

## 1. INTERVIEW TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

[SASSOON HOSPITAL,  
POONA,  
*January 12, 1924*]

. . . Dr. V. B. Gokhale came to me about 8-45 p.m. just as I was finishing my dinner; he told me how the Yeravda authorities had removed Mr. Gandhi to the Sassoon Hospital, where he was in charge. He was about to be operated for appendicitis.

. . . On my entering the room, we greeted each other and I enquired how he felt as to the operation. He answered firmly that the doctors had come to a definite conclusion and he was content to abide by it, and in reply to further inquiry, he said that he had full confidence in the medical men about him and that they had been very kind and very careful. Should there arise any public agitation, he added that it should be made known that he had no complaint whatever to make against the authorities and that so far as the care of his body went, their treatment left nothing to be desired. Then I enquired if Mrs. Gandhi had been informed of his condition. He said that she did not know the latest development, but she knew that for sometime he had not been well and he expected to hear from her. He then made inquiries of my wife and of my colleagues in the Servants of India Society, viz., Messrs Devadhar, Joshi, Patwardhan and Kunzru. He asked:

Have your frequent journeys out of India benefited your health?

Doctor Phatak then read a draft statement to be signed by Mr. Gandhi conveying his consent to the operation. After hearing it once, Mr. Gandhi put on his spectacles and read it himself. Then he said he would like the wording to be changed and asked Col. Maddock who was in the room what he thought. The Colonel said Mr. Gandhi knew best how to put it in appropriate language. His own suggestion would [not] be of much value.

Then he dictated a lengthy statement<sup>1</sup> which I took down in pencil.

When it was finished, I read it out to him once. Then he called Col. Maddock to his side and I read it again at his desire. Col. Maddock was quite satisfied and remarked: "Of course you know best how to put in proper language." He then drew up his proper posture for signing the paper, which he did in pencil. His hand shook very much and I noticed that he did not dot the "i". At the end he remarked to the doctor:

See how my hand trembles. You will have to put this right.

Col. Maddock answered: "Oh ! We will put tons and tons of strength into you."

As the operation room was being got ready, the doctors went out and I found myself nearly alone with the Mahatma. After a remark or two of a purely personal nature, I asked him whether he had anything particular to say. I noticed a touch of eagerness as he replied as though he was waiting for an opportunity to say something.

<sup>1</sup> The following item

If there is an agitation for my release after the operation, which I do not wish, let it be on proper lines. My quarrel with the Government is there and will continue so long as the originating causes exist. Of course, there cannot be any conditions. If the Government think they have kept me long enough, they may let me go, that would be honorable if they think I am an innocent man and that my motives have been good. While I have a deep quarrel with the Government, I love the Englishmen and have many friends amongst them. They may release me. But it must not be on false issues. Any agitation must be kept on proper, non-violent lines. Perhaps, I have not expressed myself quite well, but you had better put it in your own inimitable style.

I then pressed him again for a message to his people, his followers or the country. He was surprisingly firm on this subject. *He said he was a prisoner of Government and he must observe the prisoner's code of honour scrupulously.* He was supposed to be civilly dead. He had no knowledge of outside events and he could not have anything to do with the public. He had no message.

"How is it then that Mr. Mahomed Ali communicated a message as from you the other day?" The words were scarcely out of my mouth when I regretted them, but recall was impossible.

He was obviously astonished at my question, and exclaimed.:

**Mr. Mahomed Ali ! A message from me !<sup>1</sup>**

Briskly, at this point, the nurse came in with some articles of apparel for him, and signalled to me to depart. In a few minutes, he was shifted to the operation room. I sat outside marvelling at the exhibition I had witnessed of high-mindedness, forgiveness, chivalry and love transcending ordinary human nature, and what a mercy it was that the non-co-operation movement should have had a leader of such serene vision and sensitiveness to honour. . .

. . . I have read out this statement to Dr. Phatak who approves of it and adds that his inquiry as to a message elicited the same sort of answers.

*The Hindu*, 14-1-1924

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* however, "Message to Mahomed Ali", 10-9-1923.

## 2. LETTER TO COL. MADDOCK<sup>1</sup>

SASSOON HOSPITAL,  
Poona,

9.45 p. m., January 12, 1924<sup>2</sup>

DEAR COL. MADDOCK,

I know that you know the history of my illness during the past 6 months. You have been extraordinarily kind to me. You, the Surgeon-General and other medical gentlemen have come to the conclusion that any delay in performing the operation described by you to me involves considerable risk. You were kind enough to tell me that Government had authorized you to send for any of my special medical friends. I therefore suggested the names of Dr. Dalal and Dr. Jivraj Mehta. You have tried your utmost to secure their presence. But then you have not been able to get at either of them. I have the fullest confidence in you and regard being had to the serious nature of the case I would ask you please to go on with the operation without delay.

I am,

Yours sincerely

From a photostat: S.N. 8121

## 3 . MESSAGE TO THE COUNTRY<sup>3</sup>

January 14, 1924

I am deeply touched by manifestation of deep affection shown to me by my countrymen during the critical period of my health. They need have no anxiety because every possible attention is being given me by medical authorities here.

*Young India*, 17-1-1924

<sup>1</sup> This was also published in *The Hindu*, 20-1-1924 and *The Searchlight*, 25-1-1924.

<sup>2</sup> The message, given to Dr. Phatak in response to anxious inquiries from all over the country, was first published in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15-1-1924. *Young India* reproduced it with a short editorial note under the caption, "The Nation in Agony".

