amusing. You are working hard to pass three examinations at a time. I wish you success in all the three. Be a good doctor. Set a fine example of success in inter-caste marriage and be an expert at spinning and constructive work. Truly speaking, all the three examinations are a test of ahimsa.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7382. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

### *120. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SODEPUR,

*December 22, 1945*

CHL. MRIDULA,

I hope you received my letter. The following is my itinerary: I am leaving here on the 24th for Midnapore. I expect to return on the 4th January. After staying on for four or five days I shall go to Assam. I shall be there for a week. After I return from there I shall go to Madras. The latest date for Madras is [January] 23rd.

You are moving about quite a lot and gaining experience. Sometimes I wonder whether it would not be better for you after gaining so much experience to settle down at some place and put it to good use. And I wonder whether looking after his health does not have a place among the many duties of a man.

In my case these questions do not arise any more, because I have all along assumed the answer in my practice. But is there any absolute rule that what applies to one can apply to all?

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

### *121. LETTER TO SHARAYU DHOTRE*

SODEPUR,  
*December 22, 1945*

CHI. SARAYU,

I have your letter. I never thought you would come to Calcutta.

I shall leave here on the 24th on a tour of Midnapore. I hope to return on January 4th, after which I shall be staying on for four or five days. I shall be pleased to see you during that time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SMT. SHARAYUBEHN  
DHARMASANGHA, KISHORE BUNGALOW  
25 BALRAM STREET  
CALCUTTA

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

### *122. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA*

SODEPUR,  
*December 22, 1945*

CHI. TARA,

I have your letter.

You will succeed in your work with the K. G. N. M. Trust. Help Sushila rid herself quickly of the gall-stone. She will be all right. Sometimes diagnosis of stone, etc., turns out to be wrong. It has been observed that doctors also commit errors.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SMT. TARABEHN MASHRUWALA  
AKOLA

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

### 123. LETTER TO RAMANAND TEERTH

SODEPUR,  
December 22, 1945

SWAMIII,

I have your letter. I have read everything. You have done well in not accepting any conditions. I had a talk with Panditji. Keep on writing to him everything.<sup>1</sup> I am happy to know that your health is improving.

SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH  
HYDERABAD

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

### 124. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI

SODEPUR,  
December 22, 1945

CHI. SARU,

I have your letter. Kanti has described to me the sweet quarrel between you two. When both of you testify to each other's conduct or when I come to know that either has won over the other, I shall withdraw the adjective 'mad' and substitute it with a similar, nice adjective. There are innumerable couples in the world who carry on their life smoothly through the drive of passion. But real greatness lies in creating unity and spontaneity through knowledge.

Shanti<sup>2</sup>, I trust, is well.

You must learn one thing. As a rule, the wife spends most of her time in the kitchen. But if you can master the art of eating just to keep alive, you will have to give the minimum time in the kitchen. For this you must learn the rules of proper diet. If you are really keen to learn, I shall teach you some day.

You have asked my permission to come to Madras. If you want to meet me for the sake of meeting I would advise you to save both

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Ramanad

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's son

the money and the time. Saving time is also saving money. But if you feel that you must, then do come.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 7383. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

### *125. LETTER TO PALTU JHA*

SODEPUR,

*December 22, 1945*

DEAR PANDITJI,

I have your letter.

I have already given you my reply with regard to Sanskrit. I have written at length about Varnashrama. A collection of my articles<sup>1</sup> has also been published. I have expressed my present views in the foreword.<sup>2</sup> The gist of it is that it is the duty of every Hindu to regard himself as a Harijan, that is, the lowest among the Shudras. Thus alone can Hinduism be purified and saved. This includes my reply to your questions.

I cannot say when I shall be able to read your two books. I should like to read them.

You have the name and address on your card printed in English ! Why and for whom?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5682

### *126. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

SODEPUR,

*December 22, 1945*

We do not want to live on the mercy of anybody except God. *Gita* teaches us to be fearless. If you could learn that, nobody would

<sup>1</sup>*Varnavyavastha*

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* "Foreword to "Varnavyavastha"

be able to keep you down. If anybody asks me to bow down my head—I am an old man and anybody can push me or knock me down—but if I say, ‘I won’t,’ the utmost he can do is to kill me. This fearlessness is swaraj. If everybody acts in the same way or feels in the same spirit, swaraj is there. It, however, does not mean that Government will go away today but it means that no power can make us bow down our head. We would not achieve independence by simply repeating the word like a parrot. Our deeds must be on the same line.

Explaining the evening song, Gandhiji said that it was not an easy task to select an appropriate song out of the many composed by Gurudev. In this particular song, the Poet asked them not to be cowards. They were in a small boat and God was their helmsman. When God was their helmsman they should not be afraid of anything. His hands were not shaky and He would safely escort them to their destination.

Gandhiji asked his audience to have faith in God. They would have to swim across the ocean of life. After all, what was fear? The word itself frightened them. He, therefore, advised them that they must take the essence of the song to their heart. Gandhiji asked them not to leave him, nor would he leave them, so long as he was in Calcutta. He also advised them to take part in the prayer by singing in chorus with them.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23-12-1945*



## 127. LETTER TO RANGANAYAKI DEVI

SODEPUR,  
December 23, 1945

CHI. RANGANAYAKI,

I have your letter. I have shown your letter and cutting to Dr. Sushila Nayyar. She says that surgically the thing is substantial. But I would not advise you to pay for your doctor friend for going to America. If you feel like it you may go to America. But that is a matter solely for you to decide.

Personally I think that you should turn your deafness into a blessing and listen to the voice from within. What is worth hearing will be written down for you. But this can be done only if you feel like it, not otherwise.

*Blessings from*<sup>1</sup>  
BAPU

SHRI RANGANAYAKIDEVI  
FIRST HOUSE  
SRIRANGAM  
S. INDIA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 128. LETTER TO MANIBEHN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
24 PARGANAS,  
December 23, 1945

CHI. MANIBEHN,

Kakubhai<sup>2</sup> has suggested that the post of Secretary of the Bombay branch of the A.I.S.A. should be offered to you. He informs me that you have seen the letter to that effect. I shall indeed be glad if you could honour the post. I know about your capabilities but I was not aware that you were also competent to cope with accounts. However, if that be so I shall be very pleased. Please,

<sup>1</sup> The subscription is in Hindi.

<sup>2</sup> Purushottam Kanji Jerajani

therefore, let me have your reply, after careful consideration. Once you accept the secretaryship I don't want to be obliged to admit that you are not as good an accountant as anyone else. I don't wish to be a champion of women's talents nor do I want to cover up for them. I have, all along since my South African days, wished that women would acquire the ability to struggle independently and not lag behind any man, in their own field. And I believe I have fairly succeeded in my endeavour.

And is it correct for you to become an agent of the artificial silk mill instead of following in the footsteps of your husband? Or don't you yourself experience any contradiction in becoming a director of the mill? I shall expect your reply to this before I arrive at any decision. Write to me frankly. Send your reply to the address mentioned above. I shall be in Bengal and Assam till the 20th of January, but my headquarters will continue to be Sodepur.

I got your letter after I wrote this, which all the same covers all the points.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### *129. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SODEPUR,  
*December 23, 1945*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your letter of the 16th and postcard of the 19th.<sup>1</sup>

No fee is to be charged from the poor who may be admitted as indoor patients, but we shall accept what they can offer. In other words, we shall follow the practice obtaining in Sevagram. At present even our expenses on food are so heavy that no person of ordinary means can meet them. We shall have to consider what diet we can devise for those people which will cure them and help them to keep fit.

2. Along with the poor we shall admit only such wealthy patients who agree to live as the poor do. I can see no place for them in this

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's letters are not available.

sanatorium if they have to be provided special facilities. I shall not permit even providing a special room for a rich patient simply because he is rich. The plan of constructing new rooms, etc., does not appeal to me just now. For we shall know only from experience how many poor patients will seek admission or how many of them we shall admit. We shall see what to do when we run short of accomodation. My view, therefore, is that we should incur no expenditure just now except what is absolutely essential.

3. The chairs, etc., will of course have to be removed. The Doctor himself wished to buy up some of the furniture. I do not know whether he still wishes to do so. If he does not, I am afraid I shall have to arrange for their disposal. I can only hope that I shall be able to do so. We shall have to make do with the number of beds we have at present. I see that there will be no occasion in the immediate future to admit a large number of patients.

4. The reply to this is contained in what has been stated above.

5. If the boiler for heating water has become useless, it should be replaced by a new one. I did have some talk with the Doctor about it, but I forget what decision we took. If it is necessary to seek the help of the mill-owner in the neighbourhood or of Birlaji, I shall be ready to do so. Do what the Doctor suggests in this matter.

6. There is no reason to believe that we shall start getting patients right from January 1. We shall need to make arrangements only for those who are already there. And they can even sit on the floor and eat off porcelain plates.

7. I have made arrangements to buy the required quantity of khadi. If, therefore, you let me know the requirements, I shall be able to supply it. You yourself suggested five to seven rolls for three dozen bed-sheets. Will that number suffice?

8. Please consider whether those among the workers there who have their own arrangements for meals can continue the practice. I think it is our duty willingly to have meat served to those who are used to it and whose need we ought to supply. I see no harm or pollution—no one should—in the two kinds of food being cooked in the same kitchen. The idea of pollution is a mere excrescence [on our religion]. Those who are vegetarians should follow their dharma. It is self-evident to me that utensils used for cooking meat should not be used for cooking vegetables. In this matter I think we ought to res-

pect the wishes of the Doctor and Gulbai. There should not be even the slightest suspicion that we are indirectly trying to introduce vegetarian food. But we welcome anybody accepting vegetarianism on his own as being good for him.

I think it will be our duty to supply meat or eggs to those patients for whom the Doctor may consider them necessary.

9. The selection of medical assistants will rest with the Doctor.

10. Calls for no reply.

11. Just now I would regard Balkoba<sup>1</sup> as representing the standard for poor patients.

12. I agree with the Doctor that ultimately we shall have to shift to some large place. I have the fullest faith that God will make our path clear.

13. There is no need just now to call anybody from Sevagram. I have already written to you about Manibhai. He will come whenever we send for him.

14. The expenditure will have to be met by me. Is there no balance in the bank account there? I think I asked this question in a previous letter too. Probably it was in a letter addressed to the Doctor.

15. I have always held the view which you have expressed.

I think I have now replied to all your questions. If, however, there is anything you do not follow, do write to me. Address the letter to Sodepur.

I got you postcard today. The reply to the question you have asked in it is contained in what I have said above.

I have not revised the letter.

*Blessings from*

**BAPU**

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8622. Also C.W. 7195. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Balkrishna Bhavé

### 130. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

SODEPUR,  
*December 23, 1945*

CHI. PREMA,

Your letter of Decemebtr 17 is strange, and so is its language. This is the first such letter I have had from you. You are very busy. How surprising and sad that, though you claim to be a public worker, you feel embarrassed to have to ask for money from time to time? Why need one feel embarrassed to ask for money for public work? You have, I am sure, seen me putting out my head through windows of railway carriages and begging a pice each from the people. You have even helped me in this. And still the letter to which I am replying seems to have been written by a millionaire. I can understand your feeling embarrassed if you were asking for money for yourself. But how can it be too much to ask for money even a hundred times for a public cause? You have asked for an additional sum, but have not sent me a copy of the letter. If you have addressed the letter to me in my capacity as Chairman, you should have addressed a formal letter to the Secretary too. I can immediately reply to a letter received through the Secretary. If you have written to me as to an elder, you should give me enough details to enable me to send the money to you without delay.

I sought your advice as from a daughter, co-worker and one who was more than a sister to Sushila. Instead of giving the advice I asked for, you have written as if we were utter strangers. I do not undertand what all this is. Address your reply to Sodepur. I shall be touring in Bengal, and they will redirect the letter from here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10442. Also C.W. 6881. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

### 131. LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE

SODEPUR,  
December 23, 1945

BHAI KHARE,

I have your letter.<sup>1</sup> Thanks for the same. I have read it through. Let us see what happens now.

I am enclosing a newspaper cutting<sup>1</sup> which seems to me quite wrong. Is not what happened quite the opposite ?<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4870. Courtesy: N. B. Khare

### 132. LETTER TO T. J. KEDAR

SODEPUR,  
December 23, 1945

BHAI KEDAR<sup>3</sup>,

Such things have appeared in the Press. I am really puzzled. I have sent the original cutting to Dr. Khare.<sup>4</sup> I am sending you a copy. Is not the case quite the opposite of this? Who, I wonder, is getting things published in this manner? How can such a wrong thing be set right? If Dr. Khare also holds the views that have appeared in the papers, the situation cannot be remedied. Think about it and write to me. It may be taken that my address will be Sodepur till January 20. Though I shall be touring in Bengal and Assam, I am having letters addressed to Sodepur.

<sup>1</sup> The addressee along with his letter had sent for Gandhiji's perusal the Government of India's scheme for helping the Indians in Malaya.

<sup>2</sup> Which carried a report of Gandhiji having been eager to meet the addressee

<sup>3</sup> The addressee in his letter of January 12, 1946, denied that he had given any interview to the Press and was surprised to see the report of their meeting in the newspapers.

<sup>4</sup> A Congress worker of C. P. He acted as a mediator between Khare and Gandhiji, *vide* footnote 4, "Letter to Dr. N. B. Khare", 12-12-1945

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

I got your letter after writing this. Nobody has ever mentioned such a thing to me. I know that you did not charge any fee in the Ashti-Chimur case.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4874. Courtesy: N. B. Khare

### *133. LETTER TO HARIGANESH PHATAK*

SODEPUR,

*December 23, 1945*

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I have your letter written in English. Why did you not write to me in Marathi if you could not write in Hindustani ?

There was nothing wrong in sending Savitribai's name. It was your duty to do so. It is good that you wrote to Thakkar Bapa. I have been corresponding with Premabehn. I shall keep Savitribai's name in mind. What is her husband doing ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6103

### *134. LETTER TO CHARUCHANDRA BHANDARI*

*December 23, 1945*

BHAI CHARU BABU,

Your letter is very painful. What can I do? You should have some consideration for my capacity. I shall not be able to move about after 4 o'clock. If I had the strength, I would have gone to all the places. I can finish all your work in half an hour. Do kindly forgive me. This is my only request.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8699. Also C.W. 1470. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Sharda G. Chokhawala", 6-11-1945, also "Statement to the Press", 31-3-1945

*135. LETTER TO ANNASAHEB SAHASRABUDDHE*

SODEPUR,  
*December 23, 1945*

BHAI SAHASRABUDDHE,

I have your letter. I have gone through everything. I feel that at the moment nothing needs to be done in this connection.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI SAHASRABUDDHE  
KHADI KARYALAYA  
MAHAL, NAGPUR

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

*136. LETTER TO TRIPATHI*

SODEPUR,  
*December 23, 1945*

BHAI TRIPATHI,

Why did you write to me in English? I have a feeling that you are either a Maharashtrian or a Gujarati. In which case you could have written in one of the three Indian languages. You could have written in the national language or in your mother tongue. You could have written in Bengali if you are a Bengali. What do you do?

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



### *137. DISCUSSION WITH POLITICAL WORKERS<sup>1</sup>*

SODEPUR,  
*December 23, 1945*

The first [question] was from a lady who wanted to know when the remaining prisoners would be released. Gandhiji was reported to have talked with H. E. the Governor about them. Some of the prisoners were important workers without whom the great organization could not be said to be in full working order.

Gandhiji said he had naturally discussed with His excellency many questions, but he could not allow himself to be cross-examined. He could only hope with those present that if they were on the eve of liberty these prisoners must be set free sooner rather than later. But he warned the lady questioner not to worry about them if she believed with him that prisons for patriots were gateways to liberty. Was not India in bondage one vast prison ?

To a student who wanted to know what part students were to play Gandhiji said that he could not understand student organizations antagonistic to one another. Students should all be lovers of freedom and therefore all Congressmen in thought. But their first work was study. They were all servants of the nation. They should have no communal taint nor could they harbour untouchability. They were bound to follow the constructive programme and, through the charkha and all it meant, ally themselves with the millions of poor villagers of India. For the rest they should hear everything and everyone respectfully, weigh everything and follow what they thought was right. But they must keep out of party politics.

To the question whether “*Vandemataram*” should be replaced by the new song “*Qadam, Qadam*”, Gandhiji said that a song that carried such glorious associations of sacrifice as “*Vandemataram*” could never be given up. It would be like discarding one’s mother. But they could certainly add a new song or songs like the one mentioned to their repertoire of national songs after due thought and discrimination.

Q. Was there violence by the people in 1942 ?

Gandhiji referred the questioner to his reply<sup>2</sup> to the Tottenham pamphlet and added that had the people as a whole not remained non-violent, India would have gone back. He also thought the Government had senselessly put the principal Congress-

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal’s Weekly Letter issued to the Press. Those present included members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, students and trade union workers. The meeting took place in the afternoon between 3 and 5 p. m. before Gandhiji left for Santiniketan.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Additional Secretary, Home Department, Government of India”, 15-7-1943

men in prison and thus provoked the people who were not yet restrained enough for complete non-violence. He had seen nothing to alter his conviction that the Government excesses far outweighed what the people had done in the way of violence.

Q. What could Congressmen do to draw Muslims to the Congress?

Gandhiji said that in the presence of the prevailing distrust there should be no attempt to enlist Muslims or any other group or individuals. What however every Hindu could do was mutely to serve his Muslim or for that matter every non-Hindu neighbour as his blood brother. Such selfless service was bound to tell in the end. That was the way of non-violence, otherwise called love.

Asked as to what the position of the Congress in relation of class struggle between the capitalists and the labouring class was, Gandhiji replied that he could speak only in his individual capacity as he was not even a four-anna member of the Congress. His own relations with his capitalist friends, he remarked, typified the attitude of the Congress towards the capitalist class. He freely accepted the hospitality of capitalists like the Birlas and made use of their money to serve the cause of the poor, but the latter did not expect anything in return from him. On the contrary, they were glad to be exploited by him in the interests of the poor. His relationship with them was ethical. He could never give up his associations with the capitalists because of fear of anybody. To do so would, in his opinion, amount to a betrayal of the cause of the poor.

Similarly, whilst the Congress accepted the financial help and cooperation of the capitalists in its fight for independence, it never was and never could be a capitalist organization. The Congress was pledged to defend the rights of labour against anyone who might attempt to encroach upon them. From its very inception it had stood for the poor, and consciously or unconsciously striven to become an organization of the masses. In this connection he referred to Dadabhai Naoroji's monumental work *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, which showed the deep concern of the Grand Old Man of the Congress for Indian masses.

They could now understand why he asked them to rally round the Congress. They should all identify themselves and serve the Congress, irrespective of whether they were on its membership register or not. The Congress tricolour symbolized truth and non-violence. It was the only flag worthy of being adopted by them. There was no power in the universe greater than truth. Bereft of truth man was no better than the four-footed beast. If they made truth their staff and ahimsa their shield they would be irresistible.

Continuing, he told them that he considered himself to be a labourer just like themselves. He did not think that there was any essential antagonism between capital and labour. In fact he held that labour alone was true capital. All the gold of

the capitalists could not provide them with one morsel of bread. Collaboration of labour was necessary before capital could bear fruit. Again the gold and silver of the capitalists had only a limited currency but labour was universal currency. The capitalists could be robbed of their wealth but no one could rob the labourer of his wealth, namely, industry.

Moreover, capitalists were after all few in number. The workers were many. But capital was well organized and had learnt to combine. If labour realized its inherent strength and the secret of combination it would rule capital instead of being ruled by it.

He commended to them the Ahmedabad Labour Union as a model organization to copy. It was perhaps the best organized labour union in the world. It ran its own free hospital, schools for children and cheap grain shops out of the union funds. It had conducted several successful strikes. The essential condition of a successful strike was that the strikers should not be dependent on public charity for their sustenance during the strike. They must have an alternative occupation to fall back upon in a crisis. He recalled how during the 23 days' strike<sup>1</sup> of Ahmedabad labour workers, he had offered them work but had refused to give them doles. The latter would have demoralized them. Spinning was an occupation *par excellence* for their purpose. He therefore asked them to learn and practise it in their homes. Concluding, he observed that a strike should be organized not out of hostility towards the employers but for the restitution of the just rights of labour. Rights and duties were reciprocal in their nature, the former accrued only from a due performance of the latter.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 25-12-1945*

### *138. LETTER TO BHAGAWATICHARAN SHUKLA*

[After December 23, 1945]<sup>2</sup>

I was very happy to have your letter. I do not have time any more to write much to anyone. Your account is very good. I also understand the reason for choosing Gondia.

I am leaving on the 17th.

<sup>1</sup> In 1918

<sup>2</sup> The letter appears to have been written after the addressee's marriage which took place on December 23, 1945. *Vide* also "Letter to Krishnachandra", 18-12-1945

You did well to write. You must now be restored to health. I shall be truly happy when both of you live an ideal life.

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

### 139. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 24, 1945*

DEAR FRIEND,

I promised on 22nd, when we met, that I would send you for your kind acceptance a copy of my reply<sup>1</sup> to the Tottenham pamphlet. This I do now with great pleasure and hope that you will find time to read it and, if possible, to share it with Mrs. Casey.

I forgot, when we met, to ask you about the salt tax. I trust you have not forgotten this humanitarian matter.

The first question that was put to me yesterday at the meeting<sup>2</sup> with some friends was about prisoners. It was addressed by a woman. I do feel that your Government will be wholly wrong if they persist now in keeping in jail these prisoners, some of whom have broken down in health.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 133*

### 140. LETTER TO SANTOSH KUMAR BASU

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*December 24, 1945*

DEAR SANTOSH BABU,

Many thanks for your letter and the papers. I have read your statement<sup>3</sup> with painful interest. I propose to make full use of the facts

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Additional Secretary, Home Department, Government of India", 15-7-1943

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Discussion with Political Workers", 23-12-1945

<sup>3</sup> This related to incidents in January 1943, within Mahishadal Thana in Tamluk Sub-division. The addressee, who was then a minister in the Government of Bengal, had visited Mahishadal and Tamluk during the disturbances.

vouchsafed by you. I return the papers as suggested by you.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRISANTOSH KUMAR BASU

65 DIAMOND HARBOUR ROAD, KIDDERPORE

From a photostat: C.W. 10554

*141. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE*

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

*December 24, 1945*

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your letter only today. I am leaving for Midnapore. Write to me at the address given above. I have got a telegram from the Aga Khan acknowledging [receipt of my letter<sup>1</sup>]. If a letter follows, I will send you a copy of it. In the telegram he has suggested an interview. What you say in your letter is all right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4807. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

*142. LETTER TO SARALADEVI SARABHAI*

SODEPUR,

*December 24, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I received your letter today. I was happy. I know that you do not accept any position for the sake of honour.<sup>2</sup> You will only be doing service and I shall be free from worry. Do accept the position. God will make you do only good.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 11152. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 13-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had been appointed agent of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust for Gujarat.

### 143. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

SODEPUR,  
December 24, 1945

CHI. SHARMA,

I got your letter today. I am merely acknowledging it as I am going to Midnapore right now. The work is becoming difficult. Let me see what can be done.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 344

### 144. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

SODEPUR,  
December 24, 1945

Monday the 24th December was a great day for the Christians. The day following would be Christmas Day and that was the reason why they had heard in the *bhajan* a translation of one of the best English songs from the "Book of Psalms". They should understand the meaning of the song. It depicted one who had lost his way and was penitent for going on a wrong track. Now after a period he had been able to realize his mistake and he implored God to guide and show him the right way. He appealed to God to illumine his way in order that he might not fall into numerous pits which covered all his way. Wistful as he was to realize God, he fervently appealed to Him to take to the other world. He knew that it was God alone who was able to take him from darkness to the kingdom of light.

This was the essence of the song, said Gandhiji. What they said in their daily prayer was not different from this. Gandhiji asked all to remember this and respect all religions of the world like their own.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25-12-1945

<sup>1</sup>As it was Gandhiji's silence day, the speech was read out by Kanu Gandhi.

## 145. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

*December 25, 1945*

BAPA,

I am going to accommodate all the topics in one letter. I am writing this on the steamer taking me to Midnapore.

You have written to me about Kuttimalu Amma<sup>1</sup> of Malabar but I am afraid she may not be able to complete our job if she becomes a member of the Assembly.

I have written to Purnima telling her that I very much doubt if she can be an Agent if she wishes to enter the Assembly.<sup>2</sup> I discussed the same point with Jawaharlal also. If, however, you think that this will not present any difficulty I might revise my opinion.

I think anyone wishing to take up work among women, especially village women, will have no time for and no interest in the Assembly. For my part, I would suggest that you write to Kuttimalu Amma to give up her longing for the Assembly; only then will she be able to work whole-heartedly for the K. G. N. M. Trust.

Now your second letter—regarding Ram Swarup Khanna. I do not remember if the words “as far as possible” were dictated by me or by some other trustee. But they were added during the meeting itself. If you are inclined to delete the words I shall not say no. But if the words are to be removed we ought to obtain a formal consent of all the trustees.

I do not yet have Shyamlal’s letter in this connection.

I have gone through Hariji’s report on Midnapore and I am proceeding there.

Sucheta has sent a very good and exhaustive account of the camp at Sahibnagar. The girls of the camp also came and saw me. We are likely to gain some worth-while experience from it. You should however write to me only at the Sodepur address. Midnapore district will take eight days. On the 3rd I shall return to Sodepur. After having spent there a few days I shall go to Assam, where I

<sup>1</sup> A. V. Kuttimalu Amma, wife of K. Madhava Menon, for some time minister and later President of the Kerala Congress.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Purnima Bannerjee”, 18-12-1945

expect to spend seven days at the most. After that to Madras *via* Sodepur. The date fixed for Madras is 23rd January. Let us see what happens there. Will you be going to Madras ?

I ask this because we had some talk about the K. G. N. M. Trust. Spending a day in Orissa does not appear possible.

THAKKAR BAPA

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

## *146. LETTER TO JATINDAS*

*December 25, 1945*

CHI. JATINDAS,

If you say that I must write my own letters they are bound to be delayed, or I may not even be able to write them. Hence, for the time being you had better give up the desire to receive letters written in my own hand. That occasionally I may write myself is a different matter. This is in reply to your letter of the 18th which reached me yesterday at Sodepur. I am dictating this on board the steamer taking me to Midnapore. It is good you have gone there in time, for the silver jubilee celebration of the girls' school. You will certainly take a leading part in the athletic events. And I hardly need say anything about the Art section. Don't act in haste. I am not going to issue an immediate summons for you to rush to me ! After all you are doing work there and I also believe it will bear fruit. Besides, it will immensely please me if you satisfy Father. A selfless worker always gets an opportunity to serve wherever he goes. Therefore, the question of searching for a field of service does not arise.

I shall write whatever is right regarding the Vithal Kanya Vidyalaya<sup>1</sup> affair after you write to me.

I hope you are fine. Send the reply to the Sodepur address.

It appears I shall be leaving Bengal on January 21st.

JATIN

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

<sup>1</sup> A girls' school at Nadiad in Gujarat



147. LETTER TO SAUDAMINI G. MEHTA

*December 25, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. Did you have the purse you had brought specially for the Bengal Harijan Sevak Sangh? Anyway it does not matter whether or not you have it. For my part, I have collected a fairly large amount. How much would you require? Please let me know. If you say that no sum will be too much I am going to look upon you as a lazy person. Workers who only know how to spend and cannot produce what they spend cannot do any work. This has been my experience over the past sixty years. It began with myself. In England we formed the Vegetarian Society in the Way's Hotel, but did not collect funds from amongst the members, with the result that we achieved nothing. I occasionally exposed myself to laughter but I don't remember anyone having been converted to vegetarianism because of my activity. My later experience gradually proved sweeter because I then decided that funds would be collected from those amongst whom we proposed to work. That balanced the two sides. The result was I became a "Mahatma". I am pointing out the golden way in case you want to become one. This by way of jest. I am dictating this on board the steamer taking me to Midnapore. That is how I could get some time. About meeting Harijan workers you may decide after I return.

SAUDAMINI MEHTA  
CALCUTTA

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

*148. LETTER TO SUCHETA KRIPALANI*

ON THE STEAMER,  
*December 25, 1945*

CHI. SUCHETA,

I have your report. It is very good. You have given all the information. I got your report the day before yesterday after the women of the camp met me. I have written to Purnima.<sup>1</sup> Hope P [rofessor]<sup>2</sup> is well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRISUCHETA DEVI  
SWARAJ BHAVAN  
ALLAHABAD

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

*149. LETTER TO DHOLKE*

ON THE STEAMER; MIDNAPORE,  
*December 25, 1945*

BHAI DHOLKE,

I have your letter and also the newspaper cutting. I personally do not like all these things. Even a well-meaning report can do harm. I had never thought that any part of the report can do harm. I had never thought that any part of the report was going to be published. In parts it is not even true. What can I say about the comment appearing in *Navabharat* and *The Nagpur Times*?

NAGPUR

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Purnima Bannerjee", 18-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Kripalani

### 150. LETTER TO H. C. DASAPPA

*December 25, 1945*

BHAI DASAPPA,

I saw your letter addressed to Rajkumari. When will you write in Hindi? Make an effort, or is it that you cannot even make an effort in this life ?

There is no need to tempt me as far as Mysore is concerned. I should at least like it for the camp of the Kasturba Memorial Trust, but I am afraid it is necessary for you and me to develop the spirit of renunciation.

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA

GURUKUL ASHRAM

KENGRI POST, *via* BANGALORE

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

### 151. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU

*December 25, 1945*

BHAI JAJUJI,

I have your postcard. If the Congress wants us to organize an exhibition during the Congress session and is willing to pay for it, we should do it. Did the Professor write to you? Will you write to him or shall I ask him? Who will look after the work? Will you leave things in the hands of Vichitra ?

I am sending a copy of what I have written about Manibehn. I have a letter from her. I send a copy of it. There is no need to write more. You will know my mind from my letter.

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

## 152. LETTER TO VICHITRA NARAYAN SHARMA

*December 25, 1945*

CHI. VICHITRA,

Are you aware of the quarrel between Gadodiaji and Dr. Sharma? What do you know about it and what is your opinion? Gadodiaji does khadi work. He says that he is doing it sincerely. Let me know how far that is so.

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

## 153. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING<sup>1</sup>

DIAMOND HARBOUR,

*December 25, 1945*

Gandhiji had already had one blessing from them. They had gathered there in thousands but there was no noise and they were sitting there quietly and peacefully under the scorching sun. If he left them after two hours, he would be going to serve them elsewhere. If they realized that in their heart he would be really happy.

So many of them, men and women, were spinning there. That was a sight very pleasing to him. He also desired to thank them for the purse of Rs. 25,250 which they had given him for work in this sub-division. It was still more pleasing to him that this money had been collected from 3,900 persons. He was giving it to Charu Babu<sup>2</sup> and was sure that it would be spent wise with maximum benefit. He hoped that the work would be taken up with this sum as capital.

He had read and heard of the calamities suffered by the people of this sub-division due to flood, famine and pestilence. He also knew that unless they bore such calamities with fortitude, they would not be able to survive in this world. Calamities occurred at every moment in some place or other and humanity all over the world had to pass through such sufferings. Today humanity was suffering in one form or other all over the world. But if people thought of them as misfortunes falling on them and broke under them, they would not be able to reap good out of evil.

The songs sung at Khadi Pratishthan at prayer-time every day had one central message and that was that even those who suffer get the blessings of God hidden in those sufferings.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's Hindi speech was simultaneously rendered into Bengali by Satis Chandra Das Gupta.

<sup>2</sup> Charuchandra Bhandari

It pained him to find that thousands of villagers were still coming there from distant places. It had been decided that he should come there at half past three and remain with them for two hours. If he had done so his programme of work would have been disturbed and he would not have been able to serve them as he desired.

He had a faith and it was still with him after he had come there. That was about the charkha. He had been saying from the very beginning that if we did not have faith in the charkha and realized its inner meaning, we would not be able to live peacefully in Hindustan. He had been saying this for 60 years, and this was true not only for Hindustan but for the whole world, wherever humanity lived, whether it was a small or big community or country. Humanity could not live peacefully unless it accepted the creed of truth and non-violence. It needed to be said that hooliganism or rowdiness would not enable us to bring swaraj or do anything good for humanity. He was convinced that if the 40 crores of people in India were truly imbued with this spirit of truth and non-violence then swaraj would be in our hands.

He would also tell them briefly the significance of the charkha. They would see that the poorest of the poor could have a charkha and spin. He had not seen any other machine which could be as useful as the charkha. Spinning was a form of labour. If a person did not work for his bread, he would be like a thief stealing the property of others. The charkha gave them scope for honest labour.

In our country persons who knew English and who were said to be educated told us that our people, who had no work to do for six months, could have nothing in store for them but begging. He would tell them that they would have to use intelligence in spinning too. A few minutes earlier he was spinning. The charkha was good but there was something wrong in it. He had to mend it before he could spin. In this way, if there was anything wrong in the machinery used by the people of India, then we would not be able to reap the maximum benefit out of it. Here one charkha went wrong. What would be the fate of Hindustan if 40 crores of charkhas went wrong? Those who believed that swaraj could be won by the charkha, would necessarily have the blessings of God. So long as we did not believe in God we would not be able to banish fear from our mind. A person or people who was not fearless could not be free. That was a simple truth.

He desired to thank them again for they had listened to him quietly. He hoped they had listened and realized what he had said. If, however, they had not been able to follow him, he hoped what he had said would be translated into Bengali and circulated among them. When he heard that they would be glad if he held his prayer there he was greatly delighted. He would hold his prayer for a few minutes and then would take leave of them. That did not mean that his work there was finished. He would go to the launch and hold discussions with their representatives. If he could work according to his plan, he would know his duties towards them. Concluding Mahatma Gandhi said :

I would request you to be quiet at the time of prayer. You should be wholly given to meditation of God while praying. Prayer is not parrot-like repetition of words. It is meaningless without singleness of heart.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26-12-1945

#### 154. DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESS WORKERS<sup>1</sup>

MAHISHADAL,

[*On or after December 25, 1945*]<sup>2</sup>

I cannot say that all that has been done has been well done or ought to have been done. On the contrary, much of it ought not to have been done. That the people did not remain inert is a matter of satisfaction, but the fact that after all these years they should not have known what the Congress stood for is a matter for sorrow. What they did was thoughtless. By its very nature it could not be sustained.

You have graphically put in your reports how you blew up a railway track, put roads out of use, burnt a *kutchery*, seized a *thana*, set up a parallel government and so on. This is not the technique of non-violent action. People committed the mistake of thinking that all that did not involve killing was non-violence. Sometimes killing is the cleanest part of violence. If you kill the mischief-maker outright, there is an end to it as far as he is concerned, but harassment is worse. It did not put out mischief. On the contrary, it brought the mischief on our own heads. The authorities became vindictive. Perhaps, you will say that they would have been vindictive anyhow, but that is not what we should desire or aim at. It does not pay us to let them go into panic.

In August 1942, the authorities became panicky. We gave them that excuse. But they are a people who do not know what defeat is; their cowardice is not fundamental. So, they let such things as *thanas*, *kutcheries*, panchayat courts, etc., remain in your hands for a short while as toys but as soon as they had completed their dispositions they turned the full blast of their machinery of retaliation against us. It is not in this way that India will attain her independence. We cannot afford to repeat it.

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "Non-violent Technique and Parallel Government"

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was in Mahishadal from December 25 to 30.

Today you have to reckon not with Britain alone but the Big Three. You cannot successfully fight them with their own weapons. After all, you cannot go beyond the atom bomb. Unless we can have a new way of fighting imperialism of all brands in the place of the outworn one of a violent rising, there is no hope for the oppressed races of the earth.

Let nobody be misled by the Russian parallel. Our tradition is wholly different from Russia's. The historical setting too is different. In Russia the whole population was under arms; Indian masses will not take to arms even if they could be given the necessary training. But it is useless to think that our rulers will let us give them that training when they have at a stroke disarmed a first-rate military State like Japan. Today Japan lies prostrate at the conqueror's feet. But non-violence knows no defeat. It must however be true non-violence, not a make-believe. I would not shed a single tear if I alone were left to represent such non-violence.

Q. After all that we have done and suffered, we have begun to doubt whether our energies have flowed in the right channel, whether the mass awakening was not misdirected. But is not non-violent rebellion a programme of seizure of power ?

A. Therein lies the fallacy. A non-violent revolution is not a programme of 'seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power. If the people had fully carried out the five steps outlined by me in my 8th of August speech<sup>1</sup> in the A.I.C.C. in Bombay, and had there been a perfect atmosphere of non-violence, the Government's power and repression would have been sterilized and it would have been compelled to yield to the national demand.

If under the impact of foreign invasion or some such cause the ruling power abdicates and a vacuum is created, the people's organization will naturally take over its functions but such *jatiya sarkar* would have no other sanction except that of non-violence and service of the people to enforce its fiats. It will never use coercion. Even those who might hold contrary views will receive a full measure of security under it.

As an instance of the infinitely greater efficacy of the non-violent technique as compared to the technique of coercion, he mentioned the case of Bardoli. In Midnapore whilst they succeeded in capturing a few symbols of power in the initial

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at A.I.C.C Meeting", 8-8-1942 and "Speech at A.I.C.C. Meeting", 8-8-1942

stages, they could not retain the fruits of their success. But in Bardoli the satyagrahis were able fully to retain the gains of their struggle.

Moreover, you have seen that all your bravery could not prevent the violation of women. Now that is intolerable. No one should be able to cast an evil eye upon them. This requires inculcation of a higher form of bravery, i. e., that of non-violence which can hurl defiance at death and against which the power of the aggressor cannot prevail. This is what I am trying to do. It may take time. It takes a long time to infuse this kind of higher courage among the millions. Whether this kind of non violence will ever come into play or not I do not know. But you who have had training in non-violence for all these years ought to realize that in your hands non-violence should show all the brilliance that is inherent in it.

They next wanted to know as to how they could start on the right lines. Gandhiji in reply prescribed to them the spinning-wheel as “the symbol and central sun of the 8-fold constructive programme”. It was the best way of achieving social solidarity and non-violent organization. The technique of non-violent action consisted in isolating and sterilizing the instruments of evil. *Jatiya sarkar* based on non-violence would not put Government servants under duress but would effectively isolate them so that they would either have to align themselves with the people or be reduced to the necessity of carrying out the foreign Government’s writ through undiluted barbarism of which they would soon sicken and tire. Even their relations and dear ones would desert them.

This presupposes that no section among the people is labouring under a sense of injustice and wrong at the hands of the others. Untouchability, exploitation and communal rancour can have no place under a *jatiya sarkar*, or it will be like a house divided against itself which must fall.

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946



### *155. LETTER TO HOMI*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 26, 1945*

BHAI HOMI,

I would advise you not to get involved in the Assembly business. How does it matter if the people ask you to? Moreover, of what use can my testimonial be? For a noble person his own noble acts or humanity are the testimonials.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### *156. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 26, 1945*

BAPA,

Herewith the letter from the Kanya Gurukul. I think you had better write to the Gurukul lady yourself.

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

### *157. LETTER TO BHAILALBHAI PATEL*

MAHISHADAL,

CAMP: SODEPUR,

*December 26, 1945*

BHAILALBHAI,

I have your long letter. As on reading it I got a clearer idea of your enthusiasm, I felt that I might not by myself be able to do justice to that enthusiasm and, therefore, showed the letter to the experienced co-workers who are in my party. I was accompanied yesterday by Shri Satis Babu and Shri Annanda Babu<sup>1</sup> in the boat which brought me to Midnapore. Both of them are learned men and thinkers and are taking the utmost interest in constructive work. They are not men who would obstinately cling to their own ideas; they would go wherever the quest of truth leads them. Neither of them has

<sup>1</sup> Annanda Chowdhury, a veteran constructive worker or Bengal

been impressed by tractors, nor very much by electrically operated flour mills. Since I myself am temperamentally cast in a different mould, I leave out myself. I asked Satis Babu to reduce his opinion to writing and am sending his note in the original. Annanda Babu has definite proofs in support of his view and he will collect them and prepare a note after the present tour is over. I will send it to you. I think that ultimately the gulf between the two opposite views will remain unbridged, and everything will depend on experience alone. Meanwhile, you should cling to the view which you hold so firmly and act on it. I have always acted on what I believe to be true and it seems but right that I should continue to do so. Keep on writing to me if there is anything which you feel might change my views.

*Blessings from*

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Shri Bhailalbhai Patel, Sitermi Janmagranth Abhinandangranth, 1958, p. 254*

### *158. LETTER TO SADHU CHARANDAS*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 26, 1945*

BHAI SADHU CHARANDAS,

I have your letter. I have written quite a lot on students. You should read it and do whatever you feel is right. What can be there in it which makes you sleepless ?

SADHU CHARANDAS

HEAD MASTER

BOARD HIGH SCHOOL

SURADA (GANJAM)

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

*159. LETTER TO DHARMA DEV SHASTRI*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 26, 1945*

SHRI DHARMA DEV SHASTRI,

Is it true that you have fallen ill? Get well soon. Why did you fall ill ?

SHRI DHARMA DEV SHASTRI  
DARSHAN KESARI  
ASHOK ASHRAM  
KALSI, DISTT. DEHRA DUN

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

*160. LETTER TO HARIPRASAD SHASTRI*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 26, 1945*

BHAI HARIPRASAD SHASTRI,

I have your letter. Why did you write in English? What I am doing is also for the sake of Truth. Who knows what consummation will serve Truth. It is better to keep on doing what we consider our duty irrespective of the result.

SHRI HARIPRASAD SHASTRI  
SHANTI SADAN  
30 LANSDOWN CRESCENT  
LONDON—W II

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

*161. LETTER TO HARIRAM*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 26, 1945*

BHAI HARIRAM,

I have your letter, I cannot do anything in this matter.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

## 162. LETTER TO MUKHERJEE

MAHISHADAL,  
December 26, 1945

BHAI MUKHERJEE,

I have your letter dated 23rd December. I have had a talk with your son. I hope your wife is now well. I have gone through all the papers from Nepal that you have sent. I do not see what help they can be. This work perhaps can be done only by people like you who are familiar with it. It cannot be done with the help of a certificate from the Government of Nepal or anyone else.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

## 163. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

MAHISHADAL,  
December 26, 1945

I have come here to know what you have done so long, and also to know about your sufferings, and after that to try to help ameliorate some of them.

I have not come here to deliver speeches. I have delivered many speeches in my life. Now I am old in age and there has been a change in my mind, and I think by delivering speeches I will not be able to do any good to you.

Referring to the sufferings of the people of Midnapore during the past years Gandhiji said that he was anxious to visit the district for some time, and he was glad that he got the opportunity today. During his stay in their midst, he would study their conditions—political and economic.

Mahatma Gandhi advised the gathering to join in singing God's name as by doing so they would pick up the habit of doing things unitedly. Swaraj could not be given by anybody. The people must possess unity of strength for achieving it. It also meant non-violence or peace.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 27-12-1945*

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held in the open space adjoining Gandhiji's hut. It was attended by more than one lakh people.

## 164. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

MAHISHADAL,

December 27, 1945

If we can conduct ourselves unitedly as we have done in maintaining the rhythm of the *bhajan* sung, then whatever injury is inflicted on us and however wronged we may be as the result of the visitation of Nature or policy of the State, we will be the master of the situation and keep our head unbent. History provides many such instances.

Proceeding, Gandhiji referred to the *bhajan* sung at the meeting and stated that it would not distort the meaning of the song if in the place of "temple" the word "liberation" was used.

But, asked Gandhiji, what was exactly that liberation which the Poet in the song and they as well wanted to attain? Was it the liberation or salvation that came to man after his death or was it the liberation from all vestiges of bondage that a human being suffered under in this world ?

The congregation, Gandhiji hoped, would agree with him that they all wanted the liberation from bondage in this world. If that was the hankering then they must appreciate the significance of a unitedly given rhythm.

They were suffering under a bondage of foreign yoke and consequently they were anxious to be liberated therefrom. There might be, if not equally, strong powers or influences in their country which also were anxious to keep them down in bondage. They were anxious to get rid of all these bondages but, added Gandhiji, the worst type of bondage was that which enabled one to submit himself to any form of slavery.

Man was a slave to many things— his property, his desires, They should seek deliverance from all these things. If they could press forward their claim for liberation from all these bondages in the same way as they did in maintaining the rhythm of the chorus of the *bhajan*, they would, he hoped, realize his message.

When they kept rhythm by a movement of the hands, the feeling of such a movement came from within. In other words their hearts were attuned to the outside movements. That was exactly the thing prerequisite to the attainment of salvation.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28-12-1945

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was attended by over one lakh people.

165. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

CHI. AMRIT,

The papers report your safe arrival. This is earlier than anything you could have sent. I hope all will go well there.

Here I am in the midst of peaceful surroundings on the canal bank. This is saved children's home. No mosquitos. Is it not 'es'? Fancy meetings absolutely silent though attended by perhaps one lakh of people.

No more.

Love to you all.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

166. *LETTER TO T. H. BAIRD*

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 18th November. I am forwarding your letter and pamphlet to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Your pretension appears to me to be too great.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

T. H. BAIRD, ESQ.  
33 PARK AVENUE  
PORTOBELLO, EDINBURGH

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 167. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

MAHISHADAL,  
SODEPUR (24 PARGANAS),  
December 28, 1945

CHI. KAKA,

I can only dictate the reply to your letter. Just now I have to be content with what I can dictate or write after the morning prayer. I therefore do not think it necessary to stretch out the hand from under the quilt to write to you.

I can think of only one thing regarding you, and that is, you should go on doing what I tell you—though you may make any suggestion you like. This is exactly what you say in your letter too. Even if your interpretation is the only correct one, I would say that it would be safer not to exercise the right which has been granted to you but to consult the committee. At any rate you will lose nothing thereby, nor is such procedure likely to result in any delay, especially when you can consult them by correspondence.

Let us forget the affair of the Vidyapith library, for I never think about it. And, in any case, what is the use of recalling it ?

I see no need for you to resign from activities in Gujarat. The whole thing seems to be your imagination. Moreover, Amritlal takes interest in them. It was you who made him what he is. Without your support his interest would dry up. He is a straightforward and hard-working man. From among your discoveries, I consider him as the one who has proved his worth. So you can leave only after convincing him fully. You have as good as left, since Amritlal will never do anything against your wishes.

Thirdly, though you had intended Prof. Banhatti for B. B. Mandir and told him so, there will be no harm if you take him away for the Adhyapan Mandir. The latter needs his services for work which is already in progress, whereas nothing is definite yet about B. B. Mandir's work.

I did not like your falling ill. I see no need to work at such speed and expense of energy. Do what you can without overtaxing yourself. I can understand your desire that nothing should be overlooked through lethargy, but I am not at all ready to grant the necessity of working with speed. I remember in this connection the couplet: "To be impatient is to be confused and to be patient is to be self-possessed." It is for you to know who the author is.

I experience supreme peace here even in the midst of meetings attended by thousands. This is a new sight altogether. I even believe that this is the result of the work we have been able to do in Sodepur. Moreover, the people no longer ask for speeches from me, but want prayer meetings. On one side we have this, on the other, I read in newspapers the reports of the goondaism that is going on. Who can say what the outcome of all this will be, or what God will do? Is it not enough that we should cheerfully shoulder the burden of the small tasks that fall to our lot ?

Let this suffice for today.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10987

*168. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 28, 1945*

BAPA,

Herewith Mridula's wire. You will be able to see Devdas also. What shall we do about Delhi? If these two names cannot be approved we should look for some other lady. I also hold the view that until we come across a woman worker we should carry on the work through the Wardha office as best as we can, since the main thing is for us to work in the countryside.

Have you written to them that Tai Rajwade has declined the offer? Rajkumari has agreed to find [workers] for both the places (Delhi and Central India). Yet Devdas's scheme still remains to be considered. I am doubtful if Ramachandran and Saundaram can adjust themselves to this task. Ramachandran has adjusted himself to the Nayee Talim work, so how can we withdraw him from it? Saundaram alone surely cannot cope with the responsibility. This is what I think, so discuss this thing also with Devdas.

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



## 169. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

CHI. DINSHAW,

Today is the 28th. I am dictating this from a village in Midnapore. I have sent a full reply to Munnalal's letter. He had informed me that it was written on behalf of all of you. I don't know when this will reach you.

I only hope that everything will change from January 1st. My heart is there. When I shall be there is in God's hands. He will take me there whenever He wills.

A sign-board in Hindustani, Urdu and Marathi was to be put up there. Have you done it? Or have you put it off till I come ?

Do you still have the 'big' monied patients or have they left? If they have stayed on, will they agree to be in the same line with the poor ?

What did you do about the hospital furniture? Did you get the pieces you wanted for your Bombay unit? Or shall I have to see to the matter myself? I know I shall have to put up with the monthly expenditure there. A number of questions have been raised in this connection; I shall remit the appropriate amount after I get a reply.

I do not expect a large number of indoor patients moving in soon. I take it that those who have already applied to you will be the rich ones. There is no question of our admitting them at the moment. It will be a different matter if we admit them after the new norms are established and the rich agree to stay with the poor.

Of course, I strongly feel that you should adapt yourself to the new pattern in full knowledge and faith.

I hope Gulbai is fine. I expect it is now nearing time for her confinement.

Write to me at the Sodepur address.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. DINSHAW MEHTA  
POONA

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

*170. LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL, KANYA GURUKUL,  
DEHRA DUN*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 28, 1945*

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. I was a little surprised. I had always regarded the Gurukul as Dharma Devji's institution.

I have forwarded your letter to Thakkar Bapa and have written to him to write to you.

THE PRINCIPAL  
KANYA GURUKUL  
DEHRA DUN

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

*171. LETTER TO C. N. MUTURANG MUDALIAR*

P.O. SODEPUR,  
*December 28, 1945*

BHAI MUTURANG MUDALIAR,

I have your letter, I do have partiality for Rajaji. I feel that he alone is able to hold the reigns of the Government in Madras. But do whatever you people think is best. I do not involve myself at all in the affairs of the Working Committee. I give my opinion on whatever is referred to me. Therefore it will be no use coming to see me. Dr. Rajan and other friends had been here. I told them the same thing. I know nothing about what Asaf Ali did. I have read only what has appeared in the newspapers.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

C. N. MUTURANG MUDALIAR  
4 MAULVI ROAD  
THYAGARAYA NAGAR  
MADRAS

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

### 172. LETTER TO DADA DHARMADHIKARI

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

BHAI DADA,

I have gone through your letter, also that of Gopalrao. After taking into consideration everything. I have arrived at the following decision: Because all your friends want it, you may seek election to the Assembly if it can be done without any exertion on your part and on the clear understanding that it will be a bed of thorns and not of velvet. If something good comes of it the credit will go to the electorate or to God. If nothing comes of it we lose nothing because, if you remain outside it will be to serve truth and if you go in, it will be also to serve truth. I understand what Vinoba says. I am giving this opinion knowing very well his views. Refrain from all arguments and discussions, observe silence, and if even then people elect you go to the Assembly, You should not make any effort on your part to get elected.

I am not writting a separate letter to Gopalrao. This is meant for him also.

DADA DHARMADHIKARI

BAJAJWADI

WARDHA

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

### 173. LETTER TO GOPINATH BARDOLOI

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

BHAI BARDOLOI,

I have your letter. I have gone through it and also discussed it. I shudder at the thought of your programme. You seem to have taken it for granted that I can keep running about if I live for another 49 years. But it is not so. I can live perhaps for 125 years if I stick to one place and work within my limits. I had agreed to give seven days to Assam, inclusive of the time taken by the journey to and fro. You have arranged for seven day's programme in Assam itself. And two days will be spent in going and coming, which makes it nine days. How can I spare so many days? You will listen to everything and then

decide whether my stay at two place will serve the purpose or not. If does not then forget about it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*174. LETTER TO HASTMAL PATWA*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 28, 1945*

BHAI HASTMAL PATWA,

I received your telegram at Mahishadal. I do not know what can be done about it. Write or teleraph to Jawaharlalji.

SHRI HASTMAL PATWA

13 NARMAL LOHIA LANE

CALCUTTA

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

*175. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

CAMP: MAHISHADAL,

POST SODEPUR,

*December 28, 1945*

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I am enclosing a letter, this as desired by the writer. He might have met me in South Africa, but I do not remember. I have written to him that he has made a tall claim in his address. He seems to be a crazy man.

I could find time only now to read what you said before the students in Bihar. I liked it very much.

You need a littel rest. It would indeed be good if you could snatch it.

I had told Rajkumari to write to you about the Communists. Today I find a totally different thing in the newspapers. A clipping is attached herewith. What is this? Can you throw some light?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Gandhi-Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*176. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 28, 1945*

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

I have written to the Ashram about the money.

KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

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

*177. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNADAS JAJU*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 28, 1945*

BHAI JAJUJI,

It is my firm view that we should demand yarn for the khadi required by the Congress. It calls for tact and efficiency. Those who wear a uniform must learn to spin. The question implies that those wearing uniforms did not wear khadi and did not spin. Will they do so now? The presidents of the Congress committees will have to be patiently persuaded. It is they who want to destroy khadi, and they may if they can. By efficiency I mean we may provide yarn in cases where spinning cannot be started right now. I always have quite a large stock of yarn and I am willing to spare some. The only provision is that I will give yarn only to those who are willing to give it but are not able to do so immediately as they do not know spinning. But they should accept the condition that they will spin and do as required. And they should collect yarn for the khadi required in future. If we observe these rules faithfully we shall know whether khadi will bring us swaraj or will only remain a provider to the poor. You may send this letter to Vichitra if you want.

SHRI JAJUJI

SECRETARY, A. I. S. A.

SEVAGRAM, WARDHA

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

### 178. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

MAHISHADAL,  
December 28, 1945

BHAI SHYAMLAL,

I have your letter.

Haven't I written about Lala Ramswarup that even if we want to delete a word we have to invite the opinion of the members as far as possible? Consult Pakvasa and Dada Mavalankar. They are there. We must have the opinion of the persons who have moved for the amendment of the resolution. There is no doubt that it can be secured. Only it will take some time but you have to put up with that.

The second question you have raised is good. I would not like to be bound down to any particular use of the building. I would like that Lala Ramswarup should either donate the building on the understanding that we may make what use we make of it or he should not donate it at all. The donor should make the donation on our condition and not his.

BHAI SHYAMLAL

WARDHA

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

### 179. LETTER TO PRABODH CHANDRA SEN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR,  
[December 28, 1945]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI PRABODH CHANDRA SEN<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter. I have written<sup>3</sup> to Rathi Babu about it. All the inmates of Vishva Bharati must know Bengali and Hindustani. English should not be compulsory for everybody. Arrangements should be made for the foreigners to learn Hindustani first. It should be compulsory for those who come from provinces other than

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> Professor and Head of Bengali Department, Visva Bharati

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Letter to Rathindranath Tagore", 22-12-1945

Bengal to learn Bengali; similarly Hindustani should be made compulsory for Bengalis. Then only can Vishva Bharati be worthy of its name and also the name of Gurudev. If I had my way, I would carry on everything in Hindustani. If that is not possible now, I would do it in Bengali, but certainly not in English.

I do not wish to express any opinion regarding the fourth question as I do not have full information.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 10408

### *180. SPEECH AT SHISHU SADAN*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 28, 1945*

I have come here to study facts. I have known and studied and understood. What I have got to say to you I tell you through the prayer. Practise it in your everyday life.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji smilingly asked the boys whether they would like to play with him. On being asked by a boy to give him his blessings Gandhiji said that he could not do that because the boy had dirty dress. He thereupon turned to the teacher of the boys and said that he would have a quarrel with him. He explained to the teacher that the aims of Wardha scheme of education was not merely to teach the boys arithmetic and a few other things. The Wardha scheme of education, Gandhiji emphasized, moulded the life of man to a new form. Why should they sit with their face bent down? They should be taught to sit erect.

Remember if they are properly reared up they will be the best soldiers of Hindustan. Why should the boys put on dirty dress after having undergone Wardha training for six months ?

He urged that in imparting Wardha training they should be more concerned with its essence rather than the routine courses of study. Gandhiji also enquired about their progress in spinning.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29-12-1945*

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was answering a woman worker who had complained of hardships and Government oppression.

## 181. ANSWER TO QUESTION<sup>1</sup>

December 28, 1945

Mahatma Gandhi said that if it was necessary to use the plain red flag of the A. I. T. U. C. in order to be better able to serve the labour of all faiths and denominations he saw no harm in doing so provided the red flag was not used as a rival to the tri-colour flag.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29-12-1945

## 182. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

MAHISHADAL,

December 28, 1945

Gandhiji stated that he had noticed that ordinary rules of business of an assembly were not observed. If one was to attend a meeting it was expected of him, whether he liked the proceedings or not, that he should remain till the end. If this procedure was not followed and if he left abruptly while the meeting was going on he would only disturb others. He had been told by many women attending such meetings that they had only a limited time at their disposal for attending such functions because they had to attend to other household duties. Undoubtedly it was a strong argument in their favour but his reply to them would be that in such cases they should consider beforehand whether they had the time or not at their disposal to sit till the end of the meeting.

If they at all decided to attend the meeting they should be there till the meeting was dissolved. There are many who arrived at the meeting after it had commenced. In such a case the attendant should stay outside the assembly.

All these rules of conduct were applicable in respect of an ordinary assembly. But they are obligatory in case of prayer meetings. Because at the prayer they wanted to be in meditation. During such a time anything disturbing from outside was unwelcome. He would particularly draw the attention of the organizers of such meetings to the observance of these general rules of conduct. They should circulate amongst the people before-hand these rules for their observance. If they could train up people in this respect they would be rendering a public service and will be able to organize themselves better, advance the cause of public decorum and give new inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maitreyi Bose, Secretary of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, Bengal Branch, had asked Gandhiji about the advisability of Congressmen engaged in the labour movement using the Red Flag.



Referring to the charkha demonstration participated in by about 500 spinners, men and women, Gandhiji said that he noticed that there were two types of charkhas in use. The older one was the wheeled one and the latter was called the box-charkha. The latter was introduced by him and the reason for its introduction was that for the convenience of men like him who were regular spinners and had to travel, this type of box-charkha was suitable. But let them not forget, he said, the golden rule for charkha that its price should be cheap and be made from materials available in the particular locality. Crores of persons could not be expected to use one uniform type of charkha. Nor should its manufacture be limited to one central place. If they developed a central supply store of charkha how would it be possible for them to supply it to the 40 crores of people ?

So far as the strength of the charkha was concerned he could assert that there was no other machine which was more powerful than it. To him the charkha was the symbol of swaraj, ahimsa and *annapurna*.

Referring to the *bhajan* sung Gandhiji said that its composer maintained that it was through sufferings that a man could realize God. What was the method prescribed for the realization of God was also true for the attainment of swaraj.

There was no instance in the world to show that swaraj could be had without undergoing sufferings. Not only swaraj, they could not acquire even knowledge without undergoing hardships. If there was anything which was available to a man without undergoing hardships he could not fully prize or appreciate the same. Therefore, if they had followed the *bhajan* of the day they should remember that for the sake of God they had to put up with all sufferings. As it was true that without suffering they could not realize God so was it equally true that without suffering they could not attain freedom. They should also remember that for the sake of swaraj whatever they had suffered had not been in vain. They had all paved the path towards their attaining swaraj.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 30-12-1945*

### *183. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 29, 1945*

CHI. KANTI,

It is 6 a. m. just now. It is pitch dark all around. The prayer was over at 5. After the prayer, instead of returning to bed I read or heard letters and started writing. I thus reach your letter at 6 a. m.

Chi. Shanti will get well. Every householder passes through such experiences, bitter, sweet, sweet and bitter.

I would like your doing whatever work relating to spinning comes to you unsought at home. If you have skill, proficiency, firmness of mind, purity of character, devotion to God and humility, then the work you do at home will be like the Ganga flowing by your door-step. I will regard such work done during student life as more than enough.

If by fulfilling your family obligations and doing service to others while studying you have to take two years instead of one to complete your studies you need not feel unhappy at all. It would certainly be a matter of shame if studies were neglected from lethargy or love of pleasures. Those who believe that it is impossible to do public service during student life are mistaken. The student's stage of life is also meant for increasing one's capacity for service. If, therefore, the immediate opportunity for service is neglected, the student's life becomes as it generally is today, a selfish one instead of one dedicated to service. Moreover, present day education by and large is antagonistic to the spirit of service or patriotism. Add to this the burden of learning through English. And the subjects of study also include some which are unnecessary and exclude some which are essential, such as spinning. According to me, spinning, which means both its science and craft, should be introduced as the principal subject right from the earliest stage. But that is not done anywhere. Our boys, therefore, who study in Government institutions must determinedly make good this deficiency, as you have been doing. If that is not done, one would be guilty of the vanity of claiming perfection. You should not, therefore, in any circumstances abandon spinning and its science. Show and explain the whole of this letter to Saraswati. It will help her to understand and realize how much service, and nothing but service, is contained in spinning. If she is still not able to understand, let me know. I will try again to explain the point to her. Besides, you will also have received my previous letter written from Sodepur.

I followed what you wrote about the politics there. You should remain detached and go on doing what you can.

I could perhaps have revised the English of your report and sent it to you, but the news you had given in it was so good that I felt I must convey it to Jajuji and so sent on the report to him. I do not very much care if your English is not of the highest class. I am more interested in your being in the highest class as a human being and

acquiring wide knowledge of Indian languages. I would, however, like it if at the same time you could also write grammatically correct and chaste English. That is why I dropped the hint in my letter.

Here I have been enjoying the highest peace. Tomorrow I will go to Contai. The programme there, too, is for four days. I expect to return to Sodepur on January 3. From there I will leave for Assam on the 8th and return to Sodepur again on the 16th. We are a large party but we experience no difficulty on that account.

Address your reply to Sodepur. I shall probably reach Madras on the 23rd.

*Blessings to the three of you from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Harilal is in Bangalore with Nanjapa.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7381. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

#### *184. LETTER TO MADALASA*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 29, 1945*

CHI. MADALASA,

I have your letter. Sushila will of course write to you. You may be considered to be out of danger and pain now.

The operation on the breasts is a long one but is not considered a difficult one.

It seems you are still in Bajajwadi. If, after you are able to leave the bed, you eat only what your health requires but eat it regularly and in adequate quantity, you will soon get well. I was glad that Vinobaji paid a visit. It was good that the train was late, for he could give more time to you because of that.

The baby's weight is rather low. If you learn through all these experiences and become more careful in your habits, everything will be well.

Ramakrishna is gaining plenty of experience. The entire tour is full of happy experiences. How strange it is that people do not want speeches but want prayer-meetings !

If both you and the baby lie in sunshine for as long as you can stand, you will sleep longer. Just now I am having firsthand exper-

ience of this. And the longer you sleep the healthier you will become. If the sleep is not a sign of lethargy, it will refresh the mind, too. “Rasgulla”<sup>1</sup> is daily becoming more of a *rasgulla*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5855

### *185. LETTER TO MATHURABHAI*

MAHISHADAL,

*December 29, 1945*

BHAI MATHURABHAI,

I have your letter. What you say is absolutely right. Since you are in Bombay you should personally collect all the information. I am under the impression that pickers [*sic*] are made from dead animals. But now that I have your letter I shall make further enquiries.

*Blessings from*

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. MATHURABHAI

PICKERS FACTORY

DHARAVI ROAD

BOMBAY 17

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

### *186. LETTER TO SHRIPAD JOSHI*

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,

SODEPUR,

*December 29, 1945*

CHI. SHRIPAD,

I have your letter. Congratulations on your inter-communal/ inter provincial marriage. I hope that this marriage will not be for indulgence but for sacrifice and that your capacity to serve will at least be doubled.

I am not writing a separate letter to Bhai Joshi<sup>2</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5616

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's nickname for the addressee's son

<sup>2</sup> S. M. Joshi, socialist leader

## 187. A LETTER

MAHISHADAL,  
December 29, 1945

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. It is good that Harilal has reached there at last. Both you husband and wife should now redeem him. If he is saved I will consider him as your property.

If you are not able to understand Hindi properly, Harilal will explain to you. Does he write to Kanti and Saraswati? I had one or two letters from him. Blessings.

Blessings from  
BAPU

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

## 188. TALK WITH PEOPLE<sup>1</sup>

MAHISHADAL,  
December 29, 1945

Gandhiji replied that he had been asked the same question<sup>2</sup> in 1920 and 1921 and he could only repeat the reply which he gave then. The question betrayed ignorance of non-violence and also of swaraj of his conception. He did not want swaraj at the cost of women's honour. If what passed as non-violence did not enable them to protect the honour of women or if it did not enable the women to protect their own honour, it was not non-violence.

Believe me, it is something quite different.

And he described what he had written in *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. Gandhiji observed that experience had added force to the argument.

After all who protected Sita from Ravana? The poet tells us that her purity was such that Ravana dared not compass his end without her consent.

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Sushila Nayyar's "Non-violence and Molestation of Women". On the night of the 29th Gandhiji met about 200 men and women of Mahishadal and neighbouring villages including local workers and victims of police and military atrocities during the 1942 movement.

<sup>2</sup> The question was whether they were expected to remain non-violent even when their womenfolk were molested.

He warned them in the end that if anybody came to him with the plea that they could not protect the honor of their womenfolk because they had taken the vow of non-violence, he would give them no quarter. Non-violence should never be used as a shield for cowardice. It was a weapon of the brave. He would rather they died fighting violently than became helpless witnesses to such atrocities. A truly non-violent man would never live to tell the tale of such atrocities. He would have laid down his life on the spot in non-violent resistance.

*Harijan, 10-2-1946*

### *189. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

MAHISHADAL,  
*December 29, 1945*

Gandhiji paid a glowing tribute to the affection and painstaking care that the men and women volunteers who were in charge of the camp, had shown in looking after him and his party. Gandhiji congratulated the gathering on the exemplary silence and order which prevailed during the public prayers at Mahishadal. It had given him the deepest satisfaction. The peace of mind which he experienced there exceeded even what he had experienced in Sevagram or Sodepur.

Referring to the events in connection with the 1942 struggle, he said that as a result of all that he had heard and learnt during the last few days, he had come to the conclusion that whilst people had shown singular courage and endurance, they had also committed some mistakes, especially in their understanding of the principle of ahimsa. He added :

Besides, there were some acts of high-handedness amongst ourselves. There must be some difference between a national organization and alien rule. In our national organization there should not be any differences amongst ourselves. I should go further today and say that those outsiders who lived near us should be made to realize that our organization was superior to the alien organization because we did not want violence. We wanted to carry on our work through non-violence.<sup>1</sup>

Under a national government, even the opponents or those who held contrary views ought not to experience a feeling that the ideal had not been attained in Midnapore or, for that matter, in any part of India. It might even be said that it was a tall order. But if he did not point out their faults or place the undiluted ideal before them, they could never hope to reach their ideal. Gandhiji continued :

<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs are reproduced from *The Hindu* of 30-12-1945.

If you do not do it, I won't be able to do anything, even if I carry our claim throughout the world. I won't succeed if I do not make these things clear to you. During my work for the last 60 years it has been the practice with me that I do not praise those who work with me. I make their mistakes known to others and I think, by doing so, our mistakes would be rectified.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji reiterated his conviction that India had lost nothing, but on the contrary had gained in every way as a result of the adoption and practice of truth and non-violence during all these years. If they had not attained the goal which they had set before themselves, the fault lay not in truth and ahimsa, but in themselves.

For instance, if they had fully imbibed the principle of ahimsa, they would be completely free from the feeling of discrimination against the votaries of religions other than their own and regard them and serve them all with equal love. It had pained him to learn that, in the Mahishadal area, Harijans were still not being admitted in the temples. He hoped they would completely rid themselves of the taint of untouchability. It would be a big advance in ahimsa.

Referring to the song that had been sung, he pointed out that, in it, the devotee prays to God to purge him of the cowardice which springs from doubt, as well as the cowardice that results from fear of misfortunes. To harbour doubt is to insult God. To shrink from misfortune, is to run away from Him. He, therefore, prays for spiritual as well as physical courage, so that he might be completely rid of all fear.

*The Hindu*, 30-12-1945 and 31-12-1945

## 190. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

*December 30, 1945*

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. About me you must be getting all the news from the papers. I hope there was no dejection underlying the statement that Prabhudas had had yet another daughter. If we really see no difference between a boy and a girl and if we do not, out of a false sense of attachment, consider a girl a liability there will be no cause either for dejection or for a feeling of being burdened with responsibility. It will be sufficient, if we bring her up, train her to think independently and become self-reliant and teach her, in case she wants to marry, the art of finding herself a mate and also help her, if she wants, in her search for one. Moreover, we shall, in addition, master the art of bringing up daughters and set an example for others

to emulate.

Pass this on to Prabhudas for his perusal. If possible Prabhudas and Amba should now practise continence. If they fail to practise it their capacity for service is going to be greatly limited.

I am not surprised at Kashi's lack of strength. Her weakness will persist because she continues to be ever so restless. Otherwise I know she can partly get over the cold weather by keeping herself warm. My suggestion to her to go to Bombay for the cold season did have flaws. All the same I did make the suggestion which she rejected. I hope the cold has abated now.

Rajkumari is in Hyderabad (Sind). She will be relieved from there on the 2nd.

I hope you yourself are well.

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

### *191. A NOTE*

*December 30, 1945*

Children should spin well. They must learn the processes preceding and following spinning. Children should know and observe the rules of cleanliness. It is essential to keep the posture when sitting or standing. Truth and non-violence should come to them easily and naturally.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7179

### *192. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. DESAI*

ON THE STEAMER,

*December 30, 1945*

CHI. BABLO,

You have now really grown big. You too must aspire to live 125 years in the service of others, and strive towards that end.

If Durga's health is as good as you describe I shall say you have truly grown up. Sushi, I am sure, will be quite well.

As for the wedding, in my opinion the longer it is put off the better it will be.

I keep on hearing that you are grown in body as well as in



mind. May you fill Mahadev's place and excel him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

NARAYAN DESAI

SEVAGRAM

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

*193. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI*

MAIN CAMP: SODEPUR,

ON THE STEAMER FROM MAHISHADAL TO CONTAL,

*December 30, 1945*

CHI. PUSHPA,

I have your letter. How can you afford to be cowardly? You should endure your fate. I can bear, even understand, your refusal to look upon Vajubhai as your husband. But he is a brother to you, is he not? And why need one fear one's brother? How can you refuse to discuss the subject with him? He has committed no fault. If anyone is at fault, it is you. You do not want to abide by custom. I see no harm even in that. One who wishes to disregard custom must generally display great firmness of mind, purity of character and gentleness. Moreover, you aspire to rise even higher. You are resolved to have as husband no ordinary man but only God. Your stiffness does not become your noble resolve. You should, therefore welcome Vajubhai. Then alone can you uplift both him and yourself. I am glad, that you believe yourself to be still weak. You should, therefore, carefully observe the restraints which a weak person should. These restraints are only not to be alone with Vajubhai and not to touch him. It is no part of a sister's duty to a brother to touch him freely. If she chances to touch him, she does not run away nor does she experience any passion because of it. But when a girl is weak, even touching one's blood brother may sometimes have to be avoided. You will learn to look upon God as husband and be accepted in His large court only if you understand all these subtle distinctions. Otherwise you are bound to fall by the wayside like a mere pebble.

Go to Vinoba when you can. There you will get affection and knowledge and your determination will grow firm.

If you do not want, I will not send you the letters from Father or Vajubhai. But I would like you to remain unperturbed even after reading those letters. Yesterday we had a Bengali *bhajan*.

Daily in the evenings a Bengali *bhajan* is sung here and that is only proper. The first line of the *bhajan* was: "Lord, save me from weakness even when I am assailed by doubts." That destroy is, destroy every doubt in my mind. Your vow is a hard one. You have taken it of your own free will. You will not be able to keep it without God's grace. I am dictating this letter with great care in the early morning in a boat, hoping that it may remove your ignorance and strengthen you. There can be no peace except through absorption in service. You can show this letter to Vinoba. He will be able to explain my ideas better and if there is anything lacking he will make up for it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9268

### *194. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL*

*December 30, 1945*

BHAI SHYAMLAL,

I have your letter of the 26th. I feel it is necessary to consult the scheme before sanctioning expenditure for opening a basic training (school) in the village of Tirumalai. Shall we have the ownership of the site of the building? Have you received the Rs. 500? What is the population of Tirumalai? If it is necessary to sanction the expenditure soon, then decide about the ownership, etc., and you may take my approval for granted. As I want to reply quickly I am writing this on a boat. Sodepur should be taken as my address.

SHRI SHYAMLAL

KASTURBA SMARAK NIDHI, WARDHA

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

## 195. LETTER TO SATYANARAYAN

ON THE STEAMER,  
*December 30, 1945*

BHAI SATYANARAYAN,

Two of your letters came more or less at the same time—one of the 24th addressed to me and the other of the 26th addressed to Sushilabehn. I am planning to reach there on January 23, 1946. Whether I can do so is in God's hands.

You should stop touring for the present and get to work in Madras. If the ground is well prepared there our work will shine.

I do not remember having talked to Sitaramji. I did have some talk with Kamalnayanji. I shall try to talk to Sitaramji when I return to Sodepur. Much depends on the success of the programme in Madras. I believe that it is easy to get money if we are perfectly honest and industrious. You will remember what I mean by honest. I think I explained to you.

Sardar told me that the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board would be held somewhere there. He had no objection but thought Maulana Saheb might not be able to travel so far. There is no need for you to do anything in this connection. I personally do nothing and indeed I should not. Whatever has to happen will happen.

I have gone through the programme. It is for both morning and evening. It will be very difficult for me if I have to attend it at 9 in the morning. Monday is obviously a silence day and on Thursday, Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday I observe silence at 9. That is the time for massage, etc. So bearing in mind that it will be possible to take work from me only from 2 to 5, do whatever you want to.

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

## 196. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

ON THE STEAMER FROM MAHISHADAL TO CONTAI,  
MAIN CAMP: SODEPR,  
December 30, 1945

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter.