<sup>3</sup> The source gives the date as January 19, obviously a slip. Gandhiji was operated upon for appendicitis on January 12.

#### 4. INTERVIEW TO “THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE”

POONA,

January 19, 1924

The jail authorities cannot be blamed. Our fight must be clean. Appendicitis is a difficult disease to diagnose. Col. Murray is one of the best men I have met. He has been very kind to me. He is conscientious, considerate and kind. I hold the highest opinion about him.

*The Searchlight, 27-1-1924*

#### 5. INTERVIEW TO DILIP KUMAR ROY<sup>1</sup>

February 2, 1924

Our conversation having that morning centered round music, Mahatmaji told me in passing how fond he really was of music even though he could not boast of the power of any expert for analytic appreciation. He had said:

I am so found of music that once, while I was in a South African Hospital and ailing from a bruise on my upper lip, I felt greatly soothed as the daughter of a friend of mine sang the song ‘Lead, Kindly Light’ at my request.

On my asking him if he knew any of the beautiful songs of Mirabai, he said:

Yes, I have heard a good many of them. They are so beautiful. It’s because they come from the heart and not from any desire to compose or to please a public.

I called the same evening at his request. After the music, I saw that it had affected him visibly. For I thought I saw his eyes glisten even in that none-too-bright light of the hospital.

“I feel” said I after a short pause, “that our beautiful music has been sadly neglected in the schools and colleges.” Mahatmaji replied:

Yes, it has, I have always said so.

Srijut Mahadeo Desai who was present throughout our conversation

<sup>1</sup> The interview between Gandhiji and Roy, an exponent of Indian music and inmate of the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, took place at the Sassoon Hospital. The extract given here is from a report which was also reproduced in *The Hindu*, 7-2-1924, and later, featured in Roy’s book *Among the Great*, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay. According to the author, Gandhiji had revised the reports of the talks and authorized him to publish them in the book.

corroborated this. "I am glad to hear you say so. Because I have been all along under the impression that you would be against all arts such as music."

I ! Against music! Well, I know, I know. . . There are so many superstitions rife about me that it has become now almost impossible for me to overtake those who have set them afloat. As a result, my friends only smile at me when I try to lay any claim to being an artist myself.

"I am glad to hear this; because I have been given to understand that in your philosophy of life, which is one of unqualified asceticism, arts like music can hardly aspire to any place." Mahatmaji emphatically said:

But I maintain that asceticism is the greatest art in life.

"What I however meant by art just now is a somewhat different activity such as music or painting or sculpture for the matter of that. And I had thought that you would be rather opposed to them than otherwise." Mahatma said:

I, opposed to arts like music! Why, I cannot even conceive of an evolution of the religious life of India without music. I do say I am a lover of music as well as the other arts. Only, my values may be different from the accepted ones, that's all. I am doubtless against much that passes for art in these days. I do not for instance call that art which demands an intimate knowledge of its technique for its appreciation. If you go to the Satyagraha Ashram, you will find the walls bare. And my friends object to this. I admit I don't have paintings on the walls of my Ashram. But that is because I think that the walls are meant for sheltering us, and not because I am opposed to art as such. For have I not gazed and gazed at the wonderful vault of the starry sky—hardly ever tiring of the same? And I do say that I can never conceive of any painting superior to the star-studded sky in its satisfying effect on the mind. It has bewildered me, mystified me—sent me into the most wonderful ecstatic thrills imaginable. Side by side with this wondrous mystery of God's artistic handiwork, does not that of man appear to be the merest tinsel?

I said: "I agree with you when you say that Nature is a great artist, as also when you inveigh against the regrettable prostitution of art, which unhappily so often passes for art. I differ also from those artists who have acquired the habit of saying that art is even greater than life."

Exactly. Life is and must always be greater than all the arts put together. I go still further. For I say that he is the greatest artist who leads the best life. For what is art without the background and setting of a worthy life? An art is to be valued only when it ennobles life. I object emphatically only when people say that art is everything, that it does

not matter even if life has to be held subservient to its (i.e., art's ) fulfilment. I have then to say that my values are different, that is all. But fancy people saying that I am opposed to all arts on that account !

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 5-2-1924

## 6. INTERVIEW TO “ YUGA DHARMA ”<sup>1</sup>

[Before February 5, 1924]

Dr. Sumant enquired of Mahatmaji how it was that such a disease could attack a man like him who was self-restricted *sanyams*. Mahatmaji replied that though he was moderate in food for many year, he had not yet been abstemious as he ought to have been. Mahatmaji said:

I am sure that my body does not need much food. In fact, very little food is required when one has to undergo mental work and a good deal of concentration. Perhaps my weight might have been decreased by being abstemious. But my body would have been surely improved.

Mahatmaji was of opinion that there was no necessity of pulse as food for those who were used to brain work. As regards the amelioration of the depressed classes, Mahatmaji expressed the necessity of working in the villages by encamping there. He did not at all believe the rumour that there was a depression in the workers of Gujarat.

In a further conversation Mahatmaji said:

I have plunged into politics simply in search of Truth. When I went to jail, I had fixed my programme for full six years. I have dictated a little about South Africa to Indulal, but my thoughts about the *Gita* are still to be dictated and I want to show how to epitomize the *Mahabharata*. I also think of writing my autobiography. Still I have to do much.