It is good that you have started hand-carding. Vinobaji's new attempt is actually a very old thing. It can be perfected by practice. Somebody gave a demonstration at a public meeting. He separated the cotton from the seeds and pulled the cotton on all sides with his hands, made slivers from the same and started spinning. He did the spinning on the *takli*. His yarn was very neat. One woman had started spinning without separating the seeds from the cotton. But I do not value all these things much. I value Vinobaji's experiment very much because he says that he is doing it scientifically and from the point of view of social benefit. Hence, I would always be eager to know the results of the new experiment.

I understand about *Gitai*<sup>1</sup> and other things. Just as Vinobaji has written about sleep to Balkobaji and made it into a beautiful article, he should also write about observing silence while walking and follow it in practice. I understand its significance, but even so I am not practising it in this tour. I am caught by desire and temptation. But I know that if one wants to live up to 125 years, desire, etc., should necessarily be given up. I shall not write anything more about it today.

I am glad that Kanam<sup>2</sup> has gone to Paunar. But it is rather disconcerting that Vinoba should spare one hour for him.

It is good that Balvantsinha has gone to Kharangana. Let him continue the same way. It will do him good. I also infer from this that Hoshiaribehn is doing well and she has completely regained her balance.

I understand about Om Prakash. He must be provided sufficient money for travel.

Vasumatibehn must be in good health.

Shantabehn will be all right. It would be nice if Hoshiari, Kailas, Shanta and others wrote to me.

<sup>1</sup> Marathi verse rendering of *Bhagavad Gita* by Vinoba Bhave

<sup>2</sup> Kanam Gandhi, son of Ramdas Gandhi

Let Chakrayya get himself trained there. Let him learn there. Everything is bound to be well if his mind and body are in good shape.

We had elaborat recitations from *Gita* on Ba's death date<sup>1</sup>. And we did spinning. Some outsiders also did spinning with us for an hour.

I am not in the least interested in keeping that sadhu any more. I have realized too that my suggestion to keep him arose from unworthy attachment and temptation.

I shall see about the clock<sup>2</sup>. Remind me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4540

### *197. LETTER TO MARJORIE SYKES*

AS AT KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (24 PARGANAS),  
CAMP: CONTAI,  
*December 31, 1945*

DEAR MARJORIE,

I must not attempt to write this myself in the boat that carries me along the canal going towards Contai. I must dictate the letter.

My best wishes for the season, if you think that a vocal effort in the direction is at all needed. Any such effort becomes formal if the heart wish is there.

About Charlie Andrews<sup>3</sup> I fear nothing can be sent to you before I reach Sevagram, for the papers have to be searched. They have been distributed in the various subject files. Some may be in the file named after Andrews himself. This can be only searched by Pyarelal who is with me. The writing<sup>4</sup> I shall do and it will be a pleasure.

<sup>1</sup> 22nd of every month

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Krishnachandra", 18-12-1945

<sup>3</sup> The addressee was preparing a biography of C. F. Andrews and during the eighteen months of its preparation she had held an "Andrews Memorial Chair" at Santiniketan.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to the foreword which Gandhiji actually wrote on January 12, 1947.

For this you will be in no hurry, for your own manuscript will take some time.

What I said and did in Santiniketan<sup>1</sup> was a duty performed. Of course, much is expected of you and I have no doubt that you will try your best to come up to the standard. More no one can do.

I have read fully Agatha's letter. I had anticipated her. I am doing all I can to ensure helpfulness to the deputation<sup>2</sup> on behalf of the Congress. If, as the papers about report, the expenses of the deputation are to be found by India, it is a bad job. The deputation will lack the required grace. You can forward a copy of this letter or the relevant extract to Agatha. My letter may not reach her in time even if I succeed in dictating one.

Love.

*Yours,*

BAPU

MISS MARJORIE SYKES

SANTINIKETAN

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### *198. LETTER TO BAL D. KALELKAR*

CONTAL,

*December 31, 1945*

CHI. BAL,

I have your letter. It is worthy of you that you wish to serve Kaka or me; however, at present your dharma is to keep up what you are doing. If you do credit to what you have learnt you will have rendered service to both of us. We might have to consider what your dharma would be if there had been no one else to serve us; but all that is irrelevant in the present context. For the time being your knowledge is to be utilized for Birlaji's work. In the end you have to let the masses utilize your knowledge without any thought of fame or

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Foundation-Laying Ceremony", 19-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> Of the members of the British Parliament; *vide* footnote on "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 3-1-1946

fortune. I shall certainly like you to come and stay with me for some time at your own leisure.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. BAL KALELKAR

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

*199. LETTER TO VAIKUNTHLAL L. MEHTA*

CONTAL,

*December 31, 1945*

BHAI VAIKUNTHBHAI,

I got your postcard. You may gladly inform Khushal Shah<sup>1</sup> of your disinclination to join the sub-committee, adding at the same time that, since Satis Babu has not tendered his resignation, the question of your joining does not arise.

VAIKUNTHBHAI

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

*200. LETTER TO GOPINATH BARDOLOI*

CONTAL,

*December 31, 1945*

BHAI BARDOLOI,

With great difficulty I can spare five days for Assam. You can have me freed for Assam but do not be tempted to keep me there too many days or take me to too many places. I had explained this to the man who had come from there. He too was convinced. The truth is that I am no longer fit for travelling. I had to visit Bengal, so I included Assam also. What else can I do? It does not look nice to go on refusing. I am receiving wires. Please save me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

BARDOLOI

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

<sup>1</sup> K. T. Shah

## 201. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CONTAI,  
*December 31, 1945*

Gandhiji congratulated the people of Contai on successfully rivalling other places in Bengal, where he had been of late, in maintaining exemplary discipline. He hoped that they would show the same spirit of discipline in the event of any other leader coming in their midst.

Gandhiji recalled how in 1934, when he was touring in Orissa in connection with the Harijan programme, a German Nazi, Herr Buto, had requested to be allowed to accompany him on his tour. He professed himself to be an ardent admirer of Hitler. Having heard how Gandhiji's method was exactly contrary to Hitler's and how in South Africa he had led a successful struggle against General Smuts with only a handful of Indians and no other weapons than that of non-violence, he was curious to meet the author of that movement and study his method at close quarters. Gandhiji had granted him his request in the hope of converting him to non-violence, but when Herr Buto saw the undisciplined behaviour of Orissa crowds, he told Gandhiji that he could now understand how a handful of Britishers in India could keep a nation of 400 millions in bondage. As a result of his experience, he had become sceptical of India ever winning freedom through non-violence. What India needed, he thought, was a Hitler. Gandhiji, however, had drawn a different moral from the same events. What India needed was discipline, no doubt, but not of the Hitlerite variety. It had to be of the non-violent type and, therefore, voluntary. His experience in Bengal during his present tour had confirmed him in his faith that the latter was infinitely superior to the former. If six and a quarter crores of Bengalis could show the same discipline which the present gathering had shown that evening, not even a thousand Hitlers would be able to deprive them of their freedom.

Commenting next on Gurudev's song that had been sung, he observed that, in that song, a devotee pledges his soul to Truth and prays that Truth may always triumph. He prays further that Truth may give him strength so that neither misfortune nor fear of direct punishment may force him into untruth in thought, speech or action. For fulfilment of that pledge, he longs to lay down his life and all. If the song that had been sung came really from their heart and not merely from their lips, it ought to transmute their entire life and they should see the sovereignty of Truth in their lifetime.

Referring next to repression, followed by the havoc caused by cyclone and floods through which the people of Midnapore had recently passed, he told them that all that had filled his soul with anguish. The song which they had just sung was surely a message for them in their present misfortunes too.



As regards the triple problem facing them, namely, shortage of food, shortage of clothing and lack of drinking water, he told them that it would be easily solved if they could throw off their inertia. It was no use waiting idly for Government help. They must show capacity to help themselves. He was afraid that, so far, they had not done all that they might have. If all the people of Contai and the neighbouring areas took to spinning in right earnest, they could solve the problem of cloth shortage. He observed that their success in that would be followed by amelioration in other respects too.

Concluding, Gandhiji remarked that if the Government had recognized in their behaviour in 1942 the legitimate longing to be free and co-operated with them instead of trying to thwart them, the history of India would have been written differently. That was not to be. He, however, refused to shed a single tear over the past and wanted them to do likewise. The present was enough to claim their energy and attention, and that evening's song indicated the spirit in which to approach the problem.

*The Hindu*, 3-1-1946

## 202. NOTE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

1945

You must flatly refuse to give any secret help. It would be altogether wrong. The fact will never remain secret. No one would or should accept such help openly. This whole thing needs to be carefully considered. Such important decisions should not be taken in haste or through hope of gain. Never mind if we are defeated. Let the British give them Pakistan if they wish.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro*—2: *Sardar Vallabhbhaine*, p. 285

## 203. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

MAIN CAMP: SODEPUR,

*December 30, 1945/January 1, 1946*

BAPA,

I got your letter addressed to Haribhau Phatak. I agree with your view. I wish to add this by way of clarification. It is desirable that non-Harijan boys may stay with Harijan boys but we cannot admit such boys as free boarders. They must pay their full expenses. If the

building is ours then we must get the rent, and if the building is rented they must pay their share of the rent.

BAPU

[PS.]

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

I shall see about Sucheta. It is in February, I believe.

I have been able to send the matter regarding Brijkrishna Chandiwalla. It will depend on the reply to Mridula's wire.

We may as well let Santhanam complete [the writing] about Ambedkar. If, after reading Rajaji's booklet<sup>1</sup>, he himself believes that he will be able to shed no new light, it will be a different story. If I get Rajaji's booklet I shall go through it.

I understand about your tour. About mine it is what you read in the newspapers. I have been drinking cupfuls of delight.

Regarding the Harijan Fund, Kanaiyo will write to you.

The above is in reply to your letter of December 26. I have already sent one letter to you regarding Dharma Dev. I did not like the thing. I have left it to you to look into the matter. And now I have this second, alarming letter. I cannot say whether there is any substance in it. I can form no opinion on the basis of it, but all the same I must admit that I fear it may be true. Inquire into the matter and return Mirabehn's letter.

BAPU

Enclosure: Mirabehn's letter<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1196

## *204. LETTER TO MANUEL S. FERNANDES*

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter.

In a case like yours no one will be able to advise you by post, and if you cannot leave your bed you must do the best you can in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ambedkar Refuted*, written on Gandhiji's advice to refute Ambedkar's indictment of the Congress

<sup>2</sup> This is not traceable.

circumstances. The only general advice I can give is that you should live for some time on fruit juices such as orange, grape or pineapple, and have regular enema if your bowels do not move regularly and fully without causing any strain. This will do no harm and is likely to give you much benefit.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI MANUEL S. FERNANDES

ETHEL VILLA MOIRA

BARDEZ, GOA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### *205. LETTER TO S. P. MISRA*

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 26th instant. So far as I can see, you must abide by your original promise.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRIS. P. MISRA

KUTCHERY ROAD

LUCKNOW

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### *206. LETTER TO M. J. SUNDARAM*

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter and the pamphlet slandering Rajaji.<sup>1</sup> I can only say that it is a disgraceful attempt packed with untruth and half truth which is worse than the first. He never did any harm and he

<sup>1</sup> Reference is to the accusations of betrayal against him on two counts, viz., non-participation in the August movement and his stand regarding Pakistan; *vide* "Letter to L. N. Gopalswami", 27-10-1945

remains today the same dear friend which he became in 1918, when I had the privilege of being his guest.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRIM. J. SUNDARAM  
43 ROYAPETTAH HIGH ROAD  
MYLAPORE, MADRAS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### *207. LETTER TO PRAMILA*

AS AT KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (24 PARGANAS),  
CAMP: CONTAI,  
*January 1, 1946*

Your letter of 22.12.1945 is before me. I do not want any witnesses. I do not see how there can be any. I do know how I can help you. If you are pure in heart and have not responded even in thought, the man himself must be purified by your own purity. This is a universal law admitting of no exceptions. Therefore, you need no further directions from me, except that you should firmly realize that purity is its own shield against the vilest attack of the most vicious man.

If the Karnataka men are what you describe them to be, you can really become guardian of their virtues by means of your own.

You must quickly learn Hindustani. If you are industrious, you can pick up enough in one month's time and make yourself perfect by practice.

SHRIMATI PRAMILA  
GATE NO. 66  
NR. POST OFFICE  
FORT BELLARY

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

## 208. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SODEPUR,  
January 1, 1946

I did send you a longish letter. I have asked S. to send you a copy. I have before me two letters from you. The one about Dharma-dev Shastri has been sent to Bapa. It would be a sad thing if he proves untrue. But you know what havoc rumour works. Your long letter covers many points. I do not wonder at the bitter experience about *Vaidyas*. Many of them are impostors. You should write to Chandiprasad about the person sent by him. I do hope you will come upon a good man. I would have none but a proved man. That that man has proved a failure is bad and that the cow he brought has proved a burden is also bad.

Then you do not get a good worker. How will you pull on? I do not know that all this does not point to retracing your steps or at least so ordering your life as to enable you to live there without anxiety or worry. I would advise you to have a servant or two to carry out your instructions and look after your pony and a cow if you must have one for giving you pure milk. I would even go without either and be content with the good milk you may buy there. You should move away to a cooler place in summer. This should be easy. Do not think of having a summer haunt for yourself. You must not use up the last penny and then feel compelled to come to Sevagram or go elsewhere as a failure which you will be if you have to give up your place after using the last pice. Do not regard this as a doleful picture. If it is unwarranted by facts as you see them, throw it away.

About P. I must not say anything. I am prejudiced. I only hope that God will be your guide in this as in everything else. Only in the latter case I might offer helpful criticism.

Of the atmosphere what you say is about right. But the things will shape themselves right. Anyway I am trying my best. Here I am daily witnessing a mighty change. I had this evening a meeting attended by probably a lac of prople. I was able to have prayer in perfect silence. It would have done your soul good to witness such a scene. This commenced at Sodepur. My first meeting was somewhat boisterous. As days went on things were changed. And yet I build nothing on this. Only this experience is a balancing factor.

I do hope Punditji and his wife will come to you. My love to them.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABEHN  
KISAN ASHRAM  
MULDASPUR

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

### 209. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

MAIN CAMP: SODEPUR,  
CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

BHAI VALLBHBHAI,

I got your letter, as also the wire. Wherever Satis Babu and Hemprabhadevi are in charge, there can be nothing wanting in perfection of arrangements. Therefore wherever I am, I regularly receive the post redirected to me from Sodepur. Just like you, Satis Babu officiates as wherever I go and so has he done here. "Here" means Contai (in Midnapore). Though we are in unfamiliar surroundings everything is so well arranged that I get the maximum possible free time. So why should my health suffer? I daily see the miracle wrought by prayer Thousands attend, the number sometimes reaching even a hundred thousand, but the prayers are peaceful. There is no noise and no jostling. This is an altogether new experience.

I have gone through the papers<sup>1</sup> regarding Rajaji. I hope the matter has been settled. I say this because doubts persist in my mind. I get letters of that type. I reply to them only when I must.

What shall I say regarding your health? Dinshaw's suggestion appeals to me. But if you use up the strength that you daily regain, believing that you are thereby doing service, what can be done ?

About the *samadhi*<sup>2</sup> the Aga Khan had sent a wire saying "Will Meet." There has been no other communication. I understand his

<sup>1</sup> A. P. I. report about the formation of the Madras Election Board which carried Sardar Patel's telegram to Kamraj Nadar, a letter to P. C. Subramaniam and a statement by T. Prakasam.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to a proposal to acquire the land on which samadhis of Kasturba and Mahadev were built.

discussing the matter with you. The reply you gave regarding Jinnah was excellent. I am not attracted by the Aga Khan's proposals. I am wholly opposed to such partition. More when we meet.

I am reaching Sodepur on the 3rd. On the 9th I leave for Assam, and shall be back to Sodepur most probably on the 18th. After that I shall be leaving for Madras on the 23rd. I have spared a maximum of two weeks for Madras. After spending a few days in Sevagram if you permit me I shall go to Poona. Otherwise I shall first go to Bardoli and then to Poona.

I had a letter from Bhai Vaikunth<sup>1</sup> saying that Balasaheb<sup>2</sup> and you and also Deo<sup>3</sup> are pressing him. Do get him in as member<sup>4</sup>. The rest after I return.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 285-8*

## 210. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I have your letter. Ramdas<sup>5</sup> has left. It is as well. But I now realize my mistake. Even though you yourself were willing I ought not to have put his burden on you. In the event of his not being taken care of or his not submitting to being taken care of the way he was, I should have had him taken back to Mysore or allowed him to stay in whatever position he was. Wouldn't I have done the same to my own son? I should also have considered your unsuspecting nature. This I did not do and entrusted him to your care. Dasappa<sup>6</sup> was certainly at fault but it was my responsibility to rectify the mistake. Dasappa had pledged that he would leave Ramdas to my keeping. There is no

<sup>1</sup> Vaikunthlal L. Mehta

<sup>2</sup> B. G. Kher

<sup>3</sup> Shankerrao Deo

<sup>4</sup> Of the Bombay Legislative Assembly; *vide* also "Letter to Vaikunthlal L. Mehta", 1-1-1946

<sup>5</sup> Ramdas Dasappa

<sup>6</sup> H. C. Dasappa

dearth of people making pledges, but those who keep them are rare. Well whatever was destined has happened; I am not going to entertain Ramdas any more.

May your tour—and Kakasaheb's—be a success, and may he keep up his health.

I think you can manage the examination work in Wardha in addition to your work in Gujarat. Again, if Kakasaheb's responsibility comes to be entrusted to you his blessings will give you the strength to cope with it too. All the same let me warn you that you must not do anything at the cost of your work in Gujarat, because if the work in Gujarat suffers I am certainly going to take you to task and Kakasaheb, too, will take you to task because you took up the Gujarat work in the nick of time and you have no right to let it break up.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. AMRITLAL NANAVATI

C/O SJT. MAGANBHAI DESAI

GUJARAT VIDYAPITH, AHMEDABAD

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

## *211. LETTER TO VAIKUNTHLAL L. MEHTA*

MAIN CAMP: SODEPUR,

CONTAL,

*December 1, 1946*

BHAI VAIKUNTH,

I have your letter. I accept most of your arguments. Aren't you a dweller of *Vaikunth*<sup>1</sup>? Or are you its king? But whether you are a simple dweller in *Vaikunth* or its king or its gift, there is no doubt that you are a saviour at need. If, therefore, it is found necessary that you should go in order to help them out of their difficulties, we shall think over the matter.

My tour of Bengal and Assam will end on the 20th at the latest. After that I leave for Madras on the 23rs. There I will spend 15 days at the most. After that I will go to Sevagram. We shall have, therefore, enough time to think over the matter. Offer your name as a candidate

<sup>1</sup> Vishnu's abode



for the Assembly, on the condition, however, that you will not have to spend a single pie and will not have to go begging for votes. It may not perhaps be possible to apply this rule in all cases, but it should be applied in yours.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 97. Also V. L. Mehta Papers.  
Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## *212. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA*

CONTAI,

*January 1, 1946*

CHI. DINSHAW,

I have your letter of December 28, 1945. I hope you got my letter of December 28 sent by airmail. Your letter demands immediate reply and so I am sending this right away.

It will not be becoming for you to admit some patients privately in your Poona clinic. It does not at all look right that the same person should run a charitable department and a profit-making one. You may if you wish retain the Bombay clinic; I have agreed to put up with it. The expenditure at Poona is my responsibility from January and I have made an arrangement for that. In the end the monthly expenditure at Poona ought not to be as much as Rs. 3,500 but if it is, so be it. If we render service worth that amount it will not irk me. At the moment the main question is whether you may open a separate profit-making clinic in Poona. I have expressed my opinion in this regard.

What you write about Gulbai is somewhat strange. She is at present with child, so we must patiently put up with her whims. I shall certainly write to her not to meddle with the affairs of the hospital.

DR. DINSHAW MEHTA

NATURE CURE CLINIC

6 TODDYWALA ROAD

POONA

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

### 213. LETTER TO PURNIMA BANNERJEE

*January 1, 1946*

CHI. PURNIMA,

I have your letter. It is straightforward. I do not want to dampen your interest. You have the aptitude for it. Nor would I consider your going into the Assembly a bad thing. After all someone has to go there. What I mean is that neither you nor anyone else can ride two horses at the same time. A similar case from Malabar has come to me. In that also I have given the same opinion. The lady<sup>1</sup> in question is competent—perhaps as much as you are. Bapa is favourably inclined. But I have advised her that if she goes into the Assembly our work will certainly suffer because working for rural women is not a small thing at all. We have to respect the feelings of those women. It is a drawback if they cannot go and live in villages but all of us suffer from that drawback. I am confident that you are rural at heart. If that is true, in my view your place is at Wardha. It is surprising that you do not have anything more to give me. I have a vague impression that it has appeared in the news-papers. Even then I enclose a copy and should like you to send in your acceptance. If you cannot, then suggest the name of some other woman.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI PURNIMA BANNERJEE

41 GEORGE TOWN

ALLAHABAD

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

### 214. LETTER TO R. K. PATIL

CONTAI,  
*January 1, 1946*

BHAI PAITL,

I have your letter. What you have written is correct. I can say that I had forgotten about the change of air and with that all the things associated with it.

<sup>1</sup> Kuttimalu Amma; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 24-12-1945

You can give your name for the Provincial election on the condition that you would neither beg for votes from the electorate nor spend any money. If you can get elected on this condition you may enter the Assembly. We shall see about the rest. We shall think over it when I come. I expect to reach there in the second week of February.

SHRIR. K. PATIL

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

### *215. LETTER TO SHANKERRAO DEO*

CONTAL,

*January 1, 1946*

BHAI SHANKERRAO DEO,

I received your letter, and also Vaikunthbhai's at the same time. I have written to him to seek nomination for the election. Accepting presidentship is a different thing. I believe that that can be easily decided by February. There is a good deal of substance in Vaikunthbhai's opposition and for that reason the decision about the presidentship has been postponed. He has my approval for seeking election. Only I have written to him that he should see that he does not have to spend money or beg for votes from the electorate. If people want him it will be enough to give his name. We see quite a number of such instances in British elections. We of course have such instances here, too.

SHRI SHANKERRAO DEO

LAKSHMI NRISHINH BHAVAN

SHIVAJI NAGAR

POONA 5

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

## 216. LETTER TO RAMAMURTI

CONTAI,  
January 1, 1946

BHAISHRI RAMAMURTI,

I have your letter. Do what Prof. Kumarappa wants you to do. I cannot address a meeting on my way to Madras.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI RAMAMURTI

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

## 217. LETTER TO CHINNARAM THAPAR

CONTAI,  
January 1, 1946

BHAI CHINNARAM,

I have your letter. I neither take any interest in the Assembly elections nor keep track of them.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI CHINNARAM THAPAR  
VICE PRESIDENT DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE  
LYALLPUR (PUNJAB)

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

## 218. LETTER TO GOVINDDAS

CONTAI,  
January 1, 1946

BHAI GOVINDDAS,

I have your letter. These days I do not give any messages to newspapers and I have begun to believe that a noble venture needs no message. The purity of the endeavour is in itself a true message.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI GOVINDDASJI  
RAJA GOKULDAS PALACE  
JABALPUR

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

## 219. LETTER TO INAYATULLAH KHAN

CONTAI  
*January 1, 1946*

BHAI SAHEB,

It is good you wrote in Urdu. I received the letter only today in Contai. I have written to you that I am not a member of the Congress. I cannot write anything on behalf of the Congress. Only Maulana Saheb can do so. I have already expressed my opinion that no one is going to accept your constitution. I personally do not accept it.

Write to me at the Sodepur address.

M. K. GANDHI

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

## 220. DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESS WORKERS

*January 1, 1946*

Gandhiji's advice to ladies was that they could serve the country even by doing household duties. Generally, they hankered after making their daughters fit for marriage and sons for earning. Such families could not be said to be serving the country. Married men and women could give much time for the service of the country even after looking after their children and doing household duties. Instead, they passed their days in enjoyment of life and thus ended the span of life. There were some who were so addicted to pleasure that they used contraceptives.

Asked how women whose husbands were imprisoned could serve the country, Gandhiji said that they should no doubt spin. But this might not be sufficient for their living. They should take to some means of earning money. They could still work for the country. Under no circumstances, Gandhiji emphasized, should women earn their livelihood by sacrificing their honesty and purity. Mahatmaji was faced with the problem of spending annually one crore and 25 lakhs of rupees of the Kasturba Fund. Although he was trying hard to utilize the money in the best possible way still enough women workers could not be found.

Gandhiji advised women living in towns to serve the villages. He appealed to them to search their hearts whether they were really ready and then begin work when they found response in their hearts.

Addressing the students, he said that the question which was put to him was not new. How the students could serve Harijans should not have been asked so late. If

they were ready to serve the Harijan they could easily do it. They could go to villages, mix with the Harijan and educate them.

As regards inter-dining and intercaste marriage, Gandhiji said that so far as he understood the mind of the Congress he knew there was no difference of opinion about inter-dining but he thought that so long as one could not think himself one of the Harijans the poison of untouchability could not be removed. If anybody was not prepared to marry a Harijan he found no occasion of giving his blessings to that marriage. The question of marrying a Harijan was not so difficult but the difficulty was only mental.

Replying to the question whether girl students should have a separate organization, Gandhiji said although the life of men and women was not quite different so long a woman remained a woman there might be necessity for a separate organization for their work. In his Ashram men and women lived together and worked together, still there might be such necessity.

Discussing the constructive programme, Gandhiji said that besides the charkha there were several other items in his fifteenfold programme and women could take to any of them as they liked. Women could take a large share in the freedom movement of the country as they always had done specially in Midnapore and other places of India during the Salt Satyagraha. So he thought that it was needless to question what share the women could take in national movement.

As regards reorganization and rehabilitation scheme<sup>1</sup> Mahatmaji said that the people and workers should depend more on their own strength an endeavour than on the Government. Regarding the drainage problem he had talks with the Governor Mr. R. G. Casey and was trying to do whatever was possible in that respect.<sup>2</sup> If they could take up any item of work themselves and could fulfil it other things would follow.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-1-1946*

## 221. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CONTAI,  
*January 1, 1946*

Thousands of Hitlers would neither be able to win their hearts nor take away their freedom if six and a half crores of Bengalis lived peacefully, as they were beha-

<sup>1</sup> A scheme for the reorganization of the Congress and the rehabiliation of cyclone victims entailing an expenditure of about Rs. 11,13,000 was placed before Gandhiji by the members of the Executive Committee of the Contai Sub-Divisional Congress Committee, members of the Keleghal Drainage Committee, women workers, students and Harijan.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Letter to R. G. Casey”, 8-12-1945

ving at the prayer meeting, and carried out all instructions given to them.

He was very happy during his present visit, because the people made no noise and remained quiet. He recalled his visit to Orissa some time ago when people gathered in large numbers and shouted and stopped his car. He was accompanied then by a Nazi<sup>1</sup> who had arrived at Wardha from South Africa. This Nazi noticed the incidents and told Gandhiji that he did not like Gandhiji's way of non-violence. Hitler's method, he said, was the best, and if Gandhiji wanted peaceful swaraj he would not succeed.

Referring to Midnapore's sufferings, Gandhiji said that the area was still suffering. They had no cloth to wear, no food to eat and no water to drink. There were two ways of removing these sufferings, one by Government relief and the other through their own exertion. If they were to be fit for swaraj or wanted to get swaraj, it was their duty to solve these difficulties by their own exertion.

Success in one effort brought them further strength and this strength would help them to succeed in other things. The Government of the country would come in their hands. He had no doubt about it.

If troubles like those of the flood and famine days came, they should all stand together and face the danger.

Gandhiji suggested that teachers, both in schools and colleges, should understand the real significance of mass prayer and teach it to students. There should be no compulsion in any case, and those students who wanted to join prayers willingly, might do so. There was a magnetic power in prayer. As magnet attracted iron, so would prayer attract all, especially students.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji said that he was told that they came to hear his voice and not to join the prayer. If it was so then he would be very sorry. He wished that they understood the real significance of prayer and felt that through prayer one could get one's desired things.

*The Hindu*, 3-1-1946, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Herr Buto; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 31-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is taken from *The Hindu*. What follows is reproduced from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

## 222. LETTER TO REGINALD REYNOLDS

AS AT SEVAGRAM,  
January 1, [1946]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR ANGAD<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter received by me early morning on New Year's day. I am penning these lines in the evening before retiring.

I fancy that I wrote to you some time ago. Your letter just presents you as I have known you. Of course it is good you have returned to your old love. We should all be glad to greet you back, even if it be for a short time, if you do succeed in coming this side.

Agatha<sup>3</sup> is in India. I hope to see her soon.

With love and all good wishes.

BAPU<sup>4</sup>

From a photostat: C.W. 4546. Courtesy: Swarthmore College Peace Collection

## 223. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

SODEPUR, CONTAL,  
January 2, 1946

CHI. NARAHARI,

You have asked a question in the letter addressed to Sushila-behn. The original draft did contain a reference to underground activities, too. Though it was dropped, the general view was that they should have no place in non-violence. I think what you have read in Jawaharlal's statement is different from what I have. My impression is that he had described underground activities as incompatible with non-violence. I may be mistaken, for I am a hurried reader. Whatever the likely consequences, we should cling to our view if we are convinced about its correctness beyond the shadow of a doubt.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9139

<sup>1</sup> The source has "1945", evidently a slip.

<sup>2</sup> Character in the *Ramayana* who acted as Rama's messenger to Ravana. Gandhiji had given this name to the addressee when he carried his letter to Lord Irwin in 1930; *vide* "Letter to Lord Irwin", 2-3-1930

<sup>3</sup> Agatha Harrison; *vide* "Letter to Horace Alexander", 31-1-1945.

<sup>4</sup> The letter bears the following postscript by Amrit Kaur: "I gave your news to Bapu and he was so glad to have it. I do hope your passport will soon be forthcoming."



## 224. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI G. PATEL

MAIN CAMP: SODEPUR,  
CONTAL,  
*January 2, 1946*

CHI. SHIVABHAI,

Your letter is good. Instead of replying 'Yes' or 'No' to your questions, I think I shall be able to explain my point of view more clearly if I state my own ideas. If any institution has not become self-supporting on the lines suggested by me, the fact can be interpreted in two ways; either that the workers were not efficient enough, or that my calculations were erroneous. If any institution has not succeeded so far, I will begin to doubt only my calculations. But Probably you will be able to see that both these inferences are irrelevant. I have advocated self-reliance in three matters: (1) for the workers in villages, (2) for basic education and (3) for institutions. In regard to the first, my view is that any individual or family who settles in a village must earn their subsistence by working in the village itself. For instance, the person may start some industry—that is, without entering into competition with anybody else engaged in a similar industry—or may join an existing industry. If the person becomes popular with the local population, the people themselves will meet his needs. In either case I will describe the worker as self-supporting. (2) As regards basic education, I am of the view that the rent of the school building, the teacher's salary and the running expenses of the school should be met from the pupils' labour during the seven years of their stay in school. I am doubtful about including the expense incurred on the pupils' food in the scheme of self-reliance. Third, any institution will be considered to be self-supporting if the people for whose benefit it is run provide its expenses. For instance, if the money for Indian Christian institutions comes from America, then the Indian Christians will have proved their incapacity. Those institutions must be supported by the local Christians. I think this should answer all your doubts. But the three rules. I have suggested should not be interpreted to mean that any activities which do not conform to them should be treated as useless and be wound up. I have thought deeply and long about our institutions and formulated a code on the basis of experience. We shall be able to render better service to the extent we are able to live up to it, and will not become a burden on others. I think it would be dangerous to take the prevailing prices as the basis for any calculations. That

is, if you produce cotton, foodgrains, vegetables, fruits and milk on your own land and consume them, need you concern yourself with their market price? I would exclude for the pre-sent the expenditure on cows, seed and bullocks. I think on the basis of this you will yourself be able to answer the questions you have raised. If you have any more questions yet to ask, you may do so.

Can Maharaj<sup>1</sup> be said to be completely cured? I hope Ganga-behn<sup>2</sup> is doing well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9522. Also C. W. 441. Courtesy: Shivabhai G. Patel

## 225. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

CONTAI,

JANUARY 2, 1946

CHI. BHANSALI,

If you resort to fasting to cut down your weight or have to go on a fast for any other reason it is a matter which you and I need to consider. The ideal position, according to me, is that one taking a balanced diet should not find it necessary to resort to fasting nor make any changes in diet. This would be the ideal position. My ambition for you is that you should reach that stage. You certainly have the required strength. Your diet should be so adjusted that your body works like a machine. After all, is not our body only a machine given us?

I hope to reach there by the middle of February.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. BHANSALIBHAI

SEVAGRAM

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

<sup>1</sup> Ravishankar Vyas

<sup>2</sup> Gangabehn Vaidya

## 226. LETTER TO CHARUCHANDRA BHANDARI

SODEPUR, CONTAL,  
*January 2, 1946*

BHAI CHARUBABU,

I have just been able to reach your cheque. There was some confusion also. The only satisfaction is that nobody has suffered any loss. When all the money is to be spent there, why should I keep this cheque with me? So I am returning it. You must be having some committee. And would it not be for the committee to spend the amount? Please let me know who are on the committee. Also send me the budget of the expenditure so that I may pass it after checking it. However, if you want that the money should remain with me and that I should remit it as and when required, please return the cheque to me. And as and when you write and send me the budget I shall send the money. Do as you like.

Tomorrow I will go to Sodepur and from there to Assam on 8th. Please write to me at Sodepur.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

Enclosurc: Two cheques

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8700

## 227. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

CONTAL,  
*January 2, 1946*

BHAI SHYAMLAL,

I have your letter. You can belong to any category. I have nothing to say if the money is given up after due deliberation. Public criticism about such things should not be given any importance. What do they know about our condition and about our means ?

I enclose herewith what you have sent for my approval duly signed.

SHRI SHYAMLAL

KASTURBA GANDHI RASHTRIYA SMARAK NIDHI

BAJAJWADI, WARDHA

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

## 228. SPEECH AT VOLUNTEERS RALLY

January 2, 1946

Gandhiji, while taking the salute of the volunteers, asked whether they belonged to any permanent corps or were recruited temporarily. On being told that they were recruited on the occasion of his visit there, Gandhiji said that they should have a permanent volunteer corps for their own good and for the service of the people. The volunteers, he said, should be wedded to the cult of non-violence and should serve the people and not harass them.

They should spin charkha regularly and know the rules of cleanliness. That means, Gandhiji emphasized, that if they found dirt anywhere they should try themselves to clean it. They should look at every human being with an eye of love and should do their best to alleviate the sufferings of the people. Their whole life should be dedicated to prayer and they should realize that prayer would instill a power in them which would enable them to face anything.

Gandhiji put a number of questions to S. J. Sudhir Chandra Das, G.O.C. of volunteers and asked them why they did not have uniform dress. Knowing that their volunteer group was temporary and due to shortage of time they could not have uniform dress, Gandhiji told them that volunteers must get such instructions so that wherever and whenever they were required they all must be in the same uniform.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3-1-1946

## 229. DISCUSSION WITH MIDNAPORE POLITICAL WORKERS<sup>1</sup>

CONTAL,

January 2, 1946

GANDHI: How long would you take to learn it then ?<sup>2</sup>

A WORKER: One year.

G. Since Hindustani is one out of the 18 items included in the constructive programme and since the carrying out of all these items in their fulness is swaraj, how long at this rate would you take to attain swaraj?

In independent India, continued Gandhiji, they would need to have a lingua franca which could be understood by everybody. He was an admirer of the English

<sup>1</sup> A report of this discussion, which was attended by 500 workers of Midnapore District, was sent to the Press by Pyarelal.

<sup>2</sup> There were many among the audience who did not know Hindustani.

language, but it could never take the place of the national language. There was a saying in English to the effect that matter out of place was dirt. English had its place in international affairs. But he could not tolerate the introduction of English in our day-to-day business, in our domestic life. The lingua franca of India could only be Hindustani, i. e., the language written in Urdu and Devanagari scripts and so simple that it could be understood without any difficulty.

The workers promised that they would all learn it within six months. After that Gandhiji took up the questions which had been submitted to him before the meeting.

The first question invited suggestion as to how they could make a success of the constructive programme and how they could overcome the obstacle in their way.

Replying, Gandhiji enumerated the various items of the constructive programme. The spinning-wheel, though he gave it the central place, must not be on the brain. There were 17 other items. Communal unity was one of them. Did they regard all communities as one? Then they had to get rid of untouchability root and branch. Similarly, they must realize the importance and place of the mother tongue. Their mother tongue alone could be the language for the domestic affairs and day-to-day business. He was in his 77th year and yet he had set his heart on learning Bengali. He hoped to learn to read Bengali before he left Midnapore. Nothing would give him greater pleasure than to be able to talk to them in Bengali. He could hope to touch their hearts through Bengali, never through English.

Then there were the Adivasis (called Aborigines). The 1935 Act had separated them from the rest of the inhabitants of India and had placed the "excluded areas" under the Governor's direct administration. It was a shame that they had allowed them to be treated like that. It was up to them to make the Adivasis feel one with them. The other items were prohibition, village industries, basic education, adult education, women's education in health and hygiene, economic equality, *kisans*, labour, students, and village sanitation. The last was most important and at the same time most difficult. He almost despaired of our people ever observing the rules of sanitation voluntarily when he saw the riverside fouled without hesitation even by those who should know better. He continued :

The execution of the constructive programme in its entirety means more than swaraj. It means *Ramarajya*, *Khudai Sultanat* or the divine kingdom. I am thirsting after such *Ramarajya*. My God does not reside up above. He has to be realized on earth. He is here, within you, within me. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. You need not think of the world beyond. If we can do our duty here, the 'beyond' will take care of itself. This necessarily includes political independence.

Such independence could only be achieved through non-violence and truth exemplified in constructive work. The Working Committee had realized the

importance of constructive work. Even Subhas Babu would admit his (the speaker's) thesis. He did not believe that Subhas Babu was dead<sup>1</sup>. His feeling was that he was hiding somewhere and would appear at the right moment. He admired his courage and patriotism. But he differed from him with regard to the means. He was convinced that real freedom, freedom for the man in the street, could never be achieved through armed revolt.

For him, the parliamentary programme was only a means of promoting constructive work. The Congress had adopted it because they did not want self-seekers and enemies of India's freedom to go to the legislatures and hinder the struggle for freedom. He would feel happy if they sent patriotic scavengers to the legislatures. Their real job would be to keep the undesirables out.

If India won its freedom through truth and non-violence she would not only point the way to all the exploited Asiatic nations, she would become a torch-bearer for the Negro races that inhabit the vast continent of Africa, and even to Europe. The smaller nationalities lived in fear of losing their freedom. In fact they had no freedom. India's independence through any other means could never have that result.

He had heard harrowing tales of what the women of Midnapore had suffered. The shame was not theirs but the menfolk's. God would take them to task for having been helpless witnesses to those atrocities. The only atonement they could make was whole-hearted execution of the constructive programme.

Another friend asked him what he thought of the class struggle which was inevitable in labour work.

Gandhiji's reply was that class struggle there had been always. It could be ended if the capitalists voluntarily renounced their role and became all labourers. The other way was to realize that labour was real capital, in fact the maker of capital. What the two hands of the labourer could achieve the capitalist would never get with all his gold and silver. Could anyone live on gold? But labour had to be made conscious of its strength. It had to have in one hand truth and in the other non-violence, and it would be invincible. Labour and capital, classes and masses, are as old as the hills. The whole trouble arises from the fact that neither labour nor those who are guiding the labour movement realize the dignity and strength of labour. It is like the lame leading the blind.

Gandhiji was asked about Karl Marx. He got the opportunity and privilege of reading *Capital*, he told them, whilst he was in detention. He entertained high regard for his great industry and acumen. But he could not believe in his conclusions. He had no faith in violence being able to usher in non-violence. World thought was moving and was outdating Karl Marx. That, however, did not detract from the merit of the

<sup>1</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose was reported to have died in an aeroplane accident while on his way to Tokyo on August 18, 1945.

great man's labours.

Gandhiji concluded by saying that non-co-operation and civil disobedience in terms of swaraj were not to be thought of without substantial constructive effort. Either without the latter will be body without soul, as good as dead.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika 5-1-1946*

### *230. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

CONTAI,  
*January 2, 1946*

Summing up his experience of prayer gathering in Contai and elsewhere in Bengal, Gandhiji said that he had been noticing phenomenal changes in behaviour of crowds taking place before his very eyes. He was not surprised at it. Bengal had given birth to that prince of devotees, Chaitanya, and a host of other God-intoxicated saints. He longed for the day when the example of the crowds would be taken up by the whole of India.

He had felt overwhelmed by the consideration that had been shown to him, by ensuring him as much peace and quiet as was humanly possible, and the way in which he had resolved to repay his debt of gratitude was by devoting every moment of leisure accruing therefrom to learning Bengali. He had been doing that ever since he came to Bengal most systematically. In Contai he hoped that the love for all Indian languages which that resolve symbolized, would fill them too.

Before coming to the meeting he had been told that carcasses of about 700 cattle and 300 human beings, out of many more which had perished in a cyclone, lay buried indiscriminately together where the prayer gathering was held. Dust had returned to dust, and there was no mark to tell the tale, as Gurudev had observed in one of his songs. God mercifully hides man's tragedy on earth under a mantle of greenery. Nevertheless, it betrayed lack of human feeling on the part of those who were responsible for it. The common practice was to give to each dead body a separate burial and the ground in which the burial took place became consecrated ground. This was where cremation was not in vogue. While, therefore, he respected sentiment, he did not make a fetish of it and he even derived satisfaction from the fact that common calamity had united men and cattle in death, thereby symbolizing the essential unity of all life. Thought of it ought to humble man's pride and bring home to him the insignificance of human existence with its illusions, which<sup>1</sup> held him a prisoner in

<sup>1</sup> In *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, "Petition to Lord Ripon", 14-7-1894, the rest of the paragraph reads: "... hold him prisoner. If man learned to break through this net of illusions and made the fulfilment of his dharma the Pole Star of his life's pilgrimage, it would considerably lessen the burden under which the world is groaning."

their net till man had learned to break through this net of illusions and make the fulfilment of one's dharma the pole star in life's pilgrimage.

Explaining the significance of prayer Gandhiji told them that it ought to result in self-purification and it ought to transmute their entire conduct. If anybody thought that it gave him licence to do as he liked during the rest of the day, he deceived himself and others. That was a travesty of the true meaning of prayer.

Commenting on the song that had been sung at prayer, Gandhiji said that in it the devotee prayed to God that he might be able to see Him face to face. Through single obeisance it betokened an indefinable strength of faith in man. With such faith nothing in the world would be impossible of attainment. Faith in God to be real, however, had to find expression in work. In his opinion the eighteenfold constructive programme which he had placed before the country was prayer through work since it was based on the principles of truth and ahimsa. If they fulfilled that programme in its fulness not only would they be free, but their example would serve as a beacon light to all the oppressed and exploited people of the earth.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-1-1946*

### 231. LETTER TO MADALASA

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,

*January 3, 1946*

CHI. MADALASA,

I have your letter. My previous letter seems to have gone astray.

You have no reason at all to feel depressed. I have no time today to write more. I have to deal with the rest of the mail.

Get well soon.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5856



## 232. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,  
January 3, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got your note. I have telegraphed as follows :

“Leaving Bengal 20th and Madras about February 8. Very anxious to go Poona before Bardoli. Will middle March be suitable Bardoli ?”

The Bengal programme is not exceeding the limits I had set. According to me much work has been done here. The result is in the hands of God. I am dictating this letter in a boat. I shall reach Sodepur this evening. This letter will be posted from there tomorrow morning. I have to go to Assam on the 8th after four days in Sodepur. The Assam tour, including travelling, will take eight days. I shall then to go Sodepur and thence to Madras on the 23rd. I must reach Madras on that date at the latest. We must, therefore, leave Sodepur on the 21st. In the wire I have mentioned 20th.

I suppose I shall meet the people<sup>1</sup> from Britain in Bombay, Poona or Wardha. It would be unseemly to speak disparagingly of them. There would be no harm whatever if we use kind words. There are some good men among them also. I do not see much point in condemning them in advance.

You will have received my previous letter. After I take charge of the work in Poona, I must give some time there. I have therefore suggested the middle of March for my Bardoli visit. But I shall be guided by your wishes in the matter. I presume that you will definitely not keep me in Bardoli for more than 15 days. You may even release me from the promise to go there. There is also the possibility that you yourself will be engrossed in the Congress affairs. I take it that you will call me to Bardoli only if my presence there is necessary. This is just to let you know how my mind is working. The final decision must be yours. After all you are the Sardar. Are you not? That too of Bardoli. And now of India.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 289-91.*

<sup>1</sup> British Parliamentary delegation headed by Robert Richards. It arrived in India on January 5, 1946, ostensibly to make personal contacts with the political conditions and leaders of India but actually to “reduce” Krishna Menon’s influence. It left on February 10, 1946. (*Vide Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, p. 300)

### 233. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,

*January 3, 1946*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your letter of December 30, 1945, on January 3, 1946, at Contai. I read it in the boat and am dictating this reply, too, in the boat. I understand what you say regarding khadi. If I can know how much will be available there, I can think and decide immediately. I am going to supply as much as is needed.<sup>1</sup>

I can understand the Doctor [Dinshaw] not being satisfied with my reply. But I am helpless.

I will try to return as early as I can. I will arrange about the Bank account. I will arrange for the transfer of the money, too, as soon as I reach Calcutta.

We should certainly admit all patients who will mix with the poor. Nobody can be given a special room merely because he is rich. Will the patients who wish to be admitted be paying ones? If there are any, apart from our own people, who can mix with the others and observe the rules, I will not object to their being admitted.

The equipment at Sinthagadh has been covered by the Trust and I, therefore, believe that we can use it for our purpose and transfer any item from there.

If the Doctor thinks otherwise, I should like to know his point of view.

We have no intention of starting any other centre outside Poona in the immediate future. I will write to Vanamala.

Kanchan is with me in this very boat. She has got a slight cold but is in fine spirits.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8611. Also C.W. 7200. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah". 23-12-1945

### 234. LETTER TO RAGHUNATH S. DHOTRE

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,  
*January 3, 1946*

CHI. DHOTRE,

I think I told you to resume the remittances to Ramachandran. If not, please understand from this letter that the money is to be paid from October 1945. That makes three months to date. Send a sum to cover this period and later send a hundred rupees every month. The address is: Shri G. Ramachandran, c/o Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 235. LETTER TO SACHINDRA NARAYAN ROY

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,  
*January 3, 1946*

BHAI SACHINDRA NARAYAN,

I have your letter. We can achieve everything by love. Love can never be impatient nor can it ever be angry. If you behave with Muslim brethren in this spirit their anger will go.

PROF. SACHINDRA NARAYAN ROY  
31 SHAH SAHIB'S LANE  
DACCA

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

### 236. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

ON THE STEAMER TO SODEPUR,  
*January 3, 1946*

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I have your letter. I returned your letter on the very day I received it after making corrections.<sup>1</sup> Today I am replying to the letter of December 30, 1945. I am on the steamer, going to Sodepur.

It is difficult to fix the date of my return. I am considering whether I should go first to Poona or Wardha. Even so I shall try my level best to reach Wardha on February 8.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Shrimab Narayan", 9-12-1945

If the 12th is not Monday, fix it<sup>1</sup> for that date, otherwise fix it for the 11th at 2 o'clock. Let the venue be Sevagram.

As regards the Provincial Assembly you may take it that I am not interested. But if you are inclined that way and have the ability for it, and if all others agree, please do go.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 309

### 237. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

SODEPUR

*January 4, 1946*

DEAR BROTHER,

Jagadisan tells me you are again unwell, so much so that you have given yourself only two months more on this earth.<sup>2</sup> Why will you not say with the millions that you are like them in the hands of God and refuse to *feel* that you are about to leave your friends. I do not know if I have clearly expressed myself. Slowly though surely I am going through the doubly interesting collection made by good Jagadisan.<sup>3</sup>

Love.

*Yours,*

LITTLE BROTHER

From a photostat: C.W. 10524. Courtesy: S. R. Venkataraman. Also G.N.  
8825

<sup>1</sup> The meeting of Hindustani Prachar Sabha

<sup>2</sup> He died on April 17.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the collection of Sastri's speeches and writings on Gokhale published under the title *My Master Gokhale*, to which Gandhiji, wrote the Foreword; vide "Foreword to *My Master Gokhale*", 20-1-1946.

238. *LETTER TO L. F. PHILLIPS*

SODEPUR,  
*January 4, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

You must rely upon your merits, not upon certificates or recommendations.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI L. F. PHILLIPS  
99 STEPHEN HOUSE  
DALHOUSIE SQUARE  
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

239. *LETTER TO THE AGA KHAN*

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
24, PARGANAS,  
*January 4, 1946*

BHAI SAHEB,

I got your affectionate letter of December 30, 1945, yesterday at Contai. Then I took a steamer and reached Sodepur this morning from where I am dictating this. To you at least I should write in Gujarati, shouldn't I? Indeed it should be a matter of shame for us to write in English.

I hope to reach Wardha around the 8th of February. Then ten days later I shall leave for Poona. Then I shall do as you desire. If you are in Bombay we shall meet there or I shall suit myself to your convenience in Poona. Maulana Saheb of course will not be present. We shall think over it when we meet.

I understand about the samadhi. The facilities you suggest will suffice for me. It is not my desire that people should be able to visit the palace any time of the day. Those who go there out of devotion or respect should go by the prescribed route and at the appointed hour. I shall then take it that its sanctity is respected.

I shall certainly appreciate it if you will have the samadhi built and it will become yours. I have never considered marble. I shall be

content if something lasting is built. Mahadev and Kasturba had become villagers; they lived in huts. Shouldn't their samadhi be simple? I shall draw a plan but let us discuss it when we meet.

May your Diamond Jubilee be smooth and auspicious.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

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

## *240. LETTER TO K. F. NARIMAN*

SODEPUR,

*January 4, 1946*

BHAI NARIMAN,

I have your wire. I am very happy. But do not lay down any conditions. Remain a true soldier of the Congress.

*Blessings from*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI KAIKHUSHRU NARIMAN

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

## *241. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SODEPUR,

*January 4, 1946*

CHI. MRIDULA,<sup>1</sup>

I have your letter. You have done well in giving me all the news. I am dictating this reply in a hurry because I have sat down to the task just now soon after arriving here by the steamer. It is morning.

The matter regarding Saraladevi has now been resolved. She will continue to be an Agent<sup>2</sup>. You will then be able to do more work yourself as well as give all help to Saraladevi.

Devdas is what he was. Please don't worry. I can understand

<sup>1</sup> This is in Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> Of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust for Gujarat

his feelings. After all his method of work is also different.

The rest later.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SMT. MRIDULABEHN SARABHAI

RETREAT

P. O. SHAHIBAG

AHMEDABAD

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

## *242. LETTER TO VIRENDRA KUMAR ROY*

SODEPUR,

*January 4, 1946*

BHAI VIRENDRA KUMAR,

I have your touching letter. May God grant you peace.

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI VIRENDRA ROY

CONTAI

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

## *243. LETTER TO FATEHCHAND NAHATA*

SODEPUR,

*January 4, 1946*

BHAI FATEHCHAND,

Consider what will be my fate if everyone asks me for 10 minutes of my time as you do. You are not going to gain anything by meeting me. You will unnecessarily waste your time. Read whatever I have written and devote yourself to service.

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI FATEHCHAND NAHATA

PRESIDENT KUSHTIA MAHAKMA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

KUSHTIA

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

## 244. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

SODEPUR,  
*January 4, 1946*

BHAI SHYAMLAL,

I have your letter of the 31st. Write to Nanabhai Bhatt that he may select any woman who is competent. I should consider Manubhai's Vijaya eligible if only she could reduce her preoccupation with the children—it ought to become less as the days pass. She can do the job. She does not have to work in the cities; it is the villages that have to be awakened, and, in my opinion, Vijayabehn is the right person for the job. But if some other woman worker of Vijayabehn's calibre can be found, Nanabhai may become to her what Lord Melbourne<sup>1</sup> was to Queen Victoria and thus encourage her progress.

SHRI SHYAMLALJI

K. G. [N.] M. FUND

BAJAJWADI

WARDHA (C. P.)

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

## 245. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
*January 4, 1946*

Gandhiji said that he had come back in their midst after some time. He would again go out to Assam on the 8th. The prayer would be held here till January 7. He did not know if he would be able to hold prayer here again on his return from Assam.

He had been on a pilgrimage to Midnapore. The tour was so peaceful, the orderliness was so impressive, that they were unique. He had been to three or four places: Diamond Harbour, Mahishadal, Kakra and Contai. In each of these places the orderliness of the people was praiseworthy. At prayer-time the gathering went up to about a lakh of people. Many people came from long distances. Every one of them was quite peaceful and none disturbed the orderliness. From Diamond Harbour he witnessed this orderliness.

Gandhiji said that Ramanama was so attractive that it could absorb man's whole thought and self into it. That was why he had asked them to clap their hands

<sup>1</sup> Lord Melbourne (1779-1848) was the first Prime Minister of Queen Victoria. He was responsible for many important liberal measures of her reign.



rhythmically when taking Ramanama. As they went on clapping their hands they got absorbed in the prayer. They knew soldiers were so trained that they were disciplined and learnt to work together. Discipline being the most essential thing, there was an English saying—‘disciplined soldier’.

They were also soldiers of freedom. Soldiers of a State received salary and they maintained discipline. Soldiers of freedom did not get such payment; but they acquired strength by maintaining discipline. In the words of Badshah Khan<sup>1</sup>, they were all *Khudai Khidmatgars* or servants of God. They were to maintain discipline and that was why he had introduced the practice of clapping hands while praying.

Explaining the *bhajan* sung at the prayer Gandhiji said it was very sweet. The Poet—Rabindranath—said that if nobody responded to their call they must not despair but continue to work for their ideal. Even if failures met them they must not be broken. They should go on working irrespective of whether their hopes and aspirations were realized or not. One who was devoted to God did not feel despair; he went on knocking at heaven’s door for entrance to the kingdom of God.

Swaraj had not yet come, but he had not given up hope. They must keep on knocking and one day swaraj was bound to come.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5-1-1946

## 246. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have to thank you for the arrangements made by the officials for my travel to and stay in the Midnapore District.

The Superintendent of the Presidency Jail writes to me to say that Shri S. Bakshi would like to see me. I am therefore bound to see him. This will be only after my return from Assam. I wonder whether I could see at the same time the other prisoners who are there.

Shri Sudhir Ghosh tells me you would like to see me on Monday next. I shall give myself the pleasure of doing so at 7.30 p.m. that day.

I must thank you too for the relief to the E.C. employees.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji’s Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 134*

<sup>1</sup> Khan Abdul Gahaffar Khan

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the reinstatement of some dismissed workers of Calcutta Electric Supply Company.

247. *LETTER TO M. E. C. MATHEW*

CAMP, SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I do not know where I shall be at the time you reach India. However, I reciprocate your wish that we should meet. You will have no difficulty in finding my whereabouts at the time come to India.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

M. E. C. MATHEW, ESQ.  
182 SEA BOURNE ROAD  
SOUTH BOURNE WEST  
BOURNEMOUTH, HANTS, ENGLAND

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

248. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I sent Rs. 10,000 to Dinshawji yesterday. You will be able to meet from it all expenditure from this month up to the time I return.

Kanchan had an attack of cold and fever. But there is nothing to worry about. She is being treated by Sushilabehn.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8612. Also C.W. 7201. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 249. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,  
January 5, 1946

CHI. JIVANJI,

The booklet on the constructive programme<sup>1</sup> was received only yesterday. It has taken a rather long time. Why this delay? It took me some time to find the price. What was the intention in giving it on the back-page? Or is there merit in novelty as such? Generally the reader's habit is to see the cover page and look for the price, etc. There is no signature at the end of the preface. I wonder whether you thought that, since the preface was by the author himself, there was no need for his signature. But that does not seem likely as Chi. Kanaiya also reminds me. Moreover, I had drawn your attention specifically to this point in my letter<sup>2</sup> of December 7, 1945. The copies are very few. A lot of them could have been sold here. What happened about Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, etc.?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

JIVANJI DESAI  
P. B. 105  
AHMEDABAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9961. Also C.W. 6935. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

## 250. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

SODEPUE,  
January 5, 1946

CHI. DINSHAW,

I have remitted Rs. 10,000 to you yesterday. With this amount open an account in the name of the Trust in any bank you like and issue the cheques yourself, because I have remitted the amount to you as Trustee and Director. I hastened with the money because I understood you had no funds left with you. I am sorry I was under the im-

<sup>1</sup>By Gandhiji. *Vide* "Constrictiv Programme: Its Meaning and Place", 13-12-1941 Here the reference is to the second revised and enlarged edition recently published; *vide* "Forewatd to "Constrictive Programme- its Meaning and Place"

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jivanji D. Desai". 7-12-1945

pression that you usually had a large balance lying with you and, indeed, an important account such as yours ought to have such a balance. Had I known that the account hardly ever had a balance I would have arranged for an amount before leaving Poona—but let it be.

I have a letter from Gulbai, which has alarmed me. She is unhappy. Do not cause her unhappiness. It seems she is hesitant about getting Ardeshir vaccinated whereas you seem to be insisting on it. I don't have any faith in vaccination. I am writing to Gulbai accordingly. If I were in your place I would respect Gulbai's wishes. After all a mother has a stronger claim over the children. Once the seed is planted the man's job is over. It is the mother who carries the child for nine months and then suckles it while it grows. But that is not what pains Gulbai; it is your behaviour that pains her. We had already had a little talk on the subject. Please talk to her patiently and explain things to her.

You appear to be squeamish. I would still suggest that you draw a salary from the Trust. I am aware that the Deed does not provide for this, but the three Trustees can agree to make the necessary change. You may take up some other occupation if you like. A man's first duty is to be honest with himself and to be truthful. One who does not do this is no good for anything. He turns into a hypocrite or cheat. You made up your mind to go by my advice. Understand the significance of this. Anyone who decides to defer to another either sees the point of what he is told or accepts the advice on faith. Such faith, again, proves more productive than understanding. And when it does not, the person is ill at ease. May you never come to such a pass. I don't want you to lose your fire. I shall be satisfied only if you rise higher and higher as a result of my contact.

On further reflection I think I had better send you Gulbai's letter so that you can understand her feelings and know what pains her. Be calm and patient with her.

I shall reach there by the evening of 21st February, or on the 23rd, because 22nd is Ba's anniversary and I should observe it at a fixed place. This cannot be done on a train where it would be difficult to read the whole of the *Gita*.

It appears Chi. Sushila Gandhi has written to you. Have you not replied to her? If not, please write to her. She is now in Delhi at Devdas's. She does not seem to have benefited [by your treatment].

What could be the trouble with her? Was she administered thyroid extract? I have forgotten all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### *251. LETTER TO GULBAI D. MEHTA*

SODEPUR,

*January 5, 1946*

CHI. GULBAI,

I have your letter. I was thinking of writing a third letter when yesterday I got your letter. I certainly have no faith in vaccination. My views have not changed. They are firm. Therefore if I had my way I would not have Chi. Ardeshir vaccinated. I would risk an attack of smallpox. But I know Dinshaw believes in vaccination. His views on nature cure differ considerably from mine. I cling to him in spite of this knowledge for I regard him as a man of truth. In the case of a man of truth either I accomodate him or he accommo- dates me. There is no trace of obstinacy in me. Firmness I certainly have, as I should have. A man devoid of this quality can never cling to truth. He does not worry about the risks that confront him because a satya-grahi has faith only in God. Therefore do what you think right about vaccination after mutual consultation.

I have sent your letter to Dinshaw because it is a nice letter worthy of you. Dinshaw however should know that it expresses your pain. I hope I did not do wrong in passing on the letter to him.

When is your confinement due ?

Please don't worry about the nursing-home. It is for me to think about the expenses. Only yesterday I sent a sum for the expenses. According to my reckoning, it will not be necessary for us to keep the account we maintain for the poor going for long.

I see no need for Maji to move into the house which Balkrishna used to occupy. She may continue to live where she is or wherever she wants to till my return. I would suggest that Maji should live in the quarters that I used to occupy. When I return you may put me up there if you like. Since the party accompanying me will camp in tents the arrangement will cause you no inconvenience. In this way the

room that you allot to me, with attached bath-room and the adjacent room will suffice for me. Let us see when Dinshaw comes by any new income. It is desirable that he does not go in for any fresh expenditure. I would be far from pleased if he accepted defeat for one reason or another.

I hope you and Ardeshir are well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 252. LETTER TO HIRABEHN<sup>1</sup>

SODEPUR,

*January 5, 1946*

CHI. HIRABEHN,

I got your letter. May your wished be fulfilled.

*Blessings from*

M. K. GANDHI

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

## 253. LETTER TO HASMUKH<sup>2</sup>

SODEPUR,

*January 5, 1946*

BHAI HASMUKHBHAI,

I have your long letter. What is there for me to bless in what you write? I have not even understood the dispute fully. Besides, if the work is noble it does not need blessings from any man, however great. The work is its own blessings.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The letters are in Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## 254. LETTER TO NAGINBHAI T. MASTER

SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

BHAI NAGINBHAI,

I have your letter. May your efforts for the sake of Vijayabehn and Valji bear fruit. I can see that you will be able to cope with the task, and I am pleased.

SJT. NAGINBHAI MASTER  
BOMBAY CONGRESS COMMITTEE  
CONGRESS HOUSE  
VITHALBHAI PATEL ROAD, BOMBAY

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

## 255. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

CHI. AMALA<sup>1</sup>,

I was happy to read your letter. It was creditable on your part to have refused the offer of private tuition to a pupil in your own class and you deserve to be complimented. Now you will be able to teach other things. That is good. But why do you look upon Principal Seal as your enemy? How can a person who looks upon dogs and cats as her friends regard a human being as her enemy ?

Ahimsa can have no enemies.

If you go on increasing the number of your feline friends, you will not be able to shoulder the burden.

I keep good health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup>German Jewess who joined Gandhiji's Ashram in 1933

256. *LETTER TO VANAMALA N. PARIKH*

SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

CHI. VANAMALA,

I am not going to write a long letter either to you or to Zohra. I am leaving for Assam on the 8th and shall be back here on the 14th. After that as soon as possible I wish to go to Madras. I hope that I shall reach there on January 22, at the latest, and from there I shall return to Sevagram on February 8 at the earliest. Then to Poona on the 21st or the 23rd. How is Zohra? Both of you, or Zohra, or, if she is too weak, you alone, should help Munnalalbai. But you must do nothing beyond your strength.

I shall be pleased if you both write to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5797

257. *LETTER TO SAVAL L. IDLANI*

SODEPUR,  
*January 5, 1946*

BHAI IDLANI,

How is it that your letter to me is neither in Urdu nor in Hindi?

You should refer to the Congress President the question you ask me.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRISAVAL L. IDLANI, JOURNALIST  
LALCHAND NANMAL BUILDING  
JAMSHED ROAD  
KARACHI

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



## 258. LETTER TO SUBODHLAL SARKAR

S ODEPUR,  
January 5, 1946

BHAI SUBODHLAL SARKAR,

I got your postcard. Why in English? I shall not be going to Dhanbad.

Yours,  
M. K. GANDHI

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

## 259. SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKERS' CONFERENCE—I<sup>1</sup>

January 5, 1946

After enumerating the various items of the 18-fold constructive programme as mentioned in the revised and enlarged edition of his brochure<sup>2</sup> *Constructive Programme, Its Meaning and Place*, a copy of which had come into his hands only on the day before, he asked them to take note of the fact that the charkha and khaddar was only one—though by no means the least important—out of the 18 items in that programme.

Civil disobedience had been mentioned at the end of the 18 items. It had a place there since the theme of the brochure was the constructive programme not merely as an economic activity but as a means of the attainment of swaraj.

Civil disobedience was of two types, individual and mass. Individual civil disobedience was everybody's inherent right like the right of self-defence in normal life. No special sanction was needed for the practice of this kind of civil disobedience. Just as a man in normal life would use his dagger, revolver or even

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". About 750 to 800 workers from all the districts of Bengal, including several women, met Gandhiji on January 5 and 6 to seek his guidance regarding the Congress reorganization work in Bengal, particularly the constructive activity. A long list of questions were handed to Gandhiji just before he came to the meeting. Before answering the questions, Gandhiji addressed them briefly in Hindustani.

<sup>2</sup> *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7-1-1946, had reported that, "incidentally in the course of his remarks, Gandhiji congratulated two Calcutta papers—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* and *The Hindustan Standard* for publishing the brochure in their columns and hoped that people would take up the programme and give effect to it in right earnest."

fisticuffs to foil a sudden attack, even so civil disobedience would be resorted to by the constructive worker as a non-violent equivalent to the use of fisticuffs or arms. It did not need sanction or permission from anybody. As an illustration of how civil disobedience could be used to overcome Government's opposition to constructive work he took up the hypothetical case of a worker engaged in the service of the Adivasis. If the Government prevented him from going among them he would simply disobey the order. The Government might put him in prison, he would welcome it. It would be a most auspicious beginning for his work. The very fact that he had gone to prison in order to serve the Adivasis would enshrine him in their hearts.

Mass civil disobedience was for the attainment of independence. For if the fulfilment of the constructive programme almost in its entirety was an indispensable preliminary condition. The 'Quit India' resolution of August 1942 might be cited as an exception to this dictum, he remarked. His reply was that it was justified by exceptional circumstances into which, however, he did not propose to take them at present. Moreover, the movement had never been started.

Gandhiji then took up the first two items from the constructive programme and showed how they helped the struggle for independence. The first was communal unity. If they could achieve true heart unity among all the communities, not as a political expedient to be cast aside when its purpose was served or as a token of their common dislike of the third party, no power on earth would be able to sow division amongst them as at present. And even a child would understand that an India united would be an India free. The same held true in regard to the removal of untouchability.<sup>1</sup>

In the course of his remarks Gandhiji referred to the report of Sarat Babu's recent speech<sup>2</sup> which was to the effect that since with Gandhiji he believed in non-violence of the strong—not of the weak, he felt that military training was necessary to inculcate the spirit of discipline, without which true non-violence could not be practised. Commenting upon it, Gandhiji said that he did not know whether Sarat Baba had been correctly reported or not. He himself had often suffered from bad reporting. But the statement as it appeared lent itself to an ambiguous interpretation.

It was only a half truth to say that military training was an aid to the practice of non-violence. The statement was true if by military training was meant inculcation of perfect discipline, but if by military training was meant training also in the use of arms and the art of killing it could have no place in his (Gandhiji's) programme of non-violence.

<sup>1</sup> The following four paragraphs have been taken from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> In the Bengal Legislative Assembly

He Himself had been advocating the necessity of non-violent discipline in his prayer meetings and had even been trying to impart it to the people wherever he went. He considered this kind of discipline to be superior to what was known as military discipline inasmuch as the latter was enforced by penalties while the discipline of non-violence was absolutely voluntary and called for the strength to face death without killing.

If he found that his views were opposed to Sarat Babu's views and he people of Bengal asked him as to which of the two sets of views they should follow, he would unhesitatingly tell them to follow Sarat Babu's views and discard his, since Sarat Babu was the leader of Bengal and not he. But in the present case he felt sure that there was no difference between their views as Sarat Babu had himself told him in the course of his recent talks with him that in the matter of non-violence he wanted to go the whole hog with him. Therefore, he was of opinion that Sarat Babu's advocacy of military training held good only in the context of non-violence. In no other sense was it compatible with the Congress faith much less with non-violence as he (Gandhiji) understood it.

Gandhiji then proceeded to answer questions :

Q. You have asked the charkha workers to keep themselves detached from the political work of the Congress. From experience the questioner finds that such centres fail to make the people conscious fighters for swaraj. On the other hand, other centres, where workers have been working in double functions—both as charkha as well as Congress workers—give a better account of themselves during civil disobedience. So please make your directions in this respect clear.

GANDHIJI: It is a good question but it betrays want of clear thinking. All I have said is that a khadi worker will not be able to do full justice to his work if he has too many irons in the fire. Khadi work demands one's undivided attention. But that does not mean that it should be done mechanically. No khadi worker can afford to be indifferent to other things with which khadi is interrelated or lose sight of its correlation to the struggle for independence. Experience has shown that wherever intensive charkha work had been done the people had shown greater grit, unity and capacity for organization in the struggle for independence.

Q. You have often repeated that charkha without its full implications means nothing. Supposing we do not associate the charkha with political work, then, how will people understand its full implications ?

G. 'Full implications' does include political work, but it includes many more things. The charkha has an undoubted value as a means for providing economic relief to the masses but as I have so

often reiterated, khadi activity, stripped of its significance in terms of India's independence means nothing to me today. At the same time if you take up charkha work merely for gaining political ends, it will defeat its purpose and you will make a mess of it in the political as in the economic sense.

To say that unless we associate charkha work with Political work it will have no political value, betrays a thorough ignorance of the non-violent technique. Let me take 'service of the lepers' which is another item in the 18-fold constructive programme. Surely, it cannot be associated with any kind of political work in the accepted sense. Yet it would be absurd to say that it has no value in terms of swaraj. Under the non-violent technique every real service rendered, every right act performed does bring the country nearer to the goal of political independence though in itself it may not have any direct political significance.

If you were to tell me that you have lost faith in non-violence as a means for the attainment of swaraj, I would agree that the charkha or constructive work have no use for you. Nor would you have any use for me in that event. But since you have discarded faith neither in ahimsa nor in me, your indifference to charkha and constructive work is a sign only of your laziness and inertia. It is my conviction that the phenomenal awakening that has taken place in India during the last 25 years is entirely due to the adoption of non-violence and the charkha as its symbol.

To the extent to which we have neglected the charkha and constructive work we have failed in the attainment of our goal.

Q. On December 23, you have advised<sup>1</sup> Hindu workers to offer selfless service to the Muslim masses, for it will tell in the end. That might be termed a long-term policy. Should we then do nothing political among the Muslim masses? Apart from its effect on the Muslims, is not the policy of non-interference and political aloofness likely to engender in the non-Muslims a new attitude of exclusiveness towards the Muslims and thus serve the very purpose of those who are trying to divide the nation ?

G. With due deference to the framer of the question let me say that I fail to understand it. If millions of Hindus regarded non-Hindus as their blood-brothers and sisters and treated them as such without the slightest tinge of a political motive, it must result in the complete political unity of India. Is it a 'long-term' effect? The

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Discussion with Political Workers", 23-12-1945

framer of the question does not seem to know how ahimsa works. What I have deprecated in the present poisoned state of our communal relations is the attempt on the part of Congressmen to draw non-Hindus into the Congress fold, as it would only accentuate the existing mistrust. But supposing I make friends with Badshah Khan how does it widen the gulf between the communities? On the contrary, it immediately eases communal tension to that extent. Multiply this picture a millionfold and it will be seen that the difficulty posed in the question is altogether chimerical.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6-1-1946 and 13-1-1946

## 260. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

SODEPUR,

*January 6, 1946*

CHI. ANASUYA,

I got your letter. It is not possible for me to offer any suggestions or guidance from here. Sir Radhakrishnan is going that way and it would be better for you to see him. I think no one can do from here anything that would prove useful to you.

Why do you write 'people'<sup>1</sup>? 'Peoples' means 'nations'. Are we 'nations'? And if we are, how many nations are we? And where? Great Britain had one people, but Europe has many peoples with their own different countries. Is such the case with India ?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 261. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

SODEPUR,

*January 6, 1946*

CHI. ANASUYABHEN,

Chi. Mridula writes to say that you are now growing old and are often bed-ridden !!! What is this? And why? If you grow old, what

<sup>1</sup> The words in single quotes are in English ?

about me? 125 years is still far away for you as well as for me. And then 125 years is not for me alone. It is for all of us.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*262. LETTER TO SORABJI P. KAPADIA <sup>1</sup>*

SODEPUR,

*January 6, 1946*

BHAI KAPADIA,

I have the letter from Joshi Behn which you sent me. I have sent her an appropriate reply.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SORABJI P. KAPADIA

“ MUMBAI SAMACHAR ”

BOMBAY

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

*263. LETTER TO SARVANBEHN*

*January 6, 1946*

DEAR SISTER,

I got the khaddar. According to me no one is an *abala*<sup>2</sup>. A woman who does even a little can never be called an *abala*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7931

<sup>1</sup> The letter is in the Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> A weak woman

## 264. LETTER TO K. T. BHASHYAM

SODEPUR,  
January 6, 1946

BHAI BHASHYAM,

I have your long letter. I may not be regarded as a guide in any way any more. The days are gone when I could act as one. My advice is that you may take up whatever appeals to you from among the activities I have already indicated. Hence you should come together and do whatever you can regardless of whether the outcome is good or bad. I am now of no use whatever for such matters.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI K. T. BHASHYAM  
COTTONPET  
BANGALORE CITY

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

## 265. SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKERS' CONFERENCE—II

January 6, 1946

Meeting Gandhiji on the second day of the conference<sup>1</sup> the Bengal workers found in him a hard customer. Instead of waiting for them to put question he anticipated them by asking them whether they knew Hindustani. As only about half the number raised their hands in reply, he inquired as to how long they would require to learn Hindustani. Some replied: "One Year." Gandhiji commented :

No good, Contai people did not require more than six months<sup>2</sup>.

"All right then, six months," shouted a few voices. But Gandhiji twitted them for doing no better than the countryfolk of Contai in the matter of learning the national language. Calcutta should do better. Someone from the gathering objected that they were not all Calcutta folk. But the objector's voice was drowned in a chorus from the rest who shouted "three months". [Gandhiji said :]

That is good, but say "six months" all in chorus and endorse the same by raising your right hand in affirmation.

<sup>1</sup> For the previous day's report, *vide* "Speech at Congress Workers Conference-I, 5-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Discussion with Midnapore Political Workers", 2-1-1946

A forest of hands rose in reply. But Gandhiji's keen eye detected a lacuna.