On Dr. Sumant commenting on the new Labour Government in England by saying that there were still people who hoped to get sweets from the Labour Government, Mahatmaji answered with a rather grave voice:

People do not leave off the hope of getting help from outside. Who can give swaraj? We have to take it. What about the depressed classes and what about solving the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity? What help can the Labour Government give you as regards these questions? Your future lies in your own hands. If you get sweet-balls, they will be made of stones.

*The Hindu*, 18-2-1924

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sumant Mehta, editor of the Gujarati magazine published from Ahmedabad, called on Gandhiji at the Sassoon Hospital before release.

## 7. ANSWERS TO DREW PEARSON'S QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>

[After February 5, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Gandhi is recuperating in the mountain air of Poona, just a few miles from Yeravda prison in which two years of confinement so broke his health that unconditional release by the British Government was necessary.

His first statement, when interviewed, was:

I shall resume my activities for the attainment of swaraj just as soon as I am restored to complete health.

What course would he take? He answered quietly:

I still believe it possible for India to remain within the British Empire. I still put implicit faith in non-violence, which, if strictly followed by India, will invoke the best in the British people. My hope for the attainment of swaraj by non-violence is based upon an immutable belief in the goodness which exists deep down in all human nature.

I have always maintained that India had no quarrel with the

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of March 26, 1924 from New York, to Devdas Gandhi, Drew Pearson threw light on the manner in which the script of the "interview" was prepared for release. Enclosing "the copy of the interview with father which you so kindly cabled me recently," Pearson went on to write, "You will note that the editor has taken certain privileges with the interview by dating it as cabled from India. My original article explains that the interview was cabled by you. The interview appeared in about 50 papers in the United States, the list of which I enclose, together with 8 papers in Australia and New Zealand, 3 in Japan and China, 4 in Canada and was sent to other papers in Brazil, Argentine, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, South Africa and Hawaii. You will note that I have enlarged a little bit on your skeletonized cable. In such places where you referred to the fact that your father's views do not change, I looked up his views as recorded in speeches and clippings from *Young India* and used such as a basis for enlarging the interview. I did this rather in a hurry and there was not time for your approval, but I trust it will be satisfactory for you." Acknowledging Devdas Gandhi's letter of March 7, Pearson wrote again on April 15, thanking him for his "trouble and thoughtfulness in telegraphing the message from your father. As I told you in an earlier letter, it was published widely all over the United States. I trust your father did not object to my quoting from his past speeches and writings. . . The telegram arrived in its original form without censorship."

Earlier, Drew Pearson had sought Sir George Lloyd's permission to visit Gandhiji in jail, which was refused. For an account of his interview with the Governor, vide Appendix "Drew Pearson's Interview with Sir George Lloyd", 22-11-1923.

<sup>2</sup> The answers were obviously given after Gandhiji's release on this date.

English. Jesus denounced the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, but he did not hate them. So we need not hate Englishmen, though we hate the system they have established. They have given India a system based upon force, by which they can feel secure only in the shadow of their forts and guns. We Indians, in turn, hope by our conduct to demonstrate to every Englishman that he is as safe in the remotest corner of India as he professes to feel behind the machine gun.

What do you mean by swaraj?

A full partnership for India with other parts of the Empire, just the same as Canada, South Africa and Australia enjoy. Nor shall we be satisfied until we obtain full citizens' rights throughout the British Dominions for all the King's subjects, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

I asked Mr. Gandhi if he still believed in boycotting the Councils.

Yes, I still believe that we should not participate in the Councils until Britain suffers a change of heart and acts squarely with us. However, I do not wish to express any opinion on the action of the Nationalist party in participating in the Councils, until I have talked with the leaders. This I have already started to do.

When asked if imprisonment had changed his views on politics and religion, Mr. Gandhi replied:

They have undergone no change, but have been confirmed by two years of solitude and introspection. I have been experimenting with myself and friends by introducing religion into politics, and now I believe they cannot be divorced. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not Hinduism, which I prize most highly, but the religion which transcends Hinduism—the basic truth which underlies all the religions of the world. It is the struggle for truth—for self-expression. I call it the truth—force the permanent element in human nature, constantly struggling to find itself, to know its Maker. This is religion.

I believe that politics cannot be divorced from religion. My politics can be summed up in two words—non-violent non-co-operation. And the roots of non-co-operation are buried in the religions of the world. Christ refused to co-operate with the Scribes and Pharisees. Buddha fearlessly refused to co-operate with the arrogant priesthood of his day. Mahomed, Confucius, most of our great prophets have been non-co-operators. I simply and humbly follow in their footsteps.

Non-co-operation means nothing less than training in self



sacrifice. And this again was practiced by the great teachers of the world. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from indomitable will. I have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice-the obedience to the strength of the spirit.

By non-violence I do not mean cowardice. I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. But I believe that forgiveness adorns a soldier. And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because she is weak, but because she is conscious of her power and strength. The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence, but through non-violence.

Therefore, I respectfully invite Americans to study carefully the Indian National Movement and they will therein find an effective substitute for war.

Before his imprisonment Mr. Gandhi was a most severe critic of modern civilization and I asked if his views had suffered any change.

They remain unchanged. My opinion of modern civilization is that it is a worship of materialism, resulting in the exploitation of the weak by the strong. American wealth has become the standard. The United States is the envy of all other nations. Meanwhile, moral growth has become stunted and progress measured in pounds, shillings and pence.