I notice that the women workers are hesitating. Is *Azad*<sup>1</sup> Hindustan then going to be for men only and are women for ever to be in Zenanistan? If not, you should all shout out, "*sub*" ("all") in one voice.

There was a deafening chorus of "*sub, sub*" in reply. Gandhiji was pleased . . . he told them it was up to them to see that they kept it. There were ample facilities in Calcutta for learning Hindustani and they should avail themselves of it.

Another friend asked whether by learning Hindustani was meant ability to understand Hindustani or whether it included the ability to read and write Hindustani as well. This gave Gandhiji the opportunity to emphasize the importance of learning to read and write both the Nagari and the Urdu scripts, if they wanted to maintain direct touch with all the sections of the people in the country. Even Hindus in north, let alone Muslims, did not know the Nagari script. In support of his argument he mentioned the instances of the late Lala Lajpat Rai, the Lion of the Punjab, Pandit Ajodhyanath, who was one of the founders of the Congress and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, none of whom knew the Nagari script. The Urdu script was not difficult to learn. Anyway he was not prepared to hear objections on the score of difficulty from intellectual Bengal.

Gandhiji's attention was next drawn to a Press cutting purporting to give a restatement of his views on the utility of the parliamentary programme in relation to constructive work. The reference was to a recent writing of his in Hindustani in *Khadi Jagat*. "What attitude should a wholetime constructive worker maintain towards the parliamentary programme? Can the will of the people be really represented by a legislature under present conditions in India? If the conditions are adverse, i. e., if the Government is hostile, should Congressmen continue to function in the legislatures and what help can they advance under the circumstances to the cause of constructive work?"

Gandhiji, replying, said that he had advocated the boycott of the legislatures as a part of the fourfold non-co-operation programme. He still held the view that if that programme had been given effect to in full, India would have got swaraj. But the country as a whole was not prepared for it. There was a considerable section in the country that wanted to use parliamentary talent in the service of the country. No one should prevent them from serving the country in their own way. As a practical idealist he had therefore reconciled himself to Congressmen capturing the legislatures and other elective bodies, if only to prevent self-seekers and enemies of India's freedom from getting there.

<sup>1</sup> Independent



He repeated what he had said at Contai, that nothing would please him better than that ideal scavengers should be returned to legislatures to represent the Congress there. He himself claimed to be scavenger No. 1 of India. His ideal scavenger would not be an ignorant puppet but a man with sturdy common sense and capacity to think and decide upon the problems of the day. He would be an educated person though he might not know English. He could not see why such a one should not be President of the Congress. The positive function of those who went to the legislatures would be to promote constructive work. He, however, warned them that mere parliamentary work would not bring them swaraj. That would come only as a result of their work outside among the masses. A wholetime constructive worker would not be able to take up parliamentary activity without detriment to his own work. But those who were not giving all their time to constructive work might enter the legislature if people wanted it, provided however that it did not lead to rivalries among workers and they had not to enter into any expenditure in order to be elected.

Q. In many portions of Bengal, the cultivators are Muslims and the proprietors Hindus. Recently in some places the Muslim tillers have refused to till the land under Hindu owners. What should the Hindu owners do under the circumstances ?

Gandhiji, replying, said that the views he was going to express were strictly his own. As they all knew, he was not even a four-anna Congress member and therefore he could not speak as a Congressman. He spoke only in his personal capacity as a satyagrahi.

Although the question had been posed in a communal setting the real cleavage as he saw it was not communal but economic. In Bengal the cultivators might be Muslim and the proprietors Hindu. But in Andhra both the cultivators and proprietors were Hindus and yet the same conflict was in evidence in some parts.

His views, continued Gandhiji, on the ownership of land were well known. The only rightful owner of the land was he who tilled it. The present proprietors were morally entitled to hold land only if they became trustees for it. If the cultivators of the fields of a proprietor, who had become a trustee, refused to till the land for him, he would not sue them or seek otherwise to coerce them. He would leave them alone and try to earn his livelihood independently by his honest industry. If he has been discharging his function as a trustee honestly, they would come to him before long in contrition and seek his guidance and help. For, he would use his privilege not to fill his pockets by the exploitation of the labourers but teach the letter co-operation and organization so as to increase their produce and generally ameliorate their conditions. This would mean that the proprietor must himself become a cultivator *par excellence*. A proprietor who regarded his property merely as a means of satisfying his lusts was not its owner but its slave. The proprietors of land in

Bengal had therefore only to adopt his ideal of trusteeship and their troubles would end.

Q. Would the trustee's property be passed on to his children by inheritance ?

G. A proprietor who holds his property as a trust will not pass it on to his children in inheritance unless the latter in their turn become trustees and make good their claim as such. If they are not prepared for it, he should create a trust of his property. It is demoralizing for an able-bodied young man to live like a parasite on unearned income. A father should inculcate in his children the appreciation of the dignity of labour and teach them to earn their bread by their honest industry. As regards the moneyed people all I can say from my close personal association with a large number of them, is that if a general atmosphere in favour of trusteeship, devoid of ill-will and class hatred, is created in the country they will fall in line with it.

Q. Many Congress workers who have recently come out of jail have to earn a living for themselves or their families. Under present economic conditions they have been forced to crowd into towns for this purpose with the result that the villages have begun to lose their services. Could not a paid service be established for them by the provincial or the district Congress organizations? If so, how would you advise them to find the money for this purpose ?

G. The question reflects the present deplorable condition of the country. The cities are not only draining the villages of their wealth but talent also. The only way to check the process is for Congress workers to refuse to make their lives their God but to dedicate themselves to the service of their ideal only. God will then take care of them. A labourer is always worthy of his hire but I know that I have no magic wand to revolutionize people's outlook up to the ideal of voluntary poverty. Therefore I consider it desirable that a fund should be created either by the Provincial Congress Committee or by local agencies to provide maintenance for such workers as may want to dedicate themselves to the service of the villages. Do not expect me however to provide you with funds. My begging days are over. It is my firm belief that no worthy cause has ever suffered for want of finances if there are sincere workers to work for it. Calcutta has got enough 'money bags', and if a practical scheme of work in the villages is produced and there are sincere and earnest workers forthcoming to take it up, I am sure the money will come forth.

Q. You have advised spinning for swaraj. If, in trying to execute that programme in its full implications, spinning for wages has to be restricted, should we do so? That will mean hardship for the very poor who find some relief through their spinning wages. Then, again, if we keep up spinning for wages, the new rules of purchasing khadi against yarn will make it more difficult for us to dispose of the khadi produced for offering relief to the poor.

Gandhiji said that what he had recommended was that all people should spin not for self but for swaraj. Such conscious and altruistic spinning on the part of forty millions would constitute a veritable *yajna* or sacrifice out of which swaraj would emerge. It would knit the classes and masses, the brain workers and the manual labourers, in a living bond of unity. What had however happened was that although their efforts had resulted in providing thousands of men and women with a supplementary source of income, the spinners themselves did not wear khaddar. They did not realize the implications of khadi in terms of swaraj. He had therefore come to the conclusion that if khadi was truly to become the “livery of freedom”<sup>1</sup>, to use Pandit Jawaharlal’s expression, all those who spin should consciously adopt khadi and all those who wanted to wear khadi should spin. There was thus no conflict between spinning for wages and spinning for sacrifice. The two were supplementary, one of the other.<sup>2</sup>

Q. Violence is bad . . . . The only substitute for it is constructive activity as symbolized by the charkha. But the dynamic quality seems to have gone out of it. What should be done to bring out its revolutionary significance ?

G. Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherji in one of his books has quoted Colebrooke as saying that in India, the home of chronic poverty, the spinning-wheel is the provider of butter and bread for the poor. The late R. C. Dutt has shown how the prosperity of the East India Company was founded on their trade in Indian textiles. No part of the world, neither China nor Japan could produce fabrics to equal them. In the early phase the East India Company batted on the exploitation of its monopoly in Indian textiles. Not only did it bring them immense trade profits, it also gave an impetus to British shipping. Later, Lancashire developed its own textile industry following upon a series of mechanical inventions. This brought it into competition with the Indian textile manufactures. The policy of exploitation of the Indian artisans then gave way to that of destruction of their craft.

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Livery of Freedom”

<sup>2</sup> What follows is extracted from *Harijan*, 31-3-1946. It appeared under the title “How to Make It Dyamamic ?” by Pyarelal, who had explained that the question was “put to Gandhiji at Calcutta by the khadi workers of Borkamata”.

An English writer has observed that the history of cotton is the history of civilization. Politics is the handmaid of commerce. Indian history provides an apt illustration of it. In the heyday of our cotton manufactures we used to grow all the cotton for our needs. The cotton seed was fed to the cattle which provided health-giving milk to the people. Agriculture flourished. The lint was turned into beautiful fabrics of which the *jamdanis* of Dacca were a specimen. As an offshoot we had the worldfamed dyeing and printing art of Masulipatam. Connoisseurs say that our old indigenous dyes could not be matched by any in the world for their permanence as well as brightness and beauty. All that is gone now. India is today naked. We have to cover her nakedness. If anybody could suggest a better substitute than the spinning-wheel for the purpose I would discard the spinningwheel today. But none has been found so far and I dare say none is likely to be found.

The question may however be asked: 'How can the charkha bring India freedom when it could not prevent its loss?' The reply is that in the past charkha was not linked with the idea of freedom. Nor did it then symbolize the power of non-violence. In olden days it symbolized our slavery. We had not realized that our progress, prosperity and even freedom depended on the charkha or else we should have put up a fight and resorted to satyagraha to save it from destruction. What was lost through our ignorance and apathy has now to be won back through intelligence and knowledge. We have today ceased to think for ourselves. The Government says that Bengal is a pauper province and we mechanically accept the statement. To call a province which boasts  $6\frac{1}{2}$  crores of population as pauper is only to proclaim our own intellectual bankruptcy. Did not the Governor of Bengal observe in a broadcast talk<sup>1</sup> the other day that the cultivator in Bengal remains unemployed for six months in the year? Can any population in the world subsist while remaining idle for half the year? Even if all the water that the rains bring were captured and harnessed to irrigation it would not keep the masses alive if their enforced unemployment for the better part of the year were not removed. Our real malady is not destitution but laziness, apathy and inertia. You may achieve marvels of irrigational engineering. But wellfilled granaries alone cannot and will not end our slavery. To end slavery you must over-come the mental and physical inertia of the masses and

<sup>1</sup> On December 8, 1945; *vide* also "Letter to R. G. Casey", 8-12-1945

quicken their intelligence and creative faculty. It is my claim that the universalization of hand-spinning with a full knowledge of all that it stands for alone can bring that about in a sub-continent so vast and varied as India. I have compared spinning to the central sun and the other village crafts to the various planets in the solar system. The former gives light and warmth to the latter and sustains them. Without it they would not be able to exist.

Q. If swaraj hangs on the thread of hand-spun yarn, as you say, why have we failed to attain it up till now after a quarter of a century of khadi work ?

G. Because our labour was not quickened by knowledge. The peace of the grave makes the latter the house of death. But the peace in the soul makes it the seat of divine intelligence. Similarly, soulless labour symbolizes serfdom Labour illumined with knowledge symbolizes the will to freedom. There is a world of difference between the two. Khadi workers should understand that khadi work without the mastery of the science of khadi will be love's labour lost in terms of swaraj.

Q. What do you mean by the science of spinning? What things are included in it ?

G. I have often said that I can do without food but not without sacrificial spinning. I have also claimed that no one in India has perhaps done his spinning with such unfailing regularity and conscientious diligence as I. And yet I will say that all that by itself cannot take the place of scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge requires constant probing into the why and wherefore of every little process that you perform. Mere affirmation that in charkha there is swaraj and peace is not enough. A scientific mind will not be satisfied with having things scientific just on faith. He will insist on finding a basis in reason. Faith becomes lame when it ventures into matters pertaining to reason Its field begins where reason's ends. Conclusions based on faith are unshakable whereas those based on reason are liable to be unstable and vulnerable to superior logic. To state the limitation of science is not to belittle it. We cannot do without either—each in its own place.

When I first discovered the spinning-wheel it was purely through intuition. It was not backed by knowledge so much so that I confused charkha with *kargha*, i. e., handloom. Later on, however, I tried to work out its possibilities with the help of the late Maganlal Gandhi. For instance, the question arose: Why should the spindle be made of

iron, not brass? Should it be thin or thick? What would be the proper thickness? We began with the mill spindles. Then, spindle-holders used to be bamboo and wood. Later we came to leather and gut bearings. It was found that spindles got easily bent and were difficult to straighten. So we tried to make them out of knitting needles and ultimately of umbrellawires. All this called for the exercise of the inventive faculty and scientific research.

A khadi worker with a scientific mind will not stop there. 'Why the charkha, why not the spinning mill?' he will ask himself. The reply will be that everybody cannot own a spinning mill. If people depend on spinning mills for their clothing, whoever controls the spinning mills will control them and thus there will be an end to individual liberty. Today anyone can reduce the whole of London and New York to submission within 24 hours by cutting off their electric and water supply. Individual liberty and interdependence are both essential for life in society. Only a Robinson Crusoe can afford to be all self-sufficient. When a man has done all he can for the satisfaction of his essential requirements he will seek the co-operation of neighbours for the rest. That will be true co-operation. Thus a scientific study of the spinning-wheel will lead on to sociology. The spinning-wheel will not become a power for the liberation of India in our hands unless we have made a deep study of the various sciences related to it. It will then not only make India free but point the way to the whole world.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has very aptly remarked that at one time India was not lacking in the inventive spirit but today it has become dormant. Once one gets the scientific outlook it will be reflected in every act of his, in his eating, drinking, rest, sleep. Everything will be scientifically regulated and with a full appreciation of its why and wherefore. Finally, a scientific mind must have detachment or else it will fall into the lunatic asylum. The Upanishad says that whatever there is in this universe is from Him. It belongs to Him and must be surrendered to Him and then enjoyed. Enjoyment and sorrow, success and failure will then be the same to you.

One thing more. Supposing the tyrant wants to destroy the spinning-wheel itself. What then? My reply is that in that event we should ourselves perish with the spinning-wheel and not live to witness its destruction. For every khadi worker who thus sacrifices himself thousands will arise to take his place. The act of his will set the final seal of victory on the cause he represents.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-1-1946, and Harijan, 31-3-1946*

## 266. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

January 6, 1946

Gandhiji emphasized what he had said<sup>1</sup> at Mahishadal about the observance of the general rule for attending a meeting. He said that it was the common rule that nobody should enter the meeting place after it had begun and nobody should leave the meeting place during the continuance of the meeting. Those who would violate this rule, Gandhiji emphasized, would disturb others. Even if anybody did not find any interest in the meeting he should think of others who are in the meeting and not leave the meeting before it was concluded. This was the common rule for every meeting and in the case of prayer meeting they should be more careful, because at the prayer they had to train their minds and concentrate on God.

Referring to the song that was sung at the prayer Gandhiji said that they should take the significance of the song to their hearts. In the song Poet Rabin-dranath said that he would not be frightened to see God coming to him in the form of misery. In this connection Gandhiji would remind them of an English poem entitled “The Hound of Heaven”<sup>2</sup> in which God had been described as a huntsman pursuing the disciple continually. God, Gandhiji explained, could not leave His devotee alone because He, who had created the world, was concerned about the world going in order. So real misery came when they forgot God and happiness came when they kept God in them.

This<sup>3</sup> is also a kind of misery, but you should not feel like that. At the Sabarmati Ashram which was at a short distance from the Station there was a person who took the vow of silence. One day he told Gandhiji that he was greatly disturbed by the whistling train at the time of worship. Gandhiji suggested to him to shut his ears with cotton or rubber to prevent the whistle disturbing him. After a short time the man again came to Gandhiji and told him that he was no more in need of cotton or rubber because he had been trained to such a concentration of mind that no sound or whistle could enter his ears. What Gandhiji would tell them was that they should not be perturbed when misery—in whatever shape or form—came to them.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 28-12-1945

<sup>2</sup> By Francis Thompson

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the whistling of a train, which interrupted Gandhiji’s speech.

*267. TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

*Express*

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 1946*

SARDAR  
CARE POWERFARM  
BOMBAY

GOD WILLING SHALL BE AT BARDOLI THIRD MARCH.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*268. TELEGRAM TO K. SRINIVASAN*

*Express*

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 1946*

KASTURI SRINIVASAN  
“ HINDU ”  
MADRAS

YOUR TELEGRAM. APPROVED.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*269. TELEGRAM TO M. SATYANARAYAN*

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 1946*

SATYANARAYANJI<sup>1</sup>  
CARE DAKSHIN [BHARAT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA]  
THYAGARAYANAGAR (MADRAS)

RAJKUMARI WRITTEN ZAKIRSAHEB OR SAIYIDAIN<sup>2</sup>. FAILING EITHER  
RAJKUMARI WILL.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Secretary, Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras

<sup>2</sup> Khwaja Ghulam Saiyidain, Principal, Teachers' Training College, Aligarh; later Adviser and Secretary to the Ministry of Education, Government of India



## 270. LETTER TO ARUNA ASAF ALI<sup>1</sup>

SODEPUR,  
January 7, 1946

CHI. ARUNA<sup>2</sup>

I read your little note immediately it was received. But your joint letter to Maulana Sahib I read early morning today (silence-day) immediately after the 4.30 prayer. You will let me say that it is eloquent but not cogent. It does injustice to yourselves, the Maulana and the cause. But I must not argue whilst you are under detention of your own making and yet falsely believing yourselves to be free.

Of course you must do as your comprehension of truth bids and not as anybody else however high says. And I honour you for such action.

It is for your sake that I resort to a foreign tongue and a thing I will not do even for you, if you were free.

*Blessings to both from*<sup>3</sup>  
BAPU

From a copy: C. W. 11339. Courtesy: Aruna Asaf Ali

## 271. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

SODEPUR,  
January 7, 1946

CHI. BABUDI,

Today is silence day. This is the first letter I am writing after the morning prayer. How are you? How is Anand? I am still touring on this side. I shall leave for Madras on the 19th or the 20th instant.

*Blessings to you all from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10065. Courtesy: Sharada G. Chokhawala

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Asaf Ali, a Congress leader. She was a member of the Congress Socialist Party and had played a prominent part in the Quit India movement in 1942.

<sup>2</sup> The superscription and subscription are in Devanagari.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

## 272. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
*January 7, 1946*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

Shrimati Saroj Basini Goho, the wife of Shri S. C. Goho, 'until a few days ago' said to be the Agent of the Government of India in Malaya, has just seen me and asked me to approach His Excellency about her husband, who is reported to have been arrested in Singapore. She has given me a copy of her memorial submitted to His Excellency. I have taken the liberty of telling her that if what is set forth in the papers shown to me and which are in the possession of the Government are true, her husband is quite safe. Could you please enlighten me in the matter ?<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 75-6*

## 273. LETTER TO SAROJ BASINI GOHO

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 194[6]<sup>2</sup>*

DEAR SISTER,

I have gone through the papers you gave me and have started work in that connection. Please do not worry.

*Blessings from*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRIMATI SAROJ BASINI GOHO

6/1 KANTAPUKUR LANE

BAGH BAZAR P. O.

CALCUTTA

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

<sup>1</sup> S. C. Goho had been charged with collaborating with the enemy. He was released in March 1946.

<sup>2</sup> The source has 1945, which is obviously a slip. *Vide* the preceding item.

## 274. LETTER TO A. B. M. ENAYAT HUSSAIN

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 1946*

BHAI SAHEB,

I got your letter last evening. Today is my silence day. Tomorrow I leave for Assam. You and your friends may come on the 16th at 2.30 p. m. I shall manage to give you half an hour.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

JANAB A. B. M. ENAYAT HUSSAIN  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
MUSLIM UNEMPLOYED RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
18 MIRZAPUR STREET  
CALCUTTA

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

## 275. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,  
*January 7, 1946*

Gandhiji stressed the need for observance of the rules of cleanliness by every citizen. He asked them to remember that cleanliness was next to Godliness and that if they could observe the rules of cleanliness they would be pure in their hearts also.

Gandhiji said that although he did not travel much during these days he had heard from his friends how the city streets were made dirty with the kernel of fruits, paper pieces and other useless things strewn over them. It was also said that Calcutta had been dirty. But he could tell them that if every citizen did his part and observed the rules of cleanliness then the face of Calcutta would be changed.

Gandhiji also exhorted them to apply the rules of cleanliness in other spheres of their lives as well.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-1-1946*

## 276. INTERVIEW TO STUDENTS DEPUTATION<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,  
[On or after *January 7, 1946*]<sup>2</sup>

The answer is already in what you have told me just now. You should get into the habit of speaking in Hindustani. Just knowing it is not enough. One should be ashamed of speaking in English.

2. Students should assemble for this particular work and hold meeting. Vinoba, Dada, Aryanayakum, Ashadevi, Ramachandran, Mahesh and others are all there to guide you. Acharya Kripalani and Sucheta are of course there. For that matter Dhiren Majmudar and Vichitra Narayan are also there. Consult them also. There are many more whom I have not named. The thing is that there should be steadfastness and truth in you. Then everything could be done. But not today. Consult all these people. Aryanayakum is here and also Kripalani and Sucheta. Do this after careful thinking. There should be no repentance afterwards. Discuss with Radhakrishna. It is quite easy [to do this] in Kashi Vidyapith. What is the use of asking me? Think yourselves and do what you think proper. Have a talk with Pyarelal. He was also a student like you when he came to me.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10854

## 277. TELEGRAM TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

CALCUTTA,  
*January 8, 1946*

MUNNALAL  
NATURECURE CLINIC  
POONA

KANCHAN'S ILLNESS CAUSING ANXIETY. YOU CAN COME IF  
YOU FEEL YOU MUST. AM LEAVING FOR ASSAM. SUSHILABEHN  
REMAINGING WITH KANCHAN. DOCTOR BIDHAN ROY SUPERINTENDING  
TREATMENT. ASKING NAR HARI<sup>3</sup> SEND MANIBHA REPLACE YOU  
IF YOU LEFT

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 8627

<sup>1</sup> R. Achutan, Secretary, Benares Hindu University Rachanatmak Mandal for students and spokesmen of the deputation, says: "In January 1946, a group of students from Benares Hindu University met Gandhiji at Sodepur Ashram in Calcutta and discussed with him about the question of revival of Gandhi Seva Sangh to take up the constructive task of non-violent revolution.....Since Bapu was observing silence.....[he] wrote [down] his reply. . . ." (S.N. 10854)

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's first silence day was on the 7th in January 1946.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the following item.

## 278. TELEGRAM TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

*Express*

SODEPUR,  
January 8, 1946

NARHARIBHAI PARIKH

SEVARAM

WARDHA

KANCHAN'S ILLNESS SERIOUS. MUNNALAL MIGHT COME IF  
HE IS ANXIOUS. HENCE SEND MANIBHAI POONA IF  
FEASIBLE. GOING ASSAM FIVE DAYS STAY. ADDRESS  
GAUHATI.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 279. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SODEPUR,  
January 8, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI

Yesterday I sent you a telegram as follows :

“God willing reach Bardoli 3rd March.” I very much wanted to come on the 1st but I see that that is not possible, for February has only 28 days and I must look in at Poona, for a few days at least, before going to Bardoli. I have, therefore counted two days more so that I may arrange the programme as if the month had 30 days. Having started the thing I must see it through. I cannot in any circumstances tolerate misuse of money. And if I take no interest Dinshaw cannot manage the new venture. I will, therefore, quickly finish the work at Wardha, pay a brief visit to Poona, and then come to Bardoli and after that go back to Poona again. This is what I have in mind at the moment.

I have already written something about the Parliamentary Delegation.<sup>1</sup> We should not spurn it; on the other hand we should welcome it whole-heartedly. It is not necessary to get excited over it as people used to when such people arrived in the past. We should not insult our guests in any manner whatsoever. There is no need for Congressmen to decline the invitation if they are invited to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel”, 3-1-1946

parties that may be held to honour the members of the delegation. I myself will certainly meet them somewhere. As it, I was to see the Governor on returning from Midnapore. I saw him only last evening and he himself asked me when I could meet them. I gave him my dates. They will most probably meet me in Madras, no other dates seemed suitable. Dr. Mahmud has come over to see me. He met me the day before yesterday, and since I am soon leaving for Assam he intends to go to Patna after seeing me off. So he will go today. In the meanwhile, the Governor heard about his arrival and suggested a meeting. They were together for about an hour. Nothing important seems to have been discussed, but they were glad to have met. I have not as yet been able to sit and talk with Dr. Mahmud for even a quarter of an hour. Just as he came my silence began. It lasted throughout yesterday. Dr. Mahmud came in the evening, but I went to see the Governor. When I returned it was already a quarter to ten; and so naturally we could not sit and talk.

I am all right. Kanchan has been taken very ill but I hope she will recover. She has severe anaemia. She has had it for some time but she did not pay attention to it. I leave for Assam today. I do not like to leave her but you know how often I have had to go like this. Most probably Sushila will stay on for her sake. I am dictating this early in the morning after the prayers. How she fares today we shall know only in the course of the day. Just now she is sleeping. So is Sushila, She was with Kanchan for most of the night.

If I fill this letter with an account of my experience here, it would become much longer. I have not the time for it. Besides, why should you want to read all that?

Rajkumari is of course here. She had to go to Hyderabad (Sindh) for some time. She will accompany me to Assam. After that she will have to go to Mysore.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

68 MARINE DRIVE, BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 291-3*

## 280. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
January 8, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I enclose herewith a cutting<sup>1</sup> for you to read. Can the information therein be true ?<sup>2</sup> probably you could let me know without troubling His Excellency.

Enclosure: 1

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 44*

## 281. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR (NEAR CALCUTTA),  
January 8, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

His Excellency knows Dr. B. C. Ray. He is one of foremost physicians of India. He is responsible for the efficient management of several hospitals in Calcutta. His services have bww been enlisted by the Government of India. He was on the Bhore Committee<sup>3</sup> too. The Congress has organized a mission of relief for the people of Burma and Malaya. I see from the papers which Dr. Roy has handed to me that the Government of India are hesitating about giving facilities to the mission, the reason being that the Government are doing all they

<sup>1</sup> From *The Hindustan Standard*, 6-1-1946, which had reported that twenty-five-INA prisoners were bayoneted to death for singing the INA national anthem in Bahadurgarh camp and many were punished for shouting the slogan "Jai Hind"

<sup>2</sup> The addressee in reply enclosed a Press Note which said that 42 men had received bruises on their buttocks from the tip of the bayonets as a result of their resistance. No one was killed and no one was punished for using the slogan "Jai Hind".

<sup>3</sup> The Health survey and Development Committee appointed by the Government of India

can. But in a service of this kind all that even a powerful Government can do is not enough. Lest for want of offered help people in distress might suffer, I want to dismiss from my mind the suggestion that because it is a Congress mission there is hesitation about its acceptance. I only hope that the very able assistance offered by Dr. B. C. Roy will not be rejected.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely*

M. K. GANDHI

## 282. LETTER TO STEPHEN LEE

SODEPUR,

*January 8, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your prompt and clear reply. I propose to make the fullest possible use of it.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

STEPHEN LEE, ESQ.  
FRIENDS' SERVECE UNIT  
1 UPPER WOOD ST.  
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 283. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,

SODEPUR,

*January 8, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

Herewith the note I promised last night to send to you.

1. Mahishadal—Tamluk sub-division, Midnapore District.

On the application of one Shridhar Chandra Goswami on 27th June, 1944, the presiding officer ordered the return of articles seized.

<sup>1</sup> In his reply of January 30, the addressee said the offer "must be declined because the Government of Burma were themselves trying to provide medical relief and could not provide facilities to the mission.



These articles have not yet been returned nor compensation offered, if the articles are missing (according to my information).<sup>1</sup> Original papers sent herewith. (Enclosure 1)<sup>2</sup>

2. Contai sub-division.

Water that has become saline there and probably in the other sub-divisions also should be drained out and renovated so as to be drinkable.

I enclose herewith the original letter from the Friends' Service Unit showing how urgent this work is. (Enclosure 2)

3. Abhoy Ashram, Comilla.

I attach hereto a paper marked 'Enclosure 3'. It discloses a curious state of affairs, as I understand it. I know personally that the Ashram activities were wholly beneficial and constructive. Schools based on social reform were run, catering for mostly Muslim children of spinning families who spin yarn for wages; a depot was established for the storing of yarn, cotton and khadi; a hospital was conducted under the able supervision of Shri Suresh Bannerji.<sup>3</sup> (Enclosure 3)

4. Other Khadi Centres.

Other khadi centres affected are shortly referred to in enclosure No. 4.<sup>4</sup>

5. Sales Tax Act.

As to Sales Tax Act, I observe that the Act was passed on 1st July 1941. Handloom cloth was excluded from the operation of the Act, but it was amended on March 30th 1944, and the tax was raised from one to two pice per rupee. On 25th June 1945, it was raised to three pice per rupee by the Governor's Ordinance. Handloom cloth was made taxable though originally omitted, but it is not clear when. Dhoti

<sup>1</sup> The addressee said in reply that the applicant had filed a claim petition after the articles were auctioned and therefore he was asked to withdraw the sales proceeds which he declined. It was not possible to return the articles but the payment of compensation would be considered if he submitted an application to the District Magistrate to that effect.

<sup>2</sup> This and the other enclosures mentioned in the letter are not traceable.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee said in reply that the question of removing the ban on these institutions would be examined and the payment of compensation for the damage done to the property would be considered.

<sup>4</sup> The addressee said in reply that in most of the khadi centres either the immovable property had been returned or compensation in lieu of it had been paid. The cases of the remaining centres were under consideration. In cases where premises were forfeited orders were being issued either to return the premises or to provide an alternative accommodation.

sari and *lungi* worth Rs. 10, Rs. 15, and Rs. 18 respectively are excluded from the operation of the Act.

My point is that khadi, i.e., hand-spun and hand-woven, or hand-spun yarn should be excluded from all taxes. Logically, hand-woven cloth also, though woven from mill yarn, should be excluded for the tax hits the handloom weaver. Therefore, the exclusion of dhoti, sari and *lungi* is of no help. The revenue derived from khadi is altogether negligible. The revenue derived from hand-woven cloth is fair because hand-woven cloth is large enough in quantity to yield some income to the treasury, but at the poor weaver's expense. In taxing khadi, however, thousands of poor hand-spinners are so hard hit that the tax becomes so deterrent as to be punitive. I am quite certain that such was never the intention of the framers of the Act. The oversight has only to be brought to the notice of the Government to be remedied. I may also mention that all the khadi depots of the All-India Spinners' Association are benevolent concerns. The conductors are servants of the A. I. S. A. which according to the recent judgment of the Privy Council, has been held to be a benevolent institution, not liable to income tax.<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally, I may mention that whilst fresh milk is excluded from the operation of the Act, all other forms of milk such as boiled milk, pasteurized milk, *dahi*, etc., are taxable under the Act. The clause baffles me. The original Act is called Bengal Act of 1941.

#### 6. Feni.

Feni is within the Japanese bombed area. Therefore, 98 villages were evacuated by the Government. Assurance is said to have been given that six months after the cessation of hostilities the villages would be returned to the villagers. Nevertheless, 28 villages appear to be still in Government possession. At the time of evacuation, removal of merchandise was strictly prohibited. This is a case demanding close inquiry.

I enclose herewith an account furnished to me, marked 'Enclosure 5'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The addressee assured Gandhiji that he would have the sales tax examined immediately.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee said that eight villages would be permanently acquired as they had been converted into airfields. The other 14 which were requisitioned for making bricks were being released. The accusation that people in the requisitioned areas were prevented from removing their movables was wrong. On the contrary help was given to them to do so.

I have hurriedly drawn up this letter. The chief aim is to involve as little reading as possible for you. If, however, any further papers are required I shall be prepared to furnish them on my return from Assam, I hope on the 14th. As I told you last evening I cannot myself vouch for the accuracy of the facts given. They have been to me by co-workers as being accurate. But if that is not so I stand open to correction. If, however, they are found to be accurate I suggest that they call for immediate inquiry. I have taken care to refer only to those things which can be remedied without much difficulty or expense and yet they are the things which will give relief to the neediest.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANCHI

Enclosure: 5

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 116-8*

#### 284. *LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

SODEPUR,

*January 8, 1946*

CHI. DEVDAS,

I got your letter about Prabhu Dayal<sup>1</sup> on 3-1-1946. I am very busy myself. Prabhua Dyal seems to be getting along fairly well. I expect you have detained him, let me know the developments.

Kanchan has fallen ill. I have to go to Assam today.

I hope you are all well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. DEVDAS GANDHI

“HINDUSTAN TIMES”

NEW DELHI

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

<sup>1</sup>Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi

## 285. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,  
January 8, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have sent the following wire :<sup>1</sup>

As it is Kanchan was ill. She was suffering from anaemia. Dr. Bidhan sent his own pathologist, who took her blood sample and examined it. She has been found to be suffering from severe anaemia. It is because of this that her cough does not leave her. I have not known even a millionaire receive better treatment than she is receiving. Dr. Bidhan calls regularly and guides Sushilabehn. The latter had treated her once through a serious illness and hence Kanchan had complete faith in her. I do not therefore believe that you will be able to do anything more by coming here. But if you feel you must, I will not dissuade you. It might not be proper also in view of the seriousness of the illness. I have, therefore, sent the above wire. If you have already left this letter will be superfluous. But I am dictating this assuming that you have not left. If you do come the question will arise as to who will take charge there. I have therefore sent a wire to Manibhai at Sevagram saying that, if he can, he should leave immediately for Poona. If you have not already left, he will help you. Take whatever help he can give. If you have already left, Manibhai will do as he thinks best.

I had got your postcard yesterday. All the questions in it had been answered in my previous letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8613. Also C.W. 7202. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 286. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

January 9, 1946

Last night (Tuesday) was a terrible night for me. The crowds at every station were unmanageable. The shouts, although well meant, could not please me in my old age, if they ever pleased me before.

<sup>1</sup> For the text, *vide* "Telegram to Munnalal G. Shah", 8-1-1946

For I know that swaraj is made of truer and sterner stuff. They serve no useful purpose. In the beginning stages, when people out of fear were afraid to hear their own voice, shouts and slogans had a place, not today when we seem likely to achieve independence, maybe within a few months. I was allowed last night no sleep except for what I could snatch in between stations. I cannot repeat this performance for many days and hope to live to the age of one hundred and twenty-five years. Friends will now appreciate why I have hardened my heart against even a brief tour through East Bengal. I would love to travel throughout Bengal but I know that for the sake of the common cause I must restrain myself and invite friends and co-workers to do likewise. Let them and people at large satisfy themselves with what service I can render without traveling as I used to before. Let the leaders in the various places try to conciliate the populace surrounding them and advise them to restrain from shouts and slogans and from jostling one another.

One vulgar and uncivilized practice must be given up. There is the chain on every train to be used strictly in times of danger or accidents. Any other use of it and the consequent stoppage of the train is not merely a punishable offence but it is a vulgar, thoughtless and even dangerous misuse of an instrument devised for great emergencies. Any such misuse is a social abuse which, if it becomes a custom, must result in a great public nuisance. It is up to every lover of his country to issue a stern warning against such wanton abuse of a humanitarian device intended for public safety.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10-1-1946 and 11-1-1946

## 287. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

SAULKUCHI,  
January 9, 1946

Gandhiji said that he had noticed during the *bhajan* that some of the people had failed to keep time with the song, but that was pardonable. He would like that this form of congregational prayer be adopted all over Hindustan. He was told that women in Assam sang sweetly during their work, for example when they were spinning or weaving. Gandhiji had noticed that women had not joined in today's *bhajan*. It might be that they were ashamed to sing in chorus, but Gandhiji told them that swaraj would not come until they gave up this feeling of shyness.

He was thankful to them for maintaining peace in the prayer meeting. In a few months they might have swaraj and they wanted to have swaraj within a few months in a peaceful way. But could they achieve swaraj if they went on shouting in season and out of season? This would go to show that they did not possess the necessary discipline.

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the experience of his journey and the indisciplined behaviour of the people at some places. He said this showed that the people had not yet fully imbibed the principle of non-violence. Indiscipline, he added, was only a variety of violence. If 40 crores of people or even a major part of them had assimilated the message of truth and non-violence which the Congress had been preaching for the last 25 years, India would have been free. But that was no reason for despair or despondency. To inculcate perfect discipline and non-violence among forty crores of people was no joke. It needed time. Twenty-five years were insufficient for such a tremendous task. That was why he desired to live 125 years so that he might, with his own eyes, see the consummation of his own ideas. But he could not hope to live up to that span of life unless the conditions attaching to it were fulfilled. If these conditions were fulfilled not only he, but anybody even in a country like India where the average expectation of life was the lowest in the world could live up to that period. It was clear, however, that if he exposed himself to experiences like that of last night his candle would be burnt out within a month.

Britishers, continued Gandhiji, might realize, as they were bound to one day, that they could not hold down an awakened people for all time with force of bayonets and therefore, decide to transfer power to them. They (the people) would find themselves in a quandary in that event, if they had no discipline and organization. He hoped that they would not allow themselves to be caught

<sup>1</sup> Held on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra. The first two paragraphs are reproduced here from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-1-1946

napping like that.

There was no greater spell-binder of peace than the name of God, said Gandhiji. He had, therefore, commenced the practice of holding mass prayers and inviting people to join in singing *Ramdhun* to the beating of time with the hands, to inculcate in the masses the spirit of non-violence and discipline. He would love to see that the whole of India was covered with prayer gatherings like that.

*The Hindu*, 11-1-1946, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-1-1946

## 288. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

GAUHATI,

*January 10, 1946*

I have seen a report<sup>1</sup> in the Press wholly baseless, to the effect that I propose to give two days to Orissa before reaching Madras. I would love, if I at all could, to give some days to Orissa and some days to Andhra. But I know the limitations of My body. It gives the work that it does from day to day to the utmost limit. Therefore, I cannot break my journey either for Orissa or Andhra and I invite all friends and co-workers in these two provinces to give their fullest co-operation by telling people not to expect from me what seems to me to be impossible. I do not know who is responsible for the report in question.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> The report appeared in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8-1-1946

## 289. TELEGRAM TO JAMINI BOSE

EXPRESS

GAUHATI,  
January 10, 1946

JAMINI BOSE<sup>1</sup>  
CONGRESS OFFICE  
CHITTAGONG

YOUR WIRE. DOING NEEDFUL. WIRE OR POST FULL  
PARTICULARS GIVING OSTENSIBLE CAUSE OUTRAGE.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 290. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

CAMP: SARANIA ASHRAM,  
GAUHATI,  
January 10, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I enclose herewith copy of a wire<sup>3</sup> received today. The story seems to be unbelievable. I know you will inquire and take the necessary steps, if there is any foundation for the truth of the story.<sup>4</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF BENGAL  
CALCUTTA

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 114*

<sup>1</sup> President, Chittagong District Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> Four men of Ganjam Pioneer Corps and tried to molest a village woman near Chittagong. On their attempt being foiled by the villagers they came back in great strength and set fire to houses, assaulted men, molested women and plundered property.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the preceding item; also "Telegram to Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal", 12-1-1946

<sup>4</sup> Casey informed Gandhiji that the culprits would be tried by a civil (criminal) court.



## 291. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
*January 10, 1946*

CHI. MIRA,

This is just to tell you that I succeeded only yesterday in studying your drawings of the Himalayan scenes. They need greater study than I was able to give them. But I had little difficulty in understanding and appreciating the love you have put into your work. Your instructions at the back are most careful.

I hope you had my previous letter<sup>1</sup> in answer to your long letter. I do so wish you had less trouble with men and animals. Others must write to you about the wonderful experience I am having here.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6514. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Aslo G.N. 9909

## 292. LETTER TO TAYYEBULLA

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
*January 10, 1946*

DEAR TAYYEBULLA,

Some mutual friend had told me of your loss before your letter was given to me on my arrival here last night at about 10 p.m. Why grieve over the inevitable? And death is the common treasure of all that lives. Imagine the torture that birth would be if there was no death ! Loss therefore is a conventional word. Then true friendship is tested finally by the death of the loved one. And the verse you quote from the Holy Koran puts the finishing touch on all I say. Let Him take what He has given. Let us then praise His great name. My prayer with you.

You have done well in not coming to me.

Love.

BAPU

M.TAYYEBULLAH

NOWGONG

From a photostat: G.N. 3765. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 17-12-1945

### 293. LETTER TO ARTHUR HENDERSON

AS AT SEVAGRAM,  
“VIA” WARDHA, C.P., INDIA,  
CAMP: SARANIA ASHRAM,  
GAUHATI,  
*January 10, 1946*

Thank you for your letter received some days ago. I have been busy with the annual session of the Women’s Conference and hence unable to acknowledge it earlier. I am grateful to you for enquiring about the matters mentioned to you by me when we last met. I do so wish all political prisoners could be released. It would have a good effect. What is more, it would be an act of justice though tardy.

I enclose a list of several prisoners who have done ten to fifteen years in jail. This refers to Bengal only and then too the list is probably not exhaustive. Some are in bad health. Do you not agree that these should be released without delay ?

ARTHUR HENDERSON, ESQ.  
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA  
WHITE HALL  
LONDON

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

### 294. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
*January 10, 1946*

CHI. CHAMPA,

I got your letter here last evening. You seem to have succeeded very well. Kanta of course is a very obliging lady. She knows the art of looking after children. I am, therefore, not surprised by what you say. I am only pleased. How is Sarala? How is Kanta’s own health? Ask her to write to me.

You have said nothing about Shanti. I trust the children are all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8759. Also C.W. 1046. Courtesy: Champa R. Mehta

## 295. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

GAUHATI,  
January 10, 1946

CHI. AMTUSALAAM,

Since you have been following my suggestions without arguing about them, you are bound to get well. I should be very happy if both of you sisters<sup>1</sup> recover enough to be able to come to Madras. But it will be as God wills. I may not write to anybody else today. Blessings to all.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 503

## 296. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
January 10, 1946

CHI. PUSHPA,

I got your letter. Keep meeting Vinobaji from time to time.

You should regard it as your dharma to write regularly courteous letters to Father. If you want to tread the path of truth, you should lovingly and in a spirit of humility do whatever work of service is entrusted to you. If you understand only this much, all your problems will be solved. To say that God may lead you to this path of truth would be tautologous. Truth itself is God. Hence dedication to truth is itself discovery of the path of truth. Reflect on all the implications of the path of *bhakti* from this point of view.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9269

<sup>1</sup> The addressee and Kanchan M. Shah

## 297. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
January 10, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your two letters before me, which I am enclosing. I am sorry to learn that Parnerkar's sister's son has passed away. I understand what you say about Anantramji. It will be good if he grows leafy vegetables. See how much land Aryanayakumji wants and where he would like to have it. In my opinion, we should give him whatever he wants. Maybe I have left out something but today only this much.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 298. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

GAUHATI,  
January 10, 1946

Gandhiji congratulated the gathering on the beautiful way in which they had followed *Ramdhun*. Particularly he was pleased that women had wholeheartedly joined in it without any feeling of false shame. In taking the name of God, hesitation and fear as well as false shame were equally out of place. The man who had the realization of God Who dwelt in the hearts of all beings should know no fear.

"*Jai Hind*" should not replace "*Vandemataram*".<sup>1</sup> The words which Subhas Bose uttered were very pleasant to hear. But by this people should not forget *Vandemataram* which was being uttered since the inception of the Congress. First, they should say "*Vandemataram*" and then "*Jai Hind*". He would wholeheartedly return that greeting but it should not be to the exclusion of "*Vandemataram*". If they could discard "*Vandemataram*" which had such a tradition of sacrifice behind it, he was afraid they would one day discard "*Jai Hind*" also.

<sup>1</sup> The source had reported that Gandhiji was greeted by some girl volunteers with 'Jai Hind' as he arrived at the prayer ground.

Gandhiji reiterated his belief that Subhas Babu was not dead, but was hiding somewhere<sup>1</sup> and said that if he could communicate with Subhas Babu, he was sure the latter would endorse him in his view about “*Vandemataram*”.

*The Hindu*, 12-1-1946

## 299. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

GAUHATI,  
January 11, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your wire. Your decision not to come over is perfectly correct. It was my dharma to send you the wire that I did. I had explained to you what your dharma was at the time of your father's death. You have adhered to that. May you be blessed. I daily get news about Kanchan's progress I am dictating this in the early hours of the morning. I had a wire from Sushila yesterday, saying that Kanchan was improving. She gives the credit to penicillin. I believe that Sushila has nursed her very well indeed. She has stayed behind entirely for the sake of Kanchan. Let us see now what happens. Perhaps this serious illness may bring about a complete transformation in Kanchan. She is simple-hearted but is very much of a child also. As she grows in age, she does not correspondingly grow in understanding. Can it be that you are the cause of that? The people around us believe so, and hold me also jointly responsible with you. I do not admit the charge. But that is another matter. I have mentioned the thing in case you would like to think over it.

Manibhai must have arrived there by now. We had in any case decided to summon him there, and because of the development regarding Kanchan I felt it my dharma to send him there and asked him to proceed immediately if he was free. I have had very little experience of him. But Shantilal, who has lived at Sevagram for some time, and Ishvarlal Desai, husband of Nirmala, Mahadev's sister, have given me the impression that he is a man of uncommon ability. Narahari has had experience of him and seen his worth. You will, therefore, find Manibhai of the greatest help. He is a capable man at any rate.

I have been insisting on the account books being kept in English entirely for the sake of Jehangirji<sup>2</sup>. If he is not keen on that,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also “Discussion with Midnapore Political Workers”, 2-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> Jehangir Patel

you may by all means have them kept in Hindi or Marathi. Can it be so arranged that the months and the dates are entered according to the Gregorian calendar, so that Jehangirji can check them ?

You can show this letter to Dinshaw. You may show him any letter of mine.

Give the accompanying letter to Manibhai. Give Doctor the letter I am writing for him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8618. Also C.W. 7204. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### *300. LETTER TO SITA CHARAN DIKSHIT*

GAUHATI,

*January 11, 1946*

BHAI DIKSHITJI,

I have your clear letter. It is good that you have written frankly. I am dictating this also at a Mahila Ashram. It is in Gauhati. A camp of the Kasturba Fund is being held here. On one side there is a village and on the other Gauhati city. It is utterly peaceful.

It gave me satisfaction to know that the cereals which were used for the camp would be cooked as kedgerree. It is quite true that I like *garba* and this I mentioned there. In one way I liked the scene, but from another point of view I did not like it and felt sorry.<sup>1</sup> I could not then express myself in words as I was deeply moved. My heart has already in Bengal. I can never say that there was anything wrong in what you did. There was nothing wrong. The whole scene was one of love and it was performed with my consent. Even so I had some talk with Shriman Narayan. But its purport was quite different. I do not remember whether I was able to convey it or not. But if I could not speak out then I am telling you now. The Mahila Ashram is an institution of the poor. It is born of a noble sentiment. It is filled with Jamnalalji's feelings and Vinobaji's *tapascharya*. It is regarded as a good means of rendering service to poor women. And its management is in the hands of Shantabehn. And yet what a difference between what does on in such an institution and the almost naked

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at Mahila Ashram", 30-11-1945

condition of the millions of poor women of India and Bengal. And I being a witness to all this. It wrung my heart then. Even as I recall the scene, my heart weeps. Even if I could not convey my meaning, Shriman understood it and conveyed it. I dictate this early in the morning. If it calls for further explanation, or if you want to know more, ask me when I come there. You may share this letter with all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 10421. Courtesy: Sita Charan Dikshit

### *301. LETTER TO MANIBHAI*

SARANIA ASHRAM, ASSAM,

*January 11, 1946*

CHI. MANIBHAI,

Naraharibhai replied to my wire and what I had expected has come about. Give all help to Munnalal. Do as much as you can without harming your health. I expect to see in all you do firmness, sweetness, cleanliness and skill. That is the impression Chi. Shantilal has given me of you and, as far as my experience goes, you have lived up to this reputation. I had intended to take you to Poona with me but circumstances have conspired otherwise; and I think it is all for the better. Please write to me. Munnalal will give you my itinerary.

I hope your leaving Sevagram has not inconvenienced Narahari.

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

### *302. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA*

SARANIA ASHRAM,

*January 11, 1946*

CHI. DINSHAW,

Chi. Munnalal's wife Kanchanbehn has been very ill, so I sent a wire saying that he should be relieved if he wanted to come away. I assumed that someone would have to replace him there and so telegraphed to Sevagram also asking them to send M[anibhai], whom I regard as very competent. He has promptly left for Poona. I am glad I have been told that Manibhai is a very good worker. I believe it. I have hardly any personal experience of him. You will have some.

I hope you received the Rs. 10,000 I sent you, so the new account will not suffer from paucity of funds.

The patients who were already there should adapt themselves to the new pattern. They should mix with the poor. Everyone should be punctual to the minute. Over and above this, you should accommodate them only if they pay or else let them leave. This alone will be true comradeship. We cannot any more allot separate rooms to the patients according to their wishes. In fact for the present we cannot accommodate patients who need separate rooms. I have already written to you to allow as much privacy as the patients may need. I hope you remember it. If you haven't had such instructions from me so far, please make a note now.

Munnalal suggests that the English method of book-keeping is more expensive. I believe it is true. How would it matter if we maintained accounts in the Indian style? The Indian method can also ensure accurate account-keeping. Indian firms maintain accounts in the Indian way and carry on business in millions involving dealings with English banks. And since our little affair is going to be and should be worthy of an Indian we ought to infuse into it the swadeshi atmosphere as far as possible right from the beginning. Please show this letter to Jehangirji. It was at his instance that we had agreed to maintain accounts in the English way. But I believe, if opting for the English method is likely to cause an expenditure of Rs. 40 to 50 per month, Jehangirji would be in favour of saving the amount. The money that I shall contribute must be regarded as belonging to the poor. I may be getting it from the rich, but once it comes into my hands it becomes the poor man's pie, to be spent solely for the poor. All my dealings are carried on in the same old way and it pains me that now because of my old age I cannot fully follow that way, and I also put up with the situation because I cannot get on otherwise. But I must not burden others with my foibles.

I hope you got my earlier letters, and have replied to them.

For the present save all avoidable expenditure. I shall try my best to reach there on the 20th or the 21st of February. It is in God's hands whether I shall succeed.

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



### 303. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

SARANIA ASHRAM, GAUHATI,  
[January 11, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. SUSHILA (GANDHI),

I saw what you wrote at the bottom of Arun's<sup>2</sup> letter. You will know from my letter to him how my mind is working. You should not be soft. There is a famous line in Kalidasa and, I think also in the *Bhagavata*. It says that love is more tender than a flower and harder than steel.<sup>3</sup> That alone is love which can soften or harden with the occasion, all else is infatuation. Those who are worldly-wise should also note that such famous sayings are often misconstrued.

There are many occasions when I remember all of you. There are also occasions when there is a feeling of relief that you did not come. The experience which you are gaining there and what Arun and Ila are witnessing is of course worth while. Maybe, comparatively speaking that is better than anything else. Ila for one was not likely to have imbibed anything in this place. Hence, for her at least I regard this atmosphere as positively bad. You needed peace. You cannot expect to find peace in my company, especially while I am touring. Arun's can be considered a different case, yet on the whole he is likely to be safest while he is before your eyes. He is a fine boy. I am of the view that he will have achieved all if he grows finer and finer. As for the other development everything happens in its own course. And in the absence of nobility of character even the Kingdom of Heaven is meaningless.

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

<sup>1</sup> The letter is found among letters of this date.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee's son

<sup>3</sup> वज्रादपि कठोराणि मृदूनि कुसुमादपि, *Uttararamcharita*, II. 7

### 304. LETTER TO KAILAS D. MASTER<sup>1</sup>

GAUHATI,  
January 11, 1946

CHI. KAILAS,

I have your letter. I shall say you have grown very wise if you get good testimonials from everyone there. And then I shall have nothing more to say to you. I shall be glad and the expectations that Prabhudas himself has entertained and has encouraged me to entertain of you will bear fruit. Besides, you already have my blessing that you may grow to be a very fine girl. There is much scope there to learn for anyone who wants.

I have your brother's letter to which I am enclosing a reply. Pass it on to him after you have read it. Don't encourage him to come till you are yourself perfectly settled and don't let him come until he grows into a very hard-working, firm and obedient boy. The question of his earning anything does not arise. See that in your zeal you do not encourage him only to repent later and cause embarrassment to others. You must watch out. You must draw your letters still bigger and you must form them well. You have learnt Urdu, haven't you ?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

KAILASBEHN

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

### 305. LETTER TO JITU MASTER

GAUHATI,  
January 11, 1946

CHI. JITU<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter. You must improve your handwriting. I am glad you want to live in the Ashram. But it is a difficult life. You can lead Ashram life in your home and pursue the crafts

<sup>1</sup> The letter is in the Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> Brother of Kailash D. Master; *vide* the preceding item.

that are pursued in the Ashram. If you don't have the strength to do it the Ashram cannot endow you with it. Wanting to live in the Ashram merely for this is, I am afraid, mere infatuation.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 306. *LETTER TO ARUN GANDHI*

GAUHATI,

*January 11, 1946*

CHI. ARUN,

I have your letter. I find it better than your earlier one, although it has scope for improvement, which you must bring about. I would always advise you and it is my wish that wherever you be you will always fully observe your vow.

I can very well understand that there are difficulties while one is travelling. It is also quite understandable that sometimes one just cannot spin however much one wants to. I shouldn't mind if you are not lazy but fail to spin owing to some unavoidable circumstances. Thorough observance of one vow straightens out all other matters. This is invariably found to be the case.

Why is Ila growing insolent. As her elder brother, you are, I think, to blame for it. She is a nice girl. You can therefore help her make good progress.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

ARUN GANDHI

DELHI

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

<sup>1</sup> The letters are in the Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

307. *LETTER TO PRABHU DAYAL VIDYARTHI*

GAUHATI,  
*January 11, 1946*

CHI. PRABHU DAYAL,

I was glad to have your letter. I had seen your letter to Sushilabehn and I think she had sent a reply also.

It is right for you to remain there as long as they do not relieve you.

I shall pay your expenses, including your return fare. Draw the amount from Devdas and that, too, from my account. As long as Devdas is there, there should be no need to send it from the Ashram. The Government have of course offered to pay for your journeys. All this is only for your information.

The Delhi weather is considered to be the best during this season. Normally, [good] climate and pure food are adequate for maintaining good health.

I understand about the Jamia. It would indeed be good if they let you stay there. Maybe they cannot for want of accommodation but if the reason is paucity of funds you can tell them that your expenses will be borne by the Ashram.

I am writing to Bhai Shriram. It is good that you informed me.

From here, I shall reach Sodepur on the 14th and on the 19th. I may leave there for Madras. That means that a letter written to reach me by the 19th, should be sent to the Sodepur address.

C/O DEVDAS GANDHI

“HINDUSTAN TIMES”

NEW DELHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 11696. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 308. LETTER TO SHRIRAM SHARMA

[January 11, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI SHRIRAMJI SHARMA,

Prabhu Dayal writes that you lost a son while you were in jail and another after your release. What can I write to you? How can I console you? But where is any call for consolation on a death? Why fear death? Is death painful? And is birth joyful? Why is it that great epics such as the *Ramayana* teach the same thing? Because, on reflection, we find that birth and death are but two sides of the same thing. What is there good or bad about it? A world without death would be a frightful thing. Maybe the world would then have perished. All this is not philosophizing but an utterance of the thoughts that come to my mind.

Prabhu Dayal also writes that after meditation in the jail, your faith in truth and non-violence has grown much stronger and that you and your whole family spin beautiful yarn. All this makes me very happy.

My Assam tour will end tomorrow. I intend to leave Calcutta for Madras on the 19th and February 8 is the date when I reach Sevagram.

My address in Madras: Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Thyagarayanagar. At Calcutta, it will of course be Khadi Pratishthan, Sodepur. I shall expect your reply at either Place.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIRAM SHARMA  
BALKA BASTI  
NAGPUR

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

<sup>1</sup> In the source this is placed among the letters of this date.

309. *LETTER TO ADVAITKUMAR GOSWAMI*

[January 11, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI ADVAITKUMAR,

I have your letter. I am trying to find out. Let us see what happens.

I have the Raja Saheb's<sup>2</sup> letter. I have not yet read it.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI ADVAITKUMAR GOSWAMI

C/O MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER

BRINDABAN

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

310. *LETTER TO SHANTA NERULKAR*

SARANIA ASHRAM,

[January 11, 1946]<sup>3</sup>

CHI. SHANTA,

I have your letter. You write with too much hesitation. There is no reason for it. It does not matter that I may not reply. I must still have letters from you.

Your illness pains me. One who would serve the villages should have a body strong as steel.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRIMATI SHANTA NERULKAR

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

<sup>1</sup> In the source this is placed among the letters of this date.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Raja Mahendra Pratap; *vide* "Letter to G.E.B. Abell", 12-1-1946

<sup>3</sup> In the source this is placed among the letters of this date.

### 311. SPEECH AT KASTURBA MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETING<sup>1</sup>

GAUHATI,  
January 11, 1946

Addressing the gathering, Gandhiji explained the aims and objects of Kasturba Memorial Trust which had been started<sup>2</sup> during the period when he was in jail. Later on he lent a hand in framing the Trust of the Fund.<sup>3</sup> The idea behind the whole scheme of Kasturba Trust had been to make women self-reliant and self-sufficient. This did not mean that men would go down, but if womenfolk improved and raised themselves up, men would automatically be raised higher. It is good that in India there were no quarrels between the menfolk and the womenfolk as existed in other countries. But that did not mean that the condition of Indian women was better than those of European countries. If the resources of Assam could be utilized, then the face of Assam could be changed. So much time was wasted in useless and idle talk. If they kept a diary of their work for the 24 hours, then they would know it. If they could utilize only a portion of the time they wasted for constructive work, there would be a wonderful improvement in their condition. In Assam *muga* industry was one through which people could change their conditions considerably and thus could do immense service to the cause of their country.

He knew that quite a number of ladies had come merely to see him. But he could tell them that if they could devote all their strength to the execution of his constructive programme they would be immensely benefited.<sup>4</sup>

Gandhiji emphasized that beauty lay not in ornaments or fine clothes but in doing something good and in applying oneself to doing some service to others.

Replying to certain questions, Gandhiji said that the relation between the Congress and the Kasturba Memorial Trust was nothing but at the same time everything. If Congressmen took interest, the relation was there. If not, there was no relation.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13-1-1946, and *The Hindu*, 13-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> This was held at Sarania Ashram to seek Gandhiji's advice on uplift of women.

<sup>2</sup> On March 18, 1944

<sup>3</sup> In 1944

<sup>4</sup> What follows is reproduced from *The Hindu*, 13-1-1946.

### 312. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

GAUHATI,  
*January 11, 1946*

Gandhiji said that prayer was his life. He felt that the man who did not pray was a dry person, devoid of everything. He did not know whether salvation could come in the other world. He wanted salvation in this world, and did not bother about the other world. As he was a social being he could not have salvation for himself alone. That was why he wanted to share prayer with all of them.

Gandhiji was sorry that there was some misunderstanding about his going to the women's ashram (a centre of constructive work in a tribal area about 20 miles from here). He did not promise to go there, but a number of persons collected there and they were grieved as he did not go. He wanted to tell them through the people here and to the whole of India as well, that he had not the capacity now to go from place to place in view of his old age. He therefore wanted to work staying at one place.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12-1-1946*

### 313. LETTER TO HOSHIARI

[After *January 11, 1946*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. HOSHIARI,

I have your letter. Why is your mind perturbed at times? If you have grown wise enough there can be no cause for disturbance. Isn't it our duty to be completely engrossed in our own work of service? At the Ashram especially, every minute of one's time has to be devoted to service. What more can you ask for? It is equally important that you maintain good health. For that hip-bath, friction-bath, mud-packs on the abdomen and regular walks are essential. For strength of character and concentration *Ramanama*.

Does Gajaraj attend school regularly? Ask him to write to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> In the source the letter is placed after those of January 11.



*314. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE  
GOVERNOR OF BENGAL*

GAUHATI,  
*January 12, 1946*

PRIVATE SECRETARY

H. E. GOVERNOR

CALCUTTA

PRESIDENT      CONGRESS      COMMITTEE      CHITTAGONG      SENDS      WIRE  
ACCUSING      CERTAIN      PIONEER      FORCE      PERSONS      MOLESTING  
FEMALES      AND      WHEN      RESISTED      RETURNING      IN  
VENGEANCE      WITH      COMPANIONS      ATTACKING      VILLAGERS  
BURNING      HOUSES      LOOTING      PROPERTY.      TRUST      FULL  
INQUIRY      WILL      BE      MADE      AND      PROPER      JUSTICE      RENDERED.<sup>1</sup>

GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 114-5*

*315. TELEGRAM TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL*

*EXPRESS*

GAUHATI,  
*January 12, 1946*

H. H. BHOPAL

BARODA HOUSE

NEW DELHI

YOUR      KIND      WIRE.      BHOPAL      SEEMS      IMPOSSIBLE.      NOT      SURE  
ABOUT      DELHI.      WRITING.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Jamini Bose", 10-1-1946

### 316. LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

AS AT SEVAGRAM, VIA WARDHA (INDIA),  
CAMP: GAUHATI,

January 12, 1946

DEAR SIR STAFFORD,

I was delighted to receive your letter<sup>1</sup> of 19th December, 1945. As I am touring in Bengal and Assam, your kind greetings were received only yesterday. The Rajkumari had described her talks with you and told me how affectionate you were towards me. I am hoping that this time<sup>2</sup> there is determination to do the right thing in terms of Indian thought. I well remember what King Edward had said about right dealing. I was then in South Africa. The question was of interpreting the treaty between the British and the Boers and the King had gently insisted on the Boer interpretation being accepted in preference to the British. How I wish that the admirable canon be repeated this time.

I hope with you that this New Year will bring to the thirsting earth the much-needed shower of peace and goodwill for which the "Prince of Peace" lived and died.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SIR R. STAFFORD CRIPPS

BOARD OF TRADE

MILLBANK

LONDON, S.W. 1

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 175-6*

<sup>1</sup> This said: "I most profoundly hope that in these coming months we shall be able by mutual understanding, respect and trust, to work out between us a happier and brighter future for India. I know you have laboured for this throughout your life and I pray that it may be given to you to see the climax of your hopes in the realization of your desires. I shall, as always, try and play my part towards that happy solution of the great problems which confront our two countries."

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the Cabinet Mission, consisting of three members including the addressee, which was to arrive in India with a view to finding a solution for the Indian Problem.

### 317. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

AS FROM KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

CAMP: GAUHATI,

*January 12, 1946*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I am writing to you on behalf of Gandhiji. A couple of days ago he received a letter from Raja Mahendra Pratap dated October 19th, 1945, from Yokohama Prison. The letter came through the American Red Cross. He has also received a letter from a friend of Raja Mahendra Pratap to say that rumour has it that he is now in prison somewhere in India. Is this true? If so, could you let Gandhiji have any particulars about him ?<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

AMRIT KAUR

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 78*

### 318. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

CAMP: GAUHATI,

*January 12, 1946*

DEAR DR. JAYAKAR,

Your kind letter and copy of the Sapru Committee<sup>2</sup> Report was received during my Assam tour. I was wondering why I had not received a copy and had to content myself with Press notices. I had come to the conclusion that my copy must have been sent to Seva-gram and was awaiting my return there. I was, therefore, doubly pleased to find your letter and a copy of the report during my stay in Gauhati.

I wonder if you have seen the enclosed cutting.

I propose to read the report if I can find sufficient time for it. In any case I know enough of the report from my discussions

<sup>1</sup> The addressee informed Gandhiji that Raja Mahendra Pratap was in Tokyo and he no longer possessed British Indian nationality.

<sup>2</sup> Appointed by the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference in November 1944. Its report, which was compiled by T. B. Sapru, M. R. Jayakar, N. Gopalaswami Iyengar and Kunwar Jagadish Prasad, was published on December 27, 1945. For a summary of the proposals, *vide* "The Sapru Committee Proposals", 27-12-1945

with you and Dr. Radhakrishnan to feel that it is bound to be of value to constitution-makers.

Whilst I send this letter in English for fear of your resentment, I must inform you that nowadays to most Indian friends I have been studiously writing in Hindustani or, when I find it is cruel to write to a countryman in the South in Hindustani, I take special care to get someone near me who knows one of the Southern languages to write in it. So I hope you will not mind receiving my letter one fine morning written in *rashtrabhasha*.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

Enclosure: cutting from *The Statesman*, 28-12-1945, entitled "Out of date".

DR. M. R. JAYAKAR

WINTER ROAD

MALABAR HILL, BOMBAY

Gandhi-Jayakar Papers. File No. 326. p. 37. Courtesy: National Archives of India

### 319. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

[AS AT] SODEPUR,

*January 12, 1946*

BHAI NATESAN,

Your two letters. Jagadisan wrote to me about the state of Sas-triar's<sup>1</sup> health. I shall certainly see him.

As for visiting your house, I am at present unable to decide. Apart from the question whether I shall have the time for the purpose, the trouble of the journey to and fro may be too much for me to bear.

What can I—who have not read many books—say about books<sup>2</sup>? Again, do I have Sastriar's power of writing? It is said that few are as well read as he and that the books he has not read are not worth reading. But I for my part have not read most of the books that ought to be read. What then could I write? And where is the time ?

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI<sup>3</sup>

From a photostat of the Tamil: G.N. 2239. Also C.W. 10525

<sup>1</sup> V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, *vide* also "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri"

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was publishing in *Indian Review*, of which he was the editor, a symposium on "Books that have influenced me".

<sup>3</sup> The letter was originally written in Hindi but the translation of it in Tamil bears Gandhiji's signature in Tamil.

320. LETTER TO MARGARET BARR<sup>1</sup>

January 12, 1946

DEAR MARGARET,

You will pardon me when I tell you that I had forgotten—which I should not have done—that you were in Shillong. I am going to Dhubri today and from there tomorrow I say goodbye to Assam. Therefore, for the folly of my forgetfulness—and shall I also say your folly in not descending to Gauhati to meet me—I shall have to go away without seeing you even though you are within such a short distance of me. However, it is good that you have reminded me of your presence in Shillong and told me how well you are doing there.

I am sure you have gained by following my instructions about not taking part in the political turmoil.

Yes. I have been hearing fairly regularly from Mary<sup>2</sup>. I agree with you that she will return to India when your father does not need her services. So far as I gather from her letters, however, she does not expect to come back to India in the near future. It does appear as if there ever will be a time when your father will not need her services. According to my calculation if the old Mr. Barr's life is being spent in accordance with the teaching of *Ishopanishad*, he must complete the full span of life i.e., 125 years. Have you read that little Upanishad? If not you should get a copy from some library there or at least in Dr. B. C. Roy's collection. I suppose you know he has a bungalow there.

I shall be in Khadi Pratishthan, Sodepur, near Calcutta, for 4 or 5 days and then proceed to Madras.

Love.

BAPU

MISS MARGARET BARR

MALKI, SHILLONG

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> This was delivered by hand on January 12.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's sister

321. *LETTER TO RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP*

*January 12, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter<sup>1</sup> after a long lapse of time. It appears to be a manifesto and you have invited publication of it. I, however, refrain from sending it to the Press at the moment. I would like to know from you whether you are allowed to receive visitors. Goswami<sup>2</sup> has enquired about you to find out your whereabouts and suddenly within two days of this enquiry I got your letter. Are you permitted to tell me whether you are to be tried or how long you are to be detained? From your letter I gather that you are keeping well and are being well treated. Are you kept in company with others or are you by yourself? Your friends and advisers would certainly like to know all about you.

*Yours sincerely,*

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

322. *LETTER TO SECRETARY, AMERICAN RED CROSS,  
CALCUTTA*

AS FROM KHADI PRATISHTHAN,  
SODEPUR,

*January 12, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I am enclosing herewith a letter from Gandhiji addressed to Raja Mahendra Pratap, who was arrested some five months ago in Tokyo by Gen. MacArthur for trial as a war criminal by the British. Gandhiji's letter is in reply to a letter just received from Raja Mahendra Pratap dated 19th October, 1945. The letter is written in the letter head of the American Red Cross and the address given is :

XI CORPS STOKADE NO. 1

YOKOHAMA PRISON

APO 503, JAPAN.

A long time has elapsed since this letter was written and it has even been reported that Raja Mahendra Pratap has been handed over to the British by

<sup>1</sup> The addressee who had been imprisoned by the U. S. Occupation Authorities in Japan had requested Gandhiji to do everything humanly possible to have him freed so that he could work for world peace.

<sup>2</sup> Advaitkumar Goswami

Gen. MacArthur and is now somewhere in India. Since the letter is written in the letterhead of the American Red Cross I presume you will be able to forward this letter to him. Gandhiji will be grateful if you can furnish him the address of Raja Mahendra Pratap.

A line in reply to the effect that Gandhiji's letter has been forwarded to Raja Mahendra Pratap will be appreciated.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

AMRIT KAUR

SECRETARY

AMERICAN RED CROSS

CALCUTTA

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

### *323. LETTER TO SITA VIJAYARAGHAVACHARI*

CAMP: GAUHATI,

*January 12, 1946*

CHI. SITA,

I am delighted to have your letter. I see that you do know some Hindustani. Why then should you write in English? I well remember how devotedly you looked after your father and how you meant everything to him. But why are you grieved over his passing ?<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult for me to go to Salem. I would be glad if you could come and see me some day after I reach Madras.

I very well remember the affection your father had for me. I expect to reach Madras after the 21st of this month.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRIMATI SITA VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

SALEM

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

<sup>1</sup> C. Vijayaraghavachari; he was President of the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> He died on April 19, 1944, at Salem.

### 324. LETTER TO SARALABEHN

SODEPUR,  
*January 12, 1946*

CHI. SARALA<sup>1</sup>,

I have your letter. It gives all the news. Do whatever your health permits.

It is good that you informed me about the Nainital friend. When it is turned into a hospital the house, I am sure, will prove a great help to the poor.

I hope you have not forgotten your Urdu lessons. Ten minutes devoted to a thing daily produce far better results than hours spent on it irregularly; this is an unwritten law.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIMATI SARALABEHN  
LAKSHMI ASHRAM  
[KAUSANI]

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

### 325. LETTER TO N. G. RANGA

GAUHATI, ASSAM,  
*January 12, 1946*

BHAI RANGA,

I have your letter. Do as you like about your forthcoming book<sup>2</sup>.

Your latest book<sup>3</sup> has not yet been received. I shall go through it when I get it.

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

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Heilman, an English Jewess. She first came to India in 1932 as a teacher in an experimental school at Udaipur.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably *Mahatma Gandhi's Message to Oppressed Races*

<sup>3</sup> Presumably *Outlines of National revolutionary Path*, which was published in December 1945



### 326. TALK TO HARIJANS <sup>1</sup>

GAUHATI,  
*January 12, 1946*

He enquired about their wages, their accommodation and their food supply. When his attention was drawn to the next engagement, which was a meeting with sufferers of the August movement, Gandhiji was heard to say that he would also meet<sup>2</sup> them now. They were martyrs and many people would feel for them, but nobody would feel for these Harijans.

Referring to the condition of the Harijans he said that he knew how they lived and what they ate. Their condition was almost similar to what it was in other parts of India. Gandhiji asked two headmen of the Harijans to wait and see Mrs. Jayaprakash Narayan and give her a detailed account of their condition. He would try to do what he could for them.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-1-1946*

### 327. TALK TO SUFFERERS OF AUGUST DISTURBANCES

GAUHATI,  
*January 12, 1946*

Giving his blessings to these sufferers, Mahatmaji said that the victims had done what duty they had to do for the country. There was nothing for which they or the members of their families should be sorry. At yesterday's prayer meeting he had asked people to be fearless. They (family members) also should be fearless.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-1-1946*

### 328. SPEECH AT POLITICAL WORKERS' CONFERENCE<sup>3</sup>

GAUHATI,  
*January 12, 1946*

Explaining the scope of the constructive programme to them Gandhiji by way of an illustration described how a capital expenditure of about twenty five lakhs of rupees had been able to put into the pockets of the poor a sum amounting to not less

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji met about four hundred Harijans at Sarania Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>3</sup> About seven hundred workers were present at the meeting.

than five crores of rupees. Indian cloth consumption, he said, amounted to about one hundred crores of rupees according to the present price level. All that money can be prevented from going out of the pockets of the people by fulfilling one item of the constructive programme, namely, khadi.

With regard to parliamentary programme Gandhiji reiterated what he had previously said<sup>1</sup> at Sodepur. He was fully convinced that if all the people boycotted the legislatures, the country or the nation would not be losers by that. On the contrary, Gandhiji stressed that it would mean a great addition to their strength. But he realized that was not practical politics at present and as a realist he realized the necessity of preventing self-seekers and enemies of the freedom of India from entering the legislatures. The main function of the legislatures should be the advancement of constructive work. Any programme that hindered constructive work was not worth taking up. As an illustration of constructive work Gandhiji mentioned the services to Adivasis. Today, he said, they had been divided into water-tight compartments by the ruling power and that was why Adivasis had been classified as tribal races. It was a shame that they should be isolated from the nation of which they were an inalienable part. Here was a vast field of constructive work which Gandhiji exhorted all to take up. Nobody could prevent them from undertaking this kind of constructive work. And if for undertaking constructive work they were put in jail, they should not be afraid of jail-going. In this connection Gandhiji referred to his own stand in the Champaran Satyagraha.

In the course of his long and convincing speech Gandhiji made references to the names of Abbas Tyabji, Badshah Khan and Pandit Jawaharlal in order to illustrate his points by concrete examples.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14-1-1946

### 329. MESSAGE TO ASSAM STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

SARANIA ASHRAM,  
January 12, 1946

I thank all volunteers of Assam Students' Union for the services they rendered and wish them all success. My blessings are with them.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at Congress Workers Conference-II", 6-1-1946

### 330. *LETTER TO VICHITRA NARAYAN SHARMA*

ON THE STEAMER,  
*January 13, 1946*

CHI. VICHITRA,

I have your letter of 26-12-1945. Come and see me by all means. Consult Dada if you want. I see that you and Jajuji do not get on well. I am unable to make up my mind whether I should try to persuade you to keep together or let you work independently in your different ways. Either course can be justified. What harm could there be if you were to work independently of the Charkha Sangh? You are both devoted to khadi. It is possible that under Jajuji's control, the Meerut Gandhi Ashram's progress is arrested and they cannot work to their full capacity. If it is so and if Jawaharlalji and Pantji are also of the same opinion, why not have a separate organization for khadi in the U. P.? Assuming that it is done for the love of khadi and if, as a result, khadi is more successful in the U. P., such a step would only do good instead of harm. There have been many instances in my life when I gave such encouragement and it always resulted in good. The latest instance is that of the Hindi Sahitya sammelan. I quit it. How could I oppose Tandonji? He had the main part in building up the organization. I do not approve of his present policies and feel that I would be able to serve Hindi well, perhaps even better, by keeping out of it. In case it does not turn out so, I shall admit my mistake and follow Tandonji. But if I have not made a mistake, I shall only further the cause of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan from outside. The important point is that our actions should not be inspired by selfish motives and our ultimate aim should be one and the same. Maybe I should be able to make a definite statement if I could meet all the people.

Think well over this letter, consult the others and write to me what you think is the proper course of action. I shall reach Madras probably on the 21st and shall stay there for 15 days. You may come there if you like. Jajuji will of course be there. You need not go there immediately I arrive. We can manage even if you come in the beginning of February. My sole intention is that all khadi devotees should make all-round progress and khadi should get its rightful place. Of course, if you do not sincerely believe in non-violence, do

not consider khadi its symbol and have no faith in my present policy with regard to khadi, then it is a different matter. When our views differ to such an extent, the question assumes a wholly different form. And if, while maintaining different views with regard to the above three points you still want to serve khadi, you must dissociate yourself from the Sangh. Then the question is not one of differences with Jajuji but of differences over principle, and if that be the case they ought to be cleared up.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 331. LETTER TO DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

ON TOUR IN ASSAM,  
*January 13, 1946*

BHAI PATTABHI,

I enclose herewith a cutting<sup>1</sup> from *The Nationalist* of Calcutta. Is the report correct? If so, we have no right to offend anyone like this. Whatever the case we have to be civil in the face of incivility. This is the secret of non-violence. There is nothing indecorous if your association is represented by ten delegates.

Think over it and do as you think right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

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

### 332. LETTER TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL

*P. S. Persian,*  
*January 13, 1946*

NAWAB SAHEB,

I had your wire. I hope you got my reply<sup>2</sup> sent from Gauhati. My position is not at all comfortable. The pressure of work is so

<sup>1</sup> Not traceable

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Nawab of Bhopal", 12-1-1946

heavy that if I take one hour off, one hour's work piles up. Under the circumstances how can I go to Bhopal? I have to keep some margin of time for Delhi because in the event of my presence being indispensable I have to go there. In that case, I shall inform you accordingly.

I hope you will understand my helplessness. What more can I say ?

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

BY HAND

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

### 333. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS OF INDIA<sup>1</sup>

[January 13, 1946]

Asked whether the cry of *Jai Hind* could be appropriately adopted in a non-violent action since originally it was devised by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as a war cry, Mahatma Gandhi said :

It does not follow that because *Jai Hind* was devised by Subhas Babu as a war cry in armed warfare, it must be eschewed in a non-violent action. On that basis even *Vandemataram* may have to be given up because there are instances of people committing violence with this cry on their lips. If a thing is essentially an evil it becomes a positive duty to abjure it In my opinion *Jai Hind* and *Vandemataram* have almost the same meaning. In one we make obeisance to Mother India and thereby wish her victory; the other merely wishes her victory. There is no question of singing the two together. As I have said<sup>2</sup> before *Jai Hind* cannot replace *Vandemataram*.

Asked whether Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose enjoyed the same place in his esteem and affection and whether he heard what Netaji and written about him in his reported book *Father of All Nations*, as was believed in some sections of the people of Assam, Gandhiji replied :

I have not read what Subhas Babu is reported to have said about me. But I am not surprised at what you tell me. My relations with him were always of the purest and best. I always knew his capacity for

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was interviewed by a special correspondent of U. P. I. aboard the steamer *Persian* which he boarded at Gauhati in the evening of January 12 for going to Dhubri where he arrived on January 13, 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 10-1-1946

sacrifice. But a full knowledge of his resourcefulness, soldiership and organizing ability came to me only after his escape from India. The difference of outlook between him and me as to the means is too well known for comment.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-1-1946*

### 334. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

GOALPARA,  
*January 13, 1946*

Gandhiji reiterated that there could be no non-violent swaraj which was but another name for *Ramarajya* except through the charkha. His definition of *Ramarajya* was that under it even the weakest must enjoy the same freedom and same rights as the strongest. For that it was necessary that even the physically weakest person should be able to take due share in the struggle for independence. In other words, women and children should be able to play an equal part with men. It was clear that this was not possible in armed warfare.

Gandhiji's reading of India's history was that every time the people made use of armed forces for their protection it only resulted in tightening their bondage. The so-called protectors in their turn, Gandhiji added, became oppressors. But under non-violence as symbolized by the spinning-wheel, men and women enjoyed absolute parity in the fight for freedom. The condition was that every thread of yarn that they spun should be a conscientious sacrifice or *yajna* for swaraj and it should be backed by the determination to resist with their lives any assault that might be directed against charkha. By charkha, he meant not hand-spinning alone but all those things which hand-spinning symbolized. These included the revival of all other village industries, of course, but it included all the various other items of his 18-point constructive programme as well. By way of illustration Gandhiji mentioned communal harmony and total abolition of untouchability, both of which were natural corollaries of ahimsa.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-1-1946*

### 335. *SPEECH AT DHUBRI*

*January 13, 1946*

Addressing the gathering, Gandhiji said that he was sorry for keeping them waiting for such a long time. The steamer could not move due to fog. He had heard and seen the miseries of Bengal. He came to Assam because the miseries of the people of Assam were no less than that of the people of Bengal. He could not stay

longer in Assam due to urgent work at Calcutta. He emphasized that swaraj would not come from the heavens and would not be given to them by anyone. Everything depended on their self-help and swaraj would be achieved through charkha.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-1-1946*

### *336. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

ON THE TRAIN,  
*January 14, 1946*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your letter. I do not feel happy about Dr. Dinshaw's indifference. It is good that Jehangirji helps you. You should go on doing patiently and calmly whatever you can. Let those who wish to leave do so. I hope Manibhai is giving you all possible help. Do not admit new patients. Even the old ones who pay their own expenses must abide by the new rules. We do not want to run the show with their money. We wish to do that with the blessings of the poor. The Doctor may recommend to new patients such treatment as they can take at home. If any patients come for baths, etc., these may be given. But nobody should be allowed to stay in the clinic. I hope that we shall be able to systematize everything after I return. If necessary, you may show this to Jehangirji. The doctor of course will read it.

We shall arrange about khadi after I return there. I will get the required quantity.

I believe Kanchan is all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8623. Also C.W. 7205. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### *337. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK*

ON THE TRAIN,  
*Silence Day, January 14, 1946*

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. What reply shall I give? If the thing you assume does not exist at all, what reply can I give? What are we to say

to a person who asserts that there is a flower in the sky?" "As silver is perceived in the mother-of-pearl and sunlight in water though non-existent at all times are yet perceived. So is this illusion which none can dispel." Remember this verse of Tulsidas and laugh if you can.

I had never thought that you were so sensitive. And what epithets you use for Haribhau? When you write with a calm mind, I will write more. I have received Sushila's letter. I have advised Bapa not to fill the place till a suitable woman Agent is available.

As desired by you, I have torn up your letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10448. Also C.W. 6882. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

### 338. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

ON THE TRAIN,

*January 14, 1946*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

You will never cease to be the Modh bania that you are !!! Whose fault is it, yours or Taramati's? Now have a prompt betrothal, so all of you will have peace of mind. It seems life is a series of betrothals and marriages; am I right? I don't see I come anywhere into it. What is there to consult me about? This does not mean that what you are going to do is wrong. Why should you follow me wherever I go? I have taken a different path. Why should anyone join me along it without understanding? If...<sup>2</sup> has told nothing but the truth it will never prove false. You go your own way without any fear.

Take care of your health. Follow what others write about my health. It is also fairly adequately reported on in the newspapers.

*Blessings to you all from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The letter is in the Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> A word here is not clear in the source.



339. *LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*<sup>1</sup>

ON THE TRAIN,  
*January 14, 1946*

BAPA,

It is silence day, hence I must write myself. I got your condensed letter, precise and concise.

Jawaharlal thinks of nothing but the country's freedom. He spends all his energy for it. Then why shouldn't the people be mad about him ?

I understand what you say about Sucheta. Deal with Sushila Pai's case as best as you can. I am firm in my opinion. Where a woman Agent is not readily available we should wait for one. Our work will go on. I shall, however, be prepared to do anything else that you propose.

In Assam I heard about the swami and about the women's college also. Both the cases need consideration. The swami seems to have reached the limit. I have his reply.

Amalprova is proceeding well though with great caution. Her father is on her side. The place is in the countryside, but near Gauhati. I visited the village. In fact I went there for my daily walks. I see our mangoes will not ripen in a hurry.

A good amount of money has been collected for Harijan work. A sum has also been earmarked for the tribal people. I welcome your refraining from going to Madras. I might use your presence for my own selfish ends but that would be wrong. You must take some rest somehow. You will then be able to do twice as much work as you now do. Even the man-made machine needs rest. Even a pair of shoes lasts longer if it has some rest, what then to say of man ?

BAPU

SHRI THAKKAR BAPA

HARIJAN COLONY

DELHI

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

<sup>1</sup> The letter is in the Devanagari script.

### 340. LETTER TO SUMITRA GANDHI

[SODEPUR,  
January 14, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. SUMI,

I will not reply separately. How can I spare the time?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRISUMITRA GANDHI  
BIRLA GIRLS' SCHOOL  
PILANI, JAIPUR STATE<sup>2</sup>

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

### 341. LETTER TO SANKARAN

ON THE TRAIN,  
January 14, 1946

CHI. SANKARAN,

I got your letter. Today is my silence day and therefore I cannot dictate the letter.

Your reply is perfect. I am glad to know that you are improving your health and learning nature cure.

*Jeevansakha*<sup>3</sup> might probably be in Sodepur. I could not find it in Assam. I am going to Sodepur by this very train.

It seems that like Dr. Dinshaw's [clinic] Baleshwarji's is also not meant for the poor. We must remedy this. We shall think over the matter after your treatment is over. I expect to reach Madras on the 21st and Wardha on 8th February. I am not keen to send any message

<sup>1</sup> The two sentences are written by Gandhiji below the reply to Sumitra by Sushila, presumably Sushila Nayyar, which bears the date December 14, 1946 which is evidently a slip, since on that date Gandhiji was in Shrirampur in Noakhali. Sushila in her reply refers to Gandhiji having returned from Assam to Calcutta just that day, that is, the 14th. Gandhiji had left Calcutta for Guwahati on January 9, 1946 and had returned to Calcutta on the 14th of the same month.

<sup>2</sup> The address as in Sushila's postcard

<sup>3</sup> A journal on nature cure

for the special issue of *Jeevansakha*. All good things carry their own blessings.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 342. LETTER TO H. C. DASAPPA

ON THE TRAIN,

*January 14, 194[6]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. DASAPPA<sup>2</sup>,

I got your letter. The news about your brother is distressing, and on top of it your father is ill. But, if we reflect, we shall realize that death and diseases of various kinds are with us from the birth. It is therefore futile to grieve.

I have grave doubts about being able to go to Mysore. Let us see how I get along in Madras.

My blessing to Yashodhara.<sup>3</sup> Tell her to write to me. I hope Ramdas<sup>4</sup> is well. How is he doing? It will be good if he now settles down there. He should learn Hindi as well as Urdu as also all the processes connected with spinning.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRIDASAPPA

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

### 343. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>5</sup>

SODEPUR,

*January 14, 1946*

I am sorry that today I cannot talk to you as I started silence at Dhubri at midnight. I am glad to say that on my way back people

<sup>1</sup> The source has 1945, but the letter is placed among those of 1946.

<sup>2</sup> An advocate whose name was struck off the rolls in July 1940, for political reasons

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>4</sup> Addressee's son

<sup>5</sup> The speech was read out by Kanu Gandhi.

maintained perfect peace at the stations. I would like such peace to be maintained always. The villages of Chittagong have been reduced to such a state that it must have given you the same pain as it has given me.<sup>1</sup> The Government will have to do its duty. But I am thinking of ours. If true satyagraha were alive in all of us, men and women, such a happening could never have taken place. At the same time what happened in Diamond Harbour is also a tragic chapter.<sup>2</sup> Today's prayer song is helpful in pointing to a right decision in these matters. This I shall try to explain tomorrow.<sup>3</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8027

*344. LETTER TO BEGG, DUNLOP & CO., LTD.*

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 194[6]*<sup>4</sup>

GENTLEMEN,

Shrimati Profullabala Sarkar, widow of Shri Rajkumar Sarkar, writes to me about her distress. She says that her husband left a provident fund of Rs. 1,650 with you, which cannot be withdrawn on account of certain other claims submitted to you. She says that she is in a helpless conditon with several children to maintian.

If her condition is as she describes it, will you please let me know if you can render her the help she needs. Her address is: Shrimati Profullabala Sarkar, Tarapada Kumar's House, Vill. Anthpur, P.O. Shyamnagar, (24 Parganas).

*Yours truly,*  
M. K. GANDHI

MESSRS BEGG, DUNLOP & CO., LTD.  
(MANAGING AGENTS, JAGATLAL ALLIANCE  
NORTH JUTE MILLS)  
2 HARE STREET, CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the looting of villagers' properties by Ganjam Pioneer Corps; *vide* "Telegram to Jamini Bose", 10-1-1945 and "Telegram to Nawab of bhopal", 12-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> On the occasion of the Gangasagar Mela some temporarily constructed jetties to enable pilgrims to board steamers bound for Sangam island at the mouth of the Ganga collapsed. As a result 147 people were killed and 80 injured.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 15-1-1946

<sup>4</sup> The source has 1945, obviously a slip.

345. *LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA*

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

CHI. CHAMPA,

Today I have replied to Bhai Gatubhai's letters as follows.<sup>1</sup> I can think of nothing else and nothing more.

SMT. CHAMPABEHN MEHTA  
SEVAGRAM

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

346. *LETTER TO GATULAL J. DAVE*

*January 15, 1946*

BHAI GATUBHAI,

I got your letter yesterday.

I don't know at all what in the first place I can do in Maganbhai's case. I shall not be able to give him as much time as he wants. Besides, it is very difficult for me to be involved in this matter. I am therefore of the opinion that you should seek the advice of some good lawyer and act strictly as he directs.

GATULAL JATASHANKAR DAVE  
KARANPARA, SHERI NO. 23  
RAJKOT

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

347. *LETTER TO HATIM A. ALVI*<sup>2</sup>

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

BHAI HATIM,

I had your letter but how could I give it thought being constantly on the move. Your belief that the titles Deshabandhu, Deena-bandhu, Sardar, etc., are my inventions is not correct. I cannot

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> The letter is written in the Devanagari script.

therefore take credit for the inventions. I accepted the names. I don't even know if it is the invention of a single individual whom we could indentify. The name 'Harijan' is also said to be my invention, but the assumption is unfounded. It was an untouchable friend from Kathiawar who found the name. I don't know if he is still alive. It is therefore not correct to attribute to me the inventive talent you do.

I should like to find some nice descriptive title for Bhai Jamshed<sup>1</sup> but I could think of one only if I were such an inventor ! Think of something yourself. January 7 has passed; how does it matter? We should start using the title when we find one.

HATIM ALVI

KARACHI

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

### 348. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

DEAR SISTER,

Yesterday I got your letter of 20th ultimo. I have no objection to your going to the Assembly. Some of us should, but personally I attach very little value to it. I very much doubt whether those who can utilize their time in other work, or are already doing so, will gain by going to the Assembly; especially those women who represent Kasturba Nidhi. I am corresponding with Bapa regarding this. In my view, it will not be good for these women to go to the Assembly. Is not the work of Kasturba Nidhi a novel scheme? Only experience will teach that work. Let us not fall into an error through our attachment. Only from this point of view your going to the Assembly will not please me. Give your objective opinion regarding this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI RAMESHWARI NEHRU  
WARIS ROAD  
LAHORE

From a copy of the Hindi: Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.  
Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta, "builder of Modern Karachi" who was presented an address by the people of Karachi on his 61st birthday describing him as "the greatest architect of Karachi".

### 349. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SODEPUR,

January 15, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter.

The removal of Gajraj's tonsils must have done good.

I understand about Mavjibhai.

The right place for Chakrayya seems to be with Raju. By staying with him, he too may get trained.

I think there are several copies of the Hindi Koran lying with us. Any one of them may be given to them. It is likely that all those books have been given to the Talimi Sangh. From there also it can be got for them. Do what is necessary.

People do joke about boys and girls. It can be innocent as well as harmful. There cannot be one rule for this. Life is full of risks and will continue to be so. Ours can only be the middle path. Among our prayer songs there is one by Raichandbhai: "Innocent joy may be derived from anywhere." This song is probably there in the [Ashram] *Bhajanavali*. One who wants to do evil may do no evil at all by action but will do so by his thought. The golden rule is that always and in all circumstances we should remain pure. That purity does by itself influence the atmosphere. If you want to ask anything about this, ask me when I come there.

Let us be quite impersonal towards that sadhu and tell him bluntly that there cannot be any place for him in the Ashram.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4544

350. *LETTER TO HARI GANESH PHATAK*

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I have your postcard. Write to Bapa about Savitribai. Will she do better than Premabehn ?

I hope to leave here on the 19th for Madras and I shall have to spend a few days there. I expect to reach Sevagram on the 8th February.

BHAI HARIBHAU PHATAK  
625 SADASHIV  
POONA CITY

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

351. *LETTER TO G. ANNASAMY*

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

BHAI ANNASAMY,

I got your English letter. I am afraid that much as I would wish it, I shall not be able to visit Pondicherry. I hope you will all be able to understand this much Hindi.

G. ANNASAMY  
PONDICHERRY

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

352. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

SODEPUR,  
*January 15, 1946*

Gandhiji said that the victims of the Diamond Harbour accident were no more but what would happen to their relatives? Many lives had not been lost in Chittagong, however.

These two incidents had overwhelmed him but it should not be so. Men should be calm and steady even if thousands, lakhs or even crores die. If we can bear it



peacefully, we can hear the inner voice then.<sup>1</sup>

Government must be alive to their duties regarding these two incidents but at the same time the people should not forget theirs. The *bhajan* sung at the prayer on Monday (*Antar mama vikasita karo*) indicated the way. It was a prayer to open our hearts. The world would become a vast fraternity if that was done.

Gandhiji said that if he were there at Diamond Harbour, he would have advised the men and women not to go there. He had witnessed a similar instance at Kumbha Mela at Hardwar in 1915, when in the jostle for a dip in the Ganges, 17 men were drowned. At Diamond Harbour the pilgrims had to get on the jetty and the Government should have made proper shipping arrangements. However, even if the Government did not do their duty an accusation on that score would not help us. The people on their side should follow the right course. The Government could not be blamed for the incident at Hardwar. Here of course it could be found on enquiry that proper arrangement for shipping facilities had not been made.

At Chittagong, it was worse. People had read the Government account and it was an admission of the story as sent out by Jaminibabu. But the people, Gandhiji said, did not play their part as preached in the *bhajan*. The *bhajan* wanted to make us firm, active and fearless. Gandhiji felt sure that if the people could rely on these qualities, the Chittagong incident could not have taken place. If people could sing the *bhajan* as they did in the prayer, why could they not act according to its message, he asked. Gurudev's words were not meant for Bengal only. Everywhere saints had preached the same message.

An Englishman had sardonically asked Gandhiji if the Indians could get independence by harping on the theme of their slavery. Gandhiji thought that the remark was true. No good could come out of repeating the fact of dependence. Slave people lived in eternal misery and only by working for eradicating this misery could they get swaraj. Only criticism could not make foreigners quit. If people realized the message of satyagraha, if they practised it in life, they could get rid of this misery. What was satyagraha? It was only the craving for truth inherent in man and there lay its strength.

Two women were attacked at Chittagong and for that two men were counter-attacked. As a result a hundred came, attacked the villagers and burnt the hamlet. If the people could rest firm on truth such an incident could never happen. He had subsequently learnt, Gandhiji said, that the rowdy elements were his countrymen and therefore brothers. If that was so he also had some responsibility for their action and it was his duty as well to strive for the eradication of their vile instincts. On the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Telegram to Jamini Bose", 10-1-1946 and "Telegram to Nawab of Bhopal

other side many pilgrims died at Diamond Harbour. This latter accident occurred because the Indian people had not been successful in explaining the true significance of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage entails pain. It was not pilgrimage to travel by rail or steamer. Travelling from Cape Comorin to Hardwar by a train was no pilgrimage.

He had been preaching this idea for a long time, and he would be doing so in the future whatever the result. He would continue with his message even if five men only responded to the call.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 16-1-1946

### 353. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

SODEPUR,  
January 16, 1946

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have with me three letters of yours dated December 13, 1945, January 7, 1946, and January 11, 1946.

I will not argue at length about another Tamil translation of *An Autobiography*. Nor have I the time for that. I am dictating this reply in the early hours of the morning, and that also while racing against time. I have seen in English more translations than one of a good book. I don't find anything wrong in it. Our only aim in retaining the copyright can be to guard against possible misuse of the privilege. But if we have authorized one person, and then another public-spirited person who can do a better translation comes forward, why should we not give him the permission? This is my line of reasoning. More when we meet and can talk at leisure. But meanwhile I will accept your decision as final and correct. For I may decide something in haste and you may have to bear the burden, which would not be proper.

I have decided for the present to refuse permission for a Finnish translation, for the person's intention seems to be to make profit.

About *Harijan* we shall decide after I hear more from you. For, as long as the Government does not share our desire that its publication should be resumed, I think it will be a great risk to embark on the venture. I think I have discussed this matter with you earlier.<sup>1</sup> The lifting of the ban will not be enough for resuming publication. Discuss the matter with Mavalankar and Sardar, if he is there, and then write to me. We wish to do nothing in haste.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Jivanji D. Desai", 13-11-1945

I have received the new edition of *The Constructive Programme*. You are right when you say that you can afford to send, and should send, a large number of copies only if a proper account of the copies is kept and the money is regularly remitted to you. Do not send more copies just now. Two of the newspapers here published the whole test. You may publish the booklet in the other languages you intend to.

You have given a full explanation about the preface, as also about the price.

Chi. Kanu will write to you separately regarding the *Bhajana-vali*. Do not publish the new edition till you get all the material from him.

I should like you to publish the translation sent by Rajendra Babu. Discuss the matter with Kishorelal and Narahari also.

The *Rashtrabhasha* dictionary follows me wherever I go. I have not forgotten, either, about the foreword to the book on *Gita According to Gandhi* written by Mahadevbhai. I will be happy if I can finish it before leaving for Madras. But all that is in God's hands. I rest content with the work I can do from day to day. I cannot, of course, attend to all the things. I see in this my inefficiency. If I cannot overcome it, I cannot hope to live up to 125 years. But be it as it may. If you think it fit, you may reprint *Nation's Voice*.

Your suggestion for adding something more to the paragraphs on cow-protection in *The Constructive Programme* seems a good one. I would describe it as "improvement of livestock". I agree that it should not have been left out. We will remember the point at the time of the next edition. If the current edition is exhausted soon and any suggestions for improvements occur to you, let me have them, too.

I am leaving here on the 19th and reaching Madras on the 21st. The address will be c/o Dakshina [Bharat] Hindi Prachar Sabha, Thyagarayanagar, Madras. I will be in Madras for 15 days at the most. If I can finish earlier, I will try. Then on the 8th to Sevagram. After spending a day in Bombay, to Poona on the 21st.

Blessings from  
BAPU

Not revised.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9962. Also C.W. 6936. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

354. TELEGRAM TO M. SATYANARAYANA

*Express*

SODEPUR,  
January 16, 1946

SATYANARAYANJI  
DAKSHINA BHARAT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA  
THYAGARAYANAGAR (MADRAS)

SORRY MUST REACH TWENTYFIRST. MAKE NO APPOINTMENTS  
BEFORE TWENTYTHIRD. CONTINUE YOUR USUAL WORK.  
ASSUME NO SPECIAL TRAIN FOR ME.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

355. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

SODEPUR,  
January 16, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your two kind letters<sup>1</sup>. I shall have great pleasure in calling on you, perhaps for the last time (though I shall hope not) on the 18th at 7-30 p. m.

I am glad you have taken proper and energetic action on the two terrible tragedies.<sup>2</sup>

On the question of salt I see that I have failed to make my point clear. But I must not inflict written argument on you. According to the exigencies of the time I shall discuss the matter with you on Friday.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 131*

<sup>1</sup> Dated January 15 and 20

<sup>2</sup> Of Chittagong and Diamond Harbour; *vide* "Telegram to Nawab of Bhopal and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 14-1-1946

356. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SODEPUR,  
January 16, 1946

MY DEAR C. R.,

I leave here on 19th and reach there with a large party on 21st. I must not be in a train the 22nd day of a month, if I can at all help it. Ba died that day and we have *Gita Parayan*<sup>1</sup> that day. I must devote 21st and 2nd to private, necessary visits. Just now I have only Sastri<sup>2</sup> in mind. Natesan wants me to go to my old home—his place.<sup>3</sup> You will see what should be done. The rest when we meet. Do hope there will be no boisterous demonstration. Noises and undisciplined crowds get on my nerves.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

I expect to meet the Parliamentary Delegation on 23rd.

From a photostat: G.N. 2115

357. LETTER TO JEHANGIR P. PATEL

SODEPUR,  
January 16, 1946

BHAI JEHANGIR,

I have your letter dictated in chaste Gujarati. I am delighted. However, since we want to work for Dinshawji I shall certainly write in English if that helps us better.

I shall try to reach Poona before 21st February.

I am sure you know that I have already sent the money. All I am worried about, if at all, is that the clinic should benefit the masses. Till now it has catered solely to the rich. But we shall further discuss

<sup>1</sup> Recitation

<sup>2</sup> V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who was ill; *vide* "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 4-1-1946

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to G. A. Natesan", 12-1-1946

all this when we meet. For the time being whatever you can do and get done is enough.

SJT. JEHANGIR P. PATEL  
PATEL BROTHERS, PATEL HOUSE  
10 CHURCHGATE STREET  
FORT, BOMBAY

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

### 358. *LETTER TO DR. N. B. KHARE*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16, 1946*

BHAI KHARE,

I have your letter. I was delighted to see that you wrote in Hindustani and signed in Urdu.

I am carefully watching what you are doing and what you can do in Malaya-Burma. And I wish that everything is for the good of the people there. What is the harm in Dr. Bidhan's Medical Mission going to Malaya-Burma ?<sup>1</sup>

I understand what you have written about the congress. I do not want to write anything more about it.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4871. Courtesy: Dr. N. B. Khare

### 359. *LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRA RAO*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16, 1946*

BHAI RAMACHANDRA RAO,

I have your letter. I like it. I am also glad that you have decided to give Manorama in marriage to a Harijan. But your inference in favour of atheism is not correct; or as I believe, your *nastikta*<sup>2</sup> is only a form of *astikta*<sup>3</sup>.

I am prepared to get the marriage performed in the Sevagram Ashram and have the same rites followed as in the case of Tendulkar.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 8-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> Atheism

<sup>3</sup> Faith

The priest, who will perform the ceremony under my supervision, will be a Harijan. You are welcome to make any suggestion in this regard. One thing more. Manorama is 17 years old; I think I remember her. My advice is that she should wait at least for two years. If your idea is that the ceremony may be performed now and the girl might go to stay with her husband on attaining the age of 19, I would suggest postponing the marriage till she can live with her husband. In the meantime they may learn whatever more they want to learn. Let them learn at least Hindustani in both the scripts and all the processes of the charkha right from beginning to end.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 9194

*360. LETTER TO SECRETARY, MADRAS LABOUR UNION  
FOR TEXTILE WORKERS*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16, 1946*

DEAR MR. SECRETARY,

I propose to address no meetings. I have neither the desire nor the strength to undertake more work than I have already accepted. You must realize that the days are gone when I could go anywhere and address any number of meetings. Therefore, please excuse me. You may consult Shri Satyanarayana about an appointment with me.

M. K. GANDHI

SECRETARY

MADRAS LABOUR UNION FOR TEXTILE WORKERS

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

*361. LETTER TO AVADHNANDAN*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16, 1946*

BHAI AVADHNANDAN,

I got your letter. None of us could make out the first signature; the second and third are all right. I think when one's signature is illegible, one should spell it out clearly beside or below. The English deliberately make their signatures illegible. Why should we imitate

them? And if we do, we should also follow their signature practice of spelling out the name clearly below.

If your complaint is just it deserves to be considered. But then I should have your permission to show your letter to Satyanarayana. I will try to find some time for a talk with you.

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

### *362. LETTER TO T. J. KEDAR*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16, 1946*

BHAI KEDAR,

I got your letter of January 12. I was very happy. Let us see what happens.

I hope to reach Sevagram on the 8th. I shall stay there for ten days and then proceed to Poona.

SHRIT. J. KEDAR

ADVOCATE

NAGPUR

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

### *363. LETTER TO SATYANARAYANA*

SODEPUR,  
*January 16/17, 1946*

BHAI SATYANARAYANA,

A wire was sent to you yesterday. Did I tell you that I would try to reach there about the 23rd? Well, I had forgotten at the time that the 22nd was Ba's death anniversary. Chi. Kanu reminded me of it and therefore I have now decided to reach there on the 21st. Besides, the M.P.s would be there on the 23rd and in order to meet them also, I must reach there a day earlier. I hope you will not be put to inconvenience if I come a couple of days earlier. You will have understood what Rajkumari explained on the telephone. I have no letter of yours regarding the special train. It would be wrong to incur expenditure on a special train. If it is the others who are to be brought by the special train, why bring them two days in advance? In any case if that be the intention you may do as you think best. That means that if everyone pays his own fare there will be no harm in requisitioning a



special train.

I shall be accompanied by 22 persons. The number may even increase by two or three. A list<sup>1</sup> of their names is enclosed. Bapa will go there. You may put him up with me. He also wants it. See to it yourself. If the number of people increases, arrangements can be made to put some of them up elsewhere although I would prefer all my companions being put up in one place.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

*January 17, 1946*

The letter which called for the wire has arrived today but what I have written above is sufficient.

SHRISATYANARAYANAJI  
C/O HINDI PRACHAR SABHA  
THYAGARAYANAGAR, MADRAS

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

### *364. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

SODEPUR,  
*January 17, 1946*

Gandhiji said that Friday<sup>2</sup> would be his last day at Sodepur on this occasion. He had always cherished a desire to stay in this place and join them in prayer. Indeed he had not been able to stay there continuously owing to his tours. His tours had produced good results. He hoped that they would stick to the system of congregational prayer.

Exhorting them to sing the name of God in chorus and to keep tune with all heart, Gandhiji said that he had told them before and wanted to tell them now that soldiers were compelled to move together and to keep step in marching. At first there was an element of compulsion in making them do so but gradually as they became habituated the element of compulsion passed and their movements became easier and smoother. In their case the soldiers were made disciplined on pain of dismissal, but in prayer although they were the devotees of God yet there was no question of compelling them to keep or sing in chorus. But it was for the sake of their own good that they joined in prayer and if they uttered the name of God in one tune their hearts

<sup>1</sup> This, however, is not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> January 18

would be purified and they would get new strength in their hearts. This would be their remuneration for becoming the devotees of God.

Referring to the day's *bhajan*, Gandhiji said that in this song the devotee was making the submission that he would offer his salutation to God in all his worldly duties. God was their real friend, He was their father and mother and in fact everything. Their earthly friends and relations suffered death but God was immortal. He never left them at any time. The *bhajan* therefore very aptly taught them to remember God who was their eternal friend in every sphere of their life's activities. The song also told them to keep their inward eye open because it was through this inward eye that they were able to perceive God.

Concluding, Gandhiji said that in the prayer song of the day they had found such things which would be of great value in their everyday life. They should take the teachings of the song to heart. After they had attended the prayer if they returned home with their hearts unchanged they would be deprived of a great thing.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-1-1946

### 365. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

SODEPUR,  
*January 18, 1946*

CHI. AMRITA LAL,

Do you know that falling ill is a crime? And after falling ill taking no treatment is doubly so.<sup>1</sup> Hence get well soon. Your palce is in Wardha. From that also you have been cut off. Now you can go there only after getting well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 10413. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

### 366. DISCUSSION WITH CHITTAGONG CONGRESSMEN

*January 18, 1946*

A number of Congress leaders of Chittagong met Mahatma Gandhi at Sodepur Ashram and had nearly an hour's discussion with him about conditions in the district since 1942, with particular reference to war-time economy and the problem of resettlement of the evacuees.

The Congress leaders also discussed with Gandhiji the recent incident at Kasai-para. Gandhiji told them that the question of resettlement of the evacuees had been

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had dysentery and had refused medical treatment.

engaging his attention for a long time. He asked them to correspond with him on this matter. The problem could be solved if the 18-point constructive programme was fulfilled.

*The Hindustan Times*, 21-1-1946

### 367. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

*January 18, 1946*

Gandhiji regretted that he was addressing the congregation for the last time on the present occasion and God only knew when he would be in position to repeat his visit to Bengal. He had a mind to go to Chittagong and also to visit Munshigunj but he could not realize his wish. Mahatma Gandhi observed :

Although during my stay I could not visit the different parts of Bengal as I wished, still I will say that I am satisfied with what little I could do in Bengal. My code teaches me to be satisfied even if I succeed in one front out of ten I try.

Referring to the Chittagong incident, Gandhiji said that there was no point in finding fault with others over this issue. They had to analyse themselves. They should remember that in always finding fault with others they themselves were likely to be at fault. If the habit of fault-finding became a permanent feature with them they would never be able to serve anybody. Tulsidas in his inimitable way made it quite clear that there were no animate or inanimate objects which were either totally evil or totally good. Those two qualities more or less were to be noticed in everything and just like the proverbial swan they had to discard the evil of a thing and adopt the good of it for their own welfare. He asked the people to remember this moral sermon of the poet and conduct themselves accordingly. If they concentrated only on black spots they would themselves be spotted. Therefore, for one's own welfare it was desirable that the habit of fault-finding be given up. In China there was a pillar on which three monkeys were carved in stone: one of them was blindfolded, the second ear-logged and the third close-mouthed. The moral of this illustration was 'see no evil, hear no evil and speak no evil'. He urged upon the congregation to take to heart what this Chinese symbol taught them.

Dwelling upon the necessity of congregational prayer, Gandhiji hoped that people on return to their homes would conduct such prayer in the company of the members of the family and children. Theatres or cinemas they often visited, but those agencies could scarcely benefit the people to the extent the congregational prayer could do. He himself had been to a famous theatre in London and could speak from his personal experience that it hardly benefited him. Comparing the benefit

of congregational prayer with what little historical knowledge a dramatic performance could offer, Gandhiji said that the former was many thousand times more beneficial. What could the stage teach, he asked. Was it of any consequence when compared with the realistic drama that the world presented? He had seen the role of a hero being played on the stage. Could Rama of his conception be played on the stage? Could the tragedy on any stage be so realistic and effective as the tragedies they witnessed on the world stage? Mothers were ministering angels of homes and they nursed children to life and to them he especially appealed to introduce God and divinity to their children and to introduce *bhajan* song which was full of eternal bliss.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19-1-1946

### 368. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

SODEPUR,  
[On or before] *January* [19]<sup>1</sup> 1946

CHI. GHANSHYAMDAS,

The enclosed letter has been received from Kanya Gurukul. I think I had better send it to you. I do not know what exactly is to be done.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8076. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 369. TELEGRAM TO SUCHETA KRIPALANI

*January 19, 1946*

NO TELEGRAM RECEIVED. PERSONALLY AGAINST YOU  
ENTERING LEGISLATURE.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The numeral is faded in the source. Gandhiji left Sodepur on this date.

### 370. LETTER TO SUCHETA KRIPALANI

SODEPUR,  
January 19, 1946

CHI. SUCHETA,

Your letter written from Allahabad is before me. I am dictating this after the morning prayer. At 2-30 p.m. today, I leave for Madras.

Your report is good. I have written to Bapa regarding the Delhi case as well as the question of representation. I am inclined to think that if we just wait till we find a suitable Agent for a place, meanwhile getting the work done through the centre, no problem should arise in the appointment of women Agents. Therefore, I am of the opinion that we may take any kind of work from Brijkrishna. We should not formally appoint him an Agent. If the idea does not appeal to either or both of you I shall be ready to do as you suggest. This has been my policy regarding any activity that I am not conducting myself and I am convinced that it is right. Therefore, send me your own opinion.

About the U.P., I am carrying on correspondence with Purnima. No decision has yet been reached. Concerning the appointments another question had now arisen, viz., whether anyone contesting election to the Assembly can continue to be an Agent. We have three or four such cases—those of Durgabai, the sister from Calicut (I forget her name), Rameshwaridevi and probably Purnima too. I feel that it would indeed be difficult, if not impossible, for those going into the Assembly, to do full justice to their work as Agents. Besides, the mere knowledge that their Agents are members of the Assembly is likely to perturb the village women. Do send me your views in the matter. Are you coming to Madras? Bapa is coming. You may also come. If you come I shall arrange for your accommodation.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRIMATI SUCHETA KRIPALANI  
SWARAJ BHAVAN  
ALLAHABAD

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

### 371. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

SODEPUR,  
January 19, 1946

CHI. MUNNALAL,

These days I am kept extremely busy. I, therefore, have not been able to reply to one or two letters of yours. They contained nothing special. I am glad that things have improved somewhat. However, I have realized your difficulty. We shall be able to solve it only through patience. I cannot do more from here. It will be enough if you do not incur any new expenditure. I will see about the khadi after I return.

I read your long telegram to Kanchan. I would say that you should not have sent it. I do not understand how Balkrishna encouraged you to send it. It can be described as a wire from a *vevalo*<sup>1</sup>. You will understand what I mean if you know the meaning of the word *vevalo*. I do not know the English equivalent for *vevalo*. Every language has some words which are untranslatable. *Vevala* is such a word. I am not reprimanding you at all. This is only a joke. I actually gave you an opportunity to come, if you wished to. Kanchan is better now. And if she gives up her obstinacy, this illness will do her much good. I am leaving today for Madras. It is not certain whether or not I shall take Kanchan with me. Dr. Bidhan has had an X-ray taken. If the report is good, Sushilabehn says I can take her. She has not yet been permitted to walk.

My reason for sending Manibhai was that if such an occasion should arise again, you should be able to leave the place immediately. Manibhai, therefore, was to get trained by you even if you had not left. But what has happened has happened.

One thing is certain, namely, that Kanchan was looked after with as much care as would be bestowed on an Emperor. And she got a doctor, too, such as only an Emperor could get.

I had a letter from Jehangirji. He says he will do his best.

Kanchan is accompanying me.

Not revised.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8616. Also C.W. 7202. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Mawkishly sentimental

### 372. A NOTE

SODEPUR,  
January 19, 1946

I think the construction of the bunds at Hooghly, which has benefited the people greatly is actually a part of the Constructive Programme.<sup>1</sup> Such creative power should be there in all the sevaks.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8028. Also C.W. 10517 and 10526.  
Courtesy: Ratnamoni Chatterjee

### 373. SPEECH AT BALASORE<sup>2</sup>

January 19, 1946

He said that he had already spoken enough in Bengal and Assam and they must have read the speeches in the papers. He asked them to follow those instructions. Gandhiji laid stress on the need for Harijan uplift. He wanted caste Hindus and Harijans to live as brothers. He also complimented them on the discipline they had shown and said that the people at Balrampur had also behaved in similar manner.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21-1-1946

### 374. A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY<sup>3</sup>

November 1, 1945

The joy of life lies in divesting oneself of life's cares.

November 2, 1945

The past belongs to us but we do not belong to the past. We belong to the present. We are makers of the future, but we do not belong to the future.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the construction of a cross bund in Arambagh for irrigation purposes across the river Mundeswari by the villagers, the cost of which was met by voluntary cess.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was sleeping when his train arrived at Balasore. However, when he was informed that a disciplined crowd was waiting on the platform to see him, he came to the doorway and addressed them.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji started writing "A Thought for the Day" for Anand Hingorani, at the latter's request, on November 20, 1944, and continued the practice for about two years. The thoughts for the period covered by this volume are reproduced as a single item under the last date, 19-1-1946. The thoughts were originally written in Hindi. The translation by Anand T. Hingorani is reproduced here with slight alterations.

*November 3, 1945*

He alone who truly serves is a good householder. He goes on giving without expectation of return.

*November 4, 1945*

A fault as small as a mustard seed becomes as big as a mountain when sought to be concealed. It can, however, be eradicated if an open confession is made.

*Pratipada, November 5, 1945*

Faith transcends reason; it is not opposed to it.

*November 6, 1945*

It is easier to cross the ocean between countries than to span the gulf between individuals or people.

*November 7, 1945*

It is not man that enjoys pleasures; it is pleasures that enjoy man, which is to say they consume him.

*November 8, 1945*

Everyone grows old with the passage of time; desire alone remains ever youthful.

*November 9, 1945*

Irregularity never goes well with non-attachment.

*November 10, 1945*

He who is shamed into acting correctly is not acting correctly at all.

*November 11, 1945*

The avaricious, the lustful, the wrathful and the drunkard are among the ten types of persons reckoned by Vidura as having no regard for religion.

*November 12, 1945*

That which should be renounced must be declined as a matter of duty even if offered free.

*November 13, 1945*

None can put him to shame who, of his own free will, and even though others know nothing about it, makes a clean breast of his sin and is ashamed of it.

*November 14, 1945*

Innocent and dreamless sleep is *samadhi* (meditation), *yoga* (concentration of mind) and selfless action. (Adapted from Vinoba's letter).



*November 15, 1945*

Nothing is impossible for a true devotee.

*November 16, 1945*

A devotee is ever absorbed in God.

*November 17, 1945*

He who is absorbed in God cannot become absorbed in anybody or anything besides Him.

*November 18, 1945*

It is said that a pilgrimage is not undertaken at the cost of one's hearth and home. The truth, however, is that a pilgrimage is possible only after a complete renunciation of hearth and home.

*November 19, 1945*

The fear of the gun disappears when it has been fired. The bond of love grows ever tighter, yet is never felt as bondage.

*November 20, 1945*

Man's real enemies are six—lust, anger, attachment, drunkenness, pride and grief. Victory over them makes it easier to conquer the rest.

*November 21, 1945*

Everyone agrees it is folly to do evil. But to consider evil means justified for gaining a worthy end must be regarded as even greater folly.

*November 22, 1945*

If a man were not to undertake work which is beyond his capacity, there would be no scope left for anxiety.

*November 23, 1945*

It is more than severe punishment to compel a man to do something which he does not understand.

*November 24, 1945*

I see a man whom I consider my brother and love him as such. Later, I find that he is not my brother. He is what he is and I give him up. Who is to blame in this ?

*November 25, 1945*

What is it, if not futile, to argue about something which is beyond thought ?

*November 26, 1945*

What should be done if a mad man appears before us and takes possession of our house and stores? What is the non-

violent remedy? The simple answer is lovingly to let him have his way.

*November 27/December 3, 1945*

He who does not labour and yet eats, eats stolen food.

*November 28/December 3, 1945*

Who can eat with an easy mind so long as even a single person starves for want of work ?

*November 29/December 3, 1945*

Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket and you will learn much from such reflection.

*November 30/December 3, 1945*

To a starving person, God will appear in the form of bread alone.

*December 1/December 3, 1945*

Why insult the naked by giving them clothes? Give them work so that they may earn the money for clothes by their own labour.

*December 2/December 3, 1945*

It is a sin to open free kitchens for those who are capable of physical labour. To provide work for them is meritorious.

*December 3, 1945*

Faith that does not wane but ever waxes higher and turns into realization.

*December 4, 1945*

Beauty lies not in the complexion but in Truth alone.

*December 5, 1945*

When a man lives in submission to authority, it means he is paying the price of personal freedom.

*December 6, 1945*

When the administration becomes so evil as to be intolerable, a man sacrifices even personal freedom to offer non-violent resistance to it.

*December 7, 1945*

Truly, there are as many religions as there are men. But when one goes to the root of one's religion, one finds that in reality is one.

*December 8, 1945*

If we are careful about the means, the end will take care of itself. In other words there is no difference between means and ends.

*December 9, 1945*

Confession of error works like a broom. The broom sweeps away filth; confession does no less.

*December 10, 1945*

One perfect man can dispel untruth even though the untruthful be legion.

*December 11, 1945*

There is a limit to violent action and it can fail. Non-violence knows no limit and it never fails.

*December 12, 1945*

Faith is put to the test when the situation is most difficult.

*December 13, 1945*

Violence is the weapon of the weak; non-violence that of the strong.

*December 14, 1945*

He who wishes to preserve his integrity must be prepared to lose all material possessions.

*December 15, 1945*

A religion which takes no note of this world and only harps on the one beyond, does not deserve the name.

*December 16, 1945*

He who is poor by force of circumstances, cannot become poor by choice.

*December 17, 1945*

Chastity needs no purdah. It needs only God's protection.

*December 18, 1945*

The right that accrues from the performance of duty endures.

*December 19, 1945*

So long as gold and diamonds lie buried in the bowels of the earth they are of no use to anyone. Man's labour digs them out and gives them their value. Seen thus, it is the labourer who produces them.

*December 20, 1945*

Just as I have the right to eat and drink, so also have I the right to do my work in my own way. This is swaraj.

*December 21, 1945*

Do not seek to know the views of others, nor base your opinion thereon. To think independently for oneself is a sign of fearlessness.

*December 22, 1945*

If God be our protector and companion, why or whom shall we fear, however fierce be the storm, however deep the darkness.

*December 23, 1945*

In complete non-violence, there is complete absense of hatred.

*December 24, 1945*

Non-violence works for the good of all, not only of the greatest number. The votary of non-violence must be prepared if necessary to lay down his life in order to secure the good of all.

*December 25, 1945*

Prayer needs a heart, not a tongue. Without the heart, words have no meaning.

*December 26, 1945*

Purity asks for no external protection.

*December 27, 1945*

Our greatest enemy is not the foreigner, nor anyone else. We ourselves, that is, our desires, are our enemies,

*December 28, 1945*

He who does not want to be a slave of anyone, must become the slave of God.

*December 29, 1945*

Violence must be abjured, for the good that it may seem to achieve is in appearance only, while the harm that it does is everlasting.

*December 30, 1945*

Man is the image of his thoughts.

*December 31, 1945*

True religion knows no territorial limits.

*January 1, 1946*

Looking at a blank sheet of paper, one cannot say which is the obverse and which is the reverse side. So it is with non-violence and truth. The one cannot exist without the other.

KASHI,

*January 2, 1946*

It would be considered deplorable if a dead man's body were to be buried in the same pit as the carcass of an animal. But on

reflection it would appear that out of this action arises a happy state—the unity of all life is established.

ON WAY TO SODEPUR,

*January 3, 1946*

Physical weakness is not the real weakness. Weakness of the mind alone is the real weakness.

SODEPUR,

*January 4, 1946*

The common people are a devoted worker's real bank, and this bank never fails.

SODEPUR,

*January 5, 1946*

Renunciation which does not spring from the heart cannot be abiding.

SODEPUR,

*January 6, 1946*

He who in his distress turns to God is not troubled by any fear.

SODEPUR,

*January 7, 1946*

Education which does not mould character is wholly worthless.

ON THE ASSAM MAIL,

*January 8, 1946*

When there is both inner and outer cleanliness, it approaches godliness.

ON THE ASSAM MAIL,

*January 9, 1946*

O man ! If thou art really free from attachment, thou hast to put up patiently with insult, abuse and even assault.

SARANI OR GAUHATI,

*January 10, 1946*

What matters to you the world's praise or censure? Do what you think is your duty.

SARANI OR GAUHATI,

*January 11, 1946*

Only the brave can be forgiving. The weak are unable to punish; so, in their case, the question of forgiveness does not arise.

SARANI OR GAUHATI,

*January 12, 1946*

Economics which departs from or is opposed to ethics is no good and should be renounced.

ON THE STEAMER TO DHUBRI,

*January 13, 1946*

Man is where his mind is, not where his body is.

SODEPUR,

*January 14, 1946*

That which looks for mercy from an opponent is not non-violence.

SODEPUR,

*January 15, 1946*

One mark of non-attachment is that the work of a person free from attachment is never in arrears at the end of the day.

SODEPUR,

*January 16, 1946*

A person without attachment should have an inexhaustible fund of patience.

SODEPUR,

*January 17, 1946*

A person without attachment should under no circumstances give way to anger.

SODEPUR,

*January 18, 1946*

One who thinks in terms of 'mine' and 'thine' cannot be free from attachment.

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS,

*January 19, 1946*

The non-attached person cannot own anything.

*A Thought for the Day*, pp. 347-426

### 375. FOREWORD TO “MY MASTER GOKHALE”

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS,<sup>1</sup>

January 20, 1946

Whilst I appreciate Shri Jagadisan's<sup>2</sup> invitation to contribute a few words by way of Preface or Foreword to his admirable collection of Rt. Hon'ble Sastriar's<sup>3</sup> writings and speeches on Gokhale<sup>4</sup> the Good, as I would call him, it embarrasses me. However strange my claim may appear to the reader, I have called Gokhale my political *guru*. Therefore Sastriar is a fellow-disciple. And what a disciple and yet an amiable usurper! I was to have the honour of being Gokhale's successor but I found in Sastriar a worthy usurper to whom I made a willing surrender. I could have given no satisfaction to the few well-chosen members of the society.<sup>5</sup> I had, and have, no gifts which Gokhale had and Sastriar has in luxurious abundance.

I confess that however great may be my attempt at impar-tiality, I must fail to satisfy the critical reader. Fellow-admirers need no passport from me. And of whom was I to write? As I began to read Jagadisan's selection, I did not know whether Gokhale absorbed my attention or Sastriar.

Therefore I would close these hasty and rambling remarks by warning the critical reader against his or her trying the questionable task of discovering in these pages an echo of his or her own views. It should be enough to find in them the transparent sincerity and patriotism of the writer or, shall I say, the biographer and the master.

M. K. GANDHI

*My Master Gokhale*

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was going to Madras to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Dakshina Bharat Hindu Prachar Sabha.

<sup>2</sup> T. N. Jagadisan's

<sup>3</sup> V. S. Srinivas Sastri's

<sup>4</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale

<sup>5</sup> The reference, presumably, is to Gandhiji's joining the Servants of India Society founded by Gokhale in 1905; Gokhale was keen on it. But there was difference of opinion among some members: vide "An Autobiography", sub-title "With Gokhale in Poona" and "An Autobiography", sub-title "Kumbha Mela"

### 376. FOREWORD TO "THE GOSPEL OF SELFLESS ACTION OR THE 'GITA' ACCORDING TO GANDHI"

The following pages by Mahadev Desai are an ambitious project. It represents his unremitting labours during his prison life in 1933-'34. Every page is evidence of his scholarship and exhaustive study of all he could lay hands upon regarding the *Bhagavad Gita*, poetically called *The Song Celestial* by the late Sir Edwin Arnold. The immediate cause of this labour of love was my translation<sup>1</sup> in Gujarati of the divine book as I understood it. In trying to give a translation of my meaning of the *Gita*, he found himself writing an original commentary on the *Gita*.

The book might have been published during his lifetime,<sup>2</sup> if I could have made time to go through the manuscript. I read some portions with him, but exigencies of my work had to interrupt the reading. Then followed the imprisonment of August 1942, and his sudden death within six days of our imprisonment. All of his immediate friends decided to give his reverent study of the *Gita* to the public. He had copies typed for his English friends who were impatient to see the commentary in print. And Pyarelal, who was collaborator with Mahadev Desai for many years, went through the whole manuscript and undertook to perform the difficult task of proof-reading. Hence this publication.

Frankly I do not pretend to any scholarship. I have, therefore, contented myself with showing the genesis of Mahadev Desai's effort. In so far as the translation part of the volume is concerned, I can vouch for its accuracy. He has carried out the meaning of the original translation. I may add, too, that Pyarelal has interfered with the original only and in rare cases where it was considered to be essential, an interference which Mahadev Desai would, in my opinion, have gladly accepted, had he been alive.

M. K. GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS, January 20, 1946

*The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Anasaktiyoga", sub-title "The Message of the Gita"

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai passed away on August 15, 1942.



### 377. WHAT EXHIBITION SHOULD BE

The Congress session is likely to be held within two or three months. The question, therefore, arises as to what sort of an exhibition should be put up from the villagers' point of view. It is only the rural view-point which can be valid for India, if we desire and believe that the villagers have not only to survive but also to become strong and rich. If this is true, there can be no place for city articles and pomp and show. There should be no need for the entertainments that are prevalent in cities. Under no circumstances, should the exhibition degenerate into cheap entertainment or a means for earning and never into an instrument of advertisement for business men. Nothing should be sold there, not even *khadi* and the products of village industries. The exhibition should be educative, and it should be interesting too. It should be so organized that a villager after returning home, would begin to feel the necessity of learning some sort of industry or craft. There should be somebody who can point out the shortcomings in all the villages of India and someone who can explain the ways and means for getting rid of them. There should be someone who can show how far we have progressed since the beginning of the movement for village uplift. There should be somebody who can explain how this exhibition helps in making village life aesthetically satisfying.

Now let us consider what should be the form of the exhibition which can fulfil these conditions:

1. There should be two models of the village—one showing the village as it is today and the other, the improved one.

The improved village will be clean. The cleanliness will be seen in the houses, the roads, the surroundings and the fields. The condition of the cattle will also be better. Maps, pictures and books should show how particular occupations can help in increasing the villagers' income.

2. Complete details should be displayed about how the various village industries should work, where the tools for them are available and how they are manufactured. All the crafts should be demonstrated. At the same time the following items should be shown:

- (a) Ideal diet for the villagers;
- (b) the competition between machine industry and handicrafts;
- (c) a practical demonstration of animal husbandry;

- (d) a model for latrines;
- (e) art section;
- (f) organic manure v. chemical fertilizers;
- (g) use of hides and bones of animals;
- (h) village music, musical instruments and village dramas;
- (i) village games, gymnasium and exercises;
- (j) Nayee Talim;
- (k) village medicines;

Bearing in mind the policy stated at the outset, whatever additional items can be exhibited should be there.

What I have stated is only illustrative. I have deliberately omitted all those village industries which are connected with the spinning-wheel. Without these industries the exhibition should be considered worthless.

M. K. GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS, January 20, 1946

[From Hindi]

*Khadi Jagat, February 1946*

### 378. *SPEECH AT CUTTACK*

*January 20, 1946*

Gandhiji said that independence was not an easy thing to win or was it a drama. Discipline was essential in the national life of the country and, if they got *swaraj*, he asked, how could they maintain it without discipline. He was very much impressed at the discipline of people in place like Balasore<sup>1</sup> and Bhadrak and was expecting discipline of higher order in Cuttack, this being the capital of the Province.<sup>2</sup> Thankkar Bapa had asked him to break journey in Orissa. He regretted very much that he could not break journey. But he had Orissa always in his heart.<sup>3</sup>

It has cut him to the quick, he said, that Orissa, which he had loved so fondly and through which he had made his Harijan pilgrimage on foot,<sup>4</sup> should belie his expectations. Was this their non-violence or did they imagine that freedom would be

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Balasore", 19-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> According to report in Amrita Bazar Patrika, when the train slowed down at Cuttack around midnight, some people climbed the footboards, and Gandhiji asked them to sit down in an orderly manner: *vide* also the following item.

<sup>3</sup> What follows is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*.

<sup>4</sup> In May 1934

won or kept through indiscipline and hooliganism? They were living in a fool's paradise, if they did. Was it not ridiculous to pit indiscipline and hooliganism against the atom bomb which was the ultimate of brute force? It was time that they made up their mind as to their choice between the two paths. They were at liberty to scrap non-violence, if they felt that it was a played-out force. But, if they were thinking of violence while they professed non-violence, they would be guilty of deception and fraud upon themselves and the world. He remarked:

I do not want your cheers of welcome, nor money during these stoppages. But I want you to purge yourselves of the lie in the soul. That will please me more than your gifts; the noises never will, and never have.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21-1-1946; also *Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 379. SPEECH AT BERHAMPUR<sup>1</sup>

*January 20, 1946*

In these early hours I meet you, and I am glad. I am sorry, I could not stay with you even for a day in Orrisa. You will excuse me. My health is not like before. After fifty years of age one's health weakens. That is God's will. At Bhadrak and Balasore the crowds were very disciplined. So I thought it was better that I stop at Cuttack. In the original programme, no stoppage at Cuttack of the special train was arranged. In Cuttack<sup>2</sup> the mob was unruly. It was about 1.30 a. m. At such a time one should not be disturbed in his sleep and that too an old man like myself. They afterwards became orderly.

You are sitting calmly. My prayer is, not only at your place but at all places, that it should be so. Through unruliness we cannot win *swaraj*. You all know me and I know you. I am not new to you. You should carry on constructive work. You should take to *khadi* work and removal of untouchability earnestly. You have not yet completely solved the Harijan problem. The problems are the same in all parts of India. I agreed to come to you so early in the morning because I hope that Orissa will show the lead in these matters. I know the British will

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "At a reception organized by the Utkal Congress Committee at the Berhampur railway station . . . at 4 a. m. . . . Gandhiji was received . . . by Harekrushna Mahtab and Viswanath Das and conducted to a dais in the open ground close to the platform." Gandhiji's speech was rendered into Oriya by Herekrushna Mahtab.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding the item.

leave India tomorrow. If they go, not out of your strength, of what use is it to us? If you think you can make the British leave the country by empty shows, you are not correct. I have no doubt that through non-violence and truth alone we can achieve *swaraj*.

Mahatma Gandhi thanked the people for the purse presented for the Harijan fund and said :

If I have time enough, I would have collected from each one of you money for the fund.

Concluding, Gandhiji said, what had happened at Cuttack (the people behaving in an unruly manner) distressed him, but the orderly manner in which people behaved in Berhampur amply consoled him.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindu*, 22-1-1946

### 380. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VISAKHAPATNAM<sup>2</sup>

January 20, 1946

Gandhiji asked whether (1) they had removed untouchability, (2) they had achieved communal unity, and (3) they had realized that Adivasis (hill tribes) should also share *swaraj*.

Mahatma Gandhi said, they were all of Hindustan, drinking the same water and breathing the same air. So *swaraj* must be of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians and others of India.

Referring to the necessity of keeping themselves disciplined and peaceful at meetings, Mahatma Gandhi said that even if one crore people congregated at one place, there should be no disturbance. Then only could they claim to be organized and disciplined; If even the few people that gathered at a public meeting, compared to the forty crores of India, could not keep themselves in order, he asked, how they could get *swaraj*. Even supposing they got *swaraj*, they would lose it, if they were not disciplined and orderly in their behaviour. Gandhiji said that without doubt *swaraj* would come but their preparedness must be shown by proper discipline. He had not come to collect funds but to test at first hand how far people were ready for *swaraj* by self-discipline.

<sup>1</sup> According to report in Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21-1-1946, "Gandhiji's address was followed by Ramdhun led by Kanu Gandhi and joined in chorus by the entire audience."

<sup>2</sup> Then called Vizagapatam. The meeting was held at the Indian Institute. The report said: "Mahatma Gandhiji's special train arrived at Waltair at 11.05 a. m. Led by Mr. Viswanatham, Mahatmaj walked briskly the distance of two furlongs to the meeting place. Purses were presented there for the Harijan and Hindi *prachar* funds."

Gandhiji next touched upon the lingua franca of India and said, everyone knew that he was at present on his way to Madras to preside over the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha celebrations. Two or three Andhra ladies were travelling with him, and when he spoke in Hindustani, they could not understand. They should all know Hindustani. Gandhiji asked:

Do you want to know the language that is common to all Provinces of India or English?

Gandhiji said that he was devoting his services to all in India. When that was so, he asked, which would be preferable—whether his (Gaandhiji's) learning all the languages of India or a small proportion still not knowing Hindustani learning the language for following his advice. Hindustani was a sweet language, easy to learn, which had been adopted as the mother tongue of 33 crores of people. So he believed that they should all take up the subject and learn Hindustani.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said, *swaraj* cannot be retained if it came as if by magic. They all proclaimed, they would get their *swaraj* through non-violence and truth. That being so, they should not behave otherwise and cheat the world. Since 25 years they had been proclaiming that they would win independence by truth and non-violence. On that account, the whole world had placed India on a high place. Supposing in 1920 they had announced that they would win *swaraj* by violent means and later had won it, they would have lost it by now. Gandhiji wanted them to take a pledge to win *swaraj* by means of truth and non-violence.

Concluding, Gandhiji said that he was glad to have noticed that the crowd had remained peaceful.

*The Hindu*, 22-1-1946

### 381. ADVICE TO CONGRESSMEN<sup>1</sup>

*January 20, 1946*

It is necessary that you should give up English and learn Hindustani. If you want to tell me anything, tell it in Hindustani or in Telugu. You may know English but it is not necessary you should use it.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> The report said that at Dusi Station, Gandhiji spoke to “Congressmen who wanted to read out an address in English”.

### 382. MESSAGE TO ANDHRAS <sup>1</sup>

ELLORE,

January 20, 1926

I am sorry for observing silence as tomorrow is Monday. I am glad to visit Andhra. I am sorry, I could not spend longer time in Andhra. I request you to excuse me as I am old. If only you work my constructive programme, that is more than seeing me.

From a copy: C.W. 10583. Courtesy: Government of Andhra Pradesh

### 383. FOREWORD TO “HINDUSTANI-GUJARATI KOSHA”<sup>2</sup>

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS,

January 21, 1926

This is the second edition of the Hindustani-Gujarati dictionary. I have not seen any other dictionary of this type in Gujarati. A dictionary giving the words both in Devanagari and Urdu scripts seems to be a new venture. If the necessity of knowing both the scripts and speaking both Hindi and Urdu is accepted, a dictionary like this is a great necessity.

This dictionary is not to be used in the same way as other dictionaries are used. If the student of Hindustani consults it frequently, his knowledge of both the scripts and of words from both the branches of the language is bound to increase. Another way of using the dictionary properly is that, if any mistakes are found in it, the reader should note them, as also words which he does not find in it, and send the lists to the Editor from time to time. The Editor may make appropriate use of the suggestions when preparing a new edition; or the addition's if supplied as addenda, may enable the owner of the dictionary to use it at nominal cost, as if it was a revised edition. The addenda can also be sent as a supplement to everyone having the

<sup>1</sup> According to Andhra Pradesh Government Papers, “the special train . . . arrived at Ellore Station at 10.30 p. m., and stopped for fifteen minutes. About ten thousand persons including many ladies had assembled on the platform. Gandhiji . . . did not speak . . . but gave *darshan* by stepping out on a table placed on the platform. His message to Andhras was transmitted through loud-speaker . . .” A similar message was given to people the next morning at Vijayawada, when Gandhiji received contributions.

<sup>2</sup> By Maganbhai Prabhudas Desai

original edition.

I hope the people of Gujarat will welcome this venture.

[From Gujarati]

*Hindustani-Gujarati Kosha*

### 384. SPEECH AT MADRAS <sup>1</sup>

*January 21, 1926*

Gandhiji asked them to maintain silence and preserve order. He said that unless every one of them kept perfectly quiet, the vast crowd may not hear him, and he wanted every one of them to hear him.

But again the crowd shouted "*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*". Gandhiji. . . said :

I do not expect that you, citizens of Madras, would be so undisciplined. How can I come in your midst again, if you do not conduct yourself in a disciplined manner?

Then Gandhiji called for the singing of *Ramdhun*. . . . the whole gathering took up the refrain. . . . He followed the singing of the crowd with eyes closed . . . keeping tune with the song. *Ramdhun* terminated after five minutes. . . . Gandhiji said:

Now you have seen me. I want every one of you to go home quietly and leave me to my work.

The crowd, however, was not satisfied . . . They kept shouting, "Lights, lights; we want to see him." The electrical staff . . . projected a lamp . . . on the dais and . . . Gandhiji stood in the full blaze of the light . . . for a full minute and then pleaded with the crowd . . .

I have come travelling a long distance. I have not even washed or taken food. There is any amount of work waiting for me. Do you want me to stay here all night to be with you?

The crowd in a chorus shouted, "No, no; we won't detain you." Gandhiji said :

Then let me go. But you must first of all go home quietly. That is my request to you. Are you prepared to do so?

"Yes", came the unanimous answer followed by a shout in Tamil "*pogirum*"<sup>2</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> The report said that Gandhiji, who had alighted at Ambattur at 4.15 p.m., was taken in a car to the bungalow adjacent to the Hindi Prachar Sabha, where several thousands of people had collected but refused to disperse without seeing Gandhiji. When he came out at about 7 p. m., they shouted "*Gandhijiki Jai*". When Gandhiji raised a warning finger, they became quiet. The Hindustani speech was rendered into Tamil by Bhashyam.

<sup>2</sup> Meaning "We shall go."

Gandhiji said :

Good, go, all of you. Do you now give me leave to go?

The crowd shouted “Yes”, and Gandhiji then slowly descended . . . and walked back to his residence. . . .

*The Hindu*, 22-1-1926

### 385. TALK WITH INDONESIAN SAILORS <sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,  
[After January 21, 1946]<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji told them that Indian sympathy<sup>3</sup> they had already, as was shown by the resolution of the Working Committee<sup>4</sup> on Indonesia and the far East. As for the use of Indian troops against them, it was as much India’s and Britain’s shame as their misfortune. It could be ended only by India gaining her independence, which would be the forerunner of the emancipation of all the suppressed and exploited races of the earth.

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 386. DISCUSSION WITH NEGRO SOLDIERS <sup>5</sup>

MADRAS,  
[After January 21, 1946]<sup>6</sup>

QUESTION: There are several religions in the world. They were all originated in foreign countries. Which one of these should Africa follow? Or should she discover her own religion? If so, how ?

GANDHIJI: It is wrong to say that all religions were originated in foreign countries. I had fairly extensive contact with Zulus and Bantus and I found that the Africans have a religion of their own, though they may not have reasoned it out for themselves. I am not referring

<sup>1</sup> This and the following item are extracted from Pyarelal’s “Lighter Int-reludes”.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji reached Madras on January 21; *vide* the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> Pyarelal reported that the Indonesian sailors had “refused to man their posts when their ship was ordered to proceed to Batavia with personnel and cargo ostensibly meant to be used against the nationalist struggle there, and had, in consequence, been discharged. They wanted India’s sympathy in their cause and complained about the use of Indian troops to suppress the Indonesians.”

<sup>4</sup> Which met in Calcutta from December 7 to 11, 1945. For the resolution, *vide* “Lord Wavell’s Version of His Talk with Gandhiji”

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* footnotes 2 and 3, p. 10. Pyarelal explains that the Negro soldiers from West Africa came “with a long list of questions indicative of the deep stirring in their consciousness”.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*



to the rites, ceremonies and fetishes that are prevalent among African tribes but the religion of one Supreme God. You pray to that God. There are many religions, but religion is only one. You should follow that one religion. Foreigners might bring you Christianity. Christianity as exemplified in Europe and America today is a travesty of the teaching of Jesus. Then there are Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and so on. You should absorb the best that is in each without fettering your choice and form your own religion.

Q. How can a continent like Africa fight down the fetters of slavery when it is so hopelessly divided?<sup>1</sup>

G. I know your difficulty. If you think of the vast size of Africa, the distance and natural obstacles separating its various parts, the scattered condition of its people and the terrible divisions among them, the task might well appear to be hopeless. But there is a charm which can overcome all these handicaps. The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore the first thing is to say to yourself: 'I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey orders as such but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience.' The so-called master may lash you and try to force you to serve him. You will say: 'No, I will not serve you for your money or under a threat.' This may mean suffering. Your readiness to suffer will light the torch of freedom which can never be put out.

Q. Africa and India both drink of the cup of slavery. What necessary steps can be taken to unite the two nations so as to present a common front?

G. You are right. India is not yet free and yet Indians have begun to realize that their freedom is coming, not because the white man says so but because they have developed the power within. In as much as India's struggle is non-violent, it is a struggle for the emancipation of all oppressed races against superior might. I do not propose mechanical joint action between them. 'Each one has to find his own salvation' is true of this as well as of the other world. It is enough that there is a real moral bond between Asiatics and Africans. It will grow as time passes.

Q. Everything immoral and deadly is attributed to Africa. What steps should

<sup>1</sup> According to Pyarelal, the Negroes "quoted Gandhiji's observation that to remain in slavery is beneath the dignity of man; a slave who is conscious of his state and yet does not strive to break his chains is lower than the beast."

be taken to eradicate the epidemic of foreign prejudice against us?

G. In so far as there is a modicum of truth in this criticism, it is no special prerogative of Africa. Immorality and wrong are common in all countries. But you must not allow yourselves to take refuge in self-complacency either, by saying to yourself: 'Well, others are no better than we.' Many, perhaps most of the evils that are at the back of the prejudice against Negroes are the result of nominal Christianity imported from America. They have learnt to drink, dance immoral dances and so on. Then there are evil African customs. You must eradicate these and thus disarm foreign prejudice. It is a laborious task but a joyous one. The epidemic of foreign prejudice will then die a natural death.

They wanted to know as to how they could set up depots of useful Indian books, and what India could give them and how they could achieve "co-operative industrialization" in order to be saved from the terrible exploitation under which they were suffering. Gandhiji replied :

India can give you good ideas. It can give you books of universal worth. The commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters. Then India can offer you the spinning-wheel. If I had discovered it when I was in South Africa, I would have introduced it among the Africans who were my neighbours in Phoenix. You can grow cotton, you have ample leisure and plenty of manual skill. You should study and adopt the lesson of the village crafts we are trying to revive. Therein lies the key to your salvation.

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 387. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS <sup>1</sup>

[Before January 22, 1946]<sup>2</sup>

QUESTION: In the *Bhagavad Gita* comes a *sloka*<sup>3</sup>: . . . If everything goes according to fixed law, then if you pray to God, can He intervene and set aside the law for your sake?

ANSWER: But the meaning at the bottom is: “Thy will be done, not mine.” God’s law is never interrupted, but that very law says that every act has its result. In the prayer for the child, father surrenders his will to God. The law works as if it were a person, and since every action tells, this prayer has an unforeseeable result. You should work out what I have written. The sum total of every act is a resultant. Draw a parallelogram of forces.

*Jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti*—should not they all go together? Unless you know God, how can you have *bhakti*? You cannot even offer him your *karma*.

You must not reason like this. If you have no work and so-called *bhakti*, the result will be lop-sided. Do you know God to whom you pray? I don’t. He is unknown to you and me.

To whom shall we then pray?

To God, whom you do not know. We always do not know the person to whom we are praying.

But the *Shastras* say that He is knowable.

Since He is knowable we search. It may take a billion years. Even if you do not believe, you must continue to pray. “Help thou mine<sup>4</sup> unbelief”<sup>5</sup> is a verse from the Bible. But it is improper for you to ask such questions. For you, there must be infinite patience and inward longing. Inward longing obviates all such questions. “Have faith and you will be whole”<sup>6</sup> is another chip from the Bible. *Gita* has many such parallel passages.

<sup>1</sup> This was an enclosure to a letter (G.N. 3230) dated “Thyagarayanagar, Madras, January 22, 1946”, for R. P. Parasuram to Konda Venkatappayya, which read: “As instructed by Pyarelalji, I am enclosing herewith Gandhiji’s scribbled answers to your questions. I am also enclosing herewith a typed copy for your convenience.”

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> The verse is not given in the source.

<sup>4</sup> The source, however, has “my”.

<sup>5</sup> *St. Mark*, ix, 24

<sup>6</sup> *St. Mathew*, ix. 22, and *St Mark* x. 52, which read: “They faith hath made Thee whole.”

Q. When I look at nature around me, I say to myself there must be one Creator, one God and to Him I should pray.

A. That is reasoning. God is beyond reason. But I have nothing to say, if your reason is enough to sustain you.

From a photostat of a copy: G.N. 3230

### 388. *TELEGRAM TO GOVIND BALLABH PANT*<sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,

*January 22, 1946*

SUCHETA FREE DECIDE WHETHER TAKE KASTURBA OR PARLIAMENTARY WORK.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 389. *TALK WITH V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI*<sup>3</sup>

MADRAS,

*January 22, 1946*

GANDHIJI: You must not hug me and excite yourself.

SASTRI: I have wanted to say one thing to you. Another opportunity for peace has been lost. They are sitting there at the Peace Conference Table. But who is there who can speak for humanity except you? I am afraid, India has failed to do her duty. Even if they do not ask you, you must go as the apostle of truth and non-violence and be on the spot. Your mere presence will have a tremendous effect. You must not stand on ceremony.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1887-1961; Leader of Congress Party in the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, and its Premier, 1937-39; Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, 1946-55; Home Minister, Government of India, 1955-61

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji's permission to sponsor Sucheta Kripalani for membership of U. P. Legislative Assembly. She, however, joined Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.

<sup>3</sup> This is extracted from Dr. Sushila Nayyar's "Meeting Sastriar". Sushila Nayyar who explains: "Gandhiji had heard that Sastriar was so ill that probably he alone would be allowed to go in for a few minutes. Shri Jagadisan had advised my brother [Pyarelal] and me to accompany him. . . . So Gandhiji took both of us and Shri Manilal Gandhi with him. . . . The doctor, however, gave us more cheerful news. . . . Sastriar sat bolt upright . . . as Gandhiji entered . . . and moved to the edge of the bed. 'I want to come near enough to hug you, little brother,' he muttered. . . . Gandhiji took his hand and soothed him."