This land of ours, we are told, was once the abode of the gods. But it is not possible to conceive of gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and din of mill chimneys and factories, and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, do not care, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed together like sardines in boxes. Factories have risen on the corpses of men, women and children to create what we call civilization.

When asked for his opinion on the action of the Supreme Court in barring Indians from United States citizenship, Mr. Gandhi replied that he deplored the decision, and considered it due to American ignorance of India's civilization and its possibilities.

Finally, when reminded of the fact that all India worshipped him as a "saint", that thousands of children were being named "Gandhidas", that wreaths were daily

freshened over his pictures in millions of homes throughout India, Mr. Gandhi replied simply:

I think that word “saint” should be ruled out of present life. It is too sacred a word to be lightly applied to anybody, much less to one like myself, who claims only to be a humble searcher after Truth.<sup>1</sup>

From a newspaper cutting: S.N. 8956

## 8. MESSAGE TO GUJARAT VIDYAPITH

[On or before *February 6, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

The message was to the effect that the release from imprisonment was no cause for rejoicing but rather for greater humility. The burden of responsibility would be now heavier than ever to bear, and they must prepare themselves and get ready to be strong enough to bear it when the time came.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 9-2-1924

## 9. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI<sup>3</sup>

POONA,

[On or before *February 6, 1924*]

THANKS I WILL NOT TROUBLE YOU WHILE YOU  
ARE ILL. WRITING.<sup>4</sup>

From a photostat: S.N. 8264

## 10. INTERVIEW TO “THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE”

POONA,

[Before *February 7, 1924*]

Interviewed by Mr. S. A. Brelvi, joint editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, Mahatma Gandhi said that he had been preparing in his mind a message to his countrymen on his release. The message would take the form of a letter addressed to the

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Neither a Saint nor a Politician”, 12-5-1920.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to Lajpat Rai’s telegram of February 6, 1924, which read: “Returned Lahore this morning. Not quite well. Prakasam wires you want me Poona. Wire your wishes.”

<sup>3</sup> Vide “Letter to Lajpat Rai”, 8-2-1924.

<sup>4</sup> This was conveyed by C. F. Andrews to the members of the Sabarmati Ashram and the Gujarat Vidyapith on February 6. For Andrew’s statement on Gandhiji’s release, vide Appendix “Andrews’ Statement on Gandhiji’s Release”, 7-2-1924.

President of the Congress, Maulana Mahomed Ali, just as, soon after his conviction, he had wished to speak to his countrymen through a letter addressed to the then President, Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb. The letter to the Hakim Saheb, however, never reached him, because the Government, of Bombay asked the Mahatma to alter and amend certain passages which he refused to do. The Mahatma intended to take the earliest opportunity of publishing that letter.

He was grieved to find, he said, that the decision of the Government to release him was based on considerations of his health. He would be very glad to believe that his release indicated a change in the attitude of Government towards him and his activities and a realization on their part that his preaching of non-violence was not a cover for violence as was represented by his misguided critics. He would heartily welcome any indication that the Government had grasped the fact that non-violence was the essence of the non-co-operation movement.

*The Hindu*, 8-2-1924

### 11. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI<sup>1</sup>

SASSOON HOSPITAL,  
POONA,  
February 7, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I send you as President of the Congress a few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden release. I am sorry that the Government have prematurely released me on account of my illness. Such a release can bring me no joy, for I hold that the illness of a prisoner affords no ground for his release.

I would be guilty of ungratefulness if I did not tell you, and through you the whole public, that both the jail and the hospital authorities have been all attention during my illness. Col. Murray, the Superintendent of the Yeravda Prison, as soon as he suspected that my illness was at all serious, invited Col. Maddock to assist him and I am sure that the promptest measures were taken by him to secure for me the best treatment possible. I could not have been removed to the David and Sassoon Hospitals a moment earlier. Col. Maddock and his staff have treated me with the utmost attention and kindness. I may not omit the nurses who have surrounded me with sisterly care. Though it is now open to me to leave this hospital, knowing that I can get no better treatment anywhere else, with Col. Maddock's kind permission I have decided to remain under his care till the wound is healed and no

<sup>1</sup> This was also published in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindu*. 8-2-1924.

further medical treatment is necessary.

The public will easily understand that for some time to come I shall be quite unfit for active work, and those who are interested in my speedy return to active life will hasten it by postponing their natural desire to see me. I am unfit and shall be so for some weeks perhaps to see a number of visitors. I shall better appreciate the affection of friends if they will devote greater time and attention to such national work as they may be engaged in and especially to hand-spinning.

My release has brought me no relief. Whereas before release I was free from responsibility save that of conforming to jail discipline and trying to qualify myself for more efficient service, I am now overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility I am ill-fitted to discharge. Telegrams of congratulations have been pouring in upon me. They have but added to the many proofs I have received of the affection of our countrymen for me. It naturally pleases and comforts me. Many telegrams, however, betray hopes of results from my service which stagger me. The thought of my utter incapacity to cope with the work before me humbles my pride.