<sup>4</sup> According to Sushila Nayyar, "ever since Gandhiji's release from prison, Sastriar had been writing to him imploring him to go to the Peace Conference at San

Then, referring to the Parliamentary Delegation<sup>1</sup>, he remarked, “we know nothing can come out of it. Labour or Conservative, so far as India is concerned, they are all one and the same.

G. But we must trust. Burrows<sup>2</sup>, the new pitboy Governor of Bengal, has a sense of humour. When the Pressmen worried him and asked him what policy he was going to initiate, he replied, “Gentlemen, I am not going to initiate. I am going. to carry out.” That is true of all of them. The labour Government cannot afford to do otherwise.

S. What next?

G. Who knows? The British Government itself does not know, I think. But I did not come here to discuss politics with you.

S. I see, you think I am not good for it.

G. No, but you are certainly no good for it in the present state of your health.<sup>3</sup>

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946

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Francisco [*vide* “Letter From V. S. Srinivasa Sastri”, 2-6-1944] . . . Gandhiji’s view was that his non-violence should have its effect from wherever he was. His going to the Peace Conference, unless the great powers themselves want it, could serve no useful purpose.”

<sup>1</sup> Which reached Bombay on January 5; it consisted of Prof. Richards (Leader), R. Serenson, (Mrs.) Mureiel E. Nichol A. G. Bottomeley, Maj. Woodrow Wyatt, Godfrey Nicholson, Brig. A. R. W. Low, R. Hopkin Morris, the Earl of Munster and Lord Chorley of Kendal. According to *The Transfer of Power*, 1942-47, Vol. VI, p. 522, in a memorandum dated November 14, 1945, to the British Cabinet, the Secretary of State for India, Pethick-Lawrence, had said that the Parliamentary Delegation “would serve to demonstrate the sympathy of Parliament with Indian aspirations and the sincerity of British intentions in the matter of India’s constitutional advance. The Delegation. . . would be free in their movements and their contacts with Indians, from any control by the Viceroy or Governors.”

<sup>2</sup> Sir Frederick Burrows

<sup>3</sup> The report concluded: “They touched upon the topic of the communal problem. They cracked a few more jokes and then Sastriar called us near and bade good-bye saying a few kind words to each one of us. He talked a little about South Africa and Gen. Smuts with Shri Manilal Gandhi, and Gandhiji left him with a promise to visit him again if the doctor reported that the visit had had no deleterious effect upon his health.”

### 390. LETTER TO DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

MADRAS,  
January 22, 1946

BHAI PATTABHI,

I got your letter just now. Bhai Venkatrao<sup>1</sup> also showed me his letter. Get well soon. I have said all that I wanted to say. You may now explain things to me when the need arises. Your duty at present is to get well.

Blessings from  
BAPU

DR. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA  
MASULIPATTAM

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

### 391. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS <sup>2</sup>

January 22, 1946

Gandhiji explained how *Ramdhun* was sung and how those willing to join might clap their hands in time. He explained :

This custom was started in Bengal, and, I believe, with very good results. I wish as many of you as are willing should join this *dhun*.

Gandhiji first enquired how many of them could understand Hindustani. About a tenth of the crowd raised their hands. To the question how many were unable to understand Hindustani, there was no answer until it was translated into Tamil and then the overwhelming majority raised their hands. Gandhiji said, they need not be shy or ashamed, but he would want them all to learn Hindustani.

At the outset, Gandhiji said that it gave him great pleasure to be in their midst once again after so many years. He then recalled how years ago it was in the city of Madras that *satyagraha* against the Rolatt Act<sup>3</sup> was first launched. He had come to Madras on that occasion<sup>4</sup> at the invitation of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar who had put

<sup>1</sup> K. Venkatrao, Secretary, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> The report said: "Precisely at 5.30 p. m., Gandhiji, accompanied by his party including Miss Agatha Harrison, proceeded to the grounds to the south of Hindi Prachar Sabha for prayer. . . . Gandhiji . . . addressed them . . . in Hindustani. Mr. A. Subramanyam, Hindi Pracharak from Trichinopoly, rendered the speech into Tamil."

<sup>3</sup> Bill No. 29 of 1919

<sup>4</sup> In March 1919

him up with Mr. C. Rajagopalachari. Rajaji had then recently come over to Madras from Salem. There he was a leading practising lawyer and was doing useful work as Chairman of the Salem Municipality. Gandhiji confessed that he had at first felt a bit put out at Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar putting him up with one who was a preactising lawyer and a stranger to him at that time. But the late Mr. Mahadev Desai who was then with him told him the next day that Rajaji was a precious friend of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar and far from playing him a trick; therefore the latter had selected an ideal host for him. Although Rajaji had never met Gandhiji before, Mr. Desai had told Gandhiji before, Mr. Desai had told Gandhiji, he had been following his work in South Africa with close attention and admiration. Mr. Mahadev Desai had further told him that Rajaji would be prepared to throw away his practice in a trice at a word from Gandhiji.

I could hardly believe at that time that a leading lawyer could give up his practice like that. I, however, accepted Mr. Desai's testimony of faith. The subsequent events have, however, amply borne out Mr. Mahadev Desai's estimate. Rajaji as I see him today is just what he was on the day when we first met.

It was on that occasion, too, said Gandhiji, that he had made his first acquaintance with the late Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar.

Continuing, Gandhiji described how it was at Mr. Rajagopalachari's place that the observance of the 6th of April<sup>1</sup> which had become a sacred day to all of them was commenced. It was a great day for him and for them. It marked the birth of *satyagraha* in this country. The way in which it galvanized the whole nation into a new consciousness was nothing less than a miracle. It gave him particular pleasure, therefore, to recall those glorious associations and to re-visit the place that had given them birth.

Referring to his present visit, Gandhiji stated that he was disinclined to come to Madras on the present occasion. He was reluctant to come out of Sevagram in the first instance and later he would have liked to return straight to the Ashram from Bengal. He believed that it was providence that had brought him to Madras. Surely it would not be for nothing. He hoped that the present visit would prove as fruitful as the previous one. He added :

Yesterday I was rather disappointed with you. I tried in my broken Hindustani, to make myself understood but could not. When I spoke in Hindustani, Rajaji himself did not fully understand it. He is the defaulter No. 1 in this respect. He addresses you in Tamil but

<sup>1</sup> In commemoration of the total hartal observed on April 6, 1919, in protest against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre which followed on April 13. The week had since been observed as "National Week" every year.

when he goes outside the Province, he talks in English. Well, if the sea water should lose its salt, wherewith shall it be flavoured? All over the country he is reputed to be one of the finest speakers in the English language, but he has not learnt to speak in Hindustani. I want a pledge from you here and now—and you should not only give the pledge but pledge yourself to implement it too—that you will all learn Hindustani. Should you not do even that little for the country's independence? Do you expect all the two crores of people of Tamil Nadu to learn English? Or do you expect India to learn one of the four South Indian languages to be able to communicate with you? I say it is your *dharma* to learn Hindustani, which will link the South with the North.

I want you further to contribute to the Harijan fund. You must do so as a token of your determination to eradicate the blot of untouchability from the fair name of Hinduism. Another thing I want to tell you is that whatever your religion, prayer should form part of your daily life. It should mean more to you than food and drink. I thank you for maintaining perfect discipline during prayer. I will hold prayer here, every evening. The text of the prayer with the translation of the same in the four South Indian languages is obtainable from Satyanarayanaji<sup>1</sup>. You should learn it and its meanings. Further all those who come to the prayer should fully take part in it and join in the singing of the *Ramdhun* to the accompaniment of *tala*.<sup>2</sup>.

*The Hindu*, 24-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> M. Satyanarayana, Secretary, Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras

<sup>2</sup> Rhythmic beats



### 392. *ADVICE TO INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY MEN*<sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,

[After January 22, 1946]<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji told them that they could only follow the lead of the Congress and commended to their attention Capt. Shah Nawaz's statement in which he had said that, whilst they had fought with arms for their country's freedom when they were outside India, they would now serve India through non-violence.

Lastly you should remember that it is unbecoming the dignity of a soldier to depend on anybody's charity. As soldiers of freedom, you should earn your bread by your honest industry and disdain to look to others for support, even though you may have to suffer hardships and privations in consequence.

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 393. *FRAGMENT OF TALK WITH V. V. GIRI*<sup>3</sup>

MADRAS,

January 23, 1946

Gandhiji's individual opinion was that no Trade Union which respected the National Congress could do without the tricolour flag with the *charkha* in the middle.

He added that he saw no objection to the simple red flag with the particular Union's name on it, provided that it went side by side with the supreme tricolour.

*The Hindu*, 26-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from "Lighter Interludes". Pyarelal explains: "At Madras . . . there was a group of discharged I.N.A. men. Gandhiji saw them for a couple of minutes as he was going to his residence. They were returning to their respective homes. They had received their training in the Military Academy at Tokyo. They asked: 'We worked under Netaji's guidance. Whose lead should we now follow?' "

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to Shah Nawaz Khan's statement which was made on January 22, on the eve of Subhas Chandra Bose's 50th birthday

<sup>3</sup> 1894-1980; twice President of All-India Trade Union Congress and its representative at I.L.O., Geneva, 1927; represented Labour at Round Table Conference, London, 1930-47; India's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, 1947-51; Minister of Labour in Union Cabinet, 1952-54; successively held Governorship of Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka from 1958 to 1964; Vice-President of India, 1967-69 and President of India, 1969-74

394. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS*<sup>1</sup>

[January 23, 1946]<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji said that the very best of food served to a sick person who could not digest it would act as poison. Similarly freedom or *swaraj* would prove a questionable boon to them, if they lacked discipline.

*The Hindu*, 24-1-1946

395. *LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS,

January 21/24, 146

CHI. JIVANJI,

I sent herewith a Foreword<sup>3</sup> for Maganbhai's dictionary. I suggest the addition of one page to explain the Urdu script. The method of forming words, too, should be explained so that the buyer, if he does not know Urdu, may learn it. Pyarelal has an impression that there are also mistakes in a few places. If you think it necessary, get the dictionary examined again from that point of view.

I am sending a Foreword<sup>4</sup> for Mahadev's *Gita*, too. I suppose I have nothing more to write now. Am I right?

I forced myself to find time and write all this yesterday under great pressure of other work. I put aside other reading and writing.

If Maganbhai or you wish to suggest any changes, you may do so. Never mind if that delays the publication by a few days.

Enclosure: Foreword

January 24, 1946

This is a painful thing. This is being posted on the 24th instead of on the 21st. But is it not better that it should go today at any rate rather than not at all?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9963. Also C.W. 6937. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "The meeting was very noisy. Contrary to his usual practice, Gandhiji kept standing throughout the prayer."

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the noise at this meeting in "Speech at Constructive Workers' Conference, Madras", *vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

### 396. A TELEGRAM

*January 24, 1946*

YOU AND PROMILABEHN DECIDE ON INSCRIPTION. MUST BE IN  
NAGARI AND URDU RETAINING OM AND HE RAM NO GAUDINESS.

BAPU

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

### 397. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

MADRAS,

*January 24, 1946*

CHI. JIVANJI,

I came to learn in the course of a discussion with Kakasaheb<sup>1</sup> that you cannot carry out the changes he has introduced in the Nagari script because you do not have such types or give up printing in Devanagari script. We cannot cling to the old forms of the letters. The improved forms have been made current by Kakasaheb and, so far as I know, our [Hindustani Prachar] Sabha has accepted them. How, then, can we ourselves admit anarchy? If I am mistaken in this, please correct me. Kaka and Nanavati<sup>2</sup> have seen this letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9964. Also C. W. 6938. Courtesy:  
Jivanji D. Desai

### 398. LETTER TO MUNNANLAL G. SHAH

MADRAS,

*January 24, 1946*

CHI. MUNNANLAL,

Two of your letters are lying with me. I am writing this during a few moments of free time. Do not worry in the least about the

<sup>1</sup> D. B. Kalelkar

<sup>2</sup> Amritlal T. Nanavati

*samadhi*<sup>1</sup>. Go on doing only the task in hand. Nothing is done there (in the Spinners' Association) without my permission.

Do what is possible regarding the clinic <sup>2</sup>. Now I will be there in a few days.

Kanchan<sup>3</sup> is with me. Her cough has not disappeared. But otherwise she is all right. She is quite cheerful. According to me she is being looked after better than a queen. I have not asked her whether she would agree.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8609. Also C. W. 7209. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

*399. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI* <sup>4</sup>

MADRAS,

*January 24, 1946*

CHI. MRIDU,

I have your letter of January 11, 1946. I have been very busy and it is nearly six in the morning. What is being done for women seems to be good.<sup>5</sup> Jawaharlal has done a very good job.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SMT. MRIDULA SARABHAI

SHAHIBAG

AHMEDABAD

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

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the proposal to acquire the land in the Aga Khan Palace, Poona, having the *samadhis* of Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadev Desai. *Vide* also "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 1-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> Nature Cure Clinic, Poona

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>4</sup> The letter is in Devanagari.

<sup>5</sup> The addressee, a trustee of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, had organized women's welfare activities.

#### 400. LETTER TO JETHALAL L. GANDHI

MADRAS,  
*January 24, 194[6]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. KAKU,

I have your very long letter. We should be charitable. We would go crazy looking for other people's faults, and we would never see our own. Hence remain silent and render such service as you can.

I should consider it a matter of shame that you should rush about in the car to do my work. All the same I am trying to be vigilant.

I shall not be able to look up Hemchanbhai and the labourers. Sorry.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

#### 401. SPEECH AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' CONFERENCE, MADRAS <sup>2</sup>

*January 24, 1946*

Gandhiji had hardly spoken a few sentences when the drone of planes overhead dropped his voice, and Gandhiji stopped speaking for a while till he could be heard better.

Gandhiji took the organizers to task because the printed programme that had been put into his hands was in English. It should have been, he said, in the local language or in the *rashtrabhasha*, Hindustani.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhiji sharply rebuked those workers who did not understand Hindustani for not knowing that language. He told them that the time was past when he used to

<sup>1</sup> The source, however, has "1945", a slip of the pen.

<sup>2</sup> The report said, about 200 workers including a "good number" of women had gathered at the Conference, which was presided over by SShri Krishnadas Jaju of All-India Spinners' Association. Gandhiji, supported by Abha Gandhi and Kantilal, arrived at 8.20 a. m. He spoke in Hindustani.

<sup>3</sup> According to the report, "Some persons in the gathering did not understand what Gandhiji was saying and one of them stood up and, speaking in Telugu, said he could not follow Gandhiji's speech. Gandhiji asked him in Tamil to sit down. The gentleman, not understanding Tamil continued standing, and some of his friends made him sit."

address them in English, if only to please them. He had now decided to reserve his English, if only to please them. He had now decided to reserve his English for Englishmen and foreigners only. So far as they (the gathering) were concerned, he would prefer to speak to them in his broken Hindustani, even if he could make himself better understood by speaking in English.

Referring to the prayer gathering of the previous evening,<sup>1</sup> he said, he knew there were only a few at the far end who were creating the noise; but in an orchestra if even one instrument was out of tune, the harmony of the whole was spoilt. Discipline and its inculcation in the people was an essential part of constructive work.

If he had time, he continued, he would have gone to their latrines, their kitchen, their dining hall, ect., so that he might see for himself how they ate, sat and so on. Maintenance or proper living conditions in the camp was another illustration of fresh items that could be added to the 18-fold constructive programme.

Parliamentary programme and constructive programme were both before the country, he observed. It was not a question of one being inferior to the other, but he wanted to make it clear to them that for India to win her independence through truth and non-violence, constructive work was absolutely essential. Those who went to the legislatures should go there primarily to promote constructive work. But in any case he was of opinion that lovers of freedom should go to the legislatures, if only to prevent those who did not want freedom from getting in and posing as the country's representatives.

Referring to the Parliamentary Delegation, he said that he had given a couple of hours to them on the previous evening and another hour to some of them this morning.<sup>2</sup> He did not think he had wasted his time, but he did not depend on anybody for giving them *swaraj*. Gandhiji concluded :

Swaraj has to come through our own strength. We might get help from other quarters. It would be welcome. But we should understand that freedom could never come as a gift from outside. We bore no enmity towards the British. We want the British rulers to quit in a friendly spirit. If they do that, it will augur well for them, for India and the world.

Gandhiji declared the Conference open and wished them a fruitful discussion<sup>3</sup>.

*The Hindu*, 25-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion, *vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

<sup>3</sup> At its afternoon session; *vide* the following item.

## 402. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' CONFERENCE, MADRAS

January 24, 1946

The first question related to the place of khadi in the national economy and how far it would help to solve the poverty problem.

Gandhiji said that khadi was the very foundation of Indian *swaraj* and economic uplift of the poor. He had always linked *khadi* with *swaraj* from the beginning. The more khadi we produced, the nearer we would be to *swaraj*. Manual labour was an essential factor in his programme, and it was as necessary for the rich also to do manual work. Spinning was manual labour *par excellence*. It enabled even poor people to lead independent lives. Explaining the symbolism of the *charkha*, Gandhiji said that it stood for *ahimsa*. Let them not get lost in minor controversies but concentrate on the work of spinning and production of *khadi*, the most important part of the constructive programme.

Another question asked was how khadi production could be of help to the poor man when one considered that in the budget more than 80 per cent was spent on food and only 12 per cent on cloth.

Gandhiji answered that if through *khaddar* they could add to the income of the people even a few annas, it would be worth while. He was looking forward to the day when *khadi* would become a universal gospel, though today it was confined to India. The first step he envisaged was that *khadi* should touch all the 40 crores of Indian people.

A question written in English and in pencil on an odd slip of paper was next put aside by Gandhiji with the remark that it was illegible and the questioner was doing violence to an old man to send the question in that way.<sup>1</sup>

QUESTION: What exactly do you mean by economic equality? What is statutory trusteeship as conceived by you?

Gandhiji's reply was that economic equality of his conception did not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount. It simply meant that everybody should have enough for his or her needs. For instance, he required two shawls in winter whereas his grand-nephew Kanu Gandhi who stayed with him and was like his own son did not require any warm clothing whatsoever. Gandhiji required goat's milk, oranges and other fruit. Kanu could do with ordinary food. He envied Kanu but there was no point in it. Kanu was a young man whereas he was an old man of 76. The monthly expense of his food was far more than that of Kanu but that did not mean that there was economic inequality between them. The elephant needs a thousand times

<sup>1</sup> What follows is extracted from "Gandhiji's Communism" by Pyarelal in *Harijan*.

more food than the ant, but that is not an indication of inequality. So the real meaning of economic equality was: "To each according to his need." That was the definition of Marx. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children that would be a violation of economic equality. Gandhiji continued :

Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign Government and also by their own countrymen—the city-dwellers. they produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief.

That constituted his picture of economic equality. He did not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first.

As for the present owners of wealth, they would have to make their choice between class-war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They would be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and therefore without exploitation. The State would regulate the rate of commission which they would get commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society. Their children would inherit the stewardship only if they proved their fitness for it. He concluded :

Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow, all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees. But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below. When the people understand the implications of trusteeship and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves, beginning with *gram panchayats*, will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above, it is liable to prove a dead weight.

Q. What is the difference between your technique and that of the communists or socialists for realizing the goal of economic equality?

A. The socialists and communists say, they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, when they get control over and



accentuating hatred. They say, when they get control over the State, they will enforce equality. Under my plan, the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception, if I am the owner of fifty motor-cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying to do for the last fifty years or more, and so I claim to be a foremost communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it.

Q. What is the place of *satyagraha* in making the rich realize their duty towards the poor?

The same as against the foreign power. *Satyagraha* is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family, its use can be extended to every other circle. Supposing a land-owner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When they expostulate with him, he does not listen and raises objections that he requires so much for his wife, so much for his children and so on. The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence, will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. She would probably say that for herself she does not need his exploited money. The children will say likewise that they would earn for themselves what they need.

Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit, if asked to do so, but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself, and he will have to give in to their just demands. It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replaced tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants. Thus *satyagraha* is a process of educating public opinion such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible. Violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real revolution of the whole social structure.

*The Hindu*, 26-1-1946; also *Harijan*, 31-3-1946

#### 403. FRAGMENT OF AN INTERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,  
January 24, 1946

If the report about the damage to communist persons and properties is true, I consider it disgraceful. Whatever may be the difference between communists and others, they must be respected, as others will wish theirs to be respected. Every act of popular violence is detrimental to the people's progress.

*The Hindu*, 26-1-946

#### 404. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

January 24, 1946

Speaking of the Tyagaraja *keertana* that had been sung during prayer, Gandhiji said, he knew what a high place Sri Tyagaraja occupied in South India. Wherever he had been, whether in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Desha, Karnataka or Kerala, he had heard Tyagaraja's songs sung with a sweet melody which seemed to spring from the very heart of the singer. Tyagaraja's songs and Tyagaraja's name comported ill with the spirit of provincialism and secularism that he had witnessed among them. There was rivalry of languages today which might grow into something worse tomorrow. Some wanted Tamil, some Telugu and so on. Then there was the feeling of separateness and rivalry between South Indians and North Indians. He was utterly unable to understand how this parochialism could be compatible with the growing desire for freedom for the whole of India. Supposing a Bengali achieved distinction in a particular field, would the glory belong to Bengal alone? No, it belonged to every Province and every one of the forty crores of India. That should be their first lesson, if they wanted to be a free nation. Tyagaraja had sung that if all the attributes of Rama are put on one side and the glory of Ramanama on the other, the latter would far outweigh the former. Thinking of the historical Rama of Valmiki or Tulsidas, one was liable to have many doubts as, for instance, why Rama banished Sita, and so on. But when one thought of Ramanama in the abstract, forgetting who Rama was and what he did, Rama at once

<sup>1</sup> This was reported as stated by Gandhiji "in the course of an interview" with reference to "reports of outbreak of violence in Bombay [on January 23] in connection with the observance of Subhas Chandra Bose Day, and the attack on the headquarters of the Communist Party of India". According to *The Transfer of Power, 1942-47*, Vol. VI, pp. 86-9, although "the authorities in Bombay altered the permitted route of a Subhas Bose procession to avoid Muslim areas in the city", the "organizers of the procession refused to follow the altered route and in ensuing disturbances 11 persons were killed and several hundreds were injured".

become the omnipresent and omnipotent God, above doubt and criticism. Similarly he asked them to forget and put behind them the confusing label of Tamil Nadu v. Andhra, Gujarat v. Maharashtra or Punjab, and so on, and just remember Hindustan and its glory. There was a potency in the two letters composing the syllable *Ram* which nothing could match or rival. Similarly there was a magic in the syllable *Hind* all its own. After all, the world knew India, not its Provinces—India which had resolved to win her independence through truth and non-violence. He exhorted them to throw their parochialism and petty quarrels and rivalries into the Indian Ocean and, in Tyagraja's name, take a pledge that they would be Indians first and Indians last, live for India and die for India.

When Tamil translation of Gandhiji's exhortation was given, some people shouted for Telugu translation also. Gandhiji said :

All right, say it in Telugu also.

Accordingly a Telugu translation was given. Gandhiji then remarked with a laugh :

Is there no Malayalee and no Canarese here?

*The Hindu*, 26-1-1946

#### **405. DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION<sup>1</sup>**

MADRAS,  
*January 24, 1946*

Gandhiji gave a very clear picture of what his views were on the present political situation and the future. Gandhiji's view outlined broadly was, it is understood, that India wanted her freedom. She wanted the freedom to be given to her not as though by a superior to an inferior, but given and taken as among equals. He hoped that the British Government would soon make a declaration to that effect, for any delay would complicate the situation and harden the feelings between the different sections of opinion in India, and between India and Britain.

Once that declaration was made and Constituent Assembly was set up, an act which would prove that Britain was acting in good faith, India would begin to believe that Britain was in earnest. Of course, he realized that it would take time before the full Indian Constitution would function properly. But they would be prepared to work out these details in patience or, he is stated to have pointed out, they would have been

<sup>1</sup> According to the report, Prof. Richards, Lord Chorley and Reginald Sorensen called on Gandhiji. "The talks commenced at 7.30 p. m., as on the previous day, and lasted 90 minutes. . . . Lord Munster was not present."

satisfied about Britain's good faith.

Gandhiji, it is reported, also touched on the position of political prisoners and urged the need for their release.

*The Hindu*, 26-1-1946

#### 406. MESSAGE TO STUDENTS'

MADRAS,

January 25, 1946

Gandhiji's advice was that the students must observe perfect discipline and non-violence. Not only there should be no coercion of any kind, but there should be no show of force either. To take a large mass of students to another College in order to bring out the students of that College, in Gandhiji's opinion, would not be strictly non-violent. More than that he could not say. Gandhiji would like the students to act under the guidance and advice of someone in the city in whom they have faith.

*The Hindu*, 26-1-1946

#### 407. SPEECH AT DAKSHINA BHARAT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA, MADRAS<sup>2</sup>

January 25, 1946

Congratulating the *Sabha* on its work during the last 25 years, Gandhiji said that what had been achieved so far was certainly praiseworthy. One of the previous speakers, Mr. T. Krishnaswami, had used a type of English-mixed Hindustani, though he could talk good Hindustani, in order to emphasize how far they had succumbed to the influence of a foreign language. He did not want to make any invidious comparisons, but it seemed that the influence of English was so great, particularly in South India, that even Indian names assumed an English form in many places. This was a kind of slavery. Why should they continue to hug the chains, albeit golden, which enslaved them? Should they not break these asunder and try to regain their freedom? It was not difficult at all. Let them at least replace English with Hindustani. He wanted Hindustani to spread so as to unite the different parts of India and not so as to displace the local Indian languages. He was sorry to note that so many in that gathering could not understand him. He desired to serve them, enslaved as they were. It was here in Madras that he first started on his service of slaves. Many

<sup>1</sup> The message was signed by Pyarelal, and it was read out to the students of Pachaiyappa's College who were stopped by police from going in a procession.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was inaugurating the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

prominent citizens of Madras, highly educated persons, welcomed him and extended to him their hospitality at that time. They all fell in with the idea of promoting Hindustani as the lingua franca of India. It was soon after that the movement was set on foot here. He was glad to read the reports presented to him of the progress of work so far, and he congratulated them on it; but taking into consideration what yet remained to achieve, one should admit that it was but a drop in the ocean. So it was that he appealed to everyone in the gathering and outside to learn Hindustani as early as he or she could. If only they devoted to the study of Hindustani a sixteenth of the time they devoted to English, they would attain a higher degree of proficiency in that language. They should learn to read and write both the scripts related to that language—Nagari and Urdu—for the sake of India's independence.

Suggesting that the nomenclature for the work done by the Sabha should be changed from "Hindi Prachar" to "Hindustani Prachar", Gandhiji said that he was not quite such a fanatic about the nomenclature as some were. What was meant by *rashtrabhasha* was that common medium which was easily understood by some 23 crores of the people of India, irrespective of religion or class. That was Hindustani. It was their *dharma* to learn this language and in both the scripts, too. He also would like Hindi workers to learn the language of the area in which they carried on their work so that they would be able to serve the country and the *rashtrabhasha* all the more.

Referring to the difficulties over translation, Gandhiji said that he had decided that there should be no translation of his speech that day. It would save time, for one thing. Further, they could read what he said in the newspapers later on or gather the substance from friends.

It was good that they had all contributed to the Silver Jubilee Fund and come there in such large numbers. But he had seen how they had also committed a serious breach of discipline in rushing pell-mell and sitting here, there and everywhere, instead of occupying the seats allotted to them. If they did not learn to observe discipline in their everyday life, how would they be able to manage the affairs of a free India, he asked. It should be their *sankalpa*<sup>1</sup> that swaraj should be run on the basis of discipline. Everyone should learn to obey laws and regulations in order to promote constructive national work. Disobedience to be non-violent had to be civil; it did not mean breaking of any and every law. That would lead to chaos and mob rule. He did not wish to live to see mob rule in India. His desire to live for 125 years was in order to serve the cause of truth and non-violence. That presupposed the observance of strict discipline on their part.

<sup>1</sup> Determination or resolve

Gandhiji said that he did not want to take more time. He thanked them for the silence they had maintained and bade them good-bye.

*The Hindu*, 27-1-1946

#### 408. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

*January 25, 1946*

Gandhiji said that he did not put through a comprehensive prayer programme as the meeting was not observing perfect silence. He was, however, glad that the position improved during *Ramdhun*.

Gandhiji declared that henceforth there would be no translation of his speech in Tamil or Telugu.<sup>1</sup> Those who did not care to know Hindustani should afterwards gather from newspaper reports or from friends what he had said. If they did not wish to hear him in Hindustani, he was prepared to go away without saying anything. The incident had pained him greatly, he said. His appeal<sup>2</sup> of the previous seemed to have fallen on deaf ears.

They should at least observe elementary rules of courtesy. The rule was that even if a child was entrusted with authority, everyone should implicitly obey his or her instructions. He had heard that on the previous evening one child was crushed in the crowd. It had given him much pain. Their joining in the prayer was a meaningless thing, if it did not teach them to show consideration to women and children and give them precedence. They should let women and children go first. Why should there be such unseemly hurry to depart after the meeting?

Finally Gandhiji exhorted them to observe perfect discipline in the independence Day<sup>3</sup> meeting. He was the author of the independence Pledge<sup>4</sup>. He wanted to live and die for India's independence. Any indiscipline on their part would hurt him deeply. It would delay the coming of *swaraj*. The Independence Pledge laid it down that independence had to be won through truth and non-violence. This required on their part adherence to strict discipline. Violence did not merely mean causing physical injury. It means also giving provocation or causing inconvenience to others. To

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani which was translated into Tamil. After a few sentences were translated, an Ardhra gentleman among the audience asked for a Telugu translation also.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Key to Health", 28-8-1942

<sup>3</sup> January 26

<sup>4</sup> Originally drafted by Gandhiji in January 1930, the pledge was amended in December 1939 and to which a paragraph was added in 1941; *vide* "Draft Declaration for January", 10-1-1930, "Resolution on Independence Day Pledge", and "Instructions for Independence Day", 11-1-1941

indulge in abuse or to goad others into acts of violence was worse than direct physical violence.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindu*, 27-1-194

#### 409. A TELEGRAM

January 26, 1946

THAT HIGHNESS HAS BUILT SHOULD BE STATED. NO FURTHER  
INSTRUCTIONS NECESSARY.

BAPU

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

#### 410. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' CONFERENCE, MADRAS<sup>2</sup>

January 26, 1946

Gandhiji singled out for his first answer his favourite topic, Harijan uplift. He categorically called on the constructive workers to make Harijan uplift a major programme. While he agreed that a large majority of the people had advanced views on this question, the action taken in this regard, he regretted, was like a speck in an ocean. Their question was what step should be taken for the complete amelioration of the condition of the Harijans. He had again and again answered such questions. He would repeat that steps such as inter-dining of caste Hindus with Harijans, voluntary admission of Harijans into temples—he considered this as a vital programme—and accessibility of Harijans to roads and water sources would alone give the Harijans

<sup>1</sup> The report concluded: "Gandhiji then . . . walked back quickly to his residence. . . . As he approached . . . his residence, Mr. A. Subrahmanyam . . . Tamil translator . . . expressed regret that his translation should have caused Gandhiji the disturbance. Gandhiji said, he was not at all to blame. The Andhra gentleman . . . had by now come up . . . to explain himself . . . Gandhiji rebuked him saying that he should first have made his request to him either in a note or in person instead of disturbing the prayer and trying to dictate what should be done. By so doing, he had only forced him to come to a decision not to have translations at all and thus prevented his coming into contact with the people in the manner he wanted. The offender persisted in his attempts to further press his case, while expressing his regret for what had happened. Dr. Sushila Nayyar interrupted at this stage, and asked him not to cause Gandhiji unnecessary strain. The gentleman then withdrew."

<sup>2</sup> In the afternoon session to the third day, V. Bhashyam Iyengar presided. After his speech, Gandhiji called for questions from the delegates in Hindustani.

equal status with the caste Hindus. To depend on the Government for throwing open the temples to Harijans was to expect too much of them. People alone could voluntarily take the Harijans into temples and give them real temple-entry based on a change of heart.

Through another answer, Gandhiji announced that non-violence was also a principal item in the constructive programme. He averred that violent acts such as arson and causing injury to others would not bring them *Ramarajya*, their birthright. Non-violence alone would lead them to freedom. But what happened? They had freedom almost in their hands and, through violent acts, they were, as it were, throwing it away into the sea.

Concluding, Gandhiji stressed the importance of co-operating with the Harijans and helping them to keep their places and persons clean.

As a few minutes of the allotted time still remained, Gandhiji invited more questions and answered them. The answers only reinforced what he had already said.

*The Hindu*, 28-1-1946

#### *411. SPEECH AT CONVENTION OF HARIJANS, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>*

*January 26, 1946*

At the outset, Mahatma Gandhi expressed his great pleasure in seeing before him such a large gathering of Harijans. He was also glad to notice the great awakening among them.

Englishmen often put the question, what the caste Hindus were going to do for the solution of the problem of untouchability, if the country achieved freedom? They further asked what had the people done for Harijans? Mahatmaji admitted that the question was pertinent; but at the same time he wished to make it clear that untouchability did not exist in such a horrible form, as their European friends wanted to make out.

In this connection, Mahatma Gandhi referred to his South African experience and said that there all Indians were regarded by the European people as untouchables. An Indian might be a merchant or a barrister. Still he was a 'coolie', so far as the Europeans there were concerned. Separate places were allotted for the residence of Indians. There were also other disabilities. Therefore it could not be said that Europeans did not observe untouchability. There might not be untouchability amongst themselves; but they treated Indians in South Africa as untouchables. He did all he could to remove that kind of untouchability while he was in South Africa. After

<sup>1</sup> Organized as part of Silver Jubilee celebrations of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha



returning to India he had devoted himself to the removal of untouchability in this country.

“Would the conditions of Harijans be the same, or would it improve when India attained freedom?” was another question asked. He visualized that there would not be any question of untouchability in free India. Their Hindu brethren would see to it that untouchability was put to an end and that all Harijans were acknowledged equals. Crores of Congressmen would devote themselves towards that end. They would work for the removal of untouchability and die for it. In his address<sup>1</sup> to the constructive workers, he had stated clearly the nature of work [and asked] the workers to strive sincerely for the removal of untouchability. It was not enough, if a few Harijans rose to high positions in life such as barristers or High Court judges. For the uplift of the community as a whole, all of them must strive. They must educate themselves. They must fight and win their own freedom, not by violent means, but through truth and non-violence. Untouchability should disappear by winning the hearts of the caste Hindus through peaceful means.

Mahatma Gandhi then went on to explain what was meant by real freedom. It did not mean freedom to do as they pleased. It meant freedom to do their duty, freedom to abstain from drink, and freedom to work for their own uplift. In this connection Gandhiji explained the significance of the term ‘Harijan’ by which he preferred to call them. The term signified people of God. He who nurtured hatred or ill-feeling towards another could not be a man of God. The Harijans had borne their sufferings patiently for ages without retaliating. Therefore they deserved to be called Harijans. True to that expression, they must believe in God and repeat His name. They must be true devotees of God, and history furnished them with classic examples of true devotees like Nandanar. On this occasion he did not wish to refer to the rights of Harijans, but only to say a few words on their duties or dharma. The so-called higher castes had their duties; so had Harijans. If they considered that inter-dining or inter-marriage was the purpose of their freedom, they would be mistaken. All these things would not bring about real happiness. By acquiring clean and healthy habits, by adhering to truth and non-violence, and by doing their work in life honestly and sincerely and with love of God, they would be promoting not only individual happiness but also the happiness of the community as a whole. Only through truth and non-violence could they establish *swaraj* or *Ramarajya* in this land.

*The Hindu*, 28-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

## 412. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>

January 26, 1946

Gandhiji said that festivals varied in character with the times. The Independence Day was a sacred day to them all, as on that day crores of people would be repeating their pledge for the attainment of the independence of India. He hoped that everybody had taken the pledge. If not, everybody should take it. The special feature of that pledge, he reminded them, was that the means to be adopted for the attainment of independence were unadulterated truth and non-violence.<sup>2</sup> Crores of people had been repeating that pledge for the last 25 years and offering prayers for the fulfilment of that pledge to the Most High, who, though far, was yet nearer to us than our hands and feet. It was the self-same Power, though known by various designations, Allah, Rama, Rahman, Rahim, God, and so on. There was no limit to His names. They were as countless as His attributes. It was to this Unseen Power which permeated and sustained the universe that their prayers were made. It would be heard only if their means were as pure and spotless as their end.

Could they expect God to crown their resolve with success, if their means included falsehood, deceit, violence and deception? Such a prayer would not ascend to heaven. It would only bring ridicule on those who offered it. True prayer must transform their conduct. How could they indulge in unseemly behaviour like yesterday's, while they professed to be votaries of truth and *ahimsa*? Prayer meant nothing, if it did not result in self-purification and humility. Prayer ought to purge the soul of all impurity, pride and egotism. Whilst the incident had caused him deep pain, it was not without a redeeming feature. The redeeming feature was that although one person had run amok, those around him had refused to be thrown off their legs and had not joined him in the clamour. That was as it should be in a well-behaved gathering.

In conformity with yesterday's announcement, he had discontinued giving any translations either in Telugu or Tamil of his remarks at the end of the prayer. Even the song was in Hindustani because he did not want to make the language of the song a bone of contention. He strongly deprecated the rivalry and recrimination between the Tamilians and the Andhras which he had noticed during his visit to the South. The Tamilians and the Andhras, the Kanarese and the Malayalees were distinct, but not antagonistic to one another. They were like branches of the same tree. They should realize the fundamental unity underlying their diversity. Then alone they would be

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "The prayer was held without the recitation of the usual *slokas* from the Upanishads and the *Gita*. *Ramdhun* was sung, and it was followed by a song in Hindustani."

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting, Madras", 23-1-1946

worthy of independence.

Referring to the disturbances that continued through the prayer from the distant fringe of the gathering, he said, he realized that it was due to insufficiency of accommodation. The clamour came from those who could not find accommodation. The right thing for those who failed to get accommodation would have been to quietly sit back or wait in silence outside. Similarly, if they had assimilated the spirit of non-violence, he would not have been forced to confine himself to the precincts of his residence as he was doing at present. It was because he was afraid of the unthinking adoration of the crowds that he did not go out in the open even for his evening walk. Genuine love should be more discerning.

Concluding, Gandhiji asked them all to pray to God to either give them freedom or the strength to die for it. He said :

Let us hope we shall not have to repeat this pledge next year but shall have attained our freedom before that. It is given to man but to try. The result is in the hands of God. But, if our weapons are unadulterated truth and non-violence, our prayer will not go unheard.

*The Hindu*, 28-1-1946

#### **413. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' CONFERENCE, MADRAS**

*January 27, 1946*

Mahatma Gandhi said that many women enquired of him about the nature of work they might do. He had been telling repeatedly, and he would say again that women should go to villages and work there. They must attend to the health and sanitation of the villages and to the education and culture of the womenfolk. All these should be done in a spirit of love and service and not as a mere formality.

Replying to a question relating to parliamentary programme, Mahatma Gandhi said that the question of entering legislatures was a small matter. Only a limited number of women could engage themselves in this work, whereas the constructive programme provided scope for all of them. Mahatma Gandhi added that he had no objection to women standing for election to legislatures; but they must enter the legislatures with the idea of serving the people, always keeping in mind the principle of truth and non-violence. But how many of them would be able to enter the legislatures in a spirit of service? They must also have a clear idea beforehand as to what they would do inside the legislatures. The parliamentary programme was like building from the top. Their aim must be to build from below so that the foundation would be strong and the structure good. If any mistake occurred while building from the bottom, it could be rectified immediately, and the harm done would not be much.

On the other hand, if a mistake was committed in the other programme, the entire structure might collapse and the whole country stood to lose thereby.

The next question related to receiving assistance from Christian Missionaries in a free India. Gandhiji declared that they could certainly accept help not only from Christian Misssionaries but from others also, if such help was offered sincerely and in a spirit of service to the country. There was before them the example of the late Deenabandhu Andrews. He was a Christian. He served India and gave his life for India. India required the help of all men of goodwill who were prepared to offer that help in a spirit of love and service.

In reply to another question, Mahatmaa Gandhi said that the wife or dependent of a Government servant could do national work, provided she was ready to do so without fear of her property being confiscated or the education of her children suffering. If any woman thought that by doing constructive national work her children stood to lose privilege they might otherwise get from the Government, she should not undertake the work.

He said that this sphere of work was large and all were welcome. It was the constructive programme that was responsible for creating an awakening in the country. It was only through constructive programme that they would be able to retain their freedom when it was won. The important part of the constructive programme was to develop purity of body and mind and to educate their children according to the Naye Talim or New Education. Thereby their girls and boys would grow into self-supporting and independent citizens. They wanted many workers to go out into the villages and work among the people. Educated women should make it a point to get into villages and teach the children to read and write and to lead clean lives. If these things were done, the constructive programme would have achieved its purpose.

If they had a capital of one crore of rupees, they should be able to multiply it and not allow themselves to squander away what they had. All of them were aware that he would not allow even a pie being spent unnecessarily. The construtive programme, if correctly followed, would not only pay its way but also add to the capital. Therein lay its greatness.

*The Hindu, 29-1-1946*

*414. SPEECH AT DAKSHINA BHARAT HINDI  
PRACHAR SABHA, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>*

*January 27, 1946*

The business they had all met to transact was a solemn one, and he was glad to be able to take part in that function. If the aspirations of the people of India for freedom were to be fulfilled, they should learn the lessons of true discipline and right conduct, particularly in such large congregations. No doubt there was a president on such occasions to regulate proceedings and maintain order. But the order he wanted was that which was born of a due sense of discipline in each individual. The discipline should be so strong that even where it was a child of five that sought to enforce regulations and law, people should willingly abide by it. That he thought was real *vinaya*<sup>2</sup>. They should also concentrate on the main purpose for which they were assembled there and do nothing to mar the solemnity of that purpose and its fulfilment.

He had again and again said that he preferred the nomenclature 'Hindustani' to 'Hindi' in this connection. The language the Sabha sought to spread was really the language of the common folk of North India, understood by an overwhelming majority. He had also stated again and again that students of Hindustani should learn both Urdu and Nagari scripts. Some people deliberately mixed more Sanskrit words and some others Arabic and Persian words, with the result that today two distinctive streams were noticeable in the language which was one. His own view was that Hindustani was the one common language containing Sanskrit words as well as Arabic and Persian words and understood by the common people. He wanted them to do their bit for spreading that language.

*The Hindu, 29-1-1946*

*415. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS*

*January 27, 1946*

Addressing the gathering in Hindustani, Gandhiji said that in that song<sup>3</sup> there was a prayer by the devotee that God might save his honour. He then alluded to the episode in the *Mahabharata* describing how, when Draupadi was sought to be shamed in the court of Duryodhana in the presence of thousands of persons, Lord Krishna came to the rescue and saved her from being dishonoured. The secret of the miracle was her undying faith in God which nothing could shake. The legend says that the Lord himself reached out his arm to protect her. The poet, of course, is here referring to the

<sup>1</sup> At its twenty-third convocation

<sup>2</sup> Humility

<sup>3</sup> From *Ashram Bhajanaivali*; vide "Ashram Bhajanaivali"

omnipotence of God, who, however, becomes a living force to those who have faith.

Gandhiji said that as Draupadi was depicted as being sought to be made naked, India was already naked and was praying for protection from shame—the shame of slavery and serfdom under alien exploitation—and restoration of her independence.

Yesterday they had pledged themselves that they would either win independence through truth and ahimsa or perish in the attempt, and yet today, in spite of the spacious grounds, they were behaving like an undisciplined mob in one quarter of the prayer ground.<sup>1</sup> If they could not behave well even during *bhajan*, how would they behave when India got freedom? Theirs was by no means an extraordinarily big gathering, but for a people who aspired to be free and remain free through no other means than *ahimsa*, it should be possible to act and obey orders as one man even if they were 400 million. If 400 million could but shout with one voice, the effect would be overwhelming. But there was a proper time for shouting as for silence. Each must come in its proper place.

Gandhiji concluded by expressing the hope that if God again brought him in their midst, they would all be able to understand Hindustani, and there would be no clamour for Tamil and Telugu translations of his speech. He prayed to God to guide them all aright so that they might deport themselves in a manner worthy of the people who aspired to be free.

*The Hindu*, 29-1-1946

#### *416. SPEECH TO WAITING PEOPLE, MADRAS<sup>2</sup>*

*January 27, 1946*

I realize you are all here gathered to see me, out of abundant love for me; therefore I have come to you, giving up my usual walk at this time.

He then advised them to return home quickly and attend the prayer meeting the next evening. Gandhiji informed them that the prayers were now taking place on an extensive site which could accommodate many thousands conveniently. [He said :]

Therefore come there tomorrow and bring your friends.

Finally Gandhiji stressed the importance of maintaining perfect silence during prayer and said that even if a crore of people gathered, peace and serenity should be observed. Otherwise the object of a prayer meeting would be lost.

*The Hindu*, 29-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was being held in a new venue; *vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> According to the report, Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani; he instructed A. Subbiah to translate the speech into Tamil.

## 417. A MESSAGE

January 28, 1946

I hope Kamala Nehru Basic School will bring credit to the name of the departed.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1304

## 418. LETTER TO ANDHRA PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MADRAS,

January 28, 1946

BROTHERS,

I got your letter yesterday. Bhai Venkatarao had a talk with me. I had told him that Doctor Saheb<sup>1</sup> could enter [the Assembly] when it becomes imperative. What can be the urgency now?

Although Doctor Saheb takes my advice and also abides by it, I cannot order him, nor have I done so. Who am I to stop him, if he wishes to enter the Assembly? My advice, however, is against it. He can render greater service from outside.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

SIGNATORIES [*sic*]

EXECUTIVE ANDHRA PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE

C/O T. N. VENKATARAO

PRESIDENT, DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

TENALI, GUNTUR

From the Hindi original: C. W. 4230. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramayya (November 24, 1880 to December 17, 1959); son of village Karnam, he took M. B. & C. M. degree in 1906; gave up practice to join Indian National Congress; was member of A. I. C. C. and Working Committee; he headed Andhra Provincial Congress for many years; edited *Janma Bhoomi* an English weekly, from 1919 to 1930; author of *The History of The Indian National Congress*

419. A LETTER<sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,  
January 28, 1946

BROTHERS,

I have your letter. All of you are earning. God has given you wealth. You may, therefore, make no payments to the clinic by way of fees but should donate to it as much as you can, to your heart's content. This is just my wish. Anyhow, I will be there in a few weeks' time.

Tell me everything then, and I shall do what I can.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

420. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

MADRAS,  
January 28, 1946

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

What a coincidence! I got your letter today, a silence-day. There is so much work here that I do not write or get letters written except on a silence-day. God sustains me.

I would have been completely ignorant about your health. This I write just to satisfy myself.

Come over to Bardoli only if you have completely recovered. There is still the whole of February.

It is as well that I had better written to both of you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G. N. 11566

<sup>1</sup> The letter is in Devanagari.



#### 421. NOTE TO NAGESHWAR PRASAD VAKIL

January 28, 1946

Write to him and also to Priyamvada. Who is the person desiring to marry ?<sup>1</sup> What does he do ? Does he have any children ? How much money does he have ? What is his occupation ?

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

#### 422. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

MADRAS,

January 28, 1946

BHAI PRAKASAM<sup>2</sup>,

While passing through Andhra I heard that the purses presented to you were used by you for your own personal expense. I said that that could not have been so. I was told that that exactly was the case, but that there was nothing wrong in your spending the money given to you for personal use. Write to me or tell me the real facts in this matter. I wanted to talk it over with you but I have no free time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 423. SPEECH READ OUT AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS<sup>3</sup>

January 28, 1946

Today is my day of silence. Therefore I am not able to speak to you. You must please excuse me. What a good thing is silence! I have personal experience of it. The joy one derives from silence is unique. How good it will be, if everyone observed silence for some time every day! Silence is not for some great men; I know that whatever one

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written that a widower friend of his was eager to marry a Harijan girl of Gandhiji's choice.

<sup>2</sup> 1872-1957); editor, *Swarajya*; was called "Andhra Kesari"—the lion of Andhra; Premier (Chief Minister) of composite Madras state 1946-47, and later the first Chief Minister of Andhra, 1953-54.

<sup>3</sup> Written in Hindustani by Gandhiji was read out by Kanu Gandhi

person is able to do can be done by everyone, given the effort. There is a saying<sup>1</sup> amongst us that through silence everything can be achieved. There is much truth in this saying.

*The Hindu*, 30-1-1946

#### 424. MESSAGE TO COMMEMORATION MEETING ON ROMAIN ROLLAND'S 80TH BIRTHDAY<sup>2</sup>

[Before January 29, 1946]<sup>3</sup>

The few days I passed with Romain Rolland and his sister at Villeneuve<sup>4</sup> were among the happiest days of my life. He has been truly described by some of us as a Maharishi. He bore on his benign face the marks of a great sage. He lived and died<sup>5</sup> for humanity, leaving it richer for having lived.

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1946

#### 425. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS' CONFERENCE, MADRAS<sup>6</sup>

January 29, 1946

Q. Can a worker who has taken up one item of constructive work dabble in others? Is it right for him to do so? If so, how?

A. Constructive programme as it stands today is comprised of 18 items. The spinning-wheel as the symbol of non-violence occupies the central place. So every worker must spin and know all about spinning. Supposing a worker takes paper-making as his main occupation and has to find his livelihood also through it, he won't have

<sup>1</sup> मौनं सर्वार्थसाधनम्।

<sup>2</sup> The meeting was held on January 29 at Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta. The message was read out by Kalidas Nag.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> In 1931

<sup>5</sup> He died in Switzerland on December 30, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> The report in *The Hindu*, said: "Gandhiji addressed the concluding session of the Constructive Workers' Conference for about twenty minutes in the morning and answered a few questions handed over to him. Gandhiji, at the outset, asked how many of those present knew Hindustani and a large majority signified they knew the language. "The first two questions and answers are reproduced here from *Harijan* which published them under the title "Constructive Workers' Samagra Gramseva" as translated "from *Harijan Sevak*", 17-3-1946.

much time left for other things. But he will be able to render some other service to the villagers besides that which he renders through the spinning-wheel and paper-making. For instance, he can work for improving the sanitation of the place and render advice about the care of the sick when he cannot take up full responsibility for nursing them.

Supposing another worker decides to concentrate on the spinning wheel only and to find his livelihood also through that, he can do so. I have no doubt in my mind that the wheel can serve as the instrument of earning one's livelihood and at the same time enable the worker to render useful service to his neighbours. The thing is that every worker should decide for himself what will be his main activity besides the spinning-wheel, and what will be his subsidiary activities. Whatever he does, he should do intelligently and with knowledge. Thus, in order to ply the wheel intelligently, he should know all the processes that precede and succeed spinning. He should have full knowledge of the activities that he wishes to concentrate upon and have a general working knowledge about other items of the constructive programme. A student of astronomy cannot know astronomy without some knowledge of science in general. Similarly a worker cannot afford to be utterly ignorant about other items of constructive work.

Q. Please explain the meaning of *samagra gramseva* of your conception. How can we fit ourselves for that?

A. The 18-fold constructive programme includes *samagra gram-seva*. A *samagra gramsevak* must know everybody living in the village and render them such service as he can. That does not mean that the worker will be able to do everything single-handed. He will show them the way of helping themselves and procure for them such help and materials as they require. He will train up his own helpers. He will so win over the villagers that they will seek and follow his advice. Supposing I go and settle down in a village with a *ghani* (village oil-press), I won't be an ordinary *ghanchi* (oil-presser) earning 15-20 rupees a month. I will be a Mahatma *ghanchi*. I have used the word Mahatma in fun but what I mean to say is that as *ghanchi* I will become a model for the villagers to follow. I will be a *ghanchi* who knows the *Gita* and the Koran. I will be learned enough to teach their children. I may not be able to do so for lack of time. The villagers will come to me and ask me: 'Please make arrangements for our children's education.' I will tell them: 'I can find you a teacher but you will have to bear the expenses.' And they will be prepared to

do so most willingly. I will teach them spinning and when they come and ask me for the services of a weaver, I will find them a weaver on the same terms as I found them a teacher. And the weaver will teach them how to weave their own cloth. I will inculcate in them the importance of hygiene and sanitation, and when they come and ask me for a sweeper, I will tell them: 'I will be your sweeper' and I will train you all in the job.' This is my conception of *samagra gramseva*. You may tell me that I will never find a *ghanchi* of this description in this age. Then I will say that we cannot help to improve our villages in this age. Take the example of a *ghanchi* in Russia. After all the man who runs an oil-mill is a *ghanchi*. He has money but his strength does not lie in his money. Real strength lies in knowledge. True knowledge gives a moral standing and moral strength. Everyone seeks the advice of such a man. Take the instance of Vinoba. He is a good *ghanchi*. You all know what he does, and you can all follow his example according to your capacity.<sup>2</sup>

Q. Khadi work has been carried on for the last 20 years for the purpose of solving the problem of unemployment. Now if priority is to be given for an all-round uplift of the villages, then (1) arrangements should be there for the tiller of the soil so that he gets full remuneration for his labour; (2) efforts should be made to improve agriculture; (3) if there is some spare time, spinning and such other industries should be introduced in the villages. According to my scheme, khadi and gramodyog get a third place. How far am I right in this?

A. When khadi was first introduced, we used to say that it was meant for helping the poor. But at the same time I had told the country that *swaraj* rested upon cotton yarn. Both the things went on simultaneously. But you paid attention only to one of them. This was our ill-luck. I had brought the idea of khadi from South Africa. From there I could visualize that till we chose an occupation in which millions of men and women of India could take part, *swaraj* could not be achieved even through truth and non-violence. Those who have to work for their livelihood may do so. But they can spin voluntarily for their country or they can work at some occupation for their survival. I hope you understand the difference between the two.

When I came to India, then also women were carding. I placed

<sup>1</sup> *Harijan Sevak* has: "I am myself a Bhangi . . ."

<sup>2</sup> The following three questions and their answers are translated from *Khadi Jagat*, April 1946, which published them under the title "Farming or Spinning-wheel".

before them the idea of *swaraj* as I understood it. Whether the poor earned their livelihood through khadi or adopted it as a means of *swaraj*, both the things could go hand in hand. I realized that real freedom could be attained only in this way. Therefore I placed before the Congress the idea of khadi. The Congress accepted khadi in 1920. You should know that till that day the Congress had no flag. When people realized the importance of khadi, the tricolour flag came into being.

In the Aga Khan Palace I used to think constantly about the place of khadi. It is a matter of shame that I was released<sup>1</sup> on grounds of ill-health. The Government did not want that, like Ba and Mahadev, I too should die there.<sup>2</sup> Therefore they released me. After my release I placed before you the same idea. Was khadi only a means of economically helping the poor or was it a means of attaining *swaraj* also? If we wish to make khadi a means of achieving freedom, then we shall have to change our method of work. Many people were disappointed with spinning only for economic reasons. To spin for the whole day and get just an anna was not enough. We raised the status of women by raising the wages of the women spinners. But at the time we emphasized the point that the spinners should also wear khadi. This was the second step.

Now the third step is that all those who wear khadi should spin. How splendid it would be, if all the people of Madras should spin and also weave the yarn spun by them. Otherwise they can get their yarn woven at a nearby place. This is the way of the village to get all things done at minimum cost and labour. The urban way is just the opposite. When I visited Lancashire, I observed that the workers never wore the cloth that they themselves produced. For them the cloth was imported from Ireland. Some embroidered cloth from Madras was also used. Now, if the villagers or the cultivators are able to spin and produce yarn for their own use, we can save them a lot of trouble. And, if they do so with knowledge, they would be bringing *swaraj* nearer. This is the new policy of khadi.

If you have understood my point, then the place of khadi is not third, but it remains first. I have made khadi or the spinning-wheel the symbol of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is a unique thing. You can make anything

<sup>1</sup> On May 6, 1944, having been detained from August 8, 1942

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai died on August 15, 1942. Kasturba Gandhi died on February 22, 1944.

its symbol. I made the *charkha* its symbol and not the rosary after due thought. If we spin just one length all the time taking the name of God, then the spinning-wheel itself becomes our rosary. Spinning itself becomes sacrificial work.

One who having eyes does not see the light of the sun and having a skin does not feel its warmth is dead, though living. The spinning-wheel is the life of constructive work. If you take away that, all the other seventeen items will become a lifeless corpse. If we wish to achieve *swaraj* for the poorest of the poor and the weakest of the weak, for the crores of women, whose only guardian is God, and not only for some educated women, it can be done only through the spinning-wheel. And, without the spinning-wheel, the constructive programme becomes a mere cipher. It becomes ten if the zero is placed after one. Zero alone has no value.

Q. Ninety-five per cent of agriculture in India depends on rains. For the improvement of farming more than 50 per cent of it should be done through irrigation. It is the experience of the experts that in this way alone farming can be improved. Under all circumstances this sort of improvement will have a prominent place in the economic planning of India. In case such an improvement in farming is introduced, it becomes a complete industry which goes on throughout the year. In that case the spinning-wheel do not occupy the place of a supplementary industry. If we want to ply it in the villages, we will have to think of a place for it as for the handloom. Please throw light on this matter.

A. Khadi and all the activities connected with it have a direct relation with *satyagraha*. Whatever credit I have earned, I have earned it through *satyagraha*. I am not a learned man. I consider myself and feel somewhat stupid before scholars in Tamil, English, Hindustani and even Gujarati. But I have placed before you *satyagraha* knowingly and after careful thinking. I have not acquired it from books, but from experience. I could see that khadi industry could serve as a means of achieving [*swaraj*]. Farming cannot take that place. Millions of men, women and children cannot take part in it [as they can in spinning]. I live for the freedom of the country and work continuously for it. After I am worn out, I do not wish to live; not even for enjoyment. For that matter I am always happy and never sad. If I were born in free India, perhaps I would not have insisted on khadi. But, even when I was in South Africa, I knew that India was a slave country and to remove that slavery I thought of the spinning-wheel as the means.

First of all do not possess full knowledge about agriculture. But

the simple thing is that we cannot progress much without the help of the Government. Canals will have to be constructed, some trees will have to be cut down. We will have to use the new engineering devices. At every step, the Government's help will be required.

Q. An Indian villager spends about 80 per cent on foodgrains and 12 per cent on cloth. Does it not follow that agriculture holds the most important place in our village uplift scheme? Would it not be proper to give to agriculture instead of to khadi the place of the sun in the solar system [of the constructive programme]?

A. Even if all that is correct, farming cannot take the place of the spinning-wheel. It is a great thing to become industrious through the spinning-wheel and give up lethargy. The key to our *swaraj* lies in it. When we keep the spinning-wheel in the centre and try to remove its defects, we learn many things by the way. You must know that I talk about the *charkha* [only] as regards India. I would not ply *charkha* in the North Pole. If India understands the value of the spinning-wheel, *swaraj* can be certainly attained through it. To some extent there is propaganda of the spinning-wheel in the cities. It is welcome. But the villagers have to adopt the spinning-wheel. In order to link it with agriculture, the villagers had better adopt it.<sup>1</sup>

Q. Is it possible to achieve nationalization of land in a non-violent manner?

"Yes" came the answer from Gandhiji. He made it perfectly clear that *kisans*, the tillers of the land, should educate *kisans* on their rights and duties, and tell them how they should develop self-confidence and courage to assert their just rights. *Satyagraha* might have to be resorted to in the process of claiming ownership of the land, and the zamindars were not *rakshasas* to oppress them, for it would not be to their benefit to do so.

Q. What should be done when an unsympathetic Indian State placed obstacles in the way of the constructive programme?

Gandhiji said that the result depended entirely on the workers themselves and the extent to which they were prepared to suffer for the cause. Gandhiji, replying to another question, approved of Kaka Kalelkar's suggestion to bring in words belonging to other languages to make themselves intelligible in their addresses to gatherings. If any *pandit* objected to this procedure, he would be only ignoring realities. He, however, pointed out the absurdity of using bombastic words like *chathushpada peetham* for chair and *lakhini nilaya* for an ink-stand.

Gandhiji was asked as to what extent students could engage themselves in political work. Mahatmaji said that there was quite enough work for students to do

<sup>1</sup> The following two questions and their answers are from *The Hindu*, 30-1-1946.

alongside of their studies. They could, for instance, do a great deal in connection with removal of illiteracy. But he was not in favour of students associating themselves with party politics or controversies as they could not do justice to such work, remaining as students. If some of them felt like leaving schools and colleges with a view to engaging themselves in national work, they were free to do so.<sup>1</sup>

To a question whether constructive workers can go to jails, Mahatma Gandhi said :

As far as possible, constructive workers should wholly devote their time to the 18-point programme. This should be the case at almost all times. But when the situation in the country is extraordinary and the constructive worker feels impelled to go to jail, then, of course, he can go to jail. This is, however, only in extraordinary circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

*Harijan*, 17-3-1946, and *Khadi Jagat*, April 1946; also *The Hindu*, 30-1-1946, and *The Hindustan Times*, 30-1-1946

#### 426. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADRAS <sup>3</sup>

January 29, 1946

Addressing the gathering, Gandhiji called for silence, observing that unless they kept silent, they would not be able to hear him. As there was no appreciable reduction in the noise coming from the fringes of the vast gathering, Mahatmaji called for *bhajan*.<sup>4</sup>

He said that he had received a purse containing about Rs. 10,000 from the Maharani of Vizianagaram, on behalf of the ladies of Madras, for which he was thankful. The Rani Saheba had told him that on account of the the shortage of time, more could not be collected, but had promised to raise the amount to Rs. one lakh within three months. The vast gathering before him was witness to that promise. If the Maharani was not able to collect the entire balance within that period, Mahatmaji

<sup>1</sup> What follows is from *The Hindustan Times*, 30-1-1946.

<sup>2</sup> The report in *The Hindustan Times* concluded: "Gandhiji declined to bless the foundation-stone for a new building to be constructed for the Kasturba Free Reading-room and Library of the Andhra Young Men's Association, Madras, as the inscription on the stone was in English. A fresh stone was thereupon prepared with the inscription in Telugu, the mother tongue of the people in that area, and Gandhiji blessed the stone and wished the institution all success."

<sup>3</sup> The report said: "Mahatma Gandhi and party arrived at the *pandal* at 4.35 p. m. He was conducted to the dais by the Maharani of Vizianagaram, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Mrs. Ambujammal and others. He was presented with khadi garlands by a number of children."

<sup>4</sup> According to the report, "Two women sang *Raghupati Raghva Rajaram* and the audience joined in the chorus, making time with hands."



was certain she would make good the deficit from her own pocket. But that would not please him. It was his desire that his sisters residing in all the four linguistic parts of this Province should contribute and see to it that the fund reached the figure of Rs. one lakh.

Explaining what he proposed to do with the money, Gandhiji said that he was not going to devote the entire sum for work among women. He proposed to give a portion of it to the Hindi Prachar Sabha for the spread of Hindustani among women, a portion to Harijan work and balance for important work for the uplift of women. He had seen many girls taking their degrees at the Hindustani Convocation. He was not satisfied with their number. He would like to see crores of women studying Hindustani in South India. All of them were aware what a “greedy” person he was in the matter of collecting funds for specific purposes. He was never satisfied with small purses. He wanted crores so that he could spend the money on deserving causes. The sum of Rs. one lakh was not a big thing for the women of Madras Presidency to contribute. Women liked to decorate themselves with so many unnecessary things. They could avoid so much waste and contribute to good causes.

Gandhiji remarked that the Maharani had taken pity on him as sun-light was falling severely on him.<sup>1</sup> Resuming his speech, Mahatma Gandhi said that he saw women wearing a number of ornaments. He would prefer to see them dressed in khaddar rather than bedecked with ornaments. After all, character was the most important thing for women. It was ignorance that led them to wear ornaments. The simplicity of Sita was an example before them. In spite of carrying her away to Lanka, Ravana dared not lay his hands on her. Why was it? It was because of the character of Sita. India was a glorious country, full of such great examples. The glory of Hindustan was in the hands of Indian womanhood. Dusshasana was unable to put Draupadi to shame, though the Pandavas were unable to come to her rescue. It was her character that made the Lord come to her rescue. Swaraj or Ramarajya was after all a small thing. It was the *tejas*<sup>2</sup> of Hindustan that mattered. If the womanhood of India attained her complete *tejas*, the foreigner would not be here. Therefore he would impress upon them that their real asset and ornament was character and not dresses and jewels.

Finally Gandhiji spoke about untouchability and said that some of them could not drink even water given by a Harijan. Not only that, they would not give water to a Harijan in a pot. They would pour water only into his hand. This attitude should go. Other differences like Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Parsi should also go. They should strive for unity and that unity could be achieved early by all of them speaking a common language, Hindustani.

Glancing at his watch, Mahatmaji said that it was time for him to leave. He would, therefore, request them to excuse him, if he could not speak more.

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Here the speech was interrupted, while Gandhiji shifted his seat.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “brightness”; here it refers to brightness of purity of character.

## 427. SPEECH AT NAYEE TALIM CONVOCATION, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>

January 29, 1926

Gandhiji addressed an exhortation to the teachers to carry on their work in their respective areas in a spirit of loyalty and earnestness to the cause. He wanted them all to remember the several items of work mentioned in their certificates<sup>2</sup> and to strive their utmost to carry out their duties in that connection. It was true that there were certain very wide subjects like agriculture included there, but he was sure they would do their best to instil in those coming under their care the proper attitude in this matter. The one important matter which he wanted them to bear in mind was that they should all learn Hindustani. He added that they should in no circumstance neglect their mother tongue. In each linguistic area, the mother tongue should have the first claim. But Hindustani would not only serve as a common medium for the different language areas of their own Province but also as a means of communication between the South and the rest of India.

Another important thing he would urge them to bear in mind was that they should learn all about their immediate surroundings and gradually extend their knowledge in a widening circle to things outside. Mere memorizing would not carry them far. He remembered how as a young boy he was made to memorize “London is on the Thames” as part of his geography lesson. That kind of knowledge was not much good.

Knowledge directly derived from anything was much better than knowledge derived through a written lesson or through symbols. A child would have a much better idea of a charkha when it saw one and how it worked than by reading or hearing about it. That was an essential basis of Nayee Talim.

These were some of the ideas which he thought he might place before them, and he wanted that they should adopt whatever seemed good to them therein.

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1926

<sup>1</sup> The Convocation was held in the evening in the Hindi Prachar Sabha premises; Narahari Parikh presided. The report said: “Gandhiji . . . distributed certificates to 26 teachers trained in Wardha Basic Education course. . . . He first perused the certificates which were printed in Tamil, the caption alone being in Hindustani. Whenever he came upon a difficult word or a technical expression. . . he asked a teacher nearby to explain it to him.

<sup>2</sup> The Certificates, signed by Gandhiji, mentioned about training in, agriculture, spinning, village sanitation, basic education, child psychology and Hindustani.

#### 428. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

January 29, 1946

I hear many of you did not understand the *bhajan*<sup>1</sup> of Guru Nanak which was just sung. He had written the *bhajan* for men and women who are ignorant. He says, some people go to the forest to realize God. God is for the many crores of people on earth and not for those who go to the forest alone. In the forest live tigers, lions and bears. Therefore ordinary people cannot be expected to go to the forest. 'Why do you go to the forest?' he asked. When God is inside you, be in this world and do the work of this world. Gambling and operating on the sharemarkets are not among the works of the world. God is everywhere. He is in the scorpion. He is in the dog. The dog may bite us, God is good. God is not far away in the forest, but He is within us.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1946

#### 429. TALK WITH SINDHI MERCHANTS<sup>3</sup>

MADRAS,

January 29, 1946

GANDHIJI (laughingly): That is all? It is much too small! Wherever I go, I see so many of you doing good business. It should be much more.

A MERCHANT: But we have paid Rs. 50,000 already to Pandit Nehru in Sind. The more reason why you should pay me also as much.

We will do so when you come to Sind.

*The Hindu*, 30-1-1946

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Ashram Bhajanavali"

<sup>2</sup> According to the report, "at this stage Gandhiji had to stop his speech as a section of the audience continued to make noise".

<sup>3</sup> About 25 merchants led by Kewalram Chellaram met Gandhiji soon after the evening prayer, and presented to him a purse containing Rs. 10,000.

#### 430. TELEGRAM TO ARUNA ASAF ALI

[After January 29, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

SO YOU HAD YOUR WAY. EXPECT LETTER.

BAPU

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 3-2-1946

#### 431. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS OF HINDI PRACHAR SABHA STAFF AND WORKERS<sup>2</sup>

Jaunary 30, 1946

Gandhiji, who made many kind enquiries about them, cracked many jokes and, saying that he considered them as members of his own family, urged that not only Hindi workers but the members of their families should also learn Hindustani. He compared the Hindi *pracharak* to the Gantotri, the place from where the Ganges flows. He said, the *pracharak* should be the fountain-head of learning, and through him the knowledge of Hindustani should spread throughout the country.

Gandhiji then invited questions. Pandit Sivarama Sharma of Guntur asked whether *pracharaks* could take up work in public educational institutions, such as schools and colleges in connection with the teaching of Hindustani to the students there.

Gandhiji replied that there was no antagonism regarding any place of work for Hindi *pracharaks*. It was their aim to spread Hindustani all over the country and they should deem it part of their duty to teach Hindustani to everyone who desired to learn it.

If Lord Wavell wants to learn the language, I will send him my best Hindustani *pracharak* or myself take up the duties of teaching that language to him.

Answering another question, Gandhiji said that the Hindustani workers should try also to contribute their bit to the assimilation in Hindustani of whatever was best in the local languages and even in other languages. Works like those of Valmiki,

<sup>1</sup> According to the report, the telegram was sent after receipt of news of cancellation of warrant against Aruna Asaf Ali. The warrant was cancelled on January 29.

<sup>2</sup> The report said: "The members of the staff . . . and workers of the sabha's Press with the members of their families met Gandhiji at 'Mangala Bhavanam'. . . . Gandhiji guessed their unexpressed desire to meet him . . . and he had fixed 7.30 a.m. . . ."

Kamban and Shakespeare would enrich any language. Further they should continue their studies side by side with their work as *pracharak* and, if possible, organize extension lectures and postgraduate courses in this connection. Another thing *pracharaks* should do was to try to bring about a synthesis, and exchange with other Indian languages so that the benefit would be mutual as between Hindustani and those languages.

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1946

#### 432. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS AT MEETING OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

*January 30, 1946*

Gandhiji first expressed pleasure at the very large gathering that had assembled. He said that though of late he had not participated in students' meeting, yet his affection for them remained the same as before. He believed that one could do more service by silent work, and this was borne out by his experience not only in South Africa, where he had moved with Madrasis, but also in this city during his short stay. People here, to whom he had not spoken, had clearly understood what he stood for and what shape their service to the country should take.

The rest of the address was in the nature of replies to questions that were placed in his hands earlier. Gandhiji had walked into the meeting bringing the questions with him. First he remarked in a humorous vein that while he would answer the questions, he would not like to leave the place before receiving their promised purse. Before he commenced his answers, he put his usual question as to how many of them could understand him in Hindustani. The response was not good. On this he remarked that it was a matter for regret that, in spite of the fact that the Sabha had been working amongst them for twenty-seven years, they had not learnt Hindustani in large numbers. He expected that students, at least all of them, would learn Hindustani and said that learning Hindustani was not as costly as college education. It was much easier also to learn the language.

Next the subject of utilization of collections made for the presentation of a purse to Gandhiji was touched upon by him. Gandhiji said that since they had made the collections with a view to giving him the amount towards the Hindi Prachar Sabha Fund, law and propriety required that they should not lay any condition on the utilization of the amount. He did not wish to say anything more on this point.

Gandhiji's opinion was sought on the practice prevalent amongst students of conversing in English. Gandhiji condemned such a practice and said that this ought not to be. Though the English language could be compared to a gold chain, yet it

bound their hands and feet in slavery. The mother tongue could be compared to their mother, and to drop it in favour of English was like letting down their mother. Every student should know two languages, his mother tongue and Hindustani.

Q. Could girl students use cosmetics and boy students ape it?

Gandhiji's reply was that only inanimate things like stone-images required frequent polishing, and that human beings' natural beauty required no cosmetics. He added that in this country, where poverty and starvation was rampant, it was foolish to waste money on such luxuries.

Q. Do you approve of smoking which was at present very common amongst students?

Gandhiji said that he did smoke once or twice when he was young and, reflecting on it, he was really ashamed. But, while he did it stealthily, students were doing it at present openly (laughter). Smoking was as bad as drinking, whether it was indigenous stuff or foreign, and should be avoided.

Replying to another question solicited Gandhiji's view on the poor percentage of students using khadi, Mahatmaji observed that khadi had its birth for freedom. He reiterated that if they wanted freedom quickly, students must not only wear khadi, but also make it out of their own spun yarn.

Gandhiji referred the students to his latest book<sup>1</sup> on constructive work, when he was told that many students did not believe in the constructive programme. He added :

How could work amongst Harijans and aboriginal prove uninteresting? To say that constructive programme was uninteresting was a vote in favour of slavery.

When asked for his advice to students who were intolerant, Gandhiji said that tolerance was the first virtue that a student should develop. He added :

If anyone says that India can gain independence through the sword, I would patiently hear him, even though I have been preaching truth and non-violence for the last twenty years for winning swaraj.

Gandhiji, full of emotion, referred to violence such as causing destruction with the atom bomb and the victory won thereby, and said that he had applied his mind to this point. He felt that truth and non-violence were really more powerful than the atom bomb.

"I am not afraid of the atom bomb," he remarked. While they could cause physical injury, they could not kill their soul. Once they had the determination that they could not be conquered by violence, victory was theirs; for a moral protest

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place", 13-12-1941 and "Foreword to "Constructive Programme its Meaning and Place"

against evil was itself a victory.

Finally Gandhiji exhorted the students to think on the various problems; for students who could not think for themselves could not learn anything.

*The Hindu*, 1-2-1946

### 433. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

*January 30, 1946*

Taking for his theme the text of the *bhajan* song—"With the grace of the Lord, everything can be achieved"—Gandhiji said, the persistence of the noise from one section of the crowd was such that it seemed that only God's grace could bring about perfect silence in that gathering. For his part, he thought, it would be impossible for him also to speak when so many were "making speeches" at the other end of the gathering. Were a similar meeting held under the auspices of the Government, there would surely be silence enforced with a lathi. But here there was only the appeal of the volunteers, which they in their sense of freedom did not care to obey. He knew they did so because of their love for him, and in their desire to see him closer. They would not be denied. But they should learn to discipline themselves in such matters and even to deny themselves what they wanted, if it was harmful to discipline and general good. How could they do it unless they became filled with Rama for, as the *bhajan* song went, when they became saturated with Rama all else would be eliminated.

In Madras, he knew, thousands were addicted to liquor. The consequent evil was enough to break one's heart. When the Congress was running the Ministry, drink was abolished in different areas. Liquor revenue fell, but the people were happy and their wives and children had a square meal and a happy home. Had the reform come from within and not as a result of something from without, then it would have been far more good. When could such a phenomenon happen? Only when people were saturated with Rama and *Gurukripa*—God's grace—as the song went.

Should a rich man offer them gold or silver from his safe room, people would crowd to his gates. But of what use would gold and silver be to a man, really? *Gurukripa* was the greatest and most valuable help one could have. God is known by different names but God is One. When His grace filled one's being, nothing was impossible for one to achieve.

*The Hindu*, 1-2-1946

#### 434. *SPEECH TO CONGRESS WORKERS, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>*

*January 30, 1946*

Gandhiji asked, how many of them could follow his speech. About fifty people raised their hands. Noticing that Mr. Kamaraj<sup>2</sup> was not among the number, Gandhiji laughingly remarked: "You too?" Gandhiji said that he had hoped that Congress workers at least would all have learnt Hindustani by now, but he was disappointed. The Congress resolution about lingua franca and conducting all business in Hindustani should, he took it, be binding on them all. It was a misfortune, indeed, that after so many years of emphasis on the importance of Hindustani, Congressmen were yet unacquainted with the language. He knew the hold of English on the people of this country. He had seen sign-boards before business premises showing Indian names in Roman characters. That indicated the extent of the slavery of the people of this country to the foreign language.

Gandhiji paid a tribute to the late Mr. S. Satyamurti, and said :

He was a fine man, but I used to quarrel with him, asking him whether he would speak in English in Northern India.

Pointing to the writing on the mike before him (giving the name of the radio company concerned in Roman script) Gandhiji said that provided another illustration of his statement. But how did English or other Western people and firms go about the work? They tried to reach the people by boosting their own ware in the language of the people.

It was the duty of the people to throw off this slavery to a foreign language. A common language spoken by the bulk of the people of the country could alone be the medium linking all parts of India, and such a language was Hindustani. Local provincial affairs should be transacted in the local provincial language; for all-India

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "Gandhiji addressed about 1,500 Congress workers for about half an hour from 7.30 p.m. in the Constructive Workers' Conference pandaal. On his arrival, he was greeted with deafening cheers. An illuminated charkha electrically operated was revolving at one end of the hall and Gandhiji watched its movement with interest for some time."

<sup>2</sup> Kumaraswami Kamaraja Nadar (1903-76); active Congress worker from boyhood; in 1930, joined Salt Satyagraha Movement at Vedaranyam, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment; was Member, Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly for several terms, and its Chief Minister, 1954-67; Member, Congress Working Committee, 1947-69; elected President, Indian National Congress, 1963; evolved 'Kamaraj Plan' to dispel lure for power from the minds of leading Congressmen, and to persuade them to prefer organizational activities to ministerial posts



purposes and inter-provincial communication Hindustani should be the medium.

Gandhiji then invited those present to ask him questions. If they had no questions to ask, he would like to talk to them about the charkha for some time.

The first questioner, speaking in English, requested Gandhiji to tell them something about the future.

GANDHIJI (humoursly): What is 'future'? Is it a horse? Say it in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam or Kannada. Only God can say what is in the future. I am an ordinary man. I have not read as much as some of you. If I wrote 'B.A.' behind my name, people will laugh at me. Much less can I write 'M.A.' I cannot call myself Barrister-at-Law either. I have been removed from the rolls by the Inns of Court because I went to jail.

The gentleman repeated his question in Tamil. Gandhiji, replying in Hindustani, told him that he could not foresee the future; the future rested with the Almighty.

QUESTION: What is the easy method of learning Hindustani?

GANDHIJI: Devote to it one-sixteenth of the time you have spent in learning English. That is, if you have spent sixteen years learning English, spend one year for Hindustani. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Tell me beforehand when you want to take my picture. Then I will close my eyes so that they may not become blind (laughter).

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he could not tell them anything about the future. They might ask him about the present, if they chose, since talking about the past was not much good.<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji said that he would answer such questions<sup>3</sup>, as he could, within the few minutes still available to him. Referring to the complaint of the Harijan sweeper, Gandhiji said that it was a matter over which they should ponder deeply. If it was true, it was a matter very much to be regretted. He wanted that all Congressmen should place God in their hearts and act as their conscience dictated. Then everything would go all right. If they should observe distinctions such as Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, untouchable and so on, the nation would go to ruin.

Answering another question, Gandhiji said that it was part of the law of his life

<sup>1</sup> At this stage, a cameraman, took a flashlight snap. Gandhiji turned towards him as if to say something but stopped without saying anything. Just then another cameraman flashed a shot, and Gandhiji burst into laughter.

<sup>2</sup> Here the report added: "One of those in the audience, speaking first in English and then in Telugu, said that he was a Harijan employed as a sweeper in the Khadi Nilayam, George Town, and complained that those in charge of the Nilayam treated him as worse than a dog and refused to allow him to approach them."

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji received three slips.

that he should pray to God, be it Krishna, Rama, Allah or Christ. They were all one to him. All religions to him appeared to be like branches of one and the same tree. In his view, there was no conflict between different religions. He did not pray in the manner he did with any ulterior motive of preaching Hinduism or any particular religion. He merely prayed to God. If people misunderstood that, he was not to blame. People were welcome to join in the prayer, if it pleased them; otherwise they might keep away and leave him alone.

Another member asked a question in regard to the elections to the legislatures, Congress committees and Congress executive bodies. Gandhiji said :

How can I answer this question? I am not even a four-anna Congressman. Much less can I give you advice in such matters. The advice I may give you, you may not find of much use. These are questions which you should ask to the President <sup>1</sup> of the Congress, who is a great and good man. You should ask these questions of a man like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel or other members of the Working Committee. And, whatever Congress decides, it is open to you to abide by it.

It is true, Gandhiji added, that he had been connected with the Congress for many years and had also fought the Government on behalf of the Congress. To some extent he had also been responsible for shaping its Constitution. But his advice was given to the Congress Working committee, if and when it sought his advice. So far as they were concerned, such questions should be put to the Working Committee or the Congress President. His own particular department was constructive work. They were welcome to ask him questions on that subject.

Gandhiji stated that he met them because, having come all the way to Madras, he did not want to omit meeting Congress workers. But he did not want to enter into complicated political matters which were not within his province.

One member observed that constructive work was also related to politics. Gandhiji agreed that it was in a way related to politics, but to him it was pure constructive work.

One gentleman asked whether the spread of Hindustani would not prejudicially affect the local languages.<sup>2</sup>

QUESTION: What place should the Congress assign to people who had carried on black-marketing activities during the last War and what punishment should be given to them?

<sup>1</sup> Abul Kalam Azad

<sup>2</sup> Here, according to the report, C. Rajagopalachari remarked that it was like asking about the relationship of Rama and Sita after listening to the entire *Ramayana*.

Gandhiji said that if he was a Congressman, he would say, they should be horse-whipped non-violently. But as a man of out-and-out non-violence, he preferred to keep mum. Gandhiji added that he had exceeded the time which had been allotted for the function, and he asked leave of them to go.

One member asked him a question as to whether the rulers should not learn the language of the people rather than the people learn the language of the rulers. Gandhiji said that this was the proper thing to do. The rulers should learn the language of the people. But as it was, the people had allowed themselves to be suppressed and their language to be dominated by the language of the ruler.

*The Hindu*, 31-1-1946

### 435. TALK WITH V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI <sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,

January 30, 1946

SASTRI: You have been a blessing to me in a hundred ways.

GANDHIJI: What nonsense, Sastri.

s. Ah, don't I know, Gandhi, you are the greatest fellow alive in the world today? Let your *kataksha* fall on them.<sup>2</sup>

He who does not see Rama and whom Rama does not see is despised by everyone in this world.<sup>3</sup>

Then Sastriar told Gandhiji how, on the previous day after his mid-day meal, he had dozed off and as if in a trance written a most beautiful essay on the *Ramayana* in about 15 minutes. The theme was that after Ravana's death, Hanuman goes to Sita in Ashoka Vatika and asks her :

Mother, give me your permission and I shall severely punish all the *rakshasis* who have been torturing you.

The Divine Lady turns round and replies :

No, what wrong have these poor things done? They are merely slaves of their master, and they did his bidding for the sake of their livelihood. Leave them

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from "Meeting Sastriar" by Sushila Nayyar, who explains: "Dr. Srinivasan, an Honorary Physician of the General Hospital, Madras, who was in charge of Sastriar's case came to Gandhiji's residence and escorted him to the hospital as on the previous occasion"; *vide* "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 22-1-1946 C. Rajagopalachari, Thakkar Bapa, amrit Kaur, Agatha Harrison, T. N. Jagadisan, Pyarelal and Sushila Nayyar accompanied Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> Sastriar was introducing his grandchildren to Gandhiji "and in good humour" quoted the *Ramayana*, Ayodhya Kanda. 8

<sup>3</sup> यश्च रामं न पश्येत्तु यं च रामो न पश्यति ।  
निन्दितः स भवेत्लोके स्वात्माप्येनं विगर्हते ॥

alone. It is forgiveness that makes life worth living. Forgiveness is divine. It is the noblest of virtues, so I pardon them. There is no one who is wholly free of error. And who does not need to be forgiven?<sup>1</sup>

S. As soon as I go home I shall dictate it to Jagadisan, if he can come to me and send it to you. Will you let Pyarelal read it out to you?

G. You dictate it to Jagadisan tomorrow and send it to me. I shall read it before I go to Madura.

S. No, it will take me at least two or three days. I have to do it in bits. Marvellous as my doctor is, he has not made me well enough to do it tomorrow.

Sastriar was full of the *Ramayana*. He regretted that the great epic was not read more generally and that its ideal did not animate the people as of old. [He added]

S. The *Ramayana* has no parallel. When Sita had repulsed the evil-intentioned Ravana with the *tejas* of the purity the *rakshasis* came to her and said:

You do not know the world. Else you would not have refused what is being offered to you.

The Divine Lady's reply was :

Your city is beautiful, the buildings are grand, and there is every mark of civilization, but are there not two or three people who feel the wrong and can say the truth to Ravana?

That is the duty we owe to friends and that we fail to discharge. I have done that for you once or twice and, as for you, do it, and sometimes publicly, much to the consternation of everybody.<sup>2</sup> But it is the noblest office of friendship.

Tell me, Rajagopalachari, out of hundred people that go wrong, is not there one whom a timely warning could have saved? Please do not thin that I am preaching at the Mahatma. I am making a confession. I have also failed in that duty sometimes.

S. (turning to Bapu): You are a seeker after truth. You and I are poles asunder in many things. I have differed from you, and you have said so without reserve. But I am also a follower of truth, though at a great distance from you. The eternal truths propounded by Valmiki in the *Ramayana* have been the greatest source of inspiration to me. I feel, I have failed to do my duty by not giving to the people what I have found for myself in that great epic.

Gandhiji reminded him of the lectures on the *Ramayana* that he had delivered, and suggested that they should be printed. But that was not enough for him.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

समयो रक्षितव्यस्तु सन्तश्रारित्र भूषणाः  
पापानां वाशुभानां वा वधाहर्णामथापि वा  
कार्यं कारुण्यमारेण न कश्चिन्नापराध्यति

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to Gandhiji's attitude to World War; *vide* "Conundrums", 30-9-1939.

S. If I live for some time more and good Jagadisan can spare time, I might still be able to make some atonement.

G. Jagadisan is your admirer and a devoted follower. He will be always at your disposal, unless, of course, the doctor thinks that you should not be disturbed. Then he will just not be at home.

S. (with a hearty laugh): So, like Rama, you teach falsehood. When Sumantra was driving Rama, Lakshmana and Sita to the jungle, Rama asked him to drive fast: "Man, why prolong the agony? Go fast and, if my father is angry, tell him you did not hear him."

S. (to the doctor<sup>1</sup>): Yes, you are right. A good conversationalist hears more than he talks. But they say 'once a schoolmaster, always a school-master.' So I have gone on.

G. And we shall bear witness to that.

S. Well, this might be my last meeting with you. I am not in a position to say, 'I will come to see you when you return from Madura.' So I wanted to talk, and have talked. Now it is your turn.

G. Nonsense, this is not the last meeting. I will try to come and see you on my return from Madura.<sup>2</sup> And I have very little to say except this, that you must get well soon and return the visit at Sevagram.

S. You are the prince of optimists.

G. Oh yes, an irrepressible one!

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946

#### 436. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

MADRAS,  
*January 31, 1946*

MY DEAR HORACE,

Welcome. You will meet me when and where you can. Agatha knows my movement.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1441

<sup>1</sup> Who was getting worried as the patient was talking too much and said something in Tamil

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", pp. 87-8. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri died on April 17, 1946.

### 437. *SPEECH AT VOLUNTEERS' RALLY, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>*

*January 31, 1946*

Gandhiji said that he was under the impression that the entire programme was over with the previous evening. But he was told in the night that there was this rally and that he must be present. He was glad, he was able to attend the function and he was really pleased to meet them all.

Referring to the service rendered by the several departments in making the celebration a success, Gandhiji profoundly thanked them for their help and co-operation. Without the aid of volunteers, he could not believe that they could have got through such an important celebration. He considered volunteers as those sworn to non-violence, as against the police and the military who were pledged to violence and who dominated over the people. It was only with this impression that he had appealed as early as 1920 that they should organize volunteer corps all over the country so that service rendered sincerely and non-violently could get them freedom quickly.

They must learn thoroughly how to control large gatherings with tact, politeness and calmness, without distinction of rich and poor, civilized and uncivilized. He knew that people would keep order, if a policeman appeared on the scene because he posed himself as their master and paraded his lathi. But this was not what he wanted. They must make people understand by persuasion what they should do through truth and non-violence and show that these forces of law and order were only for serving the people. He had attended many parades and rallies in foreign countries where the police took an oath that they would serve the public. In London, which was considered to be very advanced in policing, policemen took an oath that they would render service to the people through their work. Why not the Commissioner of Police here take a similar oath? If the servants of Hindustan understood this particular view-point, then freedom could easily be obtained.

Referring to the frequent noisy behaviour of the large concourse at prayer meetings in spite of the efforts of volunteers to keep silence, Maahatmaji said that the volunteers should bear in mind what he had said about their duties and make a practical demonstration that they were following them by keeping perfect order and silence in that evening's prayer meeting.

*The Hindu, 1-2-1946*

<sup>1</sup> Held in the morning

#### 438. SPEECH TO MEMBERS OF MESS COMMITTEE, MADRAS<sup>1</sup>

January 31, 1946

Addressing the gathering, Gandhiji said that the Mess Committee had fed about 50,000 people, and he heartily thanked them for it. Proper feeding had kept people in good spirits to get through the important business at the conferences and meetings. They had done this job well and taken away a heavy burden off the shoulders of the Reception Committee. What he was particularly pleased with here was that the entire show was conducted in clean surroundings. He had toured all over the country, and he felt that they had really set an example to others in cleanliness. What should be observed on these occasions by cooks was cleanliness in body and mind. By cleanliness he did not mean that their clothes should be nicely ironed. It was enough if their simple clothes were free from dirt.

Gandhiji said that he had no time to auction the articles individually nor had he the required energy for it. He suggested that the entire lot might be purchased by a group of persons for a lakh of rupees, out of which Rs. 10,000 would go to the Harjan Fund and the balance to the Hindi Prachar Sabha. After all, they should realize that a bulk of it would be given to the Sabha as they had not reached their target.

Closely following this appeal, Gandhiji, like a true Bania, began to canvass support for his suggestion. He singled out of the several articles a silver *vighra*<sup>2</sup> of Gajalakshmi and said that that had been presented by a lady who stated that it was done as Gandhiji was a worshipper of God. But the pity was a worshipper of *Avinashi* and *Avyakta* (Eternal and Unseen) God. Therefore, he said, he was not keeping it with him and wanted to part with it.

Taking out a silver idol of Muralidhara from the collection, Mahatmaji said that this was presented because he was a Krishna *bhakta*. But his Krishna was He 'Who sees me but Whom I do not see'.<sup>3</sup>

*The Hindu*, 1-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "Articles collected for presentation to Gandhiji were exhibited. . . . Referring to three walking-sticks presented, Gandhiji remarked: 'I have become old and these sticks are to aid me during walks. But I would rather like to give them away in auction.' A printed list of the articles presented was then handed to Gandhiji. It was in English. Gandhiji remarked humorously: 'I think this is in English to avoid the Tamil-Telugu controversy (laughter). But I do not approve of this. You must print it in Hindustani'".

<sup>2</sup> An idol

<sup>3</sup> The report concluded: "After some consultation about Gandhiji's suggestion, the merchants promised to let Gandhiji know their view in the evening. Mahatmaji then returned to his bungalow."

#### 439. *SPEECH TO ANDHRA WORKERS OF KASTURBA FUND, MADRAS* <sup>1</sup>

*January 31, 1946*

Gandhiji said that on his way to Madras he passed through Andhra Desha and had opportunities to learn about the work that was being done there. He had heard the report just presented and was also aware of the efforts made by Sambamurthi for the collection of funds. On an occasion like this, the memory of the late Dr. B. Subrahmanyam of the Sitanagaram Ashram occurred to him. He was a good worker in Andhra Desha.

All of them were aware of the part played by women in the cause of India's freedom. The work connected with the Kasturba Fund was a different one. Here they received training for working in and among the villagers. He was looking forward to the day when it would be possible to say that women were working in the villages in large numbers. They must remove illiteracy and also improve the condition of village women. Then only would they have real swaraj and the ability and strength to retain political freedom when it was won.

*The Hindu, 2-2-1946*

#### 440. *SPEECH GIVING BLESSINGS TO ANDHRA MAHILA SABHA, MADRAS* <sup>2</sup>

*January 31, 1946*

Gandhiji said that the proper way to perform the ceremony was for him to go to the site of the buildings and lay the stone himself. That was a task physically impossible for him to do. But the women connected with the Sabha had so much regard for him that they wanted him to at least touch the stone and give his blessings. He did so with great pleasure. The Sabha should become a training-ground for workers. Mahatmaji hoped that the institution would keep up that ideal, and wished it every success.

*The Hindu, 2-2-1946*

<sup>1</sup> The workers met Gandhiji, in the afternoon, in Hindi Prachar Sabha premises.

<sup>2</sup> The ceremony was held, in the afternoon, in Hindi Prachar Sabha premises; when, according to the report, "Gandhiji blessed three inscribed tablets which were to be laid for three new buildings of the Andhra Mahila Sabha under construction in Luz Church Road".



#### 441. SPEECH AT WORKERS' RALLY, MADRAS <sup>1</sup>

January 31, 1946

Gandhiji said that he had been delayed by another engagement<sup>2</sup> and he was sorry for having come later than the scheduled time to the meeting.

The truest capital was, in his opinion, one's capacity for work. Money alone could never produce goods; only through labour could goods be created. Labourers then were possessed of real wealth, but they were not rich in worthy goods and had no property. He wanted that they should all become *maliks* (men of property), but not through any process of coercion. Property got through coercion would not remain with them; a stronger man might snatch it from them. If they were to become *maliks*, therefore, they should first learn to be non-violent, truthful and peaceful. He was a worker like them and he felt like a worker. He wanted to tell them of the joy of non-violence, truth and peacefulness. He was a servant of the poorest Harijan. He wanted them to bear in mind the example of the Ahmedabad Labour Union and take a leaf from its work. There was nothing extraordinary in a labourer becoming the President of the Congress. It was not necessary that one should know English to be the President. He said :

Maulana Azad, the present Congress President, does not speak in English with anybody, although he knows the language. When Maulana Azad goes to the Viceroy, he does not speak in English, but takes a translator with him, and he speaks through him. It is not as if he does not know English. He is a very learned man. He is so wise that there is hardly anybody who equals him. But he wants that he should speak in the language of the country.

The whole country, said Gandhiji, was one. The workers were all one entity. One of them could certainly become President of the Congress. The difference between the *mazdoor* and the *kisan* was that the *kisan* stayed to work on the land, while the *mazdoor* went wherever there was work. The workers were taken there by the proprietors. Mahatma Gandhi recalled that he had always said that the real proprietor was not the person who owned the mill, but the person who worked. He himself was speaking as a worker. He said :

I have given up my ownership of property some time back. The lakhs I have with me are not my money. It is intended for carrying out the work for which contributions have been given. If anybody gives money for the Harijans, it will be spent for the Harijans.

Ever since his return to India from South Africa he had been serving the

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji addressed them in Hindustani.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

workers. The Ahmedabad Workers' Union, which was started by himself, was a model for others. He did not suggest that even there the workers had become the owners. He felt that the workers would come to own the mills and factories in which they worked, if they became more disciplined and wiser.

Appealing to them to learn Hindustani, Gandhiji said that all India was one and they should learn the Hindustani language which would enable them to be one with the rest of India. Industrial workers and *kisans* were both badly off; they were suffering alike. If all of them pulled together and worked for their common good, he was sure they could achieve a great deal through non-violence and truth. He knew he was not understood by a good number of them, but he was thankful to them for the consideration they showed him and the perfect silence they were maintaining, though he spoke in a language which all of them did not understand. He wished he knew enough Tamil to address the gathering in that language.

In conclusion, he prayed for God's blessings for them and all their kith and kin.

*The Hindu*, 1-2-1946

#### 442. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

*January 31, 1946*

Gandhiji asked to be pardoned for coming late to the meeting. He said that it was due entirely to the heavy programme that had been arranged.

Gandhiji then referred to the Workers' Convention<sup>1</sup> held that evening and complimented the workers on the *shanti* (silence) that prevailed at that meeting. That was not to be found here. That labourers who had not acquired education, and who did not understand Hindustani, had behaved so well was marvellous, he said.

"Were these workers responsible for not knowing Hindustani?" asked Gandhiji. "No," was his answer. While the Hindi Prachar Sabha should share to some extent the responsibility for this, he felt that practically the entire responsibility for such state of affairs should be owned by the educated people of this country. The educated people had neglected the education of these poor labourers. If educated people took a decision to teach them Hindustani, he was sure that before he next visited Madras—he hoped that this would happen by God's will—all of them would have learnt the language.

Speaking on the import of the day's special song, Gandhiji said that right from his youth, he was impressed by it. Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa had told him a few days ago that his sister was conducting an institution here and that the girls of that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

school would like to learn and sing the song, *vaishnava Jana To*<sup>1</sup>. The girls today had sung the song in the best possible manner. So impressed was he that its tune and sentiments were still ringing in his ears. While the girls who sang it did their best, he had to confess that it was not rendered in the way it ought to have been done. It should be sung with a full understanding of its meaning and import. The song was by Narasinha Mehta a *bhakta kavi*, and was intended entirely for the use of the villagers. It was in a tune which could be sung by the ordinary villagers and, being sweet, was full of meaning. The *bhakta*, a worshipper of Lord Vishnu, through this song was trying to take upon himself the miseries of others and felt a supreme pleasure in doing so. This was its secret.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu*, 2-2-1946

### 443. SPEECH AT FOUNDATION-STONE LAYING CEREMONY, MADRAS<sup>3</sup>

February 1, 1946

Gandhiji said that many of them might not perhaps be aware that the function he was taking part in that morning had been pending ever since he came out of the jail. After he was released, Mr. B. Jagannath Das and Mr. V. Bhashyam Iyengar approached him on the subject. Besides his (Gandhiji's) being able to be present and perform the function, there were certain other obstacles in the way which had to be got over. Certain negotiations had to be carried on with the Madras Corporation and certain difficulties to be overcome in that connection. After putting forth some efforts, everything was settled satisfactorily, and they were able to secure this land for the Harijan Industrial School. It was not as if they were able to secure the land free; but they were able to secure it at the minimum price. All of them were thankful to the corporation of Madras for that.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that at this juncture, it was up to them to think deeply over the work ahead. Dr. Alagappa Chettiar, the great philanthropist he was, had given them very great help. Gandhiji felt confident that Dr. Alagappa Chettiar considered his wealth as but a means of rendering service. But all the wealth Dr. Alagappa Chettiar possessed would not suffice for the cause of Harijan service. The Hindu community had committed a great sin by the Harijans by observing untouchability. It was the duty of every Hindu to rid himself of this sin. How else could he

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Ashram Bhajanavali"

<sup>2</sup> According to the source, at this stage "some persons, mostly ladies, began to leave, as it was getting late for them", and Gandhiji concluded the speech.

<sup>3</sup> At the newly acquired site for Harijan Industrial School; Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani.

do the purificatory ceremony than by serving the Harijan?

There was another aspect to this harsh treatment of Harijans. All men were equals and by treating a fellowman as untouchable, a person degraded himself. The real un-touchable was the person who treated a fellowman as untouchable. Such a treatment was not only a great wrong but also a great sin. Men fortunately placed in this world, who gave for the cause, were but discharging their duty by the less fortunate, because wealth after all was a thing held in trust by the rich on behalf of the poor. Gandhiji, from this point of view, regarded that there was no need for offering special thanks to Dr. Alagappa Chettiar. All the same, he was thankful to Dr. Alagappa Chettiar for the munificent offer of help and for showing the way as to how men ought to discharge their obligation towards their less fortunate brethren. On this occasion, Gandhiji emphasized, he desired to draw the attention of everyone to the urgent need for serving the cause of Harijans through a change of heart, for, he added, a change of heart was far more important than gifts of money or other similar help.

Referring to the desire expressed by Mr. Thakkar with regard to the future development of the institution, Gandhiji said that it was very good that they were making provision for training as many as 300 persons in the institution. Gandhiji desired that the course of training should be devised on proper lines so that the institution might become a model one, serving not only this Province but also enabling people from other parts of India to come here and receive training. He also hoped that the pupils trained in this institution would be among the best workers in the cause of Harijans.

Good work carried on sincerely and truthfully would never suffer for want of financial help. God in his mercy would somehow take care of all good causes. Had he not, on this occasion, sent them help through Dr. Alagappa Chettiar? Nothing would please him more than to see that his coming to Madras had been of some help to this institution.

Gandhiji next stressed the importance of imparting instruction and training in the school in the mother tongue. Hindustani should also be taught. He was glad to note that the entire proceedings of the meeting were conducted in Tamil, though it was unfortunate that the programme of the meeting should have been printed in English. How much better would it have been, if even the programme had been printed in Tamil or Hindustani? In this connection, Gandhiji referred to an incident of the previous day when he met some merchants for the purpose of raising funds for the Silver Jubilee Fund of the Hindi Prachar Sabha. Invitation to the merchants had been sent in English. He mentioned this in order to emphasize the need for getting rid of this slavery to English. Those in charge of teaching work in the Harijan Industrial School should not forget the mother tongue just as they ought not to forget their

mother. He would, at the same time, appeal to them not to forget the motherland either. They should try to learn as many languages as possible; but they must all learn Hindustani which would help unify the whole of India.

Gandhiji next suggested that the new school should be named after Mr. A. V. Thakkar. He said that Thakkar Bapa had dedicated himself to the cause of Harijans and *Adivasis* to the exclusion of everything else. All the 24 hours of his day, he devoted to this work. It was, therefore, but fitting that the Harijan Industrial School should be named after such a good servant of the cause. They might call it the “Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya” or for brevity’s sake, only “Bapa Vidyalaya”, for who was a greater Bapa (father) of the Harijans than Thakkar Bapa?

In conclusion, Gandhiji wished the institution a great future and useful service to Harijans. He also hoped that the institution would help to bring about a real change of heart among the people towards Harijans and enable them to live as equals with the rest of the society. Gandhiji further hoped that this Vidyalaya would maintain steady progress and that the pupils trained at this centre would, by their life and example, be real Harijans, sons of God, pledged to serve the country truthfully.

*The Hindu*, 2-2-1946

#### 444. TALK TO VILLAGERS, KODAMBAKKAM<sup>1</sup>

*February 1, 1946*

Gandhiji expressed his pleasure at meeting them and told them that on the previous day, he had addressed<sup>2</sup> a gathering of workers like them. He would ask them one simple question to which they should answer without any fear by raising their hands. Gandhiji asked :

How many of you here are addicted to drink?

Finding that a good number in the crowd had lifted their hands, Gandhiji remarked that he did not understand what benefit they derived by drinking, which was a sinful act. They all earned their livelihood by labour, and they should not spend their hard-earned money in evil habits like drink and gambling. He would advise them to spend it wisely for their own good. Gandhiji then asked them to disperse peacefully and go home.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> The report said: “Gandhiji visited the Harijan Industrial School in the afternoon and remained there for nearly an hour and a half. A large gathering of men and women were present on the occasion in the school premises under a pandal. While returning to his seat in the pandal, Gandhiji noticed a crowd of villagers outside the western gate clamouring to see him. At once he proceeded to the spot and after asking them to keep silent, addressed a few words in Hindustani which were translated into Tamil by L. N. Gopalaswami.”

<sup>2</sup> Vide “Speech at Workers Rally, Madras”, 31-1-1946

#### 445. SPEECH AT HARIJAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, KODAMBAKKAM<sup>1</sup>

February 1, 1946

Gandhiji recalled his visit to the School a few years ago<sup>2</sup>, and expressed his pleasure to be present there again and see their work. He hoped that though there were practical difficulties, the trained boys would do their best to settle in villages and see that the work they had learnt was also taught to the villagers. Urging the removal of untouchability completely, he said that the workers connected with Harijan uplift should banish from their minds any notion that the people for whom they worked were un-touchables, and establish closer contact with them.

Referring to the School, Gandhiji said that at present there were 50 boys under-going training. This was not enough. They should see that hundreds of boys were benefited by the school. The public on their part should extend financial help to such institutions freely and fully. Gandhiji also made a fervent appeal to Harijans and others to learn Hindustani along with the study of their mother tongue. He reminded them of the visit of Swami Vivekananda to Madras a few years back and the advice he had given them to study Sanskrit. Gandhiji hoped that some of the Harijans would aspire to become Sanskrit pundits.

The work which the Harijans were taught in the school, Gandhiji said, was not merely intended to eke out their livelihood; it should also enable them by their conduct to make the higher castes feel that they were equal to them in all respects, and not un-touchables. If they went out doing good work, speaking good things and leading a good life, nobody would call them Harijans. Gandhiji hoped that God would guide them and the institution along the right path.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

#### 446. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS

February 1, 1946

Gandhiji began his speech with a reference to the orderliness of the gathering, by pointing out that the noise that usually came from his left was absent that day, and that he had hoped to thank them for the calm and peaceful manner in which they had conducted themselves. But, he added, at the end of the prayer there was a slight

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "An address of welcome was handed over to Gandhiji on behalf of several organizations working for Harijan welfare. Pupils of various institutions were asked to stand in their places, and were introduced to Gandhiji."

<sup>2</sup> On January 22, 1937; *vide* "Letter to Gangabehn Jhaveri", 15-11-1930

distrubance in front of him. Gandhiji, however, appreciated the patience of the gathering and remarked that the prayer meetings appeared to have had some effect on them as they had learnt how to maintain silence and order.

This big maidan was really the best temple of God. They had the fine blue sky for their roof, under which there was no difference between the rich and the poor, the master and the servant, the millionaire and the worker, or the Hindu, the Muslim, the Christian and the Parsi. With sky as canopy and with mother earth, which could accommodate thousands of them, as floor, they had before them a temple of art, *kala mandir*, the like of which he had not seen in any part of the world. This was a special feature of India. He had travelled in Europe and had seen many places of worship. He had been to many mosques. He had also visited a number of temples. Before he took up the question of Harijans, he used to be taken to the temples. People believed that they would be rid of their sins by making offerings and worshipping at the temples. Though such a belief would have its own effect, Gandhiji felt that the acts of worshipping and making offerings by themselves would not make one pure. Purity was a matter of the heart, and it was this indestructible quality that they should aim at.

Gandhiji then went on to say that a person who worshipped in a Siva temple would not go to a Vishnu temple because he felt that his salvation could be secured only by worshipping Siva. This sort of bigotry was wrong. It was a mere illusion. It used to be said that once Tulsidas went to a Krishna temple and fervently wished to see there his Rama with his bow and arrows. It was also said Tulsidas was able to see his Rama in the image of Krishna. This showed that faith and belief were matter of the heart and that one realized what one ardently desired and prayed for.

In this open-air temple, Gandhiji said, they had been assembling for the past few days. they had understood the need for orderliness, he was glad to note. But he also wanted that this orderliness and devotion should not be a mere outward show. There was no use if they appeared pious, but indulged in drink, gambling and deceit. The lessons of discipline and orderliness which they learnt at these gatherings should not be forgotten. The peace and calmness that prevailed at the meeting was very dear to him. He was perfectly satisfied. This was probably the last meeting he would be addressing in Madras this time. But on his return from Madura, if he found time, he might address them once again in the same maidan.

Gandhiji said that he had a special attachment to South India, and whenever he came to the South, the people demonstrated their affection for him. Whatever work he had been able to do, and that too without rest, would not have been possible but for their affection and sincerity. He was old and weak and he also got easily tired. His mind was overworked, but with God's grace, which manifested through their affection for him, he had been able to do his work properly. Gandhiji said :

After all what is my work? I have nothing to give you except

my services. If you continue to show the same love to me, I am confident, God will give me strength to serve you further in the future. It is your devotion that enables you to sit calmly for such a long time. It is your calmness that gives me more and more strength.

Referring next to his visit<sup>1</sup> to the Harijan Industrial School at Kodambakkam, Gandhiji said that it was a small place where students were taught many useful handicrafts. One should not go away with the feeling that the institution after all helped only a few students. It was such kind of work that would go for the unification of India. In South India they spoke four languages. It could not be said that there was unity among them. That was a sad thing. It must be possible for him to hear that no feeling of difference existed between the four linguistic areas of South India or between South India and North India. Untouchability had not completely disappeared from their midst. All human beings are the children of God, and how could there be any difference amongst them? If educated people created a feeling of brotherhood among all communities and ceased to think that brain-worker was superior to a barber or an oil-monger or a Harijan and thereby helped their Harijan neighbour to feel that he was equal to them, the unity of India would be promoted and realized.

Referring to the theme of the song sung earlier, Gandhiji said that in order to realize Rama, the poet felt that he should become a saint. The poet said that one should give up outward show and keep one's heart pure so that Rama might come and reside within. That showed that God would make his abode in the hearts of only who got rid of their sins and passions and became pure.

Concluding, Gandhiji wished the gathering happiness and the grace of God.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

#### 447. "HARIJAN" REVIVED<sup>2</sup>

Why is *Harijan* revived? This question may have occurred to many as it has to me. I may tell the reader that no special effort was made for its revival<sup>3</sup>. An application for the removal of the ban was made on December 3, 1945, and the ban was removed on January 10, 1946. Many readers, including English and American, had all along felt a void, and they began to feel it more after the defeat of the Fascist Powers. The reason for the feeling was obvious. They wanted my reaction, in terms of truth and non-violence, to the various events happening in India, if not in the world. I wished to satisfy this desire.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>3</sup> After suspension in August 1942;



There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this, I know that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours. *Harijan* will attempt from week to week to stand up for this truth and illustrate it.<sup>1</sup>

ON WAY TO MADURA, February 2, 1946

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946

#### 448. SPEECH AT ACHARAPAKKAM STATION<sup>2</sup>

February 2, 1946

Gandhiji said that if the same *shanti* prevailed all along the route to the Sri Meenakshi Temple at Madura, he would be delighted. He said :

I have a pet idea, perhaps foolish, that I should always travel third, but I am actually travelling double first class. I have not the joy of having fellow-travellers in the train with me in the carriage. I know such travel is not for a pilgrim that I am now. I am a pilgrim today for an important reason. I have passed through Madura before but I have never turned to the Sri Meenakshi Temple because Harijans did not then have access to it. But God fulfills Himself in many ways. I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "To the Reader"

<sup>2</sup> The report said: "Leaving Kattupakkam at five in the morning, the special train halted . . . at Acharapakkam. . . . people . . . gathered in the station yard . . . maintained perfect silence as Gandhiji came out. . ."

am an opponent of untouchability and so is Rajaji. It was God's will that Government came into the hands of Congressmen for some time. Through your support Rajaji had the legislation made, and the Sri Meenakshi Temple is now open to all Hindus including Harijans.<sup>1</sup> I am no worshipper of idols. But I know the great place idol-worship has amongst Hindus. There is a place in every man's heart for such worship in that spirit. I go as a pilgrim to Madura. You are sitting here like true pilgrims and listening to me with prayerful hearts. I know, I carry your prayers with me.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

#### 449. SPEECH AT ARIYALUR STATION <sup>2</sup>

February 2, 1946

You know I am on my way to Madura. I am a Harijan, and this pilgrimage of mine is a Harijan *yatra*. I want you to follow me to Madura in your thoughts and cast aside untouchability. You must also contribute to the Harijan Fund. But mere money contributions will not do. There must be a genuine change of heart. So long as there is no change of heart towards the Harijans on the part of the *savarnas*, we will not get freedom, and Hinduism will be ruined. I know, you do not want Hinduism to be ruined. So you must rid yourselves and Hinduism of the sin. Good-bye, good-bye.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

#### 450. SPEECH AT LALGUDI STATION

February 2, 1946

Referring to his visit to Madura as a *teertha yatra*, Gandhiji, who spoke a few words to those gathered at Lalgudi Station, said that in olden days pilgrims from one end of the land to the other, sometimes, used to walk the whole distance. Since the Madura Temple was thrown open to Harijans, he had been longing to visit it and worship Sri Meenakshi. He was himself a Harijan who wanted to worship there. He wanted their blessings for the success of his pilgrimage.

*The Hindu*, 3-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> The temple was thrown open to Harijans on July 8, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> The report said: Seven thousand men, women and children . . . sat in the sun patiently and . . . when the special drew up at 11.15 a.m., they lifted their folded hands in silent obeisance. Gandhiji was so impressed by the orderliness of the crowd that he called for *Ramdhun* in which the assemblage participated. . ."

#### 451. SPEECH AT GOLDEN ROCK<sup>1</sup>

[February 2, 1946]<sup>2</sup>

The workers, Gandhiji said, were possessed of real wealth, for wealth really was not money but the capacity to produce goods. Money alone could produce no goods, only labour could. He wanted the workers to realize their strength and work for progress on the lines of truth, ahimsa and unity. He was confident that he carried with him their good wishes and sympathy in his pilgrimage to Madura. Addressing the women in the gathering, Gandhiji said that during the days of the Salt Satyagraha Campaign, women gave proof of their patriotism and showed themselves as not a whit behind men. They should represent in themselves the essence of truth and ahimsa.<sup>3</sup>

*The Hindu*, 4-2-1946

#### 452. SPEECH AT MANAPPARAI<sup>4</sup>

February 2, 1946

Gandhiji said that he was very happy to see so many charkhas plying. He saw a similar demonstration in Bengal, but there it was mostly the men who were the spinners. The women who were spinning at the present gathering seemed to be poor people. Everyone must spin and wear khadi. The charkha should be in evidence everywhere. Gandhiji asked :

Have you all rid yourselves of the observance of untouchability?

If they had not already done so, they must at once, he added. Swaraj was close at hand, but they must realize that the charkha was the basis and the means of that swaraj.

*The Hindu*, 4-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> According to the report, “some ten thousand men and women mostly of the working classes sat in absolute silence and order.”

<sup>2</sup> Form *The Hindu*, 3-2-1946, which reported that Gandhiji’s Special reached Trichinopoly at 1.30 p.m. on this date, “after reception at Srirangam and Golden Rock”.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* also “Some Labour Questions”

<sup>4</sup> According to the report, “entire maidan near Manapparai railway station was filled to capacity by . . . men and women, many of whom were spinning”.

#### 453. SPEECH AT MADURAI<sup>1</sup>

February 2, 1946

I am sorry there is so much noise in this vast assembly. I came here wanting to tell you many things, but I am afraid, on account of the noise, I will not be able to say anything. People in front of the dais are very quiet and if others are not equally quiet, it will be difficult for me to stay on here. My health does not permit me to stay on here and stand noise. But when I see so many of you sitting so quiet in front, I still want to tell you how I appreciate the silence of this section of the gathering. It is a matter for regret that after so many years we have not yet learnt how to behave when we gather in such large numbers. Madura is a famous city. It is a holy city. You have opened the Temple here to Harijans. Since then I wanted to visit the shrine.

I know all this noise and commotion is explained by your love and affection for me. You are all eager to see me. But I tell you such intemperate and undisciplined affection is not love. You have only made it impossible for me to tell you what I wanted to. Prayer, to me, is no mere routine. It is dear to me and is part of my life.

His only request to them would be that when he went next morning to the Meenakshi Temple for worship, only those who had been invited should come there. Others should not go there or cause inconvenience to the invitees.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu*, 4-2-1946

#### 454. SPEECH AT ODDANCHATRAM

February 3, 1946

Gandhiji said that it was one of the very few perfect gatherings he had addressed since leaving Madras. Such discipline was good for them and would be

<sup>1</sup> Then called Madura; the report said that “Gandhiji walked round on the dais, appealing for *shanti*, but in vain”.

<sup>2</sup> The report concluded: “Gandhiji then appealed to the crowd to be orderly, and was preparing to leave for his temporary residence when the crowd made a rush forward. Seeing the utter indiscipline prevailing, he quietly stretched himself on the mattress and refused to budge until the crowd dispersed quietly. . . . The stalemate continued for over two hours. In the mean time the crowd, finding the hour getting late, began to melt away.” *Vide* also “The Lesson of Madurai”

invaluable for the country especially when swaraj came, as he was hoping it would, in a few months. He wanted them to remove untouchability from their midst and use local made khadi cloth. Gandhiji then bade good-bye, and the crowd silently joined hands in *pranam* to him.

*The Hindu*, 5-2-1946

#### 455. SPEECH AT PALNI

February 3, 1946

Addressing the crowd in Hindustani, Gandhiji said, he had been ordered by his doctor that he should not go up the hill with its 640 steps.<sup>1</sup> His experience in Madura<sup>2</sup> showed how, out of love for him, the crowds could become uncontrollable. He would ask them not to follow him up the hill if he went.

He would much rather not ascend the hill than that they should be disappointed at not being able to accompany him. Obeisance offered with a pure heart, from whichever spot it might be, would receive God's blessings. When he saw the crowd's *shanti*, his own soul had *shanti*, too.

Urging them always to conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, Gandhiji said that through discipline alone could they retain swaraj and get the best service out of their own leaders. Speaking in the presence of Palaniandava<sup>3</sup>, he would exhort them to cast off untouchability from their hearts. Removal of untouchability meant not merely willingness to suffer the touch of anyone, but readiness to treat the brother Hindu as an equal. No sense of inferiority or superiority should subsist between one section and another of the community or between Hindu, Muslim, Parsi or Christian.

Speaking of temple worship, Gandhiji said that worship of God's image would serve no good unless people cleaned their hearts of hardness against fellow-beings. God should be enshrined not in images, but in human hearts. He had just worshipped Sri Meenakshi at the Madura Temple because that Temple was now open to Harijans. While in the Temple he had realized a new spiritual significance. Worship in the temples must mean change of heart towards Harijans. Otherwise it was fruitless. Their silence and *shanti* made him feel confident that his pilgrimage had borne fruit<sup>4</sup>

*The Hindu*, 5-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> He was, however, carried in a palanquin; *vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Madurai", 2-2-1946

<sup>3</sup> The presiding deity at Palni

<sup>4</sup> The report concluded: "Gandhiji then conducted his evening prayer at the meeting. It was a complete prayer with the usual recitals from the Upanishads, the *Gita* and the Koran followed by *Ramdhun*. He then left for the Hill Temple."

#### 456. ENTRY IN PALNI TEMPLE VISITORS' BOOK<sup>1</sup>

February 3, 1946

I was happy to be here and be able today to have *darshan* in this Temple.

*The Hindu*, 5-1-1946

#### 457. ARE WE GOING DOWN?

Personal likes and dislikes, ambitions and jealousies should have no place in our organization. What, therefore, distresses me greatly is that dislike, hatred and vindictiveness in private life and even in public speeches are becoming common among Congressmen; and consequently indiscipline and hooliganism are increasing.

This extract is taken from a long letter from a friend. She even quotes instances and elaborates her thesis. But I have reproduced sufficient for my purpose. I whole-heartedly endorse every word of what she says. Though I do not read newspapers diligently, I feel that there is truth in her experience. Now that it seems that we are coming into our own, the evils complained of ought to go and calmness, rigid discipline, co-operation and goodwill must take the place of passion, indiscipline and jealousies, public and private. Or else swaraj machinery will crack and go to pieces and our future state may very well become worse than the present, bad and insufferable as it is. As I said in Mahishadal,<sup>2</sup> the glow of swaraj in action must be felt by the illiterate millions of India. They must feel the vital difference between the present autocratic and ordinance regime and the orderly, democratic, non-violent regime under swaraj. I hug the hope that when real responsibility comes to the people and the dead weight of a foreign army of occupation is removed, we shall be natural, dignified and restrained. We are living just now in a state that is highly artificial and unnatural. The sooner we get out of it the better for us, the ruling power and the world. I can, therefore, only suggest to my friend and

<sup>1</sup> The report said: "Sitting in a special palanquin, Gandhiji reached the Temple at 9 p. m. Some 200 worshippers who were present . . . sat down in perfect order and silence leaving . . . Gandhiji . . . to offer worship in comfort. . . ." *Vide* also "Its Implications"

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech At Prayer Meeting", 29-12-1945

those who think like her, that they should rigidly carry out in practice what they think, even though they be a handful.

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS, February 4, 1946

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946

#### 458. ITS IMPLICATIONS

The vast meeting at Palni<sup>1</sup> under the shadow of the Temple was perfectly silent; there were no noises. I seized the occasion to give the audience the implications of removal of untouchability. It began with touch but it would be a wooden thing, if it merely ended there. A Brahmin may be a depraved man in spite of his learning. It would be preposterous to call him one. A Brahmin is he who knows Brahma. It is character, not occupation, that determines the man. The Bhangi is, or should be, on a par with the Brahmin in all social relations. There is no reason why he should not, other things being equal, occupy the chair which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies with distinction. I would be happy to see the day when a Bhangi, working as such, is in the Presidential chair.

The ulcer of untouchability has gone so deep down that it seems to pervade our life. Hence the unreal differences; Brahmin and non-Brahmin, provinces and provinces, religion and religion. Why should there be all this poison smelling of untouchability? Why should we not all be children of one Indian family and, further, of one human family? Are we not like branches of the same tree?

When untouchability is rooted out, these distinctions will vanish and no one will consider himself superior to any other. Naturally exploitation too will cease and co-operation will be the order of the day.

Having dealt with untouchability, I turned to the pilgrimage. There was fear of my being unable to negotiate the flight of over six hundred steps on a chair, if crowds of people insisted on accompanying me up the hill which was too small to accommodate them. I would be satisfied with doing *darshan* at the foot of the hill. Let not the people, however, think that I was guided by any belief in the potency of images of clay or precious metal. Idols became what the devotees made of or imputed to them. For me they had no potency whilst Harijans were prohibited from entering temples. I had passed

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech At Palni", 3-2-1946

by the famous Meenakshi Temple in Madura more than once before and never cared to go inside it whilst the prohibition against the Harijans lasted. How could I, who claim to be a Bhangi, care to enter such temples? Then I was sure that the God of India was God living in the plains where the millions lived. How many could reach the Himalayas? Many more have gone and more many could reach the Himalayas? Many more have gone and more could certainly go to Palni, but the crores could not. I would be, as I am, one of them.

I was sure, too, that my prayer at the foot of the hill would be heard more than that of some devotees in the Temple itself. God knew and cared for the hearts of men. Outward appearance was nothing to Him, if it was not an experssion of the inner. It was enough for me that the Harijans of the inner. It was enough for me that the Harijans were as free as any other Hindu to enter the Palni Temple for the purpose of worship.

Nevertheless the millions who were assured that I would have *darshan* of the image itself would not understand this message and might feel that some calamity would descend upon the country, if I could not go up the hill. Their silence at the meeting encouraged the hope that I might be able to go through the advertised programme.

The speech was delivered at nearly 6 p. m. But at 8 p. m. I found that I was able to negotiate the hill and, though there was a large crowd at the entrance, none insisted on joining while Rajaji and I were being taken up the hill in chairs. Thus happily did the pilgrimage come to a successful end.

One swallow does not make summer. No legitimate inference can be drawn from this incident. However I cannot help cherishing the fond hope that it augurs well for India under swaraj, home rule or independence, by whatever name one may choose to call the thing.

Perhaps this article is the proper place for recording my thanks to the South Indian Railway and the staff for their considering no trouble too great for making the journey as little tiresome as it was possible for it to be under the circumstances.

ON THE TRAIN TO MADRAS FROM PALNI, February 4, 1946

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946



#### 459. SPEECH AT ULUNDURPET STATION

[February 4, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji thanked the giver<sup>2</sup> but added that he was no longer able to digest groundnut and had, therefore, given it up. He said :

Day by day, I am growing older but I am at the same time desirous of living 125 years. Not that I want to live in pleasure, but I want to do more service. I want to serve you and your freedom's cause. True freedom is in developing freedom-consciousness. That cannot be developed in one year or two. Twenty-five years' work among 400 millions is but a drop in the ocean. My prayer to God is that He should spare me 125 years to render more service. Harijan *seva* is an important item in that service. If you do not wash your-selves of the sin of observing untouchability, we cannot become free, nor can our religions survive long. From the time the Madura Temple was thrown open to the Harijans when Rajaji was Premier, I have thought of visiting it. Rajaji is a servant of you all. But even ten Rajajis could not have achieved such great work unless there was public support and public opinion behind it. I want you, therefore, to eliminate untouchability from your hearts.

*The Hindu*, 4-2-1946

#### 460. SPEECH READ OUT AT PRAYER MEETING, MADRAS<sup>3</sup>

February 4, 1946

I am very glad that I have been able to make the two pilgrimages to Madura and Palni. The people of the Province behaved with great consideration to me all along the route. The vast gathering kept sitting in their places, observing complete silence. The best exhibition of such silence and such discipline was at Palni. It was entirely on account of the discipline of the people there that it was possible to carry me up the hill in a chair.

You, people of Madras, have given me your company at prayers

<sup>1</sup> On his return journey from Palni to Madras, Gandhiji reached Ulundurpet on this date.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was given a bag full of groundnuts by one of the villagers.

<sup>3</sup> The report said that this "message in Hindustani written on an envelope" was read out by Kanu Gandhi as Gandhiji had not broken his silence.

for the last ten days. May I expect that through you the people of this Province will imbibe the lesson of silence and orderliness? Swaraj is on the way—that is the belief of all. But swaraj will be incomplete without *shanti*. There cannot be *shanti* without the grace of God, and there cannot be grace of God without prayer, *prarthana*. That is why I ask you to cultivate the habit of prayer. Prayer should proceed from the heart.

*The Hindu*, 6-2-1946

#### 461. TALK WITH V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI<sup>1</sup>

MADRAS,  
February 4, 1946

In reply to Sastriar's enquiry about the tour, Gandhiji wrote that it had been very nice but very taxing. Sastriar was surprised to hear that five to six lakhs had gathered at the prayer meeting at Madura, more than half of which number had come from the surrounding villages. They had sat on the roadside without food and shelter just to have a *darshan* as they felt that this might be their last chance.

Gandhiji enquired about Sastriar's health and advised him to obey the doctor. Sastriar said, he felt almost normal. He was moved beyond words. He remarked :

Brother, you have done me an exceptional honour, especially by paying this visit when you were in a great hurry. You are dearer and nearer to me than my own brothers and sons and members of the family.

His voice had become almost inaudible :

We have come together by some inner affinity. No external reason can explain this friendship. Gokhale was but the occasion of it.

And he drew nearer to Gandhiji and whispered :

I won't waste words. You know what I want to say.

Gandhiji waved to him to be quiet as he was becoming breathless with emotion and got up to say good-bye.

As Gandhiji got up, Sastriar caught sight of his dangling watch. He said :

Ah! your constant companion. Somebody said, you had lost your watch and

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Sushila Nayyar's "Meeting Sastriar". Sushila Nayyar explains: "On his return from Madura, Gandhiji had only three hours at his disposal during which he . . . saw several people, collected funds for Harijans and Hindustani *prachar* and paid hurried visit to Sastriar, on his way to the Station. It was a Monday and Sastriar was disappointed to find that Gandhiji was observing silence. . . .Sastriar talked and Gandhiji replied by writing on slips of paper."

would use it no longer.

Shri T. R. Venkatarama<sup>1</sup> corrected him by saying that the remark related to his fountain pen. Sastry said :

Oh! I see. But if someone steals your watch, will you give up using a watch also?

Gandhiji laughed and shook his head to say that he could not do without his watch.

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946

#### 462. *CURIOUS*

On my return journey from Palni, someone gave me at one of the halts a letter reviling Shri Rajaji and Shri Gopalaswami<sup>2</sup>, and informing me that they would not allow anyone against them to come near me. Now I know to the contrary. No one who wanted to say anything worth-while could be prevented from seeing me or writing to me. The delivery of the very letter disproves the allegation. Shri Kamaraja Nadar was with me on the same special. He was with me in the Temple on the Palni Hill. But there is no doubt that both Rajaji and Gopalaswami were closest to me during the journey. They had arranged it. Rajaji is one of my oldest friends and was known to be the best exponent in word and deed of all I stand for. That, in 1942, he differed<sup>3</sup> from me, I know. All honour for the boldness with which he publicly avowed the difference. He is a great social reformer, never afraid to act according to his belief. His political wisdom and integrity are beyond question. I was, therefore, pained to find a clique against him. It is a clique that evidently counts in the official Congress in Madras. But the masses are devoted to Rajaji. I am neither vain nor foolish enough to feel that I could have had the huge public demonstrations all along the route of the pilgrim, if he had no influence with the masses in Tamil Nadu. Congressmen in the South will act as they think best. But I would be less than loyal to the organization, if I did not warn them against losing the valuable services

<sup>1</sup> T. R. Venkatarama Sastry, one of the students of Srinivasa Sastry, who later became his intimate friend

<sup>2</sup> N. Gopalaswami Iyengar, Chairman, Jubilee Celebration Committee of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras

<sup>3</sup> On the issue of demand for Pakistan, Rajagopalachari, resigned from the Congress Party on July 15, 1942; *vide* "Letter to C. Gopalachari", 5-7-1942

which no one can shoulder as Rajaji can at the present moment.<sup>1</sup>

*En route TO WARDHA, February 5, 1946*

*Harijan, 10-2-1946*

### 463. *SPEECH AT VIJAYAWADA* <sup>2</sup>

*February 5, 1946*

Addressing the audience in Hindustani, Mahatma Gandhi first referred to a letter<sup>3</sup>, handed over to him by Mr. A. Subrahmanyam, a local Congressman, saying that there was a feeling among the Andhras that he (Gandhiji) had come to Madras to set up Mr. C. Rajagopalachari as the Premier. He said that he was very sorry that there was such a misunderstanding even among Congressmen about the purpose of his trip to Madras. Even the Telugu papers, he added, were writing that he had come to set up C. R. as Premier, and that he had made his journey specially for Mr. Rajagopalachari's sake. In fact he had not even dreamt of this. Ever since his release from jail he had been thinking of visiting Madras for Hindustani propaganda. He made it clear that he had gone there as the President of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Sabha *Rajat Jayant* (Silver Jubilee) celebrations and not in any other capacity or for any other purpose. He was asked to speak about Mr. C. Rajagopalachari but he refused to do so. He did not answer any letter received by him in this connection. This was because he was not even a four-anna member of the Congress.

Mr. Rajagopalachari was his old friend, and he had great respect for his conduct and convictions. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari was quite competent to wield the reins of Premier-ship, he would do it, but to make him the Premier or to become Premier himself was not in his hands. It was the business of the provincial Congress Committee and the All-India Congress Committee, which were the only bodies competent to do the job.

He was not interested in the elections and the Parliamentary programme. Until today he had not done anything secretly nor did he intend to do so in the future. He came to know of their misunderstanding only after his arrival in Bezwada. He had no occasion to think of it before. If it was his intention to interest himself in setting up Mr. C. Rajagopalachari for the post of Premiership, he need not have come all the way to Madras but could have done it from where he was. Therefore he wanted to keep silent over this matter and did not want to interfere.<sup>4</sup>

He wanted them not to forget what he had said about Hindustani propaganda.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji continued the article after he left Vijayawada; *vide* "Curious"

<sup>2</sup> Then called 'Bezwada'

<sup>3</sup> For a gist, *vide* the following item.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* also the preceding item.

Although the Hindustani Pracharak Sangh had been functioning in Andhra Desha for the last many years, he was really sorry to find that a vast number of them did not know Hindustani. Today he had blessed <sup>1</sup> the foundation-stone of the Hindustani Bhavan to be constructed in Bezwada. He hoped that very soon all of them would take advantage of it and learn Hindustani. He would only be satisfied when he heard that there was no one who did not understand Hindustani. By this he did not mean they should neglect their mother tongue, Telugu. But Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, etc., could never become the all-India language and, therefore, people of all languages should learn Hindustani.

Gandhiji also referred to the controversy whether Hindi or English should be the common language in India. All Indian languages were being eclipsed by the popular use of English. It was just for this reason that he was strongly emphasizing the need for Hindustani propaganda.

In conclusion, he appealed to them not to waste their time with Tamil-Telugu or Canarese-Malayalam differences and said, "God bless you all."

*The Hindu*, 6-2-1946

#### 464. *CURIOUS [CONTINUED]*

The foregoing<sup>2</sup> was written before Bezwada was reached at 5.30 in the morning. At Bezwada a note in Hindustani from Shri A. Subrahmanyam was delivered, the gist of which is given below :

There is a belief spread in Andhra Desha that you have come to Madras with a view to make Rajaji Premier. Several Congressmen have been carrying on such propaganda. Taking up the theme, some Telugu newspapers have been writing even against Hindustani. Pease give your opinion on this.

I felt bound, therefore, to give my reply. I said<sup>3</sup> that my journey was purely for the purpose of celebrating the Silver Jubilee of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, now Hindustani Prachar Sabha, and incidentally for Madura and Palni Temples. The visit was conceived soon after my premature discharge and before the Congress resumption of parliamentary work was even conceived. My visit has nothing to do with Rajaji being the Premier. My life had no secrecy about it. If I wanted to give an opinion, I was in the habit of giving it openly. But I had rejected the advances of friends to guide

<sup>1</sup> Soon after his arrival there in the morning

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Curious"

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

them, for I was not interested in elections and offices. But since I was challenged, I had no hesitation in saying that Rajaji was by far the best man for the purpose in the Southern Presidency and, if I had the disposal in my hands, I would call Rajaji to office; if I did not give it to myself. But the disposal was with the Provincial Congress Committee and finally with the Working Committee. My opinion was only that of an individual, to be taken for what it was worth.

AFTER BEZWADA, *en route* TO WARDHA, February 5, 1946  
*Harijan*, 10-2-1946

#### 465. HINDUSTANI

How can any Indian really be averse to Hindustani? Lovers of Sanskritized Hindi are, however, afraid that Hindustani will hurt Hindi and likewise lovers of Persianized Urdu fear hurt to Urdu. These fears are futile. No language can spread through mere propaganda. If it had been so, Esperanto would have found a place amongst the populace in the West. They failed because in such a matter the enthusiasm of only a few cannot succeed. The language of a people who produce hard workers, literary experts, business men and enterprising persons spreads and is enriched. It is ours to make the effort in that direction.

Only that language which the people of a country will themselves adopt can become national. However virile the English language may be, it can never become the language of the masses of India. If the British regime were to be permanent, it would continue to be the official language of their Indian officials and, because education would be in their hands, provincial languages would suffer. The late Lokamanya<sup>1</sup> once said that the British had done a service to the provincial languages. This is true to some extent. But it was not their business to encourage them nor could they in reality do so. That work belongs to the people and their leaders. If the English-educated neglect, as they have done and even now continue, as some do, to be ignorant of their mother tongue, linguistic starvation will abide.

We are today certain that the British Raj cannot remain for ever. They say, and we believe, that it will go even this year. Then there can be no national language for us other than Hindustani. Today there are two forms of this language, Hindi and Urdu, the former written in Nagari and the latter in Urdu script. One is fed by Sanskrit, the other

<sup>1</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak

by Persian and Arabic. Today, therefore, both must remain. But Hindustani will be a mixture of these. What shape it will take in the future none can say nor need we know. Twenty-three crores out of thirty speak Hindustani. This number must have increased *pari passu* with the population. Obviously in this lies the national language.

There ought to be no quarrel between the two sisters Hindi and Urdu. The rivalry is with English. This struggle itself means much labour. The rise of Hindustani will also give an impetus to the provincial languages because it is the language of the masses, not of a handful of officials.

It was for the propaganda of the national language that I went recently to the South. The name Hindi used there up till now has been changed to Hindustani. During the last few months several persons have been learning both the scripts and have obtained certificates. In the South, too, the difficulty is not about the two scripts but in regard to English. We may not blame the official world for this. The fault lies in us. It is we who are infatuated with English. I found this disease even in Hindustani Nagar. But I hope that the illusion will now disappear. A good deal has been done in the South but much still remains, if we have to reach the desired goal.

February 5, 1946

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946

#### 466. THE LESSON OF MADURAI

The crowd in Madura<sup>1</sup> could not have been less than five lacs and may have been even six. Human faces were to be seen as far as the horizon. It was a veritable sea of human faces. The long route to the race course was lined by people who were all to swell the crowd in the prayer ground. They must push on as much as they could. I doubt if the people on the fringe could even see me, much less hear me or anyone else, though loudspeaker arrangements were good and the rostrum high enough. The volunteers were not used to manage such vast crowds. People had come from distant villages where the Congressmen had not worked habitually, if at all. Such being the case, the din and noise and jostle were unavoidable. And then the crowd had to deal with a satyagrahi in me. But my satyagraha for the first time failed. The people's was bound to fail. They showed

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Speech At Madurai", 2-21-1946

the greatest forbearance whilst I was passive. The vast multitude in front of me and on either side sat noiseless and motionless, in spite of the pressure from behind. But the jostling and noise from behind the rostrum continued unabated. I, therefore, cleared the dais and asked the women members of my party to go. Only Rajaji, Kanu Gandhi and Ramakrishna Bajaj remained. The latter said, the way was clear; but, as I appeared, the people became restive. I addressed the people in front and at the sides and pleaded with them to go away as I did not propose to speak. They remained silent but would not leave. So I thought I would rest where I was for the night till the crowd had either dispersed or made a way for me. Kanu Gandhi, the tempter, came again and said, the people would make a passage and let me go. The car would wait for me at a distance from the crowd. In a weak moment I yielded. I went down the few steps of the improvised strong ladder only to meet the same pressing and noisy crowd as before, though considerably thinned. It was not a safe passage through a noiseless, disciplined crowd for which I was pleading and waiting. It was neither a mischievous crowd. Making noise and pressing forward towards the idol was the only way of expressing their love towards it. Here was a living idol made of the same clay as they. And this idol could not and would not appreciate their demonstration. But I proved an impatient and inefficient teacher. Had I waited, I believe, this particular crowd would have learnt the value of silence and, knowing love, probably of discipline requisite for swaraj. I shall know much better next time, if such ever comes. Anyway it is legitimate to ask whether the exemplary behaviour at Palni was a result of the imperfect lesson of the previous night at Madura. In any case, no blame attaches to anybody in the drama and nobody has any cause for shame.

*Enroute TO WARDHA, February 5, 1946*

*Harijan, 10-2-1946*

#### 467. NATURE CURE CLINIC<sup>1</sup>

Readers are aware<sup>2</sup> that I have become co-trustee with Shree Jehangir Patel and with Dr. Dinshaw Mehta in his clinic at Poona. A condition of the trust is that from January 1 this year the clinic should

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes", as "translated from Hindustani" in *Harijan sevak* published simultaneously with the source.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 21-11-1945



become a clinic for the poor instead of for the rich. The conception was mine but owing to my absence on tour the condition has not been wholly fulfilled. I am hoping to go to Poona this month, however, and trust I shall be able to do some work in this connection. My fervent hope is that rich patients will, if they came, pay to their fullest capacity and yet live in the same wards as the poor. I believe that by doing so they will derive more benefit from henceforth. Those unwilling to abide by this condition need not trouble to go to the clinic. This rule is necessary.

In addition to treatment for their ailments, poor patients will also be taught how to live healthy lives. It is a common belief today that nature cure is expensive, more so than Ayurvedic or allopathic. If this is proved to be true, I shall have to admit failure. But I believe that the opposite is true, and my experience also bears out the belief. It is the duty of a nature cure doctor not only to look after the body but also pay attention to and prescribe for the soul of a patient. The best prescription for the soul is, of course, Ramanama (God's name). I cannot today go into the meaning of and method of applying Ramanama. I will only say that the poor do not stand in need of much medicine. They die uncared for as it is. Their ignorance makes them blind to what nature teaches us. If the Poona experiment succeeds, Dr. Dinshaw Mehta's dream of a nature cure university will come true.

Help of India's true nature cure doctors is needed in this great work for the country. There can be no question of making money in it. The need is for those who are filled with the spirit of service to the poor and only with a sufficient number of such doctors can the work progress. The mere title of a doctor is no criterion; a real doctor is he who is a true servant. Those who have experience and knowledge and are anxious to serve may write with a list of their qualifications. No replies will be given to those whose qualifications are not up to the standard.

Readers will please note that work has increased with the revival of *Harijan*. There will, therefore, be very little scope for replying to individual letters.

ON TRAIN TO WARDHA, February 5, 1946

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946

#### 468. *THE LURE OF LEGISLATURES*<sup>1</sup>

I believe that some Congressmen ought to seek election in the legislatures or other elected bodies. In the past I did not hold this view.<sup>2</sup> I had hoped that the boycott of legislatures would be complete. That was not to be. Moreover times have changed. Swaraj seems to be near. Under the circumstances it is necessary that Congress should contest every seat in the legislatures. The attraction should never be the honour that a seat in a legislature is said to give. The desire and opportunity for service can be the only incentive for a Congressman. Congress should have, and has, such prestige that a Congress candidate is irresistible even where a particular seat is contested. Moreover those that are not selected by the Board should not feel hurt. On the contrary, they should feel happy that they are left there to render more useful service. But the painful fact is that those who are not selected by the Board do feel hurt.

The Congress should not have to spend money on the elections. Nominees of a popular organization should be elected without any effort in the latter's part. Conveyance arrangements for the poor voters should be made by their well-to-do neighbours. For instance, if the voters from X have to go to Y, the railway fare from X to Y for the poor voters should be paid by the well-to-do people of X. That is the distinguishing feature of a well-organized, non-violent, popular organization. An organization which looks to money for everything can never serve the masses. If money could bring success in a popular contest, the British Government which can, and does, spend most lavishly should be the most popular body in India. The facts are that even Government servants drawing fat salaries do not, in their heart of hearts, want the British Government.

Let us examine the utility value of legislatures. The legislatures can expose the Government, but that is the least service. He who can tell the people why they become victims of the Government in spite of knowing its faults, and can teach them how to stand up against Government wrongs renders a real service. The members cannot do this essential service, for their business is to make people look to them

<sup>1</sup> This appeared as "translated from the Gujarati" in *Harijanbandhu* published simultaneously with the source.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Resolution on Council-Entry", 19-5-1934

for the redress of wrongs.<sup>1</sup>

The other use of legislatures is to prevent undesirable legislation and bring in laws which are useful for the public, so that as much help as possible can be given to the constructive programme.

Legislatures are supposed to carry out the popular will. For the moment eloquence may be of some use in these bodies. Ultimately that will not be the need. Experts with practical knowledge and those who can give to these few their support will be required. In an organization which exists for the sake of service and which has boycotted titles and other such paltry things, the sentiment, that to be selected as candidates for the legislatures is a mark of honour, is harmful. If such a sentiment takes root, it will bring down the name of the Congress and finally prove its ruin.

If Congressmen are to be reduced to such degradation, who will put flesh and blood into India's millions of skeletons? On whom will India and the world rely?

ON WAY TO SEVAGRAM, February 5, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

#### 469. MESSAGE TO ANDHRA DESHA<sup>2</sup>

*February 5, 1946*

I expect much from Andhra Desha, and I hope the Andhras will fulfil my expectations. This is my wish: Remove untouchability altogether, throw open the doors of all temples for Harijans, strive for communal unity, wear khadi and work for its spread; learn your mother tongue and learn your mother tongue and learn Hindustani as well both in Urdu and Devanagari scripts.

*The Hindu*, 7-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> Instead of this sentence, *Harijanbandhu* has: "Councils are, have been and will be, an obstruction in this work."

<sup>2</sup> According to the report, this was sent through Unnava Rajagopalakrishnayya, Secretary, Andhra Hindi Prachara Sangham, Bezwada, who accompanied Gandhiji from Bezwada to Kazipet.

#### 470. SPEECH AT BALHARSHAH STATION

*February 5, 1946*

If people do not keep discipline, then swaraj, which is near at hand and which they are sure to get, would be swaraj only in name and will not be of any use. The British will quit India. They have to quit. Therefore you will have to change your hearts and be worthy of swaraj.

Concluding, Gandhiji urged the people to give up corrupt practices like black-marketing, etc.

*The Hindu*, 8-2-1946

#### 471. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, WARDHA

*February 6, 1946*

I had proposed to come here on the ninth instant, but I came earlier. On the 19th evening, I am leaving for Poona for staying in the Nature Cure Clinic. After staying about ten days there, I desire to be in Bardoli Ashram on March 2 or latest on March 3, for observing Ba's death anniversary on Shivaratri Day. It may be that on February 22 the anniversary may also be observed according to the Gregorian calendar. After about a month's stay there, I will be in Poona.

*The Hindu*, 8-2-1946

#### 472. STATEMENT TO THE UNITED PRESS OF INDIA<sup>1</sup>

*February 7, 1946*

I never made such an admission. What I did say, and what I believe, is that the Bengal famine of 1943, which is claimed in certain quarters to be man-made, was certainly due to hopeless mismanagement passed current like other things under the military necessity. It was certainly not an act of God.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindustan Times*, 9-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> The report said that this was in reply to a question put by an U. P. I. representative "whether Mahatma Gandhi had admitted to the Governor of Bengal that the Bengal famine of 1943 was not 'man-made'".

<sup>2</sup> The report added that "in an interview which Dr. B. C. Roy had with members of the British Parliamentary Delegation during their recent visit to Calcutta . . . one member asserted that the Governor of Bengal succeeded in convincing Mahatma Gandhi that the famine of 1943 was not man-made and that Gandhiji had accepted that position."

473. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 7, 1946*

DEAR MR. ABELL,

I thank you for yours of 30th ultimo received by me in Madras on the 4th instant about the proposed Medical Mission to Burma and Malaya.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the Government of Burma is somewhat strange. I had the pleasure of meeting H. E. the Governor of Burma last June in Simla. I should have thought that they would welcome any medical assistance especially when it is under the very able guidance of one of the most celebrated physicians of India, who is well-known not only for his exceptional medical talent but for his equally great organizing ability.

I am glad that the part of the offer that relates to Malaya has been accepted, for which I am thankful to His Excellency.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

G. E. B. ABELL, ESQ

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 75*

<sup>1</sup> Replying to Gandhiji's letter of January 8, *vide* "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 8-1-1946, the addressee, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, had said that while offer of medical assistance was "declined" by the Government of Burma, the British Military Administration of Malaya, however, "accepted" it.

474. LETTER TO JATINDAS M. AMIN

SEVAGRAM,  
February 7, 1946

CHI. AMIN JATIN,

I would only say this much that you should stay where you are and render such service as you can. "Action alone is thy province, never the fruits thereof."<sup>1</sup>

The best way of undoing injustice is to persuade ourselves that no one can [really] do an injustice.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

JATINDAS M. AMIN  
VITHTHAL KANYA VIDYALAYA  
NADIAD

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

475. LETTER TO SUCHETA KRIPALANI

SEVAGRAM,  
February 7, 1946

CHI. SUCHETA,

I got your letter of January 30, 1946, written from Allahabad. As for me, I am quite certain about two things: one, that a member of the Assembly cannot be an Agent<sup>2</sup>, and two, that no man should be appointed Agent. I think that Thakkar Bapa also agrees with this and, therefore, as long as he is unable to find a woman worker in Delhi, he will carry on the work through the Central Office. The committee has ceased to be since January 1.

Poornima has already sent name [as candidate] for the Assembly. Now wouldn't you, therefore, agree to be the Agent? Rameshwaribehn<sup>3</sup> writes to the effect that she will quit the Assembly.