Though I know very little of the present situation in the country, I know sufficient to enable me to see that, perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing today. It is clear that, without unity between Hindus, Mahomadans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of swaraj is idle. This unity which I fondly believed, in 1922, had been nearly achieved has, so far as Hindus and Mussalmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanks giving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid unity between the communities? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest-cure. When I heard in the jail of the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans in certain places, my heart sank within me. The rest I am advised to have will be no rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilize it in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realize our own weakness and approach Him and He will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but I know that, even if *one* of us will cease

to fear, we shall cease to quarrel. Nay, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

If we could but visualize the growing pauperism of the land and realize that the spinning-wheel is the only remedy for the disease, the wheel will leave us little leisure for fighting. I had during the last two years ample time and solitude for hard thinking. It made me a firmer believer than ever in the efficacy of the Bardoli programme and, therefore, in the unity between the races, the charkha, the removal of untouchability and the application of non-violence in thought, word and deed to our methods as indispensable for swaraj. If we faithfully and fully carry out this programme, we need never resort to civil disobedience and I should hope that it will never be necessary. But I must state that my thinking prayerfully and in solitude has not weakened my belief in the efficiency and righteousness of civil disobedience. I hold it, as never before, to be a man's or a nation's right and duty when its vital being is in jeopardy. I am convinced that it is attended with less danger than war and, whilst the former, when successful, benefits both the resister and the wrongdoer, the latter harms both the victor and the vanquished.

You will not expect me to express any opinion on the vexed question of return by Congressmen to the Legislative Councils and Assembly. Though I have not in any way altered my opinion about the boycott of Councils, Law Courts and Government Schools, I have no data for coming to a judgment upon the alterations made at Delhi, and I do not propose to express any opinion until I have had the opportunity of discussing the question with our illustrious country-men who have felt called upon, in the interest of the country, to advise removal of the boycott of legislative bodies.

In conclusion, may I, through you thank all the very numerous senders of congratulatory messages. It is not possible for me personally to acknowledge each message. It has gladdened my heart to see among the messages many from our Moderate friends. I have, and non-co-operators can have, no quarrel with them. They too are well-wishers of their country and serve to the best of their lights. If we consider them to be in the wrong, we can hope to win them over only by friendliness and patient reasoning, never by abusing. Indeed, we want to regard

Englishmen too as our friends and not misunderstand them by treating them as our enemies. And if we are today engaged in a struggle against the British Government, it is against the system for which it stands and not against Englishmen who are administering the system. I know that many of us have failed to understand and always bear in mind the distinction and, in so far as we have failed, we have harmed our cause.

*I am,*

*Your sincere friend and brother,*

*Young India, 14-2-1924*

## *12. LETTER TO PRANJIVAN MEHTA*

SASSOON HOSPITAL

POONA,

*Maha Sud 2 [February 7, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI PRANJIVAN,

I thought of you constantly. Hardly a day passed in the jail when I did not remember you. Having protested to the Government on the issue of my correspondence and stopped writing letters altogether, how could I make an exception in your case and write to you? Today is the third day since my release. There is some strength in my hand and the very first letter I am writing is to you.

As we are now both unwell, who should enquire about whom? My health is improving. The wound has not healed completely. The doctor thinks at present that it will take about a week to heal. It seems I shall have to pass this whole month here. What to do after that I shall decide only then.

Revashankarbhai and the others who had been to see you tell me that you are much better now. Write to me yourself only if you can write letters with your own hand, otherwise dictate to someone. I shall certainly like seeing you when I am well. Do you think your health will permit your coming?

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 131

<sup>1</sup> The letter was written on the third day after Gandhiji's release on February 5.

### 13. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI<sup>1</sup>

SASSOON HOSPITAL,  
February 8 [1924]

DEAR LALAJI,

I had promised to write to you, but could not until now. My hand is still weak. I wanted to dictate the letter, but when I was ready to do so, none of my assistants was available.

I do not remember having told Shri Prakasam that you should come down to Poona and see me. But then I do much want to see you at the earliest opportunity and have a long chat with you about Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindu-Sikh unity, the Councils, the untouch-ables, and other problems. But this is possible only when you are perfectly well and I am able to bear the strain of a fairly long conversation. But how can I ask you to take the trouble of coming over here if your health is not quite all right or if it cannot stand the long journey? Moreover, I want you to have at your disposal full three days when you come here. Maybe, we may have to carry on our talks in separate instalments. So far as I am concerned, I should, I think, be fit enough by next Wednesday unless the wound is hiding treacherous stitches or any other foreign matter.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 17-2-1924

<sup>1</sup> Part of this letter, which is likely to have been written in English, was published in *The Hindu*, 12-2-1924. It was in reply to a telegram of February 7 from Lajpat Rai, reading: "Will be fit to travel few days. Will come immediately. Meantime awaiting your letter. Your health greatest importance."

#### 14. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI

POONA,  
*February 12, 1924*

THANK YOU EIGHTEENTH WILL SUIT ME ADMIRABLY.

GANDHI

From photostat: S. N. 8325

#### 15. LETTER TO MAHOMED YAKUB

[*February 12, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi has written to Mr. Mahomed Yakub requesting him to desist from moving in the Assembly<sup>3</sup> to recommend the Nobel Peace Prize to him, his efforts in the cause of world peace being their own prize. Any recognition by Europe of the doctrine of non-violence would be welcome to Mahatmaji, but the value of such recognition would be lost if the prize is not spontaneously offered, but is to be awarded through extraneous recommendation. Moreover, the idea of his name being put forward in competition with that of a countryman of his is extremely distasteful to Mahatmaji.<sup>4</sup>

*The Hindu*, 14-2-1924

<sup>1</sup> Lajpat Rai had telegraphed Gandhiji on February 12, 1924,: "Thanks. Can start fourteenth reaching eighteenth. Wire wishes." Lajpat Rai replied to this stating that he would reach Poona on February 17 and see Gandhiji the following day. S.N. 8326.

<sup>2</sup> As given in Mahomed Yakub's reply dated February 17.

<sup>3</sup> Central Legislative Assembly of which he was a member

<sup>4</sup> Mahomed Yakub in his reply agreed to respect Gandhiji's wish, and added: "The contents of your letter are so noble that I would like to have them placed on the record of the Assembly." S.N. 8334



## 16. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

Wednesday [February 13, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI NARAHARI,

Mahadev told me today about your mind being at peace. I often feel tempted to wire, but I control myself. I do not want to be impatient. You and I, all of us, are in the hands of God. We should always obey the dictates of our conscience and think no more. Why should we then worry about the result? I only want to be assured that Manibehn<sup>2</sup> is not at all worried and that she understands the significance of your penance.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9044

## 17. ANTI-INDIAN CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH AFRICA<sup>3</sup>

February 14, 1924]

As one expected to understand the situation created in South Africa by the anti-Asiatic movement now going on there, and especially the Class Areas Bill now under consideration by the Union Parliament, I deem it my duty to place my opinion on the situation before the public.

The anti-Asiatic agitation on the part of Europeans in South Africa is no new thing. It is almost as old as the first settlement of unindentured Indians in South Africa, and is principally due to trade jealousy on the part of white retail traders. As in other parts of the world so in South Africa, interested men, if they sufficiently persist, find no difficulty in gathering the support round them of those who are not so interested, but who do not think for themselves. The present agitation, I remember, was begun as early as 1921<sup>4</sup>, and the Class

<sup>1</sup> The Wednesday following the commencement of addressee's fast to which the letter alludes fell on this date.

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

<sup>3</sup> This statement was published generally in the Press.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Notes", 6-4-1921.

Areas Bill is, no doubt, one result of that agitation.

Before dealing with the nature and effect of the Bill, It is necessary to point out that it is in breach of the compromise of 1914 arrived at between the Union Government and the Indian community of South Africa.<sup>1</sup> But it was a compromise to which both the Indian Government and the Imperial Government were as much party as the Union Government and the Indian community, because the compromise was arrived at with the knowledge and concurrence of the Imperial the and Indian Governments. The latter had even sent Sir Benjamin Robertson as a representative, technically to watch the course of the Commission that was appointed by the Union Government to inquire into the Indian position, but in reality to negotiate a settlement. The main terms of the compromise were settled before Sir Benjamin Robertson, who represented the Indian Government, returned to India.

In accordance with that compromise, no further anti-Asiatic legislation was to be passed by the Union Government. The understanding at the time was that the legal position of the Indian would be gradually improved and that the then existing anti-Asiatic legislation would, in time to come, be repealed. The contrary has, however, happened. The public may remember that the first attempt to break the spirit of the compromise was made when, in the Transvaal, an attempt was made to enforce the existing legislation adversely to the Indians and contrary to the practice that prevailed at the time of the compromise. The Class Areas bill, however, goes much further in restricting Indian liberty.

Whatever may be the other implications of the compromise, this much cannot be disputed by any party, that the settlement of 1914 pledged the Union Government not to put further restrictions upon the Indian liberty, and apart from the general powers of disallowance vested in His Majesty under the Letter of Instructions addressed to the Governor-General of South Africa, the Imperial Government if they would be true to their trust are bound, at any cost, to insist upon the observance of the terms of the compromise referred to by me.

We in India may not ignore the difficulties of the Union Government which is dependent for its existence solely upon the will of the Europeans of South Africa expressed through their elected representatives to the exclusion of Indians and the natives of the soil.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The End of the Struggle", 8-7-1914.

This unwarranted exclusion is the original flaw in the South African constitution, as it is to be found in the constitution of most of the self-governing Colonies which have their native populations and Indian populations. As the Imperial Government permitted the flaw, it is in honour bound to prevent untoward results arising from it. South Africa and Kenya will presently show what moral worth there is in the Imperial system. Pressure of public opinion may, and probably will, bring about temporary relief in both the places; but it will be only temporary. It can merely postpone the final act in the tragedy unless some unforeseen radical change, either in England or in India, takes place.

And now for the Bill itself. Unlike the Natal Municipal Franchise Bill, which happily the Union Governor-General has in effect vetoed and which applied only to Natal, the Class Areas Bill is designed to apply to all the four<sup>1</sup> provinces. It enables the Government to segregate all the domiciled Indians and other Asiatics alike for residence and trade. It is, therefore, an extension, in a modified manner, of the location system<sup>2</sup> devised as early as 1885 by the late Transvaal Government.

Let me say in a few words what the segregation may mean. The Indian Location in Pretoria, where, in spite of the Law of 1885, not a single Indian has been as yet compelled to remove, is situated far away from the town itself and entirely outside the beat of the buyer, whether English, Dutch or native. The only trade possible in such Locations is trade among themselves. Segregation, therefore, carried out to the full means nothing less than compulsory repatriation without any compensation. It is true that the Bill appears to preserve to a certain extent the existing rights. But that reservation is of little consequence to the Indian settlers. I do not wish to burden this note by citing illustrations from my South African experience to show how such reservations have, in practice, proved almost useless.

Finally, let it be remembered that, when Indian emigration to South Africa was unrestricted, the fear of the Europeans was expressed to be that South Africa might be swamped by India's millions. All the South African statesmen then used to say that South Africa could easily digest a small Indian population and could even give it a liberal

<sup>1</sup> The source has "poor", evidently a misprint.

<sup>2</sup> Indians and natives in South Africa were forced to reside in certain areas which were known as "Locations".

treatment, but that the European settlers could never rest content so long as the possibility of swamping remained. Now that the so-called message to gujarat vidyapith message to gujarat vidyapith fear of swamping has been removed, practically since 1897, the cry is raised for segregation; and, if that is accomplished, the next step will be compulsory repatriation. If the segregated Indians do not voluntarily retire, the fact is that the more accommodating the European settlers of South Africa find the Imperial trustees to be, the more grasping they become in their anti-Asiatic demands.

*Young India*, 21-2-1924

### 18. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI

[POONA,

On or after *February 15, 1924*]

SORRY YOU HAVE FEVER AGAIN. HOPE YOU WILL  
BE SOON FREE. NO HURRY ABOUT COMING SUGGEST  
YOUR COMING POONA FOR REST.

From a photostat: S. N. 8333

### 19. TELEGRAM TO C. R. DAS<sup>2</sup>

[POONA,

On or after *February 19, 1924*]

WILL BE DELIGHTED MEET FRIENDS NAMED. WILL HOLD  
SILENCE PACT TILL MEETING.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8353

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Lajpat Rai's telegram of February 15, 1924, which read: "Had fever yesterday. Could not start. Will wire again."

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to C. R. Das's telegram of February 19, 1924, which read: "Motilal and I coming together. Have wired him to fix date. Want you hear me before you advise Hindu-Muslim pact. Suggest meeting of Motilal myself Lajpat and Malaviya in your presence."

## 20. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

Thursday [February 21, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI NARAHARI,

I am glad to know that your fast is over. Bhai Lakshmidas, Ramji and Gangabehn are sitting here as I write this letter. The excitement of the fast while it is in progress keeps up our spirit, but the period following its end is a difficult time. Be careful in your food. For the present take liquid food only. Start taking chapatis and other things gradually. I am sure you will be patient in your attitude towards others. However, I caution you again since you have had difficulties in the past. After the fast is over, the mind becomes restless and it is difficult to control it. More when you come.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9045.

## 21. TELEGRAM TO DR. SATYAPAL<sup>2</sup>

[On or after February 23, 1924]

DR. SATYAPAL<sup>3</sup>

DISTRESSED OVER NEWS MORE BECAUSE HELPLESS AND  
UNABLE ADVISE . WITHOUT FULL STUDY OF WHICH  
SICKNESS RENDERS ME INCAPABLE.

From a photostat: S. N. 9916

<sup>1</sup> Thursday' here is evidently of the week following February 13, the date of Gandhiji's previous letter, written when the fast was on.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to Dr. Satyapal's telegram received on February 23, 1924, which read: "Situation Jaiton serious. Jatha fired at. Kitchlew and Gidwani arrested. Several died many wounded. Exact number unknown. Reporters not allowed. Congress Committee sent ambulance corps already. They not permitted to work. Working Committee passed resolutions to sent another corps. Administrator-General Nabha wired for permission corps to relieve suffering. Shiromani Committee assured all possible help. Wire further instructions." The telegram was followed by a letter of the same date, written earlier; *vide* Appendix "Letter from Dr. Satyapal", 23-2-1924.

<sup>3</sup> Congress leader of the Punjab.

## 22. TELEGRAM TO MAHOMED ALI <sup>1</sup>

POONA,  
[On or after *February 24, 1924*]

NOT INFORMED OR FIT ENOUGH GUIDE DELIBERA-  
TIONS COMMITTEE.

From a photostat: S. N. 8371

## 23. OPEN LETTER TO AKALIS <sup>2</sup>

*February 25, 1924*

DEAR COUNTRYMEN,

It was with great distress that I heard about the shooting of an Akali Jatha on the orders of the Administrator of the Nabha State, resulting in several members being killed and many more wounded.<sup>3</sup> In reply to telegrams, beyond sending a message of sympathy, I had no wish to say or do anything more. It is contrary to the wish of Col. Maddock, who has covered me with every form of kindness during my illness, that I am undertaking a moderate amount of activity in the shape of informing myself of the prevailing situation in the country. The following telegram just received from Zira, "Come unminding health condition soon—Akali Jatha" compels me to say something in connection with the tragedy just mentioned. I do not happen to know the sender of the telegram, but had it been at all possible for me, I would certainly have gone down in reply to the message. The wound being yet unhealed, any such journey is a physical impossibility. I am, therefore, doing the next best thing. I need hardly assure the Akali Sikhs of my sympathy in the loss of so many brave men and many more being wounded. Without full facts before me, I am unable to say whether the march of a large number of men in order to pay devotion to the shrine of Gangsar at Jaiton was or was not justified. But I would

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Mahomed Ali's telegram of February 24, 1924: "If you consider necessary please send messages with instructions regarding situation recently created to Delhi. Working Committee meeting 26th." S.N. 8371.

<sup>2</sup> This was published generally in the Press

ask the Akali Sikhs not to send any more Jathas without further deliberation and consultation with those leaders outside the Sikh community who have hitherto been giving them advice. It would be well to stop and watch developments arising out of the tragedy. One of the telegrams received by me tells me that the Jatha was and remained throughout strictly non-violent. You have, from the very commencement, claimed that your movement is perfectly non-violent and religious. I would like every one of us to understand all the implications of non-violence.

I am not unaware of the fact that non-violence is not your final creed. It is, therefore, doubly incumbent upon you to guard against any violence in thought or word creeping in the movement. Over 25 years of the practice of non-violence in the political field has shown me as clearly as daylight that, in every act of ours, we have to watch our thoughts and words in connection with the movement in which we may be engaged. Non-violence is impossible without deep humility and the strictest regard for truth and, if such non-violence has been possible in connection with movements not termed religious, how much easier it should be with those like you who are conducting a strictly religious movement?

I have deemed it necessary to reiterate what I used to say about non-violence before my imprisonment, because I have observed, during my brief study of the events of the past years, that we who claim to be engaged in a non-violent movement have not fully in thought and speech conformed to our creed during the past two years, as we certainly did not during the previous years. I am sorry to have to say that what I wrote about ourselves in the pages of *Young India* during the three months prior to my arrest holds truer today than it did then.

I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that, had we practiced non-violence in the sense I mean during all these five years, we would not only have achieved our common goal, but there would be today no differences and quarrels between Hindus and Mussal-mans. In drawing your attention, therefore, to the necessity of non-violence in your special struggle about your Gurdwaras, I do not wish to be understood to mean that there has been greater disregard of the essentials of non-violence amongst you than amongst the other communities.

But a word of caution is more necessary in your case, because

you have never flagged. You have been incessantly active in the pursuit of your special goal. I would, therefore, have you to search yourselves and, if you find that you have not been true to the standard you set before yourselves, to cease further demonstration for the time being and perform the necessary cleansing process before beginning anew; and I doubt not that your effort will be crowned with success.

*I remain,*

*Yours friend and servant,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10055; also *Young India*, 28-2-1924

## 24. TELEGRAM TO DAS<sup>1</sup>

[On or after *February 25, 1924*]

PHYSICALLY      IMPOSSIBLE      WOUND      UNHEALED.      PRAY  
WIRE      SITUATION.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8376

## 25. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES<sup>2</sup>

*February 26, 1924*

It was my intention to publish all the important correspondence I had with the authorities during my incarceration as part of my jail experiences, which I intend to write out if health and time permit. But it is not possible for me to do so for some time to come. Meanwhile, friends have urged me to publish the correspondence without delay. I appreciate the force of their reasoning, and, therefore, present the readers of *Young India* with a portion of it this week. The main part of the contention raised in the letter<sup>3</sup> to Hakimji stands good even in

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to addressee's telegram of February 25, 1924, from Zira which read: "Come unminding health condition soon.—Akali Jatha" The identity of Das is not known. *Vide* also "Statement on Open Letter to Akalis", 28-2-1924.

<sup>2</sup> This was Gandhiji's prefatory note to the correspondence which, as a prisoner, he had carried on with the Yeravda Jail authorities from April 1922 onwards.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan", 14-4-1922.



the light of subsequent experience. But, in justice to the Jail officials, I must add that, so far as my physical comfort was concerned, progressively better facilities were given to me. Mr. Banker, much to my joy, was restored to me. The marking line referred to in the first letter to Hakimji was done away with, and both of us had a run of the whole yard. On Mr. Banker's discharge, without any request on my part, the then Superintendent, Major Jones, obtained the Government's permission to send Mr. Manser Ali Sokta to me as a companion, a consideration which I very greatly esteemed. For, Mr., Manser Ali Sokta was not only a valuable companion, but was also an ideal Urdu teacher for me. Soon after, Mr. Indulal Yagnik came and added to our pleasure. Major Jones then transferred us three to the European ward where we had superior accommodation and not a bad garden in front of us. On Mr. Manser Ali Sokta's discharge, Major Jones's successor, Col. Murray, obtained the Government's permission to put Mr. Abdul Gani with me as a companion who, in addition to giving Mr. Yagnik and myself joy, replaced Mr. Manser Ali Sokta as my Urdu teacher and took great pains in order to improve my Urdu Calligraphy. Had my sickness not interrupted the course, he would have made of me a passable Urdu scholar. so far, therefore, as my physical comforts were concerned, both the Government and the Jail officials did all that could possibly be expected to make me happy. And if I suffered from illness now and then, it is my firm belief that neither the Government nor the Jail authorities could in any way be blamed. I was allowed to choose my own diet and both Major Jones and Col. Murray, as also in this respect Col. Dalziel, who preceded Major Jones, strictly respected all my scruples about diet. The European jailers too were most attentive and courteous. I cannot recall a single occasion when they can be said to have unduly interfered with me. And even whilst I was subjected to ordinary jail inspection, to which I cheerfully submitted, they carried it out considerately and even apologetically. I entertain high regard for both Major Jones and Col. Murray as men. They never let me feel that I was a prisoner.

Subject to what I have said about the kindness of officials, I am unable to revise the estimate I gave in Hakimji's letter about the soulless policy of the Government regarding political prisoners. All I have said in that letter was confirmed by later experience. For proof of this statement the reader must wait till I am able to write out my experiences. My purpose just now is to avoid any the least possibility of the correspondence being so interpreted as to cast any reflection

upon the Jail officials or, for that matter, even upon the Government, so far as my physical well-being was concerned.

I must not close this note without expressing my deep gratitude to the convict warders who were placed in charge of us. Instead of acting as supervisors, they rendered me and all my companions every assistance. They would not allow us to do any labour in the shape