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

<sup>2</sup> Of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

<sup>3</sup> Rameshwari Nehru

What you say about Priyamvada<sup>1</sup> is right and so too about Devdoot<sup>2</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SUCHETA KRIPALANI

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

#### *476. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI<sup>3</sup>*

SEVAGRAM,

*February 7, 1946*

What shall I write? I have your letter. Meet Jairamdas<sup>4</sup> and learn *shantipath*<sup>5</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### *477. SOME LABOUR QUESTIONS*

During the pilgrimage to Madras and Palni the following document signed by 259 persons was handed to me at tremendously large meeting<sup>6</sup> of labourers at Golden Rock :

We the workers of the South Indian Railway beg to place before you some of our major problems with a view to get your support.

Nearly 2,64,000 workers are going to be retrenched all over the railways. In South Indian Railway alone, 10,000 will be retrenched and till now more than 2,000 have been discharged. The Government

<sup>1</sup> Priyamvada Nandkeolyar who was subsequently appointed Agent of Kasturba National Memorial Trust for the Province of Bihar

<sup>2</sup> Devdoot Vidyarthi, worker of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, Madhubani

<sup>3</sup> This was a postscript to Sushila Nayyar's letter to the addressee which read: "Bapuji will most probably continue to write his daily thoughts. The thoughts of the last two months I am sending through a separate bookpost. Please write which dates have been left out. Till now Bapuji was not able to correct the original. Therefore I did not send them. He may be able to get them in Poona. Then I shall send them."

<sup>4</sup> Jairamdas Doulatram

<sup>5</sup> Lesson of peace

<sup>6</sup> *Vide* Speech at Manapparai", 2-2-1946

contemplate absorption of ex-service men in place of railwaymen, thus putting us against the ex-soldiers.

We have been demanding a minimum living wage of Rs. 30 per mensem. At present the lowest wage is Rs. 8 to Rs. 15, and a majority of us receive less than Rs. 18 per mensem.

Out of 42,000 railway employees, only 8,000 are provided with quarters, of which the majority are infested with insanitary conditions, and are without proper ventilation.

You may be aware of the decision of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation demanding adjudication or a court of enquiry, if they refuse to redress our grievances and accept the suggestions. The suggestions were intended for improvements in the railway system and the condition of the employees. For your reference we are giving below the sixteen suggestions forwarded to the Railways Board and the Government by the Federation:

1. Reduction of work to 40 hours per week as a first step and further to 40 hours per week for all the staff including running staff without fall in wages.
2. Introduction of weekly calendar days off for all the railwaymen.
3. Leave reserve to be increased to 25%.
4. Reduction of rail length for engineering gangmen.
5. Extension of leave facilities to dailyrated and inferior service staff on par with subordinates.
6. All the work now done through contract labour should be taken over departmentally.
7. Reduction of mileage for overhaul of locomotives, wagons and carriages.
8. Expansion of workshop production, namely, construction of boilers, engine parts, etc.
9. Manufacture of locomotives, carriages and wagons in the Indian Railways workshop.
10. Rebuilding of third-class carriages so as to provide better facilities for passengers such as bath-rooms, fans and sleeping accommodation for long distance travel, etc.
11. Reopening all the lines that were closed and the restoration of all the trains stopped during the period of war and further expansion of services to meet the needs of the public.
12. A programme of house building with a view to provide decent houses for all railwaymen.
13. Construction of new lines to suit the needs of the country.



14. Laying down of double tracks wherever necessary.
15. Introduction of rail-motor transport to the distant towns and villages where railways cannot reach.
16. R. A. F. workshops now controlled by railways to be maintained and extended to serve the need of aviation.

In the demand of ours for full work, living wages, proper housing facilities, etc., we request you to support us and give a lead in the matter to the country and force the Railway Board to accept the same and save thousands of railwaymen and others from unemployment, misery and poverty.

If the workers are to be retrenched in order to make room, as alleged in the letter, for ex-soldiers, it is, in my opinion, doubly wrong. Wrong for the ex-soldier in that they will be favoured, and a soldier who accepts favoured treatment is no soldier. The second wrong will be to the men to be retrenched who, for no fault of their own, will be thrown out of employment. It will not do to say they were temporary hands. The State has to find work for all unemployed persons. Coming to the railwaymen's demands, items Nos. 1-9 and No. 12 fall, in my opinion, within the sphere of labour, but whether they are reasonable or not cannot be said without hearing the railway authorities' side. They should be referred to arbitration. They cannot be made a subject of strike, before the process of arbitration has been gone through. Any lightning strike is a form of dictation which is dangerous.

Items Nos. 10, 11 and 13-16, cannot legitimately be demanded by labourers. They are passengers' grievances and passengers, i.e., the public, can take them up.

Item No. 10 I would consider quite extravagant. By far the largest number of passengers belong to the third class, and I have no doubt they deserve progressively better treatment, not the first and second class. Railway-cars of the not distant future will have no classes. Class society is the idea, not merely to be aimed at but to be worked for and, in such society there is no room for classes or communities. Until that time is arrived at, first and second-class comforts be standardized and lowered where necessary and all attention bestowed upon third-class passengers. But I cannot visualize a time when third-class carriages, no matter how distant of the journey may be, can carry bathing accommodation for tens of thousands of travellers. What is required is proper bathing arrangement for third-class passengers at railway stations. Third-class passengers are the most neglected in

India. Railway-cars and railway stations should be utilized for proper education of the public in sanitation and cleanliness. This is not the case today. And the quicker Hindu and Mohammedan tea or water distinctions disappear the better<sup>1</sup>. Why should the State recognize these unnatural and irreligious distinctions? Those who consider themselves defiled by service rendered by person not belonging to their own persuasion may well be left to their own resources.

The association for railway passengers' relief should certainly ventilate grievances before the authorities. Their main work should be to conduct sustained education among the passengers as to their own duty toward one another and about observing laws of cleanliness and hygiene.

SEVAGRAM, February 8, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

#### 478. TELEGRAM TO JATINDAS M. AMIN

SEVAGRAM,

*February 8, 1946*

JATINDAS AMIN

VITHTHAL KANYA VIDYALAYA

NADIAD

NO FAST. PERFORM YOUR OWN DUTY QUIETLY.<sup>2</sup>

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

#### 479. LETTER TO R. G. CASEY

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA,

*February 8, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your three letters of January 20, 1946, January 30, 1946, and February 1, 1946.

Now that you are about to leave your office and also India, I will not trouble you any further with reference to the several matters on which I see there are differences of view-point. I can-

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* also "Hindu and Mussalman Tea, Etc.", 7-3-1946.

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* also "Its Implications"

not help mentioning my regret that I have failed to carry conviction in the matter of salt and khadi.<sup>1</sup> The position regarding milk is certainly extraordinary. There is no question here of even carrying conviction. It is typical. The answer you have been instructed to give reveals to me the official mind in India which refuses to admit even obvious mistakes. Hence we have called the Civil Service 'heaven-born' and the late Mr. Montagu called it 'wooden'. Some day, if you and Mrs. [Casey] and I meet without you being trammelled by cares of office, we shall laugh heartily over the many tragedies of Bengal which, let us hope, will have been things of the past and the ludicrous mistakes lying at the bottom of these tragedies.

I understand what you have said<sup>2</sup> about the release of prisoners.

I hope that the Red Cross work will share itself for the benefit of the millions.

I enclose for your information the statement<sup>3</sup> I have made with reference to "man-made famine". I hope that I have correctly recalled our conversation.

I thank you for the Australian wool you have been good enough to send to the Rajkumari<sup>4</sup> for turning into blankets. I hope to report to you how the blankets look when they come from the weavers and tell you whether Australian wool makes better blankets than the Tibetan.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF BENGAL  
CALCUTTA

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 122-3*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to R. G. Casey", 8-1-1946 and "Letter to R. G. Casey", 16-1-1946

<sup>2</sup> In his letter dated February 1, the addressee, *inter alia*, had said: "The process of release of all those that it is anyway safe to release will be continued hereafter."

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the United Press of India", 7-2-1946

<sup>4</sup> Amrit Kaur

#### 480. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

GRAMSVA ASHRAM, SEVAGRAM,  
February 8, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You may not know X but he is staunch Congressmen. He has suffered, too. I send you the letter which he has left with me. You will see from it that Y has broken faith with the Congress. The Doctor left the letter with me in order to guard against his candidature being approved through mistake. Now do what seems right to you.

I hope you keep good health. The tour was quite strenuous, but God granted me the necessary strength, and it was finished without a hitch. As arranged, I hope to reach Bardoli on the 3rd. I leave here on the 17th and reach Poona on the 19th.

From the newspaper reports, you seem to have done fairly well in the Sind elections.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhaine, p. 293*

#### 481. LETTER TO VEENA

SEVAGRAM,  
February 8, 1946

CHI. VEENA<sup>1</sup>,

I got your letter as also the previous one. How can I find time to write while I am constantly on the move? It is good news that you are keeping well.

Your parents arrived here yesterday. Everyone is fine. Why are your envelopes marked 'Private'?

It would be good, if you could come to Bardoli. I shall try to leave here on the 17th and reach Poona on the 19th.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Amrita Lal Chatterjee

## 482. LETTER TO SANKARAN

SEVAGRAM,  
February 8, 1946

CHI. SANKARAN,

I got your letter. I reached the Ashram on the 6th morning. The issue of "Jivansakha" has not yet been found. Why are your envelopes marked 'Cofidential'? Such letters are handed over to me unopened, and I can see them only when I find time. For instance, though your letter had reached us in Madras, I opened it only yesterday. There was no scope for it to be opened during the journey. You do not write to Sushilabehn at all.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 483. PRESERVATION OF CATTLE<sup>1</sup>

The Goseva Sangh which has its headquarters in Wardha was the late Shri Jamnalalji's last creation. He served the public cause in a variety of ways. For years money-making had ceased to be his main occupation. If he cared for money, it was only with the object of financing public activities. Eleventh day of February was the fifth anniversary of his death, and his followers and comrades decided to celebrate this anniversary by holding a meeting of friends and workers of the Goseva Sangh.

An hour before he died, he was working for this cause. Gopuri, where the meeting took place, is his creation. His ashes rest there, and the first meeting of the Sangh was also held there. The name Goseva was chosen after careful thought. The sense of patronage contained in *goraksha* was eliminated by the substitution of the word *seva*. The Hindu believes in the cow as mother and indeed she is so. An American has described her as the "Mother of Prosperity" and the description is correct. It is another matter that they eat beef in the West. They believe, at the same time, that the cow occupies highest place amongst those animals which contribute to man's comfort and

<sup>1</sup> This appeared as "from the Hindustani" in Harijan Sevak published simultaneously with the source.

happiness. It is difficult, if not impossible, for an Indian to think of man as being able to live without cow's milk.

Preservation of cattle is a vital part of *goseva*. It is a vital question for India. And it is a tragedy that the country which worships the cow pays scant attention to her and her progeny. While we may not kill the cow, we definitely torture her. Matters have reached such a sorry pass that today cattle seem to have become a burden and people talk of killing them off in order to lighten this load. What could one Jamnalalji do to battle against such odds? And now even he is not among us.

Speeches are not going to solve the problem. There is urgent need for deep study and the spirit of sacrifice. To amass money and dole out charity does not constitute real business capacity. To know how to preserve cattle, to impart this knowledge to the millions, to live up to the ideal oneself, and to spend money on this endeavour is real business. Today the opposite obtains. The rich amass wealth somehow and salve their consciences by giving a paltry sum out of it towards the upkeep of *goshalas* by untrained persons and fancy that they have acquired merit. Jamnalalji was well aware of these short-comings and was working out a scheme to overcome them. In the meanwhile, death claimed him. Perhaps even greater capacity is needed to solve this immensely difficult problem than to obtain *swaraj*.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

#### 484. QUESTION BOX<sup>1</sup>

Q. While in conversation or doing brain work or when one is suddenly worried, can one recite Ramanama (the name of God) in one's heart? Do people do so at such times and, if so, how?

A. Experience shows that man can do so at any time, even in sleep, provided Ramanama is enshrined in his heart. If the taking of the name has become a habit, its recitation through the ear becomes as natural as the heartbeat. Otherwise Ramanama is a mere mechanical performance or at best has touched the heart only on the surface. When Ramanama has established its dominion over the heart, the question of vocal recitation does not arise. Because then it transcends

<sup>1</sup> This appeared as "from the Hindustani" in *Harijan Sevak* published simultaneously with the source.

speech. But it may well be held that person who have attained this state are few and far between.

There is no doubt whatsoever that Ramanama contains all the power that it attributed to it. No one can, by mere wishing, enshrine Ramanama in his heart. Untiring effort is required as also patience. What an amount of labour and patience have been lavished by men to acquire the non-existent philosopher's stone? Surely God's name is of infinitely richer value and always existent.

Q. Is it necessary for the mind to go through different stage of progress (including collapse) before it attains absolute calm? Why is it that even when one is awake and quite calm, one's mind is often disturbed as in a dream? Why do such things as one has neither felt or seen in real life intrude into one's conscious or sub-conscious mind?

A. Before attaining perfect calm, it is essential for almost everyone to go through stages of progress. I use the word 'almost' advisedly. It exclude those who have made consistent effort in a previous existence, but without complete success, and who will not, therefore, have to pass through purgatory in this life. When the apparently calm mind is disturbed as if by dreams, it means that the calm is outward and not inward. What does not appear to have any relation to one's life's experience and yet disturbs shows, in my opinion, that there are many things which have associations but of which one has no recollection.

Q. Is it harmful if, owing to stress or exigencies of work, one is unable to carry out daily devotions in the prescribed manner? Which of the two should be given preference, service or the rosary?

A. Whatever the exigencies of service or adverse circumstances may be, Ramanama must not cease. The outward form will vary according to the occasion. The absence of the rosary does not interrupt Ramanama which has found an abiding place in the heart.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

#### 485. CRIMINAL IF TRUE<sup>1</sup>

A letter from Karnataka contains the following information:

On February 1, 1946, at about 10 a.m. when the Karnataka Provincial Congress Parliamentary Board was conducting its business in its office in Hubli, 20 to 25 persons effected an entrance into the meeting hall without first obtaining permission of the President.

The Board had met to discuss some important matters. Some of the persons above mentioned asked for time to make certain representations. The President told them that sufficient time for the purpose had been given to them on the previous day. The Board was now engaged in serious deliberations but would see them again during the afternoon. In reply, they said, they had further important matter to represent and insisted on doing so then and there. The president opined that their attitude was quite inconsistent with due decorum and discipline, but they continued to insist, whereupon the President said that he would be obliged to leave the hall. As he stood up in order to go away, one member of the party tried forcibly to hold him down. Another snatched the office files from his hands and was going to take them away. Yet another hit Shri Diwaker on the head with his umbrella. Persons in the hall finally came to the rescue and restored order.

If such be the case, the Congress organization will go to pieces. Indeed no organization can successfully work under a system of terror. I do not go into the merits. That work will be done by the Congress Working Committee. What is reported to have taken place is not against decency and all the rules of the game, but is manifestly against non-violence. Moreover there seems to be an indecent longing for getting into the legislatures. This indecency shows that the deciding reason for contesting elections is being lost sight of.

SEVAGRAM, February 9, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".



## 486. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

SEVAGRAM,  
February 9, 1946

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Today I am dictating this letter in Gujarati.

1. Those who feel themselves poor without the knowledge of English may be taught the language. The general policy should be understood that nobody should be taught English, and that, when it is found necessary to teach anybody, my permission should be obtained.

2. The reason for stressing the importance of carding is that, if we learn it, we shall be spared the necessity of all other processes. If, in addition to carding by hand, they also think it necessary, they may use the carding-bow, but I don't regard that as essential. I see no difficulty at all in stopping the practice of procuring the gutstring of the carding-bow from outside. Good cotton can be carded with a string made of *mooj*<sup>1</sup> or yarn. But I don't insist on this.

3. General supervision work leaves no time for teaching things to others. It is another matter if, in order to improve one's efficiency in supervision work or relax one's mind, one finds it necessary to take up some other work. It is difficult to lay down any rule in this matter. The supervisor himself must decide. It is a sign of ignorant attachment to go on working till the breaking point.

4. I regard a weekly tour by Vinoba as essential. There would be no harm in his taking someone who can be spared from his work and who is eager to learn. The rule that one person should always accompany him seems laudable.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4545

## 487. FAMINE OF GRAIN AND CLOTH

During my wanderings in Bengal, Assam and Madras, I heard tales of distress due to shortage of food and cloth. Reports come to

<sup>1</sup> A kind of hay

me from other parts of India. They support the same tale. Dr. Rajendra Prasad tells me that the Government report expressing fear of shortage of food immediately doubled the market price. This is a bad sign. Such speculation should be a thing of the past. The mercantile community should be competent to curb such greed. Let them not add to the distress caused by the Government mistakes or incompetence. There are mercantile association and chambers. If they act patriotically, they can help most to prevent panic and speculation.

It is the fashion to blame nature for famine. Scarcity of rain is by no means a monopoly of India. In other countries, though people welcome rains, they have made themselves fairly independent of rainfall during a season or two. Here Government have used themselves and the public to the idea that famines come when there is shortage of rainfall<sup>1</sup>. Had the mind been framed otherwise, they would have made adequate provision for shortfalls. They only tinkered with the problem and naturally so. For the official world was taught to think no better. Originality there could be none in a close monopoly organization like the Government of India. It is the largest autocracy the world has known. Democracy has been reserved only for Great Britain. And when it rules and exploits millions belonging to other races, it becomes an unmitigated evil. It corrupts the whole island with the idea that such exploitation is the best thing for an enlightened democracy to do. It would be well to remember this fundamental fact, if I have correctly estimated it. If we recognize this while dealing with the immediate problem, we shall be patient with the present actors. There is no call here for patience with the evil. The distinction will enable us the better to deal with the evil.

We must then first put our own house in order as far as may be, and at the same time demand from the foreign Government that since they mean what they say, let them at once replace the irresponsible executive with elected and responsible members from the Central Legislature, however archaic and based only on a limited franchise it may be. There is nothing to prevent the Viceroy from doing this today. I do not propose to answer the difficulties in anticipation. "Where there's will, there's a way". This one act will restore confidence and allay panic.

"Grow more food" was not a bad cry during the war. It is a greater necessity now. This can be best done only by a national

<sup>1</sup> The source has "waterfall".

executive. Even its mistakes will not loom so large as those of a nominated executive, however able the latter may be. As it is, even their ability and integrity are in question—rightly so or wrongly is beside the point in this connection. Everything possible should be done to draw water from the bowels of the earth. There is talent enough in this country for the purpose. Provincial selfishness should give place to the national want. In addition to, not in the place of, these measures, grain should be imported from wherever it can be had.

Cloth famine can and ought to be averted by telling the millions to spin and weave in their own villages, the State supplying them with cotton where it is not grown or available, and with the simple instruments of production on hire or long-term purchase. The A. I. S. A. with its seasoned workers should be summoned to render assistance and guidance. This will take a few months, if the work is taken up in earnest. Indigenous mills will be called upon to assist this national process by a wise distribution of their cloth in cities and villages while the transition process is going on. Argumentation on the capacity of mills to supply all the cloth required should cease in face of the calamity which is existent and daily growing in intensity. Mills cannot find employment for the millions of unemployed villagers. The educative value of the charkha is not to be surpassed. But for the spell of hypnotism which rules our minds today, we shall all realize this obvious truth, set ourselves working out the concrete proposition and thereby restore confidence to the millions and, maybe, even to the world which has neither enough food nor cloth<sup>1</sup>.

SEVAGRAM, February 10, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

#### 488. TO THE READER

*Harijan* is being revived. For all these years I used its columns to place before people my views on several matters. The stream that had dried up in 1942 will now flow again. In fact the *Harijan*

<sup>1</sup> In his "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*, 3-3-1946, Pyarelal says: "The grim spectre of the impending famine filled Gandhiji's mind. . . . He took the opportunity to discuss the question with the Governor of Madras. . . but did not come away from the talk reassured. . . Mr. Abell was agreeably surprised to find, when he flew to Sevagram on February 11, that Gandhiji had anticipated his proposals in an article. . . " Vide also "Statement to the Press", 11-2-1946 and "What ought to be done"

editions—the Hindustani, the Gujarati and the English—are my weekly letter to readers. But I would not be wrong, if I described the Gujarati edition as specially so. Gujarati being my mother tongue, a large number of correspondents write letters to me in that language than in the others, and I reply to them more easily and freely. If, therefore, I wrote only in Gujarati and the material for the other editions was supplied as translations, I would have to take less pains, and I would be able to enrich the Gujarati *Harijan*<sup>1</sup>

But one cannot easily give up a practice already adopted. And ignorant attachment also, consciously or unconsciously, would do its work. I know English. I have realized that my English writing has an appeal, though I do not know what exactly is the attraction. The same is true of Hindustani but to a lesser extent. Shri Brajkishore Babu<sup>2</sup> made me realize this years ago. I was then made President of the Provincial Hindu Sammelan. At that time my Hindi was much weaker than it is today. I gave him my Presidential address and asked him to revise it. But he refused to do so and it was delivered as it was. The reader puts up with my imperfect and ungrammatical Hindi. Thus unlike the proverbial recluse who, hankering after both this and the other world, ruined his prospect in both, I stand to lose three! For the present, however, I wish to let things continue as they are. I cannot say at the moment where the ship will anchor in view of this, I hope, the Gujarati reader will excuse me, if he finds in the Gujarati *Harijan* more translations of my English articles than original Gujarati articles. I can, however, give him the assurance that whatever translation appear in it will have been by me also, so that there will generally be no misinterpretation. I have to say “generally ” because sometimes I may have no time to see the translations and, moreover, if a translation is done at Ahmedabad. I will not be able to see it at all. Be that as it may, I trust the reader will put up with this as he had been doing so far.

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 10-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> That is, *Harijanbandhu*

<sup>2</sup> Father-in-law of Jayaprakash Narayan

## 489. TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 10, 1946

*Express*

SARDAR PATEL  
68 MARINE DRIVE  
BOMBAY

SORRY                      CANNOT                      EARLIER.<sup>1</sup>

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 490. LETTER TO LORD WAVELL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 10, 1946

DEAR FRIEND,

Shri Sudhir Ghosh has handed me your kind note of 9th instant. You will believe me when I say that I would have responded to your invitation at once, if I could have. But I have explained to our mutual friend physical and moral reasons for my inability. He will explain them fully to you and will also put before you my proposition. Of course I shall be glad to meet any representative you may send.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

*Gandhi's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 139-40*

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Gandhiji's arrival in Bardoli; *vide* also "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 10-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> In *Gandhiji's Emissary*, "Talk to Villagers, Kodambakkam", 1-2-1946, Sudhir Ghosh explains: "Abell asked me, if I would . . . take a letter from Lord Wavell to Gandhiji. . . and do my best to persuade Gandhiji to come and see the Viceroy in New Delhi to discuss with him how best to handle the food situation. . . I was rather confident that Gandhiji would respond to the Viceroy's appeal. . . But. . . Gandhiji refused to come. He firmly told me that I was not to try to persuade him to go to Delhi. . . He took me to task for having acceded to Lord Wavell's request. . . I conveyed to George Abell on the telephone Gandhiji's reaction . . . Abell flew down. . . on the 11th February . . . the idea was that the appeal should be signed by Gandhiji, Mr. Jinnah and the Viceroy. . . But it was the same old game of parity between Hindus and Muslims. . . To this sort of treatment Gandhiji's objection was as he said in his letter to Lord Wavell, 'moral'". For an extract from Abell's note on the meeting, *vide* Appendix II. For Gandhiji's view on the famine situation, *vide* pp. 110-2 and 120-1.

491. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 10, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Rajendra Babu is with me. I have your wire. It is impossible to reach Bardoli before the 3rd.

The Viceroy has sent for me<sup>1</sup>. But I cannot go in the near future.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapana patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 294*

492. LETTER TO DAMAYANTI

SEVAGRAM,  
February 10, 1946

CHI. DAMAYANTI,

I have your letter. I did not read in the papers that Bhogibhai had passed away. And I don't read newspapers. I learnt about it only through your letter. You had written to me acknowledging receipt of the money; Mahendra also wrote. Was it not God's miracle that Bhogibhai passed away only after paying up the amount? Death, of course, ought not to be grieved over.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DAMAYANTIBEHN  
GANDHI NIWAS  
GHODBUNDER ROAD  
SANTA CRUZ

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

493. *LETTER TO AGA KHAN*

February 10, 1946

BHAI SAHEB,

I got your letter today. You certainly know my plight, and why I am unable to be present. I expect the Diamond Jubilee to be celebrated in a fitting manner, and may you live for many more years.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. M. THE AGA KHAN  
LAND'S END  
MALABAR HILL  
BOMBAY

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

494. *LETTER TO PRITILATA*

SEVAGRAM,

February 10, 1946

CHI. PRITILATA,

It is good you wrote. Your health must now improve. I shall feel happy only when you both make your lives ideal. If you lead an indulgent life, it would set a bad example.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

495. *LETTER TO BHAGAVATICHARAN SHUKLA*

SEVAGRAM,

February 10, 1946

CHI. BHAGAVATI,

I was delighted to have your letter. I am no longer able to write many letters. The resumption of *Harijan* has added to the work.

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, was weighed against 243.5 lb. diamonds on Sunday, March 10, 1946, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Sultanette. Vide "Message to Aga Khan", 10-3-1946.

You have given a good account. I understand why the marriage had to be solemnized at Gondia. I shall leave this place for Poona on the 17th. You can come over here or to Poona whenever you wish to. But my programme is uncertain.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

BHAGAVATICHARAN SHUKLA

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

#### *496. FLAGS AND SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>*

I have two typical letters about flags in schools and colleges. Some boys hoist the Congress flag, therefore others hoist the League flag. Both are wrong. My correspondents report that the mischief commenced by the hoisting of the Congress flag. Probably nothing would have tolerated. The right thing was, and is, that boys must not take the initiative in such cases. The buildings belong to the authorities and they must decide whether or not to fly, which, if any, flag over their buildings. If boys take the law into their own hands, the result must be chaos and confusion plus breaking of heads. This would be sheer vulgarity and doing no good to anybody. Schools and colleges should be institution for healing communal breaches, not for promoting differences. If boys and girls do not learn discipline in their school-days, money and time spent on their education is so much national loss. The one bright thing that emerges from the Lahore episode is that Maulana Saheb Abul Kalam Azad promptly intervened and ruled that the boys who had hoisted the Congress flag were in the wrong.

SEVAGRAM, February 11, 1946

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".



### 497. *LIVING UP TO 125*<sup>1</sup>

I have not talked about wishing to live up to the age of 125 years without thought. It has a deep significance. The basis for my wish is the third *mantra* from *Ishopanishad* which, literally rendered, means that a man should desire to live for 100 years while serving with detachment. One commentary says that 100 really means 125. Even today in Madras the word ‘hundred’ is used to mean described as Rs. 100, but was, on scrutiny, found to be Rs. 116.  $100=99+1$  is not an invariable formula in our country.

Be that as it may, the meaning of ‘hundred’ is not necessary for my argument. My sole purpose is to indicate the condition necessary for the realization of the desire. It is service in a spirit of detachment, which means complete independence of the fruit of action. Without it one should not desire to live for 125 years. That is how I interpret the text. I have not the slightest doubt that without attaining that state of detachment, it is impossible to live to be 125 years old. Living to that age must never mean a mere life unto death, like that of an animated corpse, a burden on one’s relations and society. In such circumstance one’s supreme duty would be to pray to God for early release, not for prolongation of life anyhow.

The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death. Therefore everyone has a right and should desire to live 125 year *while performing service without on eye on result*. Such life must be wholly and solely dedicated to service. Renunciation made for the sake of such service is an ineffable joy of which none can deprive one, because that nectar springs from within and sustains life. In this there can be no room for worry or impatience. Without this joy long life is impossible and would not be worth while even if possible.

Examination of the possibility of prolonging life to 125 years by outward means is outside the scope of this argument.

SEVAGRAM, February 11, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in Gujarati, this appeared as “from *Harijanbandhu*”, 17-2-1946.

498. *TELEGRAM TO URMILA DEVI*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 11, 1946*

URMILADEVI<sup>1</sup>  
2/1-B HINDUSTAN PARK  
RASHBEHARI AVENUE  
CALCUTTA

LEAVING SEVENTEENTH BUT YOU CAN COME.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

499. *TELEGRAM TO AGA KHAN*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 11, 1946*

*Express*

H. H. THE AGA KHAN  
MALABAR HILL

THANKS YOUR LETTER. TWENTY-FOURTH POONA FOUR  
O'CLOCK AFTERNOON WILL SUIT ME.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

500. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 11, 1946*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. Now we shall see about it only after I come. You may not fix up a woman cook for the time being. The matter about Dr. Dinshaw will also be settled after my arrival.

I propose to reach there on the 18th. From there I proceed to Bardoli on the 28th or on the 1st of March. I shall bring with me as small a party as I can. You need not obtain anything for their sake.

<sup>1</sup> Sister of Chittaranjan Das

You should lodge me where Doctor says. I am even prepared to put up in a tent. I shall be having a mosquito-net.

I shall see what I can do about *Harijan*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 501. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

[On or after *February* 11, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

The food situation brought the Private Secretary to H. E. the Viceroy to me. I had many meetings and appointments up to a fairly long time. These I could not disregard, and I do not know how to fly, and hope I may never have to do so. Therefore in reply to an imperative invitation from His Excellency, I asked<sup>2</sup> that he should send me someone who could speak for him, and so the P. S. V. came yesterday<sup>3</sup>. The food situation alone brought him to me. Could I say something in order to lift the question out of the political arena and out of the general distrust of Government intentions and policy? As the matter brooks no delay, I give here the purport of what I said. So far as the Congress policy is concerned, His Excellency should invite Maulana Saheb and, if he cannot come, ask him to name his deputy. I personally feel that the present irresponsible Executive should be immediately replaced by a responsible one chosen from the elected members of the Central Legislature. I also personally feel that this responsibility should be shouldered by the elected members of the Central Legislature irrespective of parties, for famine of cloth and food is common to the millions of India. Whether the Government can accept the suggestion and whether the different political parties that compose the Central Legislature consider it practicable or not, is more than I can say. But this much I can say without fear of contradiction: I have little doubt that if the mercantile community and

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to the visit of Abell, Private Secretary to the Viceroy; *vide* footnote 11, "To the Reader" Abell met Gandhiji in the evening on February 11; *vide* "Speech at Second Goseva Samgh Conference Wardha", 12-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Wavell", 10-2-1946

<sup>3</sup> It being his Silence-Day, Gandhiji wrote down his part of the dialogue; for an extract from Abell's note, *vide* "G. E. B. Abell's Note on Interview With Gandhiji", 11-2-1946

the official would become honest, if only in face of the impending calamity, we are such a vast country that we can just tide over the difficulty even if no help comes from the outside world, which is itself groaning. Grain and cloth dealers must not hoard, must not speculate. Food should be grown on all cultivable areas wherever water is, or is made available. Flower gardens should be used for growing food crops. This has been done during the period of war. The present is, in some respects, worse than the war period. Before we have eaten up the grain we have in stock, we must economize like misers. All ceremonial functions should be stopped. Women can play the highest part in the alleviation of the present distress by economizing in their households. In nine-tenths of our activity we can manage our daily affairs without the aid of the Government, whatever its colour may be, if only it will refrain from interfering with the people. Panic must be avoided at all costs. We must refuse to die before death actually takes toll, and think of the skeletons of India and the least little things we may do to help, and all will be well with India. Let us not hypnotize into the belief that because we can indulge ourselves, our next-door neighbour can do likewise. Cloth famine, I know, is a mockery, for if only the Government and mill-owners will act honestly and intelligently, no one need go naked for want of cloth. We have cotton enough and idle hands enough and skill enough to make in our villages all the cloth we need.

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946

## 502. TELEGRAM TO WANDA DYNOWSKA

SEVAGRAM,  
February 12, 1946

UMADEVI

7 PEDDAR ROAD

MOMBAY

LEAVING            HERE            SEVENTEENTH            FOR            POONA.            NO  
USE            COMING            HERE.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

503. TELEGRAM TO HARIHAR SHARMA

SEVAGRAM,  
February 12, 1946

*Express*

HARIHAR SHARMA<sup>1</sup>

195 HIGH ROAD

TRIPPLICATE

MADRAS

THANKS      OMIT      MEETING.      CONTINUE      REPAIRS.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal

504. TELEGRAM TO PRESTON GROVER

SEVAGRAM,  
February 12, 1946

PRESTON GROVER

["THE] TIMES OF INDIA" BUILDING

BOMBAY

DAYS      HERE      FILLED      WITH      MEETINGS.      LEAVING  
FOR BOMBAY      SEVENTEENTH      EN      ROUTE      POONA.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal

505. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

SEVAGRAM,  
February 12, 1946

CHI. BAL,

You do not seem to have fully recovered yet.

I met Vinoba<sup>2</sup> yesterday. But I got a report from him only about carding and making slivers.

<sup>1</sup> Of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha; he was also called "Anna".

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's brother

Regarding sleep, when we meet. I hope to arrive there on the 18th.

Paper which resembles mill-made paper in appearance cannot be hundred per cent hand-made paper. Explain this to me further when we meet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 814. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhavé

### 506. LETTER TO AGA KHAN

SEVAGRAM,

*February 12, 1946*

AGA KHAN,

I have your letter from Bhopal. You will have received the telegram<sup>1</sup> I sent you in reply. I have suggested 4.00 o'clock on the 24th. Please let me know if that time is not suitable. It will be nice if Nawab Saheb can come. I do not think Maulana Saheb and others will be able to come.

May the Diamond Jubilee be a success ! I trust you are well.

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

### 507. SPEECH AT SECOND GOSEVA SANGH CONFERENCE WARDHA

*February 12, 1946*

The principle of succession to property should be based on new fundamental, i. e., that those who act up to the wishes of the departed soul or carry on his work should be the real heirs and not those born in his family.

So, if Janaki Devi<sup>2</sup> or Kamalnaya<sup>3</sup> or Ramakrishna<sup>3</sup> do not devote themselves to Jamnalal Bajaj's incomplete work whose anniversary we are observing, they have no right to be Jamnalal's heirs, but persons like us who carry on his work<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 11-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> *Wide and sons of Jamnalal Bajaj*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Vide also "Oh! For Our English!"

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the impending famine and the visit of the Viceroy's Private Secretary to Sevagram last evening.

I have visited Bengal and Assam and met workers from Orissa. I have seen people who have expressed their views about the famine which is staring them in the face unless proper steps are taken. If things or food can be imported from outside, it is well and good. But this year there is little prospect for that for transferring food from one province to another. So my advice to you would be to minimize food requirements, avoid wastage and serve both men and cattle to your utmost capacity. We must produce better milk and increase our wealth and improve our health. If you devote to cow-keeping, it will be a fitting tribute to Jammalal's revered memory.<sup>1</sup> If you don't know how to serve your own people, how can you serve animals and especially cows?

Gandhiji referred to his talk with Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali when the latter told him that people served cows and other animals but there are many other animals in India, namely, 40 crores of Indians whom they should not forget.

*The Hindustan Times*, 14-2-1946; also *The Hitavada*, 14-2-11946

### 508. LETTER TO LABHSHANKER VYAS

[On or before *February 13, 1946*]<sup>2</sup>

BHAI LABHSHANKER,

I got and read your letter today. May all the girls become good and bring credit to the institution.<sup>3</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

LABHSHANKER VYAS, PRINCIPAL

H. K. VIDYALAYA

SABARMATI

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

<sup>1</sup> What follows is reproduced from *The Hitavada*, 14-2-1946.

<sup>2</sup> From the postmark

<sup>3</sup> Harijan Kanya Vidyalaya

509. LETTER TO AGNES M. PHILLIPS<sup>1</sup>

SEVAGRAM,  
February 13, 1946

MY DEAR AGNES,

It was a good thing to have a letter from you after such a long time. The friend to whom you gave your note has not yet turned up. He has been informed that he can come and see me.

My doings you should follow from the paper. This is merely a line to tell you that my love does not suffer because I do not hear from you, or because you are so far away from me.

Love.

Yours,  
M. K. GANDHI

MISS AGNES PHILLIPS  
ST. ANDREWS'S HOSPITAL  
THORPE, NORWICH

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *Reminiscences of Gandhiji*, p. 195

510. LETTER TO J. C. SMUTS

SEVAGRAM, "VIA" WARDHA,  
February 13, 1946

DEAR FIELD MARSHAL,

This is just to introduce Miss Majorie Sykes who is proceeding to South Africa and other parts of the earth in search of material and facts for writing the life of the late Deenabandhu C. F. Andrews. I

<sup>1</sup> Reproducing this letter in her article "Recollections" in *Reminiscences of Gandhiji*, the addressee explains: "During the 1939 war a soldier who was going out to India told me that he would much like to meet Mr. Gandhi. I gave him a letter of introduction. Owing to illness he was not able to meet him, but sent on my letter. Later I received a letter from Mr. Gandhi, which bore my name and his signature in his own handwriting. I still have that letter and regard it as one of my cherished possessions." The addressee came to know Gandhiji in South Africa while staying with her uncle, the Rev. Charles Philips, who was deeply interested in the Asiatic question. She did nursing work in the two World Wars and met Gandhiji during his visit to England.



hope you will give her such help as it is possible for you to give and facilitate her passage from South Africa to England.

I see that you are keeping fit and well even though fairly advanced in years.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

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

### 511. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN

SEVAGRAM, "VIA" WARDHA (C.P.),

*February 13, 1946*

MY DEAR VERRIER,

Your letter of 1st November was given to me by our mutual friend Jehangir Patel after the 14th January through Thakkar Bapa.

Your language cannot hurt me. I love you so well and so much that language has no effect on me, even as my son Harilal's has not. What has hurt me is that distrust of you has crept into me. Bapa, who loves you, if it were possible to do so more than I do, deepens that distrust. I do not know whether I have succeeded in conveying to you my full meaning. Your learning which I know is very great, is worth nothing to me if you do not or cannot represent truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Of course you know this fine oath that is administered to every witness before a law court. That it has become a mere mechanical thing and debasing as that does not matter. We utter God's name in vain. He does not suffer. We do. Is it possible that untruth has crept into you ? Bapa swears, I feel.

Bapa will see this letter before I send it and so will Jehangir Patel through whom it will go, if it does.

I have dictated this letter because *Harijan* takes almost every ounce of my energy.

Love.

BAPU

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

## 512. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 13, 1946*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You will have seen my statement<sup>1</sup> in the newspapers. I did not like what Jawaharlal is reported to have said. I have also written to him about it. We cannot incite people in that way. We cannot deprive the millions of poor people of what little they get. If food is available only in a limited stock, it should be made to last until the next season. I hold that we should offer our co-operation to this end. However I am reaching there on Monday. But I shall be observing silence when I arrive.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 294*

## 513. LETTER TO ARUN GANDHI

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 13, 1946*

CHI. ARUN

Have I not told you not to expect letters from me? Besides, now that Harijanbandhu comes out every week, is it not a letter for you too? And what a long letter ! It is good that you spin. I got Chi. Manilal's<sup>2</sup> postcard. I have been very busy. So much the better. Pyarelalji has fallen ill.

*Blessings to you all from*  
BAPU

C/O MANILAL GANDHI  
DELHI

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 11-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's father

#### 514. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

SEVAGRAM, *via* WARDHA,  
February 13, 1946

BHAI SAHEB,

I have your long letter<sup>1</sup>. It is good, you have given [the details]. I already knew some of the things, but some are news to me. I am cautious and will remain so. To keep me on my guard please do write to me as much as you can with ease.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRIM. R. JAYAKAR  
[From Hindi]

Jayakar Papers: File No. 826, p. 38. Courtesy: National Archives of India

#### 515. WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE

Food crisis should be regarded as a certainty. In the circumstances, the following things should be attended to at once:

1. Every person should confine his daily wants regarding food to the minimum, consistent with his or her health requirements; and where, as in cities, milk, vegetables, oil and fruit are available, grains and pulses should be reduced as they easily can be. Starch can be derived from starchy roots such as carrots, parsnips, potatoes, yam, banana; the idea being to exclude from present diet and conserve those grains and pulses which can be kept and stored. Vegetables too should not be eaten as an indulgence or for pleasure when millions are denied the use of these things altogether and are now threatened with starvation due to shortage of cereals and pulses.

2. Everyone who has access to any water should try himself or herself to grow some edibles for personal or general use. The easiest way to do so is to collect clean earth, mix it with organic manure where possible—even a little bit of dried cowdung is good organic manure—and put it in any earthen or tin pot and throw some seeds of vegetable such as mustard and cress, etc., and daily water the pots.

<sup>1</sup> Dated February 8, 1946; for the text, *vide* "Letter From M. R. Jayakar", 8-2-1946

They will be surprised how quickly the seeds sprout and give edible leaves which need not even be cooked but can be eaten in the form of salad.

3. All flower gardens should be utilized for growing edibles. And in this connection I would suggest to the Viceroy, Governors and high officials to take the lead. I would ask the heads of agricultural departments at the Centre and Provinces to flood the country with leaflets in the provincial language telling laymen how and what to grow easily.

4. Reduction should be taken up not merely by the civilian population but equally, if not predominantly, by the military. I say “predominantly” for the military ranks, being under rigid military discipline, can easily carry out measures of economy.

5. All exports of seeds, such as oil-seeds, oils, oil-cakes, nuts, etc., should be stopped, if they have not been already. Oil-cakes, if the seeds are sifted of earth and foreign matter, are good human food with rich protein content.

6. Deep wells should be sunk by the Government wherever possible and required, whether for irrigation or for drinking purposes.

7. Given hearty co-operation by Government servants and the general public, I have not the slightest doubt that the country can tide over the difficulty. Just as panic is the surest way to defeat, so also will be the case when there is widespread distress impending and prompt action is not taken. Let us not think of the cause of the distress. Whatever the cause, the fact is that if the Government and the public do not approach the crisis patiently and courageously, disaster is a certainty. We must fight this foreign Government on all other fronts except this one, and even on this we shall fight them, if they betray callousness or contempt for reasoned public opinion. In this connection I invite the public to share my opinion that we should accept Government professions at their face value, and believe that swaraj is within sight inside of a few months.

8. Above all, black marketing and dishonesty should disappear altogether, and willing co-operation between all parties should be the order of the day in so far as this crisis is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

SEVGARAM, February 14, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also “Statement to the Press”, 11-2-1946

*516. TELEGRAM TO AGA KHAN*

*Express*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 14, 1946*

H. H. THE AGA KHAN  
KAPURTHALA

TWENTY-FIFTH WILL SUIT. THREE P. M. DOCTOR DINSHAW'S  
POONA.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*517. TELEGRAM TO BHOLANATH MASTER*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 14, 1946*

BHOLANATH MASTER  
PRAJAMANDAL  
ALWAR

DELIGHTED.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*518. TELEGRAM TO SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH*

*Express*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 14, 1946*

SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH<sup>1</sup>  
10 SUBURBAN SCHOOL ROAD  
CALCUTTA

PLEASE                WIRE                TRUTH                ABOUT                CALCUTTA  
DISTURBANCES                AND                BURNING                OF                MILITARY  
LORRIES.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *The Hindu* 18-2-1946.

*519. TELEGRAM TO JEHANGIR PATEL*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 14, 1946*

JEHANGIR PATEL  
10 CHURCHGATE STREET  
BOMBAY  
PROPOSAL ACCEPTED.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papars. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> President of Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> Disturbance broke out in protest against sentence for life passed on Capt. Abdul Rashid of Indian National Army; the sentence was, however, reduced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment by Commandar-in-Chief. The addressee telegraphically informed Gandhiji that "reaction against police firing on peaceful processionists excited people and led to mob violence including burning of military lorries. In all 53 persons were killed and over 500 were injured. Congress Peace Brigades were patrolling the city but the military were interfering with their work, and the city was under military control."

## 520. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 14, 1946

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got your letter, as also the cheque.

I am writing to. . .<sup>1</sup> What he says is strange. To me he talks sensibly. Your work has increased very much indeed.

I think you are mistaken about the food situation. Some foodgrains may be imported from abroad but I think depending on others always ends in disappointment. If the people show some enterprise, they can certainly grow more food. It may be that there would be insufficient cotton for the mills; if so, the balance may be imported. There is enough for the spinning-wheels.

More when we meet.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 295*

## 521. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 14, 1946

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. You have given plenty of news“*The lure of Legislatures*”<sup>2</sup>, though written in Gujarati, is really, meant for the whole country. I am returning the Press cutting.

I will implement whatever suggestions of yours can be implemented.

Take care of your health. I will not write more as we shall meet soon.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 138*

<sup>1</sup> The name is omitted in the source.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “*The Lure of Legislatures*”

522. LETTER TO DR. DINSHAW K. MEHTA

SEVAGRAM,  
February 14, 1946

CHI. DINSHAW,

I shall reach there on the 19th. I shall write later by what train. We shall be about 11 or 12 people. This time I am not coming as your guest, but for the sake of the work that we want to do there. This time my party as well as I will meet our food expenses only from the funds reserved for the poor. You need not, therefore, incur any expenditure on that account. I will reimburse then and there whatever you spend [on our account]. That too would not be from my own account but from the money that is earmarked for the poor out of the hospital fund. The other that lies with me has not been earmarked for any particular purpose. And this amount belongs to my rich friends. Whatever amount now remains with you is what you have earned yourself and for your personal expenses. And I have no right to take a single piece out of it, for after having become a trustee I should not regard it as my right to draw anything from that amount.

As regards accommodating me, I shall put up wherever you ask me to, i. e., in the room you have reserved for me or in any part of the hospital or in a tent. I don't at all regard it as inconvenient for me to put up in a tent in this season. And I shall not find it inconvenient to stay throughout the year in a place with a tiled floor. You had such a place made for the Working Committee.

You are not to incur any expenditure on my account. If I don't proceed with a hardened heart as I do, I will not be worthy of the trust, nor will I be able to serve the poor through the trust.

I hope you, Gulbai<sup>1</sup> and Ardeshir<sup>2</sup> are fine, and I expect Maji<sup>3</sup> is enjoying peace and happiness. From there I shall return on the 1st of March. I expect to go to Poona again on the 19th or 20th of March.

The rest when we meet.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. DINSHAW MEHTA  
POONA

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

<sup>1</sup> Wife, son, and mother of the addressee

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*



### 523. ABOUT RAJAJI

I have read Shri Kamaraja Nadar's Press message<sup>1</sup>. I am sorry. I can easily be silent, but the cause may suffer. He says he is my follower. In that case he should have referred to me before rushing to the Press and certainly before resigning<sup>2</sup>. I have intentionally described myself as a Bhangi. In the man-made social ladder I want to be at the bottom. I would like Shri Kamraj to cease to be a Nadar and to become a Bhangi with me and then in all humility withdraw his resignation. Whatever it is legally or not, the Provincial and Working Committees alone can decide. Morally it is perfectly possible, if he himself feels he has hurt himself and the cause by resigning. Then he will rejoin the difficult post (if it is legally possible) as a strong man. He was weak in resigning. He says he prevented four others from following him. It was well that they did not resign.

Why worry about the use of the word 'clique'?<sup>3</sup> In spite of all my love for the English language, it is a foreign tongue for me and I am as likely as not to make mistakes in using it. Of course, I have used the word 'clique' deliberately. I must not withdraw it. This is its dictionary meaning: "small exclusive party". I know that there is such a clique in Tamil Nadu against Rajaji. I am unable definitely to name one single person in it.<sup>4</sup> No one need wear the cap unless it fits him. There are many cliques in the Congress organization as even in the best managed organizations in the world. The fewer their number the better the organization.

Were I not challenged at the time that I was touring in the South, I would have been silent.

I must admit that I did not talk to those who were with me in that special train. I was buried in my work which was divided between meetings at frequent stoppages and writing whilst the train was in motion. And let the public know that those who are physically nearest to me have to be so forbearing that they would not come near me and interfere with my work. Such has been the usage during my stormy life. My own children thus get the least of me. Aruna Asaf Ali came

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Statement of K. Kamaraja and T. Prakasam"

<sup>2</sup> From the Congress Parliament Board

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Curious"

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* also "Interview to 'The Hindu', 16-2-1946

for two days to see me fresh from her hiding place and was so forbearing that she had of me only as much as she could during my walks.

SEVAGRAM, February 15, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

#### 524. HOW TO CANALIZE HATRED

Hatred is in the air, and impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it, if they can, through violence, to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and everywhere. But it is more wrong and unbecoming in a country where fighters for freedom have declared to the world that their policy is truth and non-violence. Hatred, they argue, cannot be turned into love. Those who believe in violence will naturally use it by saying, 'Kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires.' The result will be deeper hatred and counterhatred, and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent war, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whether they so-called victors have really won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies. It is a bad game at its best. Some philosophers of action in this country improve upon the mode and say, 'We shall never kill our enemy but we shall destroy his property', for the remarkable thing is that the so-called enemy has brought no property of his own and what little he has brought he makes us pay for. Therefore what we destroy is really our own. The bulk of it, whether in men or things, he produces here. So what he really has is the custody of it. For the destruction too we have to pay through the nose and it is the innocent who are made to pay. That is the implication of punitive tax and all it carries with it. Non-violence in the sense of mere non-killing does not appear to me, therefore, to be any improvement on the technique of violence. It means slow torture and when slowness becomes ineffective we shall immediately revert to killing and to atom bomb, which is the last word in violence today. Therefore I suggested in 1920 the use of non-violence and its inevitable twin companion truth for canalizing hatred into the proper channel. The hater hates not for the sake of hatred but because he

wants to drive away from his country the hated being or beings. He will, therefore, as readily achieve his end by non-violent means. For the past twenty-five years, willingly or unwillingly, the Congress has spoken to the masses in favour of non-violence as against violence for regaining our lost liberty. We have also discovered through our progress that in the application of non-violence we have been able to reach the mass mind far more quickly and far more extensively than ever before. And yet, if truth is told as it must be, our non-violent action has been half-hearted. Many have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast. But the unsophisticated mass mind has read the secret meaning hidden in our breasts, and the unconscious reaction has not been altogether as it might have been. Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence. and yet more non-violence. I do so not without knowledge but with sixty years experience behind me. This is the critical moment, for the dumb masses are today starving. There are many ways that will suggest themselves to the wise reader as to how to apply the canons of non-violence to the present needs of the country. The hypnotism of the Indian National Army has cast its spell upon us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with us. His patriotism is second to none. (I use the present tense intentionally). His bravery shines through all his actions. He aimed high but failed. Who has not failed? Ours is to aim high and to aim well. It is given to everyone to command success. My praise and admiration can go no further. For I knew that his action was doomed to failure, and that I would have said so even if he had brought his I. N. A. victorious to India, because the masses would not have come into their own in this manner. The lesson that Netaji and his army brings to us is one of self-sacrifice, unity irrespective of class and community, and discipline. If our adoration will be wise and discriminating, we will rigidly copy this trinity of virtues, but we will as rigidly abjure violence. I would not have the I. N. A. man think, or say, that he and his can ever deliver the masses of India from bondage by force of arm. But, if he is true to Netaji and still more so to the country, he will spend himself in teaching the masses, men, women and children to be brave, self-sacrificing and united. Then we will be able to stand erect before the world. If he will merely act the armed soldier, he will only lord it over the masses and the fact that he will be a volunteer will not count for much. I, therefore, welcome the declaration made by Capt. Shah Nawaz that, to be worthy

of Netaji, on having come to Indian soil, he will act as a humble soldier of non-violence in Congress ranks.

SEVAGRAM, February 15, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 525. PLEASE NOTE

I have taken up *Harijan* at such a critical moment in our country's history that, having undertaken to write, I cannot wait in certain matters for publishing my thoughts till the next number of *Harijan* is out. Then too it is published not at the place where I reside but away from me. Thus exacting readers will forgive me, if they find things in the columns of *Harijan* which have already printed in the daily Press. The reason for publication is obvious. *Harijan* goes to many readers who do not read the papers in which my statements may be published and in which accurate publicity can never be guaranteed. *Harijan* is not a commercial concern in any meaning of the expression. It is published purely in the interest of the cause of India's independence.

SEVAGRAM, February 15, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 526. TELEGRAM TO SAROJINI NAIDU

SEVAGRAM,

*February 15, 1946*

SAROJINI NAIDU

SUKHNIVAS

HYDERABAD, DECCAN

LOVE. MANY HAPPY RETURNS<sup>1</sup>. HOPE YOU FAMILY  
WELL.

SPINNER<sup>2</sup>

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's birthday was on February 13.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had given to Gandhiji the epithet "Spinner of Destiny".

527. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM PATEL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 15, 1946

BHAISHRI,

In reply to your letter I should say that your ideal can be reached through a knowledge of nature cure. I am of the opinion that nature cure is at present in a very imperfect state.

*Vandemataram from*  
M. K. GANDHI

PURUSHOTTAMBHAI PATEL  
69 BARODA COLLEGE HOSTEL  
BARODA

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

528. LETTER TO DAHYALAL

SEVAGRAM,  
February 15, 1946

CHI. DAHYALAL,

I have your letter. You might be knowing that I don't hold any office in the Goseva Sangh. Please write to the Goseva Sangh direct.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

529. LETTER TO HARI-ICHCHHA KAMDAR

SEVAGRAM,  
February 15, 1946

CHI. HARI-ICHCHHA,

I have your letter of the 12th; I am very glad. I am not going to stay in Bardoli for one month, I shall stay for fifteen days only. You should ask Manibehn<sup>1</sup> about your staying there.

I accept your claim to my company when I am in the Ashram.

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Narahari Parikh

But when I am away doesn't the right to stay with me generally belong to whosoever I am putting up with?

I hope you are keeping well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

HARI-ICHCHHA KAMDAR

KHADIA POLE

RAJMAHAL ROAD

VADODARA

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

### 530. LETTER TO POONAMCHAND RANKA

[February 15, 1946]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI POONAMCHAND<sup>2</sup>,

I hear that you have deliberately formed a sort of group, excluding from it those who can be regarded as fully eligible, whereas you have sent in the names of those who don't deserve to be returned to the Assembly. I am pained to hear all this. Why such fascination for the Assembly. Why the lure, and that too for a man like you? Adopt the path of humility, justice and truthfulness.

BAPU

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

### 531. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

[On or before February 16, 1946]<sup>3</sup>

I have seen both statements<sup>4</sup> and I confess that I do not like them. I have not singled out any person for reference. My observation was general and took stock of the situation as I observed it. I must repudiate the charge that in making my observation I committed a

<sup>1</sup> In the source, letter is placed between the letters of February 14 and 15.

<sup>2</sup> President of the Central Provinces Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>3</sup> The interview was reported under the date-line "Wardhaganj, February 16".

<sup>4</sup> Of K. Kamaraja Nadar, and T. Prakasam, President, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee. They were in connection with the observation made by Gandhiji in his article "Curious", *vid*"Curious"and "Curious". For the statements, *vide* "Statement of K. Lkamaraja and T. Prakasam"

serious blunder. But, if I have, my advice as an individual may be summarily rejected. My sole anxiety is that the right thing should be done irrespective of individual likes and dislikes.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindu*, 19-2-1946

### 532. QUESTION BOX<sup>2</sup>

Q. It is necessary to import as many foodstuffs as possible. As it is, people do not get enough to eat. Any further reduction in rations is fraught with risk. It will mean further undernourishment, making the people an easy prey to disease. It may even lead to food riots. As for increasing production, it is most difficult, if not utterly impossible, at the present juncture.

A. I am aware that many people hold the views given above. But the argument does not impress me. People will find it unbearable to have their rations further reduced when they are already not getting enough to eat. But, if we accept, as I do, that the Government figures are correct, foresight demands, and it is our duty, to swallow the bitter pill and ask the people to do like wise; that is, we should all eat less so that we can hold out till the next harvest. Today, because of the corrupt administration, the masses do not get even their just dues under the rationing system. It will be a great thing if this can be rectified so that everyone can get his or her share easily and truly. If, however, we believe the Government figure to be wrong and continue the agitation for increased rations, and if the Government concedes that demand, a time will come before the next harvest is in when we shall be let without any food whatsoever and the poor will have to die an untimely death. We should take every care to avoid such a calamity. It will, therefore, be wisdom on our part to put up with a reduction in the present rations.

Then I do not think it is impossible to grow more foodstuffs, though I agree that it is difficult. The difficulty is due to our lack of knowledge and the requisite skill. If we are all optimistic and courageous and employ ourselves forthwith to produce whatever food we can by our individual effort, we shall probably be able before long to give the people a balanced diet and shorten the period of reduced rations.

<sup>1</sup> Vide also "About Rajaji"

<sup>2</sup> Originally published in Gujarati, this appeared as "form *Harijanbandhu*", 17-2-1946.

My optimism is irrepressible, but I admit that nothing will be possible without whole-hearted co-operation on the part of both the Government and the public. Without it, even the imported foodstuffs may be squandered and maldistributed. Besides we are not yet independent. Relying on outside help will make us still more dependent. If, however, without relying on them, we do get imports of foodstuffs, we shall gratefully accept and make the best use of them. While it is the duty of the Government to try to get food from outside, I do not think it is good for us to look either to them or to other countries. What is more, disappointment from that direction will be positively harmful for the morale of our people in these hard times. But, if the people become united and determined to look to none save God for help and do not oppose such Governmental measures as they find useful, there will be no cause for disappointment. Such action will enable the people to emerge stronger from the ordeal, and foreign countries will think of their duty to send us food of their own accord wherever they can spare it 'God helps those who help themselves.' How can others withhold help from the self-reliant? The British Government, during their hour of need, took away all that India had, and today we have to put up with the consequences of their action. Need we then tell them and those whom they helped by depleting India's resources that their duty today is towards India?

Q. India does not produce enough cotton. This has to be imported from Africa and America. Peasants are not allowed to grow cotton, the reason given being that they should grow more food.

A. This cannot apply to those who grow cotton for their own use. It can only be applicable in the case of those who grow cotton as a money crop. The Government has committed the crime of making cotton a commercial commodity. This sin cannot be wiped out by importing cotton. That can only aggravate the wrong. The export of the cotton was made solely for the benefit of Lancashire. It thus became a commercial commodity in an artificial manner. I can understand the prohibition against growing large quantities of cotton during war in certain areas in the interests of food production. To prohibit the growing of cotton altogether and depend on imports for our needs is no remedy for food scarcity. Wherever possible people should grow cotton for their own use. I might understand, and even tolerate, the policy of importing cotton for the use of Indian cloth mills. But, if this policy prohibits the growing of cotton for the individual's own use, it becomes wholly untenable and must, there-



fore, be strongly resisted. This is a matter for the consideration of both the Government and the public.

SEVAGRAM, February 16, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 533. MEANING OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent writes :

I am reading your *Gita Bodh* these days and, trying to understand it, I am puzzled by what Lord Krishna says in the tenth discourse<sup>2</sup>.

“In dicer’s play I am the conquering double eight. Nothing, either good or evil, can take place in this world without my will.” Does God then permit evil? If so, how can He punish the evil-doer? Has God created the world for this purpose? Is it impossible then for mankind to live in peace?

To say that God permits evil in this world may not be pleasing to the ear. But if He is held responsible for the good, it follows that He has to be responsible for the evil too. Did not God permit Ravana to exhibit unparalleled strength? Perhaps the root cause of the perplexity arises from a lack of the real understanding of what God is. God is not a person. He transcends description. He is the Law-maker, the Law and the Executor. No human being can well arrogate these powers to himself. If he did, he would be looked upon as an unadulterated dictator.<sup>3</sup> This does not befit a man. They become only Him whom we worship as God. This is the reality, a clear understanding of which will answer the question raised by the correspondent.

The question whether it is impossible for mankind ever to be at peace with one another does not arise from the verse quoted. The world will live in peace only when the individuals composing it make up their minds to do so. No one can deny the possibility nor say when that will come to pass. Such questions are idle waste of time. To a good man the whole world is good. By following this golden rule the correspondent can live in peace under all circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> Originally written in Gujarati, this appeared as “from *HarijanBandhu*” published simultaneously with the source.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 36

<sup>3</sup> In place of this sentence, *Harijanbandhu* has: “If he did, we see him as Emperor Nero (devil), as the Viceroy here, the Law-maker, the Law and the Executor.”

believing that what is possible for him to be is also possible for others.  
To believe the contrary connotes pride and arrogance.

SEVAGRAM, February 16, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 534. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVAGRAM,

*February 16, 1946*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You cannot detain me there till April 3. I have already written<sup>1</sup> to you that you may keep me there for 15 days at the most. I must see through what I have started. I have even accepted engagements outside Bardoli after the 19th. You can take all the work you want from me during my fifteen days in Bardoli. I have discussed everything with Bhai Kher<sup>2</sup>. Of that more when we meet. I am quite busy at present.

I am sorry to hear about Bhulabhai's<sup>3</sup> illness. I should like to go and see him before you take me home from the railway station. My silence will not come in the way. I think Mathuradas<sup>4</sup> will be able to come and see me at Birla Bhavan.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine*, pp. 295-6

### 535. TALK WITH MEMBERS OF TALIMI SANGH<sup>5</sup>

SEVAGRAM,

*February 16, 1946*

It would not, therefore, do for you to say in the present crisis that you are occupied with your educational activity whilst the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 13-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> B. G. Kher

<sup>3</sup> Bhulabhai Desai's

<sup>4</sup> Mathuradas Trikumji also was ill at the time.

<sup>5</sup> Extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter"; Zakir Husain and some members of the Sangh came in the afternoon.

people are threatened with death due to starvation. Nayee Talim must react to the present situation by converting itself into an instrument for increasing our food supply and teaching people how to meet the danger of food shortage. If the students under Nayee Talim can produce even a part of their food requirement, they will to that extent release food for others, besides teaching them self-help by their personal example.

You do not know the kind of land we had to begin with in South Africa. Who would give good land to ‘coolies’, as we were called there? But by dint of application we were able to convert it into a fruit orchard.<sup>1</sup>

If I were in your place, I would not use the plough to begin with. I would arm our children with the hoe, and teach them to use it effectively. it is an art. Bullock power can come later. Similarly I would not like you to be deterred by the power quality of the soil. A thin top layer of loam or compost can enable us to grow many a useful vegetable and pot herb. A beginning can be made at once by converting night-soil into manure by the shallow trenching system. The conversion does not need more than a fortnight. Every pint of water whether from bathing and ablutions or from the kitchen should be turned into the backyard vegetable beds. Not a drop of water should be allowed to be wasted. Greens can be grown in earthen pots and even discarded old tins. No opportunity should be neglected, however trifling. The cumulative result, then, if the practise is on a nation-wide scale, will be colossal.

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

### ***536. PROCEEDINGS OF THE HINDUSTANI PRACHAR SABHA MEETING, WARDHA<sup>2</sup>***

[On or after *February 16, 1946*]<sup>3</sup>

A meeting of this Sabha was held on February 15 and 16. Important extracts of the proceedings are given below:

A committee comprising Shri Kaka Kaleker, Shri M. Satyanarayan, Dr. Tarachand, Shri Mangabhai Desai and Shri Shriman

<sup>1</sup> According to Pyarelal, “someone had complained that the land at the disposal of the Sevagram Tamil Sangh was of a poor quality”.

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under the title “Hindustani Prchar Sabha, Wardha”.

<sup>3</sup> Inferred from the contents.

Narayan Agrawal (Secretary) be appointed to suggest necessary amendments to the Sabha's Constitution.

The following Associate Members can be appointed Members of the Sabha under Rule 5 of the Education Circular:

Dr. Jaffar Hassan, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Shri A. M. Khwaja, Shri Jugatram Dave, Shri Shrinath Singh, Shri Haribhau Upadhyaya, Shri Pyarelal, Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Smt. Yashodhara Dasappa. Smt. Prema Kantak, Shri Devprakash Nayyar, Shri Shripad Joshi.

The first three examinations in Hindustani should not be conducted from Wardha but as far as possible the responsibility of them should be placed on the Provinces. The fourth, or the final examination, should be conducted from Wardha.

The responsibility for conducting the final examination and supervising the other three examinations will rest with a committee consisting of the following members.

Shri Kaka Kalelkar, Shri Shriman Narayan Agrawal and Shri Amritlal T. Nanavati (Secretary).

The syllabus for the fourth examination will be along these lines:

Paper 1: Hindustani Prose

Paper 2: Hindustani Poetry

Paper 3: Language and Grammar

Paper 4: Essay and Translation

Paper 5: Oral Examination

The work of selecting text-books for this examination will be taken up by Shri Kaka Kalelkar and Shri Shriman Narayan Agrawal, who will be assisted by the following members:

Dr. Tarachand, Shri Surdarshan, Shri Satyanarayan and Smt. Raihana Tyabji.

The final decision about the text-books will be taken by the Working Committee.

An institution named "Hindustani Pracharak Madrasa" should be opened in Wardha. It will work from July to April.

Selected students from the all-India body will be recruited in this school.

The following committee is being appointed for running this school:

Shri Kaka Kalelkar, Chairman  
Shri Shriman Narayan Agrawal, Secretary  
Shri Amritlal T. Nanavati, Member  
Shri Rainath Banhatti, Member  
Smt. Raihnana Tyabji, Member

The following subjects will be taught in this school:

Paper 1: History of the Hindustani Language and an advanced study of Hindustani.

Paper 2: Hindustani Language and the origin and development of the language Hindustani, its structure and grammar.

Paper 3: Knowledge of Hindi and Urdu—language and literature.

Paper 4: Methods of teaching.

Paper 5: History of Indian civilization.

Paper 6: India's communal problem.

Paper 7: Art of translation.

Paper 8: Indian languages, and an elementary knowledge of their literatures.

The work of selecting text-books for the study of these subjects will be done by Shri Kaka Kalekar and Shri Shriman Narayan Agrawal. In this work they will be assisted by the following members:

Shri Satyanarayan, Dr. Tarachand, Shri Sudarshan and Smt. Raihana Tyabji.

The final decision regarding the text-books will be taken by the Working Committee.

On finishing the course at this school, candidate passing the examination will be awarded the 'Hindustani Pracharak' diploma.

Perinbehn Captain, Secretary, Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Bombay, has proposed that the area of operation of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Bombay, should not be restricted to Bombay city only and that it should be permitted to work in the suburbs of Bombay, up to Kalyan on the G. I. P. Railway line and up to Vihar on the B. B. & C. I. Railway line.

It was agreed to accept provisionally the proposal of Perinbehn Captain.

[From Hindu]

*Harijan Sevak*, 3-3-1946

### 537. *IGNORANT WASTE*<sup>1</sup>

Shri Jhaverbhai Patel of A. I. V. I. A.<sup>2</sup> , who knows his subject, writes:<sup>3</sup>

Since the cutting off the supply of rice from Burma, there has been an acute shortage of rice in India. To meet this quantitative deficiency, Government prohibited the polishing of rice beyond a certain degree. If polishing has been banned altogether, the deficiency. . . would have been more than met. . . Government could not introduce that measure. . . but. . . even the halting step taken by the Government has been put to naught without the intelligent co-operation of the people. Since the Government has begun supplying undermilled rice, consumers have begun getting the rationed rice polished. . . . The most effective way to get whole rice find its permanent way into our dietary is to teach our womenfolk the science of dietetics.

It is very true that this peremptory reform can be brought about quickly by educating our women in the art of conservative cookery. How this education can be imparted is a serious question. Schools and colleges are perhaps the most ready-made media, let alone the Press and platform. If the people are to save themselves and the starving millions during this critical period, the Press and the platform have to respond to the urgent need.

SEVAGRAM, February 17, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 538. *LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

SEVAGRAM,

*February 17, 1946*

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. I should certainly like it, if Anna lives in the Ashram but the question is whether he will be able to adjust himself to the Ashram atmosphere. Hence write to him all that you should about this point. Pass on this letter to him. He had a talk with me and his response had the same tone. That is why he had said that had he

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> All-India Village Industries' Association

<sup>3</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

would be able to pull on for two or three months. It was proposed that he would work with Jagannath Dass and at the same time help in the working of *Bharati*. I cannot make out what has happened about all that. His letter is not clear whether he will come alone or with his family. A lot of work can be found in the Ashram itself, and later he can be accommodated under you as it suits all. This is all I can think of at the moment. It will be all right even if you pass on this letter itself adding to it whatever you think fit.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I do have Ranade's book but have not read it. Maybe, I shall bring it myself or send it on.

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

### 539. *SPEECH TO TEACHERS, SEVAGRAM*<sup>1</sup>

*February 17, 1946*

We should try to draw all the children towards us. We should admit that it is our fault if some do not come to us. They should all want to come to us.

We should treat those children who come to us as our own children. If their body and mind become sound and they acquire normal discipline, we should be satisfied that our purpose has been served.

I have taught many boys. I never allowed them to indulge in mischief. If they were under my care, I would educate them in such a way that they would learn from their very childhood that the desire to destroy was a very bad thing. Whatever they do, they should create something, produce something. There is an art in making anything and whatever they make should be artistic.

I do not believe that children are either good or bad from their very birth. Some tendency is there, but we have to mould them. This means that an infant starts learning right from the time of conception. At that time I would teach the mother. That would be a part of adult education. The training of the infant begins from that stage. We have

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "Pre-Basic Education", as summarized by Sushila Nayyar.

to train the future generation on these lines. Till the child is separated from the mother, I would teach the mother. The infant is ever moving its hands and feet and is able to do something. If we are able to take under our care children of two or two and a half years of age and if they learn to move their hands and feet according to our method, I cannot set any limits to their progress.

If the child is put under our care, he will not destroy anything. He will feel hurt in doing so.

Whatever education we give to the children, it should be constructive and creative but never destructive.

When the child starts speaking, he starts learning a language. First you should teach him to distinguish different colours. Begin teaching him the letters of the alphabet only with the help of the pictures. Don't you have charts showing 1-2, A-B and so on? Reading, writing and arithmetic will come in due course of time and the child will not be overstrained. His education should be a form of play.

Whatever thing he makes should be useful. In this way his mind and hands and feet develop in co-ordination.

There are no distinctions between work and play in basic education. For a child everything is play. I would go so far as to say that thus his whole life becomes a kind of game. I have been doing this for many years now. I never feel that it is time for play and I should go and play. For me even writing is a game. Under basic education of my conception children will learn while playing.

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak*, 17-3-1946

#### 540. NEW POLICY AND BOMBAY KHADI BHANDAR

The following figures<sup>1</sup> have been received from the All-India Spinners' Association Bhandar. They deserve to be studied. The progress of khadi under the new policy will in some matters, have to be measured in the inverse ratio. No doubt the more spinning-wheels the city-dwellers buy, the better; it means that more of them learn spinning. But the sooner slivers stop selling the better. The only condition is that the number of persons desirous of learning carding

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here



and spinning should increase. If the people are really enthusiastic, Vinobaji's experiments should bear some fruit. Whatever it may be, this much is clear that one who spins should himself card his cotton and make slivers out of it. For this the process of carding should be made easy. The answer to this is hand-carding.

Khadi may be kept in a bhandar, but the bhandar should present the appearance of a school. The persons working in a bhandar, if I may call them employees, should necessarily be volunteers. They do not cease to be volunteer, if they accept less than their market value and do the work because of love of khadi. All of them should be proficient in ginning, carding, spinning and in teaching all the these. The greater the number of those who can weave, the better. We have done very few experiments regarding weaving. The real bhandar of my conception is an extensive plot near a suburb of Bombay where all those processes go on and are taught.

Difficulties should not overwhelm us; we should overcome them, that is, get rid of them. If it is true that swaraj lies in khadi, there are bound to be difficulties. Here, in the path of non-violence, they will be the least.

IN THE TRAIN TO BOMBAY, February 18, 1946

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 17-3-1946

#### 541. LETTER TO RAMESHWAR

ON THE TRAIN,  
*February 18, 1946*

CHI. RAMESHWAR,

I have no faith in this plan. Nothing can be achieved by having the building alone. I have told them that so many trustees are not required. Even if one intelligent, honest and hard-working man is available, the work can go on. I tried to get one sister but was unsuccessful. What is the use of getting a sister from a far off place? What would be gained by asking her to meet me in Bardoli? I shall be immersed in work.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10417

## 542. OH! FOR OUR ENGLISH!

How nice it would be, if we had newspapers only in our own languages. We should not then be blind persons, one mistaking the tail for the elephant, another the tusks, a third the trunk, for the noble animal—all wise in their own conceit, yet all wrong in essence. Thus I in my conceit said<sup>1</sup>, and still say, that the opposition to Rajaji was, and is, confined to a clique. An esteemed friend and others maintain that I have made a serious blunder<sup>2</sup> in calling the opposition by this name. My appellation can-not be, and was not meant to be applied to the Congress organization, whether provincial, central or any other, which, like the king, can do no wrong. A clique generally does the wrong thing. But surely both my critics and I are right, each other in our own way, and both are wrong. All this bother over the use of a foreign word! If I had written in the national [language] or my mother tongue, we would not have quarrelled over a word. Only let me close the Rajaji episode by saying that if I am wrong in the use of the word or in my estimate of Rajaji, no one need follow me. I have no official authority. The loss will be purely mine in that, for a wrong estimate, I shall have lost much or some of the moral weight I possess.

My purpose, however, just now is to quarrel with the reporter who, in trying to translate my Hindustani speech<sup>3</sup> at the Goseva Sangh meeting into English, has made me say the opposite of what I had said and meant. A handsome and delicate compliment has been turned into an indelicate reflection. There was no 'if' about my saying that Janakibai, the widow or the late Jammalalji, was the rightful first successor of her late husband, even as the late Ramabai was of her later husband Justice Ranade. Next to her were his children. They might fail, but those of us who had gathered together to honour the memory of the deceased were also heirs, only if we were true. We were heirs by choice unlike the heirs through relationship. I am sure that the delicate compliment I paid in my indifferent Hindustani was not lost upon the widow, the children who are all working for the cause, or the numbers of friends who filled the pandal which was specially constructed for the purpose. All were heirs in a common and noble

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Curious" and "About Rajaji"

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Poonamchand Ranka", 15-2-1946

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Second Goseva Sangh Conference, Wardha", 12-2-1946

service which constituted a limitless inheritance. I prided myself on the message which was altogether lost in transmission through a foreign medium. Could it have been reported and transmitted in Hindustani, it would have gone home to the readers.

I have not been able to read the whole report. Let me, therefore, complete it by briefly stating the other two thoughts I placed before the meeting. Cattle preservation was one of the major problems of India. It was not to be solved by speeches or money. It could only be solved by the Goseva Sangh possessing many cattle experts who understood and gave themselves to the problem, and by the mercantile community doing its work in the spirit of service rather than in the spirit of self-aggrandizement and exploitation. If they applied their undoubted talent to cattle-preservation, they could render great service to India. They need not be overwhelmed by the vastness of the problem. Each one was to think what he could do and do it thoroughly, irrespective of his neighbor or others. Therefore the central body was to concentrate on producing milk and bringing milk cheaply to every inhabitant of Wardha. In the end they would discover that they had solved the cattle problem for India.

Lastly I asked them to bear in mind Aruna Asaf Ali's wellmeant taunt that in thinking of their benefactor, the four-footed animal, they might not forget their elder freind, the biped of India, who made up the forty crore and without whom cattle could not exist for one day. Therefore every honest man owed it to himself, and the country, only to eat what he must for living healthily and not a morsel for indulgence. Every man, woman and child of understanding should try to grow for the use of India two blades of grass where today only one was growing. If they worked intelligently, honestly and co-operatively in hope, they would find that they could tide over the impending calamity without fuss, without anxiety and with dignified bearing.

BOMBAY, February 18, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

### 543. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, BOMBAY<sup>1</sup>

February 18, 1946

There is a time for laughing and shouting and a time for observing silence and being serious. I have often said that a people who want to be free should learn to mount to the gallows with a smile upon the face. But laughter becomes an offence against decorum, if it is out of season. Similarly shouting out of season is an exhibition of bad manners. It becomes a man to remember his Maker all the twenty-four hours. If that cannot be done, we should at least congregate at prayer time to renew our covenant with God. Whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians or Sikhs, we all worship the same God. Congregational prayer is a means for establishing the essential human unity through common worship. Mass singing of *Ramdhun* and the beating of *tala* are its outward expression. If they are not mechanical performance but are an echo of the inner unison, as they should be, they generate a power and an atmosphere of sweetness and fragrance which has only to be seen to be realized.

In the police and the army, physical drill and training in the use of arms regarded as an essential part of discipline. Military training includes marching in step and executing of movements to order in the mass noiselessly and harmoniously too. The mass singing of *Ramdhun* and the accompaniment of *tala* are as much a part of discipline in non-violence as physical drill and training in the use of arms are that of military discipline.

Gandhiji, however warned them that his advice must appeal to their hearts, not merely to their heads, if it was to bear fruit. Dry intellect would not take them far.

Turning next to the food crisis, he said, it presented a grim prospect. They could criticize the Government as much as they liked for its share in it. He himself had not been sparing in his criticism of the Government in the past and he would do so again when the occasion demanded it even though he stood alone. He stood by what he had said in 1942. If the British had stayed in India as the servants of the people, not their masters, and purely to defeat the Axis powers, he would have had nothing to say. Instead they had in their arrogance cast to the winds the warnings and

<sup>1</sup> The speech is extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji, taking advantage of a day's halt in Bombay on his way to Poona, addressed in Hindustani a prayer gathering at Rungta House in the evening.

protests of the people's representatives and denuded India of her vital resource, though perhaps not deliberately, with the result that they all knew. Nevertheless he could understand the food shortage. But cloth shortage he could not understand at all. India could grow any amount of cotton. He said:

In this land of ours, fabulously rich in natural resources, there is the lofty Himalayas with its everlasting snows where, they say, dwells the Lord of the Universe. It has mighty rivers like the Ganges, but owing to our neglect and folly, the year's rains are allowed to run down into the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. If all this water was trapped and harnessed to irrigational purposes by the construction of dams and tanks, there should be no famine or food shortage in India. Similarly cloth shortage can immediately be remedied by planting a miniature mill in every home in the form of a spinning-wheel or a *takli*. That would give us all the cloth that we need almost for nothing. I have cried myself hoarse in pressing this solution on the Government. It is immediately feasible, and it is my claim that not a single person need go naked, if necessary steps are taken to put it into operation. The only obstacles in the way are the inertia and prejudice in high places.

In regard to the food shortage, I admit that Government alone has adequate resources to cope with it. But even so we need not apathetically resign ourselves to fate, fixing our gaze at the skies for the rains to come. There is an inexhaustible reservoir of water in the bowels of the earth. It should be tapped, even though we may have to dig two thousand feet deep for it, and used for growing food. We may not blame fate before we have exhausted all available means for combating a threatening calamity.

Today there is a lot of wastage in food going on in big cities like Bombay in the form of feasts and ceremonies. It is the sacred duty of every man, woman and child to conserve every grain of food and every drop of oil and ghee in this crisis. One should eat no more than necessary to keep the body in health and fitness when millions are faced with the prospect of death through starvation. The foodstuffs thus saved can be distributed among the needy poor—not as alms but as remuneration for honest labour.

The *Harijan* which resumed publication recently, had a part to play in the present crisis. He advised them to read it as it would be for their good.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These two sentences are from *The Hindu*, 20-2-1946.

Proceeding, Gandhiji diagnosed the present helplessness of the country to the double slavery—slavery under the foreign yoke and slavery to our own inertia and sloth. As an instance of the latter he mentioned the fitful and inadequate response to the officer under the new khadi plan of the Bombay Kalbadevi Khadi Bhandar to provide instruments of, and instruction in, spinning and carding and the allied processes to all those who care. If we were not under the hypnotic spell of inertia and laziness, the people of Bombay should flock to the Khadi Bhandar in an unending stream day and night and make in no time the shortage of cloth a thing of the past.

The political slavery, they all hoped and he shared that hope, would soon end. But the removal of the foreign yoke won't necessarily bring freedom to the people in the real sense of the term. The Congress President had only the other day denounced<sup>1</sup> the recent happenings in Calcutta as being unworthy of a people who aspired to be free. He hoped that they would never disgrace themselves again like that. They were greatly deceiving themselves, if they thought that by indulging in hooliganism they would be able to make the British quit India. They would belie their creed and demean themselves in the eyes of the world if, after pledging themselves to truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of swaraj, they exhibited their impotent wrath by indulging in looting, stone-throwing, arson and abuse. He repeated what he had previously said that if 40 crores of Indians resolved unanimously and whole-heartedly that they would have swaraj through and non-violence alone, it would be theirs for the asking. But, if they lacked that faith, it was open to them to repudiate non-violence openly and after due deliberation. People like him might question their wisdom but nobody would charge them with falsehood and cowardice. He was afraid, they could not escape that charges today. He reminded them of Capt. Shah Nawaz's declaration<sup>2</sup> that Netaji Bose had told them that on their return to India they would be expected to serve their country not by means of the sword but through non-violence.

Granted that India produced sufficient arms and ammunition and men who knew the art of war, what part or lot will those who cannot bear arms have in the attainment of swaraj? I want swaraj in the winning of which even women and children would contrubute an eqal share with physically the strongest. That can be under ahimsa only. I would, therefore, stand for ahimsa as the only means for obtaining India's freedom even if I were alone.

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

<sup>1</sup> On February 12, in his statement to the Associated Press of India

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Advice to Indian National Army Men", 22-1-1946

#### 544. PURSES FOR PUBLIC MEN<sup>1</sup>

An interesting case of the use of purses presented to a public person has recently come under my observation. I received many purses from the public. Thus, during my recent tour, donations covering over two lakhs were given to me between Calcutta and Madura. Some of them were anonymous, some earmarked, and some donors said, when asked, that I was to use the money in any manner I liked. I have kept no property which I can call my own. Am I entitled to use those donations or a part of them for personal needs? During the whole of my career I have never made any such use and have always advised friends to do likewise. I hold that there is no other course open to persons who enjoy public confidence and to whom the public give donations, fully believing that the money will be used more judiciously and carefully than by themselves for some public purpose. It would be a terrible thing, if the trust reposed in one were abused for personal purposes. Ruinous consequences of such use can be better imagined than described. Public service must be, like Ceasar's wife, above suspicion.

BOMBAY, February 19, 1946

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946

#### 545. A LETTER

BOMBAY,

*February 19, 1946*

Your letter had been forwarded to me by Bhai Sadiq Ali. I am sorry I could not send a reply sooner. I do not consider what you write a justification for Pakistan. The two-nation theory does not impress me. Economic inequality must go. It is not a Hindu-Muslim question; it is a question of hunger, affecting millions. It is the same both for the Hindus and the Muslims. It is the question of the workers and employers. I am convinced that when this question is solved, the problem of high and low will also be solved. Both parties will have to co-operate in solving this problem. Let us see what God wills.

M. K. GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

*546. TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY, C. P. PROVINCIAL  
CONGRESS COMMITTEE*

POONA,  
*February 20, 1946*

SECRETARY

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

NAGPUR

GENERAL      AWARI'S      FAST<sup>1</sup>      ENTIRELY      MISPLACED.      HE  
SHOULD      DESIST.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*547. TELEGRAM TO AGA KHAN*

*Express*

POONA,  
*February 20, 1946*

THE AGA KHAN

MALABAR HILL

THANKS      WIRE.      DATE      DEATH<sup>2</sup>      TWENTY-SECOND.  
WOULD      LIKE      TO      VISIT      CREMATION      GROUND      THEN.  
IF      YOU      ARE      THERE      THEN      I      WOULD      GLADLY      COMBINE  
PILGRIM-AGE      WITH      OUR      MEETING.      WOULD      NOT      CARE  
SPARE      FURTHER      TIME      OUT      OF      LIMITED      TIME      MY  
DISPOSAL.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Manchershaw Rustomji Awari, popularly known as 'Gen.' Awari' after his 'movement of civil disobedience with regard to the Arms Act and the Explosive Substance Act designed for the release of Bengal detenus" in 1927, vide Vol. XXXIII, pp. 337-8, was Treasurer of Central Provinces Congress Committee, and also an office-bearer of Nagpur Parliamentary Board. He went on hunger-strike from February 18 in protest against what he called acts of injustice by the Central Parliament Board of the Congress of which Vallabhbhai Patel was Chairman, in rejecting the nominations, including his, proposed by the Nagpur Pradesh Congress Committee for a seat in Nagpur General Urban constituency. Vide also "Letter to Damodar Das Mundada", 24-2-1946 and "Letter to Manchershaw R. Awari", 24-2-1946 also "Letter to Puratan Buch", 28-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> Of Kasturba Gandhi



548. *TELEGRAM TO PIROJA WADIA*

POONA,  
*February 20, 1946*

PIROJA WARDIA  
PANORAMA  
WALKESHWAR ROAD, BOMBAY  
COME ANY DAY.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

549. *LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL*

NATURE CURE CLINIC,  
6 TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,  
*February 20, 1946*

DEAR FRIEND,

I refer to the letter<sup>1</sup> I wrote on November 25, 1945, when Sir Evan Jenkins was P. S. V. He asked me to send Shri Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi to New Delhi which I did. Since then my son has been in correspondence with me as he was seen by Sir John Thorne<sup>2</sup> in this connection. But I have had no official intimation of the result of the examination or what is produced to be done.<sup>3</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Governement, 1944-47, p. 64*

<sup>1</sup> It was about torte and bad treatment in prison of Prabhu Dayal Vidyarthi and Rammandhar Lohiaa; vide "Letter to Sir Evan M. Jenkins", 25-11-1945

<sup>2</sup> Home Member

<sup>3</sup> The addressee's reply dated March 12, read: "I am sorry for the delay over answering your letter of 20th February about Mr. Vidyarthi's case. The Home Member had discussed the whole matter with your son Mr. Devdas Gandhi; he had also promised to let him know the result of certain investigations which are still proceeding at Nagpur."

550. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI

POONA,  
February 20, 1946

CHI. PUSHPA,

It is all right, if you refrain from writing in order to save my time. Otherwise you must write.

I hope you are in high spirits.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9270

551. NOTE TO DR. DINSHAW K. MEHTA

February 20, 1946

Here is my idea :

At present do not admit any patient unless I send him or for whom I cannot arrange the expenses from the fund that is earmarked for the poor. This way the poor, but not the destitute, will be accommodated.

2. Examine any poor patient, whether male or female. Give him a bath, if necessary; also the syringe, if necessary. Prescribe the diet in writing. He should himself procure it. If he asks for it, we may give it but he should pay for it. They need not be made to lie down in a large tub; should be seated to have a hip-bath and bathed with a shower. There should be provision to clean all parts of the body. [The patient] should be given nude sun-bath. He may put on a *langoti*<sup>1</sup>. There should be separate arrangement for women but no separate arrangement for individual patients.

3. Let him take as much clean drinking-water as he can. Those who cannot afford oranges, etc., should be given honey, lime and water.

4. Only those for whom such treatment is enough should be attended to. This includes indigestion, fever, smallpox, constipa-

<sup>1</sup> Cod-piece or long strip of cloth to cover frontal nudity

tion, headache, eczema, eruption, measles, chicken-pox, itch, dysentery and such other ailments common among the villagers.

For carrying on this work we should take on workers, in proportion to the number of patients, and train them. We should take only those who are prepared to work at least for two years. Generally such workers should stay at their own place. Some of them should give a few hours' free service while some should be paid a regular salary. But all these things will settle down gradually. As our needs grow, a way will suggest itself and we shall know how to implement it.

5. We shall never use foreign medicines nor any organic drugs. Medicines made from plant stalks and as simple as can be procured in the village may be used to some extent. Castor oil may be used, if found necessary.

6. We would need a large number of volunteers for this work. None of them, however, should be highly paid.

7. If this work is broad-based, it can certainly develop into a seat of learning, say, a university.

8. It is my firm belief that if the project works, we shall certainly get as much land and funds as we need.

9. If you cannot appreciate this project but if you can have faith in it, you may go ahead with your work at Bombay until this is put on the rails. Examine other places. I am not inclined to invest in land or a building right now. I wish to carry on with the existing means. If you have the faith, you will of course, peep in now and then.

10. You must keep your promise to those patients who pay. It is for you to see how it can be done. Whatever amount you get should belong to you. These people may not stay on this site but I think they can stay anywhere in Poona.

If anything is left unanswered, please ask me. I shall reply in writing.

Show this to Jehangirji. After that all three of us can discuss.

You are not to accept defeat and certainly there is no question of despairing. It is the duty of all three of us to fulfil what we have undertaken.

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

552. *LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI*

POONA,  
*February 20, 1946*

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

I have your interesting letter. May the dance-and-music function that you have organized bring good results. We must not understand by music mere singing or playing on an instrument, or by dance mere rhythmic movements. I would say that one understands music only if one's whole life became full of music. Therefore a student of music ought to know how to make himself comfortable, how to communicate with others, etc., whether alone or in society. There should be sweetness in [whatever he does], in his movements, in his eating, drinking. A person who is full of music will be courteous and thoughtful in all his acts.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

553. *LETTER TO PYARELAL*

*February 20, 1946*

CHI. PYARELAL,

Though I took work from Manibhai there, I had brought him so that he would work here. I thought you knew that much. But I shall send Munnalal as substitute. He is also capable of working. Someone else had asked for him but I let the matter pass. There is no need at all to panic.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

554. *LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI*<sup>1</sup>

POONA,  
February 20, 1946

GURUBANDHU,

I have your letter<sup>2</sup>. Venkatrama Sastriji's handwriting is as neat as yours. I have torn up your letter. Do not worry. My support cannot be had for dividing Hindustan into two parts. I do not think Rajaji's opinion is different. If it is, it will not be acceptable to me. The Aga Khan has not offered the Palace to me, nor have I asked for it, nor do I wish to.

May you get well and have a long life.<sup>3</sup> What did you do about Valmiki<sup>4</sup> ?

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8819

<sup>1</sup> Forwarding this letter to the addressee on February 21, Amrit Kaur said: "Bapu wrote the enclosed for you and asked me to copy it out in clear Hindi which I did. I feel you would treasure the original rough draft, and am, therefore, giving it to Jagadisanji to make over to you . . ."

<sup>2</sup> In *Letters of Srinivasa Sastri*, p. 366, Jagadisan explains: "At Sastriar's bidding this letter, written from his death-bed, was delivered by me personally to Gandhiji. . ." Dated February 18, the letter read: "The Aga Khan's offer of the palace to you is genuine and need not be doubted. He is the most acute and wily diplomat in modern India. He began the separatist game and would end it by taking it out of Jinnah's hands and making it

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 30-1-1946

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Talk with V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 30-1-1946

555. *LETTER TO MAHARAJA OF REWA*

DINSHAW MEHTA CLINIC, POONA,

*February 20, 1946*

MAHARAJA SAHEB<sup>1</sup>,

Yesterday you presented me a cheque for Rs. 1,001. I considered whether or not I should accept it. My heart says that I should not; I am, therefore, returning it. Please excuse me.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

MAHARAJA

REWA

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

556. *QUESTION BOX*<sup>2</sup>

Q. You say that one of the contracting parties in a marriage should be a Harijan. I hope you do not call other marriages taboo.

A. This is a good question. I do not believe that all other marriages are taboo. I have pointed to the ideal, the practical attainment of which it is our duty to strive for as speedily as possible.

POONA, February 21, 1946

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

<sup>1</sup> Martand Singh, the Yuvaraj who presumably ascended the throne on the dramatic deposition of the Ruler, Gulab Singh Ju Deo, while out on camp near the border, by the Resident Lt. Col. Campbell. The dismissal was condemned by Jawaharlal Nehru, for it implied British displeasure at the ex-maharaja's desire to give self-government to his subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Originally written in Hindi, this appeared as "from *Harijan Sevak*", 24-2-1946.

557. MESSAGE TO BRITISH PEOPLE<sup>1</sup>

POONA,  
February 21, 1946

My life itself is a message for the English people.

*The Hindi*, 24-2-1946

558. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

NATURE CURE CLINIC,  
6, TODIWALA ROAD, POONA,  
February 21, 1946

DEAR MR. ABELL,

Here are a few more suggestions to meet the food situation which have been sent to me by friends.

The Indian Army should be given this unique opportunity of doing constructive work. They can be moved about easily. They could, therefore, be sent to all such places where wells need to be dug most urgently.

Regarding additional foods, fish has been mentioned. Fish abounds in the seas around the coasts of India. The war is over; there are innumerable small and medium-sized vessels which were used for doing patrol and guard duties along our shores for the last five years. The Royal Indian Navy could arrange about staffing these with the Department of Fisheries giving all assistance. If everything and anything can be done during a war, why not a peace-time war effort? Dry fish does even now form part of the normal diet of a great number of people who are very poor—that is when it is available and they can afford to buy it.

All public gardens should immediately by law made to start growing vegetables. Squads of army personnel should be put to work here too People requiring extra labour to transform their ground or garden should also be able to obtain free help through this channel.

<sup>1</sup> The report said that the message was given to an officer of the British Army in India whose service had been terminated. He told Gandhiji that he would go back to England and propagate India's cause for freedom as he knew how Indians were "exploited under the British rule".

The distribution of food should be through co-operative societies or similar organizations.

All food parcels to friends or relatives in Britain or elsewhere abroad should be stopped as also the export of groundnuts, oils, oil-cakes, etc.

All stocks of foodstuffs in the hands of the military should be released forthwith and no distinction should be made between military and civil ranks. In this connection I draw His Excellency's attention to the following A. P. I. message published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of February 11, 1946.

It is learnt that huge quantities of composed *atta* are being destroyed for the last few days by throwing them into the river Shitalaksha at Narayanganj.

The campaign against despondency and for growing more food will avail nothing, unless bribery which is going on as never before is stopped and honesty and straight dealing begin to pervade the Government ranks and the public.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 141-2; also Harijan, 17-3-1946*

### 559. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

*February 21, 1946*

MY DEAR PRAKASAM,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Bezwada dated 15th inst. Ordinarily I would have ignored such a letter but there is a specific allegation in this letter which I believe requires immediate contradiction. It is about your having collected Rs. 50,000/-.<sup>2</sup> I do not know whether there is any truth in this matter but if you have collected such an amount, it must have been credited to the Congress account in your province. This kind of scandal should not be allowed to be spread and therefore I would suggest that you may take such steps either by public contradiction or by such other

<sup>1</sup> For the addressee's reply, *vide* "Letter from G. E. B. Abell", 26-2-1946. The two letters appeared in *Harijan*, 17-3-1946, as "released to the Press by Gandhiji with the consent of His Excellency the Viceroy". *Vide also* "Famine of Grain and Cloth" and "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 22-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> *Vide also* "Speech at Prayer Meeting, Bombay", 11-3-1946



method as you may deem appropriate to prevent the spread of such scandals.

*Yours sincerely,*

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

*560. LETTER TO ANNIE MASCARENE*

POONA

*February 21, 1946*

CHI. ANNIE<sup>1</sup>,

A report of the speech you made at Bombay has appeared in the newspapers. If it is correct, what you said is not right. Even otherwise, I know that you have no control over your tongue and when you stand up to speak, you blab anything that comes to your mind. This speech also is quite a specimen, if the newspaper report is correct. I have sent the report to Bhai Thanu Pillai. You can read it. Such indiscreet talk can do good neither to you nor to the poor people of Travancore. Besides, by your act you put the whole fair sex to shame. Why all this?

Send me a prompt reply. If you address your letter to Sevagram, it will reach me wherever I may be.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*561. LETTER TO PATTOM THANU PILLAI*

POONA,

*February 21, 1946*

BHAI THANU PILLAI,

I hope you are well. I send you a report of Annie Mascarene's speech that has appeared in the newspapers. I am also enclosing a copy of the rejoinder that the Sachivottama<sup>3</sup> has sent me. If the speech

<sup>1</sup>Advocate and political worker; Minister for Health and Electricity, Travancore-Cochin State; Member, Constituent Assembly of India

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also the following two items.

<sup>3</sup> The Maharaja of Travancore had conferred this title, meaning Prime Minister, on C P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan.

was as reported, I feel that Annie Mascarene does not deserve to be a co-minister. The Sachivottama writes that it is our duty to admit as much as is true, but to expose what is vile also becomes our duty. With this thing in view, please send me a full reply. If you do not understand the Hindustani, take the help of Bhai Satyanarayana or any other Hindi Pracharak and reply in the *rashtrabhasha* only. If this is not possible, then write in English.

Read my letter<sup>1</sup> to Annie and forward it to her wherever she is.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PATTOM THANU PILLAI]

TRIVANDRUM

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

## 562. LETTER TO C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR

POONA

*February 21, 1946*

BHAI RAMASWAMI,

I have your letter regarding Mrs. Annie Mascarene's speech. It is good you drew my attention to it. I had not read it before your letter came. I hardly look at any papers, and leave out many things. Though I am not making your letter public, I have written<sup>2</sup> to Annie and also to Bhai Pattom Thanu Pillai. Let me see what the outcome is.

My advice is that in case you do not already have one, you should engage an additional secretary knowing Hindi and Urdu and should correspond, as far as possible, with other Indians in the *rashtrabhasha* and with the Travancore people in their mother tongue. I know a simple thing like this is not beyond you.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI

TRAVANCORE

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceeding item.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Annie Mascarene", 21-2-1946

### 563. LETTER TO CHANDRANI

POONA,  
February 21, 1946

CHI. CHAND,

I have your letter. That you keep longing to meet me is as good as meeting me. Get well and be ready [for service]. That is much more important than meeting me. I also like it that you consider Satyavati your ideal. God will take care of the rest.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: Chandrani Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

### 564. COERCIVE FAST

Telegrams and letters condemning my remarks<sup>1</sup> about Rajaji have been received. Some of them say that all the praise bestowed on Rajaji is well-deserved. They admit his integrity, self-sacrifice, great ability and administrative capacity. But they hold his so-called apostasy in 1942 to be unforgivable and add that his scheming to be Premier of Madras is insufferable. For me there is no offence or apostasy in resigning from the Congress and maintaining one's views. If he is scheming to get the Premiership, it is undoubtedly worthy of condemnation and would be a sad discovery for me.

But my purpose in reverting to the subject is not for the sake of defending him. My opinion carries no authority save moral which can be rejected at will. What I want to reprehend the threat of fasting, or the fast itself, if I do not withdraw the epithet 'clique' in respect of those who are opposing him. I have given my meaning of the word. And I adhered to its use according to that meaning. Nobody should be coerced into changing his belief. There would be an end to all decency and reason, if such fasting became effective. As the author of fasting as a weapon in satyagraha, I must state that I cannot give up an opinion honestly held even if the whole world fasts against me. I

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Curious", "About Rajaji", "Interview to "The Hindu", 16-2-1946 and the following item.

might as well give up my belief in God because a body of atheists fasted against such belief. The rule of conduct stated by me is of universal applicability. Incidentally I may mention that the fasts reported of prisoners in some U. P. jails and now of persons<sup>1</sup> aggrieved by the decision of the Parliamentary Board elsewhere fall under the same category though for different and sound reasons.

POONA, February 22, 1946

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

### 565. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,

*February 22, 1946*

Among messages and letters condemning my remarks about Rajaji are some from persons threatening to fast, if I do not withdraw the word 'clique'. As the author of fasting as a weapon in the armoury of satyagraha, I must reprehend such use of fasts. No one should give up opinion honestly held even if the whole world were against him. I, therefore, advise against such fasts.<sup>2</sup>

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

### 566. MINUTES OF MEETING OF ALL-INDIA NATURE CURE FOUNDATION TRUSTEES

The first meeting of the trustees of All-India Nature Cure Foundation was held on February 21, 1946, at 10.30 p. m. at . . .<sup>3</sup> where Gandhiji stayed. Gandhiji presided over the meeting. Both the other trustees, Shri Jehangir Patel and Shri Dinshaw Mehta, were present.

I. Regarding the accounts, the following subjects were discussed at length :

1. The weekly expenditure during seven weeks.
2. The details of income.
3. Daily expenses incurred over the indoor and outdoor

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Manchershaw Awari's fast against the decision of Congress Parliamentary Board; *vide* footnote 1, "Telegram to Secretary, C. P. Provincial Congress Committee", 20-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> Omission as in the source

patients.

4. Expenses incurred on the boarding and lodging of the resident workers and servants.

5. Expenses incurred on construction works and repairs, and also on gardening and the income from garden produce.

6. Account of the bills pertaining to expenses of December 1945 or an earlier period paid in January, so that necessary adjustment can be made with the personal account of Dr. Dinshawji.

7. The statement showing the outstanding amounts, if any, to be recovered from the patients or from any other source.

II. How this institution functioned till today, i.e., January 1, 1946, to February 21, 1946, was discussed in detail. Gandhiji desired that the institution should function according to his views.

III. Elaborate discussion took place amongst the trustees as to how this institution should function in future. Gandhiji expressed his views not only regarding the management but also how treatment should be given so that poor people could derive benefit. Dr. Mehta stated that this method of treatment was only experimental and had very limited scope. But even in its limited form, if it was made available to the people of India and if a Nature Cure University came into being, he was prepared to run the treatment according to Gandhiji's views. And during that period either its success would have been proved or Gandhiji would give up the idea. According to Gandhiji, the creation of a Nature Cure University was the last mission of his life.

The meeting then adjourned to February 22, to meet at 2.15 p. m.

M. K. GANDHI

February 22, 1946

From a facsimile of the Gujarati in *Mahatma*, Vol. 7, between pp. 96 and 97

567. TELEGRAM TO H. L. SHARMA

POONA,  
February 22, 1946

DR. H. L. SHARMA<sup>1</sup>  
KHURJA

COME HERE TWENTY-SIXTH.

*Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, p. 348

568. LETTER TO G. E. B. ABELL

POONA,  
February 22, 1946

MY DEAR MR. ABELL,

In continuation of his letter<sup>2</sup> to you of yesterday's date, Gandhiji wishes me to bring to your notice the following information which has been given to him :

(a) The Managing Director of the New Dholera Steamships Ltd., Bombay, says that one of their boats went out last week with 2951 sacks of pulses called *moong*.

(b) The steamers *Begam* and *Jalajyoti* last month carried to Colombo 35,000 bags of pulses; *moong*, *tur* and *lang* dals on the *Begam* were 1,612, 3,011 and 26,053 bags respectively. The writer says, this is done monthly.

(c) The attached cutting<sup>3</sup> refers to the very large quantities of rice exported as late as September last.

<sup>1</sup> Mangaging Trustee of Surya Chikitsalaya and Dadeech Seva Sangh, Nawabad, Khurja

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to G. E. B. Abell", 21-2-1946

<sup>3</sup> Pyarelal explains: "The report was to the effect that during the month of July, August, September 1945, 22,504 tons of rice valued at over Rs. 94 lakhs was exported from Calcutta port by one single firm."

Thanks for yours<sup>1</sup> of the 15th instant. Gandhiji quite understood about the Government communique to the Press.<sup>2</sup>

With kindest regards,

*Yours sincerely,*

AMRIT KAUR

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 145*

### 569. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*February 22, 1946*

I got your letter. There was nothing improper in what you said. From a philosophical point of view nobody has any right. But we were not discussing philosophy. I see nothing improper in somebody saying to his elder, 'I have a right over you'. I can understand your having such thoughts at present because of your illness. Banish them. I hope your fever has quite gone.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi, p. 209*

<sup>1</sup> Which, *inter alia*, read: "What had been out to the Press was an official communique from New Delhi. . . My telephone message to say nothing except that I had gone to Wardha to apprise Mr. Gandhi of the situation . . . had not been appreciated. . . . We managed to get something into the morning's papers simultaneously with the communique to show that Mr. Gandhi's health was satisfactory . . ." Pyarelal explains: "The official communique was to the effect that Gandhiji was 'unfortunately not well enough to travel' and so the Private Secretary . . went to see him. . . . But . . . in the communique . . . Mr. Abell was . . . reported to have said . . . that Gandhiji 'is in good health but is a bit tired due to strain of his recent long tour of the country.' " *Vide* also "Letter to Lord Wavell", 10-2-1946

<sup>2</sup> In his reply dated February 25, the addressee said that as he was not aware of the facts, he was "sending on to the Food Department the cutting about the alleged export of rice in July, August and September 1946. He added that they "have been exporting 3,000 tons of pulses per month to Ceylon", which "has now been stopped though the result will be a very serious situation for Ceylon".

570. LETTER TO VIKRAM SINGH

February 22, 1946

CHI. VIKRAM,

I got your letter. I approve. I am doing all that should be done in that connection.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI VIKRAM SINGH

C/O SHOORJI VALLABHDAS

BOMBAY MUTUAL BUILDING

POST BOX NO. 34

BOMBAY

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

571. LETTER TO ANASUYA KALE

POONA,

February 22, 1946

SISTER,

I got your letter. How can it be a matter of right to get elected to the Assmby? It should never be a question of right. The picture of the Congress has room only for service, none for rights. You should be satisfied with what we get while rendering service. Have you forgotten that at Faizpur I had them raised their hands only at your instance and you saw, didn't you, that a very large number did not have their names on the Congress rolls? Yet they rendered service and that too gladly. Of course there were many among them who didn't. For once, even if I accept that the field of service has scope for rights too, you must understand that I neither participated nor have any interest in elections. And I am pained at the rivalry that is rampant in elections.

*Vandemataram from*

M. K. GANDHI

SOW. ANASUYA KALE

DHANTOLI

NAGPUR

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



## 572. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

POONA,  
February 23, 1946

I have followed the events now happening in India with painful interest. This mutiny<sup>1</sup> in the navy and what is following is not, in any sense of the term, non-violent action. Inasmuch as a single person is compelled to shout “Jai Hind” or any popular slogan, a nail is driven into the coffin of swaraj in terms of the dumb millions of India. Destruction of churches and the like is not the way to swaraj as defined by the Congress. Burning of tram-cars and other property, insulting and injuring Europeans is not non-violence of the Congress type, much less mine, if and in so far as it may be different from the Congress. Let the known and unknown leaders of this thoughtless orgy of violence know what they are doing and then follow their bend. Let it not be said that India of the Congress spoke to the world of winning swaraj through non-violent action and belied her word in action and that too at the critical period in her life. I have deliberately used the adjective “thoughtless”. For, there is such a thing as thoughtful violent action. What I see happening now is not thoughtful. If the Indian members of the Navy know and appreciate non-violence, the way of non-violent resistance can be dignified, manly and wholly effective, if it is corporate. For the individual it always is. Why should they continue to serve, if service is humiliating for them or India? Action like this I have called non-violent non-co-operation. As it is, they are setting a bad and unbecoming example for India.

A combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy and will lead to and probably is a preparation for mutual violence—bad for India and the world.

The rulers have declared their intention to “quit” in favour of Indian rule. Let the action be not delayed by a moment because of the exhibition of distressful unrest which has been lying hidden in the

<sup>1</sup> According to *The Indian Annual Register, 1946*, “The Indian Franchise”, 16-12-1895, the mutiny “against the quality of food supplied. . . and ill-treatment” was started “by the men of H. M. I. S. *Talwar* . . . who secured the sympathy and support of nearly 20,000 men representing the entire Royal Indian Navy personnel”. On February 19, “strikers . . . in the Bombay Harbour demonstrated widely and sometimes violently for two hours . . . causing utter confusion and complete hold-up of traffic . . .”

breast theirs might is unquestioned. Its use beyond the bare requirement will be unworthy and even wicked, if it is made to suppress the people or a portion of them. The people have been far too long under the foreign heel.

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

*573. TELEGRAM TO SARALA DEVI*

POONA,  
*February 23, 1946*

SARALADEVI  
CARE SARALA  
BOMBAY

IMPOSSIBLE      TOMORROW.      CAN      SEE      YOU      TWENTY-SEVENTH.  
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*574. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN*

POONA,  
*February 23, 1946*

MIRABEHN  
CARE POSTMASTER  
BAHADRABAD  
JWALAPUR

NO      CHANCE      DELHI.      YOU      MAY      COME      TO  
POONA      ANY      DATE      AFTER      MARCH      TWENTIETH.  
BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6516. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9911

*575. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

SEVAGRAM,  
*February 23, 1946*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I can understand the ordeal you are going through. To what a pass have things come!

Do you want to take me to Bardoli in this situation<sup>1</sup>? I cannot

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to riots in Bombay in connection with naval mutiny.

stay there longer than 15 days in any circumstances. Why need I be taken in a special train? Is it in order to save me from the crowds that the night will have to be spent in the train? I send this with Sushila in the hope that it will reach you earlier. She will give you the details.

I hope you are well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 296-8*

### 576. LETTER TO POTTI SRIRAMULU

POONA,  
*February 23, 1946*

BHAI SRIRAMULU<sup>1</sup>,

I got your wire today. Of course you have my blessings.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 114

### 577. LETTER TO T. J. KEDAR

POONA,<sup>2</sup>  
*February 23, 1946*

BHAI KEDAR<sup>3</sup>,

I got your letter of the 20th today. I also had the previous one. I deliberately omitted to acknowledge it as it did not call for a reply. There was nothing in it to pain me.

Although I had hoped that you would come and show me your face at Sevagram, I appreciate the reason you give for not coming.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[T. J. KEDAR]

NAGPUR

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

<sup>1</sup> A Congressman of Nellore who had asked for Gandhiji's approval to undertake a fast in order to awaken public conscience in favour of opening a temple to Harijans in Nellore. *Vide* also "Statement to the Press", 16-3-1946, and "Letter to Potti Sriramulu", 17-3-1946.

<sup>2</sup> This is in Marathi.

<sup>3</sup> Advocate; Vice-Chancellor of Nagpur University

## 578. LETTER TO RAGHAVDAS

POONA,  
February 23, 1946

BABA RAGHAVDAS,

I got your letter and was pleased to get it. I shall surely do all I can. Do you get *Harijan Sevak*? What newspapers are you allowed? I hope you are keeping good health.

Blessings from  
BAPU

[RAGHAVDAS]

FAIZABAD JAIL

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

## 579. NOT LONELY

A friend<sup>1</sup> wrote to me the other day how lonely he felt in the midst of company. This remark was prompted by my telling him that I distrusted the word of the official world. He did not and had thought that I might share his trust. Behold his disappointment when he found me wanting. It may be that was not what he meant by his cryptic letter. Anyway that was my interpretation and I replied<sup>2</sup> that as a man of God, he must never feel lonely. For God was ever with him.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Sudhir Ghosh, who, in *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 77, explains: "It was the evening of 10th February . . . Gandhiji and Dr. Rajendra Prasad reviewed the whole Indian political scene, and I listened quietly to all that they said to me. What bothered me was Gandhiji's repeated statement . . . that he distrusted the word of British officialdom in India and advised me to do likewise . . . He told me that I was not to be 'thrilled' by the attention that was being paid to me by men in high authority like the Viceroy. This hurt, though there was no lack of fatherly love in what he said. . . . I brooded over what Gandhiji had told me about the need to distrust British officials. I was seized with an unusual sense of loneliness. . . . On 16th February I wrote a letter to Gandhiji to unburden myself." For an extract from Sudhir Ghosh's letter, *vide* "Letter from Sudhir Ghosh"

<sup>2</sup> Sudhir Ghosh, who seems to have lost the letter from Gandhiji, says that Gandhiji narrated, "in his own inimitable language, the story of the Prophet Mohammed and his disciple Ali, both of whom were hiding from their persecutors in a dark cave. Ali was afraid and said to his master, 'We are alone.' The master said: 'We cannot be alone. For God is with us.' "

Why should he care even if the whole world deserted him? Let him trust in spite of me, as long as the trust came from his heart and not his head.

I feel differently. Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. I have sound reasons for distrusting the English official world. If my love is sincere, I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust. Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that. They become enemies immediately the trust is gone.

See what is happening in Bombay<sup>1</sup>—the Bombay where I have passed so much time, which has given the public causes so much money, and which I had thought had fairly imbibed something of ahimsa. Will it prove the burial ground of ahimsa?

I am unable to think that the incendiarism, the looting and the insults heaped upon Englishmen are, or were, acts of hooligans. Who are hooligans? Will there be none when English rule is no more? The fashion of blaming the hooligan ought to be given up. We are the makers of the brand. They respond to the air about them.

Imagine the senselessness of looting grain shops. The looters did not help themselves. Even if they did, they were not starving. The grain was meant for the starving. If it was being misused, looting could not prevent that misuse. Usurpers will always replace the looted grain while there is any to usurp. Between the two sets of looters the starving will be more starved than before.

They who incited the mutineers did not know what they were doing. The latter were bound to submit ultimately. Or was it meant as a lesson in violence? That is not the way to understand history.

I ask myself, and perhaps others are asking, why I am not repeating what I did after Chauri Chaura.<sup>2</sup> I have no call in that direction. When or if it comes, nothing in the world will prevent me, ill or well. Let me reaffirm the truth that I love the Englishman as well as the Indian. Both are humans. Yet I want the rule of and for the masses of India. Loka-manyas has taught us that Home Rule or swaraj is our birthright. That swaraj is not to be obtained by what is going on now

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the naval mutiny.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the suspension of civil disobedience Resolutions at Bardoli", 12-2-1922 after the inhuman conduct of the mob in February 1922. *Vide* "Working Committee's

in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi.

Let every Congressman, whether four-anna member or not, think for himself where Congress should stand. Let us not deceive ourselves and the world.

POONA, February 24, 1946

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

### 580. NATURE CURE TREATMENT<sup>1</sup>

Nature cure treatment means that treatment which befits man. By 'man' is meant not merely man as animal but as a creature possessing, in addition to his body, both mind and soul. For such a being, Ramanama is the truest nature cure treatment. It is an unfailing remedy. The expression *ramban*, or infallible cure, is derived from it. Nature too indicates that for man it is the worthy remedy. No matter what the ailment from which a man may be suffering, recitation of Ramanama from the heart is the sure cure. God has many names. Each person can choose the name that appeals most to him. Iswar, Allah, Khuda, God mean the same. But the recitation must not be parrot-like, it must be born of faith of which endeavour will be some evidence. What should the endeavour consist of? Man should seek out and be content to confine the means of cure to the five elements of which the body is composed, i. e., earth, water, *akash*, sun and air. Of course Ramanama must be the invariable accompaniment. If, in spite of this, death supervenes, we may not mind. On the contrary, it should be welcomed. Science has not so far discovered any recipe for making the body immortal. Immortality is an attribute of the soul. That is certainly imperishable but it is man's duty to try to express its purity.

If we accept the above reasoning, it will automatically limit the means permissible under nature cure. And man is thereby saved from all the paraphernalia of big hospitals and eminent doctors, etc. The large majority of persons in the world can never afford these. Why then should the few desire what the many cannot have?

POONA, February 24, 1946

*Harijan*, 3-3-1946

<sup>1</sup> Originally written in Hindi, this appeared under "Notes" as "from *Harijan Sevak*", published simultaneously with the source.

### 581. LETTER TO DAMODAR DAS MUNDADA

POONA,  
February 24, 1946

CHI. DAMODAR,

I have read the statement<sup>1</sup> of Gen Awari. My opinion stands that nothing can be done under the pressure of fast. Public life will become worthless, if things could be achieved in this manner through coercion. Fast has several limitations. Fasts which transgress those limitations, I consider as disastrous to public life. Gen. Awari ought to see this simple thing and give up his fast. After that it is open to him to say what he wants to. It is not also correct to say, as Gen. Awari does, that there is no appeal against Sardar's decision. There is the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee.

You can show this letter to anybody.

*The Hitavada*, 27-2-1946

### 582. LETTER TO MANCHERSHAW R. AWARI

POONA,  
February 24, 1946

BHAI AWARI,

Your hunger-strike is not right. I hope you got my wire.<sup>2</sup> Can such self-torture prove anything, or turn a falsehood into truth? This kind of obduracy is not worthy of you or anyone else. I think no one would stop a person who sets out to commit suicide in this way. Does Bhai Pooranchand approve of this obduracy? I do hope, you will not

<sup>1</sup> According to the report, this was shown to Gandhiji by the addressee, "who was deputed by Acharya Dharmadhikari to secure Gandhiji's help to persuade Gen. Awari to give up his fast". Awari had stated: "It was a farce to appoint a Parliamentary Board while Sardar Saheb had decided to sweep off the whole list selected by the Nagpur Parliamentary Board. . . . Ours was the only Province where the President of the Parliamentary Board was not a candidate for the Assembly. . . . I will go on with this fast, a death warrant and . . . no persuasion . . . shall budge me from my determination except the removal of the grievances before or even after this election."

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, "Telegram to Secretary, C. P. Provincial Congress Committee", *vide* "Telegram to Secretary, C. P. Provincial Congress Committee", 20-2-1946

exhibit your ignorance by claiming your action to be God's prompting. You may, if you like, file an appeal. Give up your fast.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

AWARI

NAGPUR

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

583. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

POONA,

*February 24, 1946*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Write and ask Awari to give up the fast and to send a statement to the Working Committee or to the All-India Congress Committee presenting his ease. And of course he may appeal to the public.<sup>2</sup>

You must have received the earlier letter<sup>3</sup> sent with Sushila. Personally I feel that you should now give up the idea of taking me to Bardoli. I will of course do as you say but you must not leave Bombay. If there is anything about which you want to see me, do come here. I shall come, if you want me there. My work here will be over in a few days.

The differences of opinion in the Working Committee are very harmful at present. Think over this. Frankness is essential. Please do not drive yourself too hard.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 299-300*

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's reply, reported under date line "Nagpur, February 27" in *The Hindu*, 1-3-1946, read: "I had expected you to tell me where I am wrong. You say that under pressure of fast nothing can be done. This argument was advanced by the British Government whenever you launched upon a fast. I had not expected you to adopt the slogan of the British Government. Fasts against humiliation and injustice are not suicide." *Vide* also the preceding and the following items.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also the preceding item, and "Statement to the Press", 27-2-1946

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 23-2-1946



584. LETTER TO DR. DINSHAW K. MEHTA

POONA,  
*February 24, 1946*

CHI. DINSHAW,

I continue to think about you. I also had a talk with Jehangirji. The poor will never be treated properly unless a sanitary<sup>1</sup> sense<sup>2</sup> awakens in you. The servants' chawl is a shame. Filth reigns. I think you should remove them from there. This is your task and nobody else's. It cannot be done by others. Something can possibly be done only if you hand over vacant possession of the premises. You may transfer absolute custody on a date which you would yourself appoint. You can relieve Munnalal with immediate effect [if not also a few others]. What else can I say?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DR. DINSHAW MEHTA  
POONA

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

<sup>1</sup> These two words are in English.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### *THE SAPRU COMMITTEE PROPOSALS<sup>1</sup>*

BOMBAY,

*December 27, 1945*

“The Committee stands for a single Union of India, including the whole of British India and all the Indian States, the claim for secession or non-accession, by which individual Provinces or States can keep out of the Union is not accepted,” says the Sapru Committee in its final report on constitutional proposals. This report, which was compiled by the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Rt. Hon. Mr. M. R. Jayakar, the Hon. Sir N. Gopalaswami Iyengar and Kunwar Sir Jagadish Prasad, was released to the Press on December 27, 1945.

Embodying this principle in its proposals, the Committee recommends that the constitution-making body to be appointed after the elections should proceed on the basis of framing a constitution for a single State, and urges that the right of secession or non-accession given to individual States or Provinces in the Cripps proposals should be withdrawn.

The Committee maintains that throughout it has endeavoured to make a constructive approach to the many knotty problems that confront the country, to investigate them from every angle, to appraise as dispassionately as they could every fact, circumstance or conceivable argument and to reach conclusions which in their estimation were calculated to promote the lasting interests of India and were likely to elicit the approbation of thinking Indians.

The report says : “It is the Committee’s firm conviction that the future of India lies in adopting a democratic constitution. The ultimate sovereign in a democracy is the electorate, which chooses those who are to represent it in the Legislature and Executive. Adult franchise is therefore recommended. Under existing conditions, it is excusable to give religious communities the right to a fair and adequate share of opportunities for service in the Legislature and Executive, but the aspirants for these opportunities should realize that they hold them in trust for the nation as a whole and should for that reason seek the support of all communities.”

#### JOINT GENERAL ELECTORATES

The Committee has recommended that separate communal electorates should disappear and should be replaced by joint general electorates with reservations

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to M.R. Jayankar”, 12-1-1946

of seats. In the opinion of the Committee, Parliamentary Government is not unsuited to India and can be worked even with communally composed Legislature and Executive. One of the cardinal features of the constitutional proposals made by the Committee is the provision of ample and effective safeguards for the minorities.

Emphasizing the importance of joint electorates, the Committee says : “No Government, which is not merely in power but accepts active responsibility for its decisions, can legitimately flinch from the task of righting a manifestly wrong decision (taken forty years ago, accepting separate electorate for Muslims), which has been so mischievous in its effects. We hope the present Labour Government in Britain, with its high democratic ideals and the enormous voting strength behind it, will not lack the courage to get this decision reversed with the support of Parliament. We have no doubt that such reversal would be to the lasting benefit of the Muslims themselves.”

#### PARITY AT THE CENTRE

It is because the Committee attaches great importance to the abolition of separate electorates that it considers parity of representation in the Central Legislative Assembly between Muslims and Hindus, other than Scheduled Castes, not too great a price to pay. Hindu objections to this proposal are strong, because it means on a population basis one Muslim will be regarded as equal to two Hindus, other than Scheduled Castes, also the fear that the British Government may accept the parity concession without implementing the important provision that joint electorates must be introduced, is not unfounded in the light of past history. Each special concession has, in the past, been made the starting-point for fresh demands. But in the interests of communal harmony, which abolition of separate electorates will bring about, the Committee has ventured on this proposal, but it insists that in its recommendation on parity, the conditions and limitations it has laid down are equally important. Parity, however, is confined to the Lower House of the Union Legislature and Union Executive, which are the final organs for determining all-India policy; and it is important that such policy should have the substantial backing of the bulk of Hindus and Muslims. The same considerations do not apply to the Provincial Legislatures or Executives, or to the Services, or to other fields of administration.

Joint electorates, with reservation of seats, are admittedly a far cry from democracy, but they are a necessary halfway house between separate electorates and general electorates without any limitation even as to candidature.

#### CONCESSION SHOULD NOT EXTEND TO THE SERVICES

The Committee considers that it will be unjust and improper to extend the concession of parity to the Services, civil or military. Government Services, like any other service, must be based upon individual merit and fitness. Neither does the

Committee think that the Muslims are educationally backward, as they were thirty or forty years back. As regards other communities, the present proportions are considered fair, but they may be revised by future Governments, so as to provide adequate representation for backward communities. The Committee also expresses the view that it will be dangerous to extend the principle of parity to the Defence Services.

Maintaining that the Muslims are not a separate nation, the Committee in the chapter on Pakistan or partition of India says that the separate nationhood of Muslims cannot be established on grounds of race, language or culture. If religion alone will have to be the basis of division, then many other communities can also claim separate nationhood.

Declaring that self-determination is not an absolute right and can only be applied with due regard to circumstances, the Committee examines the practicabilities of Pakistan in the context of Indian conditions and in the light of Indian opinion. It says : “The position is that the scheme of Pakistan put forward by Mr. Jinnah is not acceptable either to the Hindus of the Punjab and Bengal or to the Sikhs or to the Congress or to the Hindu Mahasabha. The C. R. Formula has been totally rejected by Mr. Jinnah and has been opposed by the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab and Hindus of Bengal.

#### PAKISTAN NOT A PRACTICABLE PROPOSITION

“It is thus clear that Pakistan, whether whole, according to Mr. Jinnah’s ideals, or truncated, according to the C. R. Formula, cannot be established without the consent of parties and will meet with the strongest opposition. Arbitration has been ruled out and is out of place when the fate of the entire country is to be decided. The only alternatives for enforcing Pakistan are either British enforcement of it or civil war.”

After considering the problems of Defence of the sub-Continent and the position of minorities after division, the report states the Committee’s conclusion that Pakistan “solves no communal problems and only raises fresh ones : that on grounds of Defence, leaving apart other major considerations, the division of the country into two independent States will endanger the safety of both, and that there is no justification for the British Government to support such a revolutionary scheme if they have genuine faith in the unity of India which they themselves have built up and fostered.”

The report characterizes Prof. Coupland’s regional scheme as “fantastic, unreal and academic.”

Rejecting all schemes of partition and division, the Committee concludes : “We are convinced that the partition of India would be an outrage justified neither by history nor by political expediency. It is incompatible with the greatness, safety and economic development of the country and will lead either to constant internecine war

or perpetual foreign domination. It multiplies and complicates the problem of minorities without solving it and threatens to plunge India back into the dark and dismal days of the 18th century."

The Committee feels certain that political unity can be maintained and Hindus and Muslims can live together amicably as they have done for a thousand years."

The report proceeds to consider the arrangements to be made by which India will remain united and at the same time, afford the communities sufficient scope for self-development. One of the Committee's fundamental recommendations in this regard is the provision by which in the Union Assembly, excluding the seats given to special interests, Muslim representation from British India will be on a par with the representation given to Hindus excluding the Scheduled Castes. The offer of parity is subject to the condition that joint electorates with reservation of seats are introduced throughout, i. e., for all elective bodies in the country and the Committee adds that, should the Muslims not agree to this condition and insist on separate electorates, not only should the offer stand withdrawn, but the Hindus should be free to ask for a revision of the Communal Award.

#### PROVISION FOR ADULT FRANCHISE

Another important recommendation is the provision for adult franchise. If political power is to be transferred to an Indian Democracy, so as to prevent its concentration in the hands of a few, the risk of enfranchising the entire adult population should be taken. Political consciousness among the masses has awakened to a great extent and the last elections in 1937 were in themselves a great educative force. The average man thinks more and more in terms of politics and, if his judgment is faulty, he is no better or no worse than the average voter in Europe, where franchise has been in existence for some time.

Before Pakistan came to occupy the field, Muslim opinion generally seemed to demand that the residuary powers should be lodged with the Provinces, in order that the latter might have the fullest freedom to legislate in matters which were not covered expressly by the provisions enumerating the distribution of powers. Though the case for a strong Centre is strong, the Committee, as a matter of compromise and for the sake of peace and amity, recommended the vesting of the residuary powers in the Provinces, in accordance with the Muslim view. Mr. P. R. Das and some other members disagree with this recommendation.

While the subjects allotted to the Centre are reduced to a minimum, it is provided that the Centre shall have powers to co-ordinate legislation and administration of different units when necessary as well as to ensure the maintenance of the political integrity and economic unity of India as a whole.

## REPRESENTATION FOR COMMUNITIES

The Committee recommends that the constitution should provide for representation of different communities in the Central Executive on the basis of their strength in the Legislature. The Cabinet will be a composite one only in the sense that communities will be represented on it, but in the interests of harmonious working “the Prime Minister’s choice of his colleagues is not to be fettered”. The Committee looks forward to the choice of members to whatever community they may belong on the basis of their political affiliations. The substitution of joint for separate electorate should, by compelling candidates to seek support from all communities, help the emergence of political parties each of which will contain members of different communities. It is on these considerations that “composite” instead of “coalition” Governments have been envisaged. It is also provided that there should be collective responsibility to the Legislature. The Committee prefers the British model, namely that the Prime Minister should choose his colleagues though a suggestion had been made that the Swiss model, under which the Central Legislature in joint session by single transferable vote elects the Cabinet and the Ministers hold office for the duration of the life of the Legislature, was made.

## INDIAN STATES AND FEDERATION

Dealing with the Indian States, the Committee says that provision should be made in the constitution for the accession from time to time of Indian States as units of a Federation on such terms as may be agreed upon but the establishment of the Indian Union should not be contingent on the accession to the Federation of any Indian State or of any minimum number of Indian States. The Committee, therefore, contemplates that the Union need not be identical with Federation and it may include States which have not formally federated.

The Committee say: “Our recommendation is that the new constitution should continue at least the unity that now binds the States and British India, though the bond may not be federal. Federation, we recognize, is a closer and a more intimate and efficient bond and we earnestly hope that in due course and after the fullest consultation and investigation, all the States—a few individually but the great majority organized in groups and sub-federations—will have acceded as federated units of the Union. The inherent difficulties of bringing about such a happy consummation and the experience of negotiations which Lord Linlithgow inaugurated and conducted between 1936 and 1939 do not encourage the hope that these consultations and investigations can be successfully concluded, except with the exercise of infinite patience and after lapse of several years. To hang up the Federal Union of such units as are willing to federate until some States, or a minimum number of States, or the last hesitant State has agreed to accede, would be a policy which is calculated to postpone indefinitely the elimination of foreign rule and the achievement of full self-government. The Committee, therefore, insists that the Union of

India should be established without any such waiting and that, while individual States might take their own time to make up their minds as to whether they would accede as federated units, all of them should, from the outset, be treated as in the Union, united with each other and with the rest of India through paramountcy at the Union Centre."

As regards paramountcy, the report says, "British suzerainty, which is the mainspring of paramountcy jurisdiction today, will have to cease to exist and the new Union Centre, that is, the Federal Cabinet will come to exercise that jurisdiction over the unfederated States." The Committee hopes that the Rulers of States will not object to this inevitable development.

The Committee is also of the view that the Crown Representative as a separate office should disappear and the paramountcy jurisdiction now exercised by him should be transferred to the Union Cabinet. It is suggested that the Minister of the Union Cabinet should be in charge of the States affairs, assisted by a reformed Political Department. The Minister should also have a body of Indian Advisers to help him in administering paramountcy jurisdiction over the unfederated States.

#### "HEAD OF STATE"

On the question of "Head of the State", the Committee says : "All parties are agreed that the constitution should be based on Indian independence and, therefore, in law and in fact the indefeasible sovereignty of the people of India from whom alone all powers of legislation and administration should be derive, should be recognized. No foreign power should be allowed to exercise any jurisdiction over the Indian Union and therefore the existing practice by which all residuary powers are exercised by the United Kingdom Parliament on the theory of "the indestructible sovereignty of the King in Parliament over the land through-out the King's dominions" will not be acceptable to any school of Indian political opinion. The Head of the State under the new constitution should replace the present chief Executive with his dual role as Viceroy and Crown's Representative. He will have such powers as are given to him under the constitution as also such other powers as are now vested in his Majesty the King, including powers connected with the exercise of the functions of the Crown in relation to Indian States. The Head of the State cannot act arbitrarily but only on the advice of the Ministry. His term of office may be for five years and ordinarily one person may not hold it for more than one term.

#### MINORITY RIGHTS

Dealing with the rights of the Scheduled Castes and other minorities, the Committee has provided that these communities will in future be accorded by statute a place on the Executive and will share in the responsibilities of administration. They will have adequate voice in framing the constitution with safeguards against hasty

changes. They will have likewise the benefit of the fundamental rights with power to have more important ones enforced by the highest tribunal in the country. The Minorities Commission will keep a jealous watch over their welfare and will obtain relief when they are injured. The Committee hopes that with their rights ensured and protected, the minorities will not lose sight of their obligations to the sub-sections which exist in their midst.

As regards the Scheduled Castes, the Committee recommends the continuation of the method of election prescribed in the Poona Pact.

#### INDIANIZATION OF ARMED FORCES

Dealing with the question of Indianization of armed forces the Committee says : “Under any system of real self-government, these must be in the charge of a member of a responsible ministry. The disciplinary head of the armed forces, the Commander-in-Chief, has to work under the orders of the Ministry and, on the Dominion analogy, the supreme command of the armed forces has to be vested in the Head of the State; Indian statute law will make provision for the government of the armed forces, the application of the British Army Act and any other enactment of a similar nature to the Indian Army being done away with.”

The Committee lays great stress on the creation and rapid development of a National Army.

#### SECESSION

Dealing with the question of secession, the Committee takes strong exception to the provision contained in the Cripps offer in regard to secession. In the opinion of the Committee such a provision amounts to the recognition of revolt from and repudiates the constitution. It is, in essence, an extraconstitutional act and common sense is against the constitution recognizing it as a legal right to be unilaterally exercised at the option of the unit.

In the opinion of the Committee, the constitution-making body should proceed on the basis of framing the constitution for a single State as a safe-guard for minorities, it is provided that no decision of the constitution-making body will be valid unless it is supported by three-fourths of the members present and voting. Valid decisions of the Constituent Assembly must be binding on the British Government. The Committee says that a stage has been reached when the British Government can no longer evade responsibility. Therefore they should not allow things to drift and the situation to deteriorate.

#### INTERIM GOVERNMENT

In conclusion the Committee makes an earnest appeal to all communities and parties in the country to accept the principles underlying its recommendation. In the event of there being no agreement, the Committee calls upon His Majesty's



Government to set up an interim Government at the Centre and proceed to establish a suitable machinery for framing a new constitution, substantially on the principles enunciated by it and to have it put into operation at the earliest possible date by handing over all the power now vested in them to the authorities established there-under.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1945, Vol. II, pp. 176-8*

## APPENDIX II

### *CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION ON INDONESIA<sup>1</sup>*

The Working Committee have watched with admiration and sympathy the valiant struggle in defence of their newly won republic and independence which the people of Indonesia have been carrying on with steadfast courage and determination against British and Dutch forces. This Committee emphatically condemn the wanton invasion of Java and other parts of Indonesia in order to impose Dutch imperialist domination on their inhabitants against their unanimous demand for a free State. Any support from any quarter to imperialist designs in Indonesia, Indo-China and elsewhere is resented throughout Asia as culpable violation of the professed aims of the United Nations and the undeniable right of Asian nationals. This will destroy the chance of international understanding and the very basis of any future world organization. The Committee regret that the United States of America have by their passive attitude encouraged these imperialist aggressions. While expressing their heartfelt sympathy with the Indonesia and Indo-Chinese nationalists for the enormous loss and suffering inflicted upon them by the imperialist powers, this Committee are particularly distressed to find the units of the Indian army arrayed against the Indonesians and Indo-Chinese and view with deep indignation this mischievous misuse of the Indian forces by the British Government. This Committee note with resentment that the Government of India has not granted necessary facilities to enable Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed to Java in response to Dr. Soekarno's invitation to which the present intolerable state of humiliating helplessness is due.

*The Indian Annual Register, 1945, Vol. II, p. 101*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Talk with Indonesian Sailors", After 21-1-1946

### APPENDIX III

#### *G. E. B. ABELL'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHIJI<sup>1</sup>*

SEVAGRAM,

*February 11, 1946*

At 1 p. m. exactly I was taken along to Mr. Gandhi and was given a chair beside him. He sat on a mattress on the floor. Mr. Pyarelal, Mr. Ghosh, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and an anonymous young girl also sat on the floor.

It was Mr. Gandhi's day of silence. When I asked if I might speak first and deliver His Excellency's message, he nodded assent.

I said, His Excellency hoped he had recovered from the fatigue of his Madras tour. He wanted me to explain the grave food situation and ask for Mr. Gandhi's help and co-operation. I had come without any high hopes as Mr. Ghosh had told me over the telephone that Mr. Gandhi's attitude was thoroughly hostile—I said this in a joking way and Mr. Gandhi laughed heartily. His Excellency had toured in the scarcity areas of Bombay, Mysore and Madras. In these areas there were practically no crops. Food had to be found for the people of these areas for 8 to 10 months; otherwise there would be a disaster. There was a very heavy all-India deficiency and the world food situation was such that in spite of our best efforts we might get very little in the way of extra imports. Two different policies had been suggested. The first was to maintain the present basic ration of 1 lb. and rely on getting imports. The other was to cut down the rations every-where, impose equal sacrifices on all, and thus ensure that even if no extra imports were obtainable, the people in the villages of South India would not starve. The Government of India were quite clear that the second was the right alternative. Mr. Gandhi signified that he agreed.

I said that we had very slender reserves, and that hoarding was a grave danger. If political parties used the opportunity of the ration-cut to agitate against the Government and undermine confidence in the food administration, the result might be to make a large-scale disaster inevitable. We had no desire to shirk responsibility, but there was a clear humanitarian issue to which everyone must face up.

On the political side, the scarcity involved a grave risk to the success of the efforts that would be made shortly to form a National Government and to get ahead with deliberations on a new Constitution. It would also be a very serious obstacle in the way of the new Ministries in the Provinces. The present Government was prepared to incur the odium of cutting the ration now in order that every available ounce of foodgrains should be saved for the scarcity areas, and a fair field given to the new Executive Council and the new Provincial Ministries.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lord Wavell", 10-2-1946 & "Statement to the Press", on or after 11-2-1946

Though the Government of India would have welcomed the nomination of a Congress representative on the delegation now going to London, His Excellency realized that Mr. Gandhi might find it difficult to help in this particular matter. Mr. Gandhi nodded emphatically, and I did not pursue the point.

It had also been suggested that Mr. Gandhi's support to an appeal for imports would be valuable. I did not think His Excellency would press this either. Again an emphatic nod from Mr. Gandhi.

His Excellency did, however, urge very strongly indeed that Mr. Gandhi should assist by not embarrassing the administration on the food issue—Party capital should not be made of it as the result of agitation would be panic, hoarding and the loss of many lives. Mr. Gandhi's influence would be invaluable and His Excellency hoped he would use it.

Mr. Gandhi was in a more friendly mood than I had expected. He wrote down that he had written at 5 a. m. that morning an article for the *Harijan* which met His Excellency's requirements. This he produced. I read the article and said that though it contained some very useful advice to the public, the emphasis, which was on the futility of the administration, was wrong, I thought he could do better than that.

Mr. Gandhi wrote that the emphasis was a matter of opinion. His article showed a way out, which was to put in a National Government at once. I said His Excellency wanted such a Government as soon as possible but the President of the Congress himself had deprecated the formation of a new Executive Council until after the elections were over in the Provinces. Mr. Gandhi said that he personally disagreed with this. An Executive Council could be formed in two days. I said, I did not agree. A serious attempt would have to be made to get the Muslim League into such a Government. This would be very difficult and at the best take time. If it were urged that the League should be by-passed, at once I would say that this could not possibly be done during the elections. Nor, at such a critical time, could we have two changes of Government in the space of two or three months. (Mr. Gandhi made it clear he thought only of a short-term Interim Government to give way to another Government in April or May.) Finally there was the obvious difficulty about the budget. Mr. Gandhi seemed to be impressed with the practical difficulties and did not pursue the idea further.

Mr. Gandhi then said, it would be helpful, if I would give him in writing suggestions as to what he should do. I said, if he wanted anything authoritative, I would ask His Excellency to send him a letter on my return, but I emphasized that we were short of time and wanted a lead from him in the next few days. He said it would help, if I wrote down my ideas "as a man". I wrote down a few suggestions in the following words and got Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to give me a copy before I left :

1. Put about the idea that sacrifices are necessary by all, rich and poor, in order that the poor may live.
2. Encourage thrift, especially by housewives.
3. Discourage hoarding as a criminally wicked act.
4. So far as possible give the lead to electioneering speakers either to speak helpfully on food or at least not to say anything that will tend to destroy confidence.

Other moves in the same direction will occur to you. May not the shortage be a blessing in disguise, if all parties and people work together both now and under a new government to mitigate the suffering of the poor?

Mr. Gandhi read this and indicated that he was fully prepared to help on these lines. I asked him whether he would give a lead at once to Congress and electioneering politicians all over India. He refused to commit himself firmly on this point, but sent a message after I had left him that he would consider making a Press statement. . . .

Mr. Gandhi advised that His Excellency should send for Maulana Azad and say to him what I had said to Mr. Gandhi. . . .

Before leaving I asked what I should say to the Press. I told him that I had suggested that the Press should only be told today that I had gone to see Mr. Gandhi on His Excellency's behalf to apprise him of the food situation in India as a whole. He said, he would like us to say no more than that, unless we added that His Excellency had asked Mr. Gandhi to see him in Delhi but I had gone to Sevagram instead, because Mr. Gandhi, owing to his engagements, could not make the journey at once. He wanted no mention made of fatigue of ill-health and indeed he seemed very fit and spry.

*The Transfer of Power. 1942-47, Vol. VI, pp, 932-5*

#### APPENDIX IV

#### *LETTER FROM M. R. JAYAKAR*<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY,  
February 8, 1946

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

You will kindly excuse this letter, which is consequent on the eventful news in today's Press that H.H. the Aga Khan is meeting you on the 20th at Poona. This is an astute move, which he foreshadowed during his interview on reaching India a few days ago. Why should he be bothering you with his attention instead of meeting Mr. Jinnah's, it is not difficult to understand. You have done your best to meet Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to M.R. Jayankar", 13-2-1946

Jinnah's point of view by offering a division of India, though on the basis of a friendly transaction between two brothers. Mr. Jinnah contemptuously spurned it wanting the division as between two separate nations. With this background, the Aga Khan should be busy in meeting Mr. Jinnah and not you. But he won't do this because he knows that Mr. Jinnah will show him the door, if he tried to interfere. So he turns in your direction.

As for the Aga Khan's credentials to be an intermediary in such a vital cause, you will no doubt remember that he was the sponsor of the deputation to Lord Minto in 1906, asking for separate electorates—a deputation which the late Maulana Mohammed Ali described as a command performance. Further if you were aware of the proceedings of that deputation and knew, as I do, the activities of the Aga Khan during the four years of the Round Table Conferences in London, you would have no difficulty in realizing that, under the cloak of an international diplomat, he is as vicious a communalist as any in India. You will also recall what is now well-known, though at one time a part of the secret history of that time, that, on the occurrence of a European crisis, the Aga Khan went to Turkey to carry on negotiations, but the Ata Turk Kamal Pasha, on becoming aware of his visit, summarily ordered him out of the country.

These are some of the Aga Khan's antecedents which I have been able to recall. So I am writing this letter, as I did during your talks with Mr. Jinnah, with the view of conveying a caution—perhaps unnecessary—about the subtle nature of this attempt.

As reported in this morning's papers, the Aga Khan talks of a Pakistan State as part of an 'Indian and South Asiatic Confederation'. The South Asiatic Confederation is not in his power to establish. It may or may not come. But, if you accede to his delusive scheme, the Pakistan in India will be established and the other ingredients of the scheme may evaporate into thin air. His clever device is to sink Pakistan in an attractive scheme of an Asiatic Confederation, but a little search into the matter will reveal that it is an astute method for obtaining for the Muslim League its cherished object of a divided India. I need not say anything more. I am aware, as you said in one of your replies to me that you will not be wanting in caution, remembering that, anything which you think of conceding, it will be difficult for the country later to avoid. Such is your great influence in the country.

Begging you to excuse once more, I am,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. R. J.

MAHATMA GANDHI  
SEVAGRAM  
WARDHA

Gandhi-Jayakar Papers. File No. 826, p. 36a. Courtesy : National Archives of India

## APPENDIX V

### STATEMENT OF K. KAMARAJA AND T. PRAKASAM<sup>1</sup>

#### KAMARAJA'S STATEMENT

After Gandhiji's recent article, I feel that I can do nothing else than resign from the Parliamentary Board because all this conflict has come about only on account of the parliamentary programme. Yesterday the Parliamentary Board met, as already arranged. But meanwhile Gandhiji's article appeared. That needed serious attention. So I adjourned the Board meeting, so that I may consider Gandhiji's statement. It came as a shock to me.

I am the official head of the Tamil Nadu Congress. According to the Constitution, I nominated the Working Committee. Therefore Gandhiji's reference can only be applicable to me. I have paid my respects to Gandhiji in person, and have been in his calling distance in Madras and during his Tamil Nadu tour. So have been many of the other members of our Working Committee. It pains me much that Gandhiji did not talk to us anything about the Tamil Nadu Congress affairs while here. His use of the word "clique" affects me deeply.

Neither I nor my colleagues believe in the parliamentary programme except as a means to further the country's struggle for freedom. I had made my position clear on dozens of platforms since my release. At any rate I am no aspirer to any kind of office under the parliamentary activities.

As for the public agitation against Rajaji, it is only the reaction among Congressmen and the public to Rajaji's action and his speeches since his Pakistan resolution and resignation from the Congress. But, after Gandhiji's recent article, I feel that I can do nothing else than resign from the Parliamentary Board, because all this conflict has come about only on account of the parliamentary programme.

My four colleagues, Messrs T. S. Avinashilingam, C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliar, O. P. Ramaswamy Reddiar and Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathy felt compelled to quit also. I have persuaded them to remain for the very simple reason that the short time available for the election work ahead could not admit of such wholesale resignations. I thank them for the spirit in which they have agreed to continue on the Board. They would certainly have been within their rights, if they had followed my example. But they and I do not want to disturb the election work.

For my part, I cannot but quit. For 20 years Gandhiji has been the leader whom I have unswervingly followed and my faith in him continues unabated. That I should occasion him pain drives me to take the action I have decided to take. I assure

<sup>1</sup> Vide "About Rajaji", 15-2-1946 & "Interview to *The Hindu*", on or before 16-2-1946

everybody concerned that every decision taken by the Board here or at the centre will command my whole-hearted acceptances.

PRAKASAM'S STATEMENT

*February 13, 1946*

Mahatma Gandhi, who had declared more than once that he had nothing to do with Parliamentary politics and that he was not interested in anyone particularly, was led into a serious error when he characterized the official Tamil Nadu Congress as a "clique".

I feel strongly that Gandhiji should make amends in this matter, and I have every hope he will.

Shri Kamaraja Nadar did well in resigning the presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Parliamentary Board. He fought well over a big constitutional issue until it became impossible for him to continue any further.

*The Hindustan Times*, 13-2-1946 and 14-2-1946

APPENDIX VI

*LETTER FROM G. E. B. ABELL<sup>1</sup>*

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

*February 26, 1946*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your letter of the 21st February making suggestions to meet the food situation. His Excellency, to whom I have shown your letter, is grateful to you for writing, and will have the various proposals examined where this has not been done already.

2. Only a day or two ago His Excellency suggested to the Commander-in-Chief that it might be possible for the R. I. N. to assist with fishing. Recent events may make this difficult, but meanwhile His Excellency has initiated enquiries about the possibility of importing dried fish from Canada and Newfoundland, and also about the securing of suitable vessels and equipment so as to make a start with developing on modern lines the fisheries industry. Already the Army is doing a good deal in the Grow More Food campaign and is releasing machinery for digging wells, levelling ground, etc.

3. In Delhi, a considerable part of the Central Vista is to be ploughed up and the gardens of bungalows are to be used for growing vegetables on a larger scale. The sending of food parcels to friends or relatives outside India has been ordered to be stopped and an urgent examination is being undertaken of the question of exporting groundnuts, oil-cakes, etc.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to G.E.B. Abell", 21-2-1946 & 3-3-1946

4. Bribery and corruption is admitted to be one of the worst enemies of efficient food administration. This is also one of the most difficult to defeat. The detailed implementing of the controls is mainly in the hands of Provincial Governments, and perhaps the new Ministries may be able to achieve results in this direction.

*Yours sincerely,*

G. E. B. ABELL

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 143*

## APPENDIX VII

### *LETTER FROM SUDHIR GHOSH<sup>1</sup>*

During the conversation I had with you at Sevagram you talked about 'distrusting' one's friend. I pondered over it after I left Sevagram. It made me feel that I ought to say something about what I am trying to do and why. It is difficult to talk about it. But I enclose a letter which a young Englishwoman wrote to me when I left Cambridge. I hope you will have a look at it in a spare moment. She was a Quaker and a deeply religious person. We worshipped together in the Friends' Meeting House during our three years at the University. You know how young people get drawn towards each other and become fond of each other. We were very fond of each other; but we succeeded in keeping this friendship free from any sentimental bonds. She says in this letter : "You have not chosen to do anything easy and I fear that, humanly, you will often be lonely. But you have a source of strength which will not fail you in the worst trials and desolation. If my friendship can help, I shall be more than glad and shall send you my love as I do now." She helped me to understand the good that is England, and Cambridge gave me the inspiration to work for peace between the British and the Indian peoples. When I left Cambridge in the summer of 1940, she sent me a copy of the *Oxford Book of Mystical Verses* along with this letter. I experienced when I left Sevagram this time something of the 'loneliness' which she talks about in the letter. I know you will understand what I am trying to say.

*Gandhi's Emissary, p. 78*

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Not Lonely", 24-2-1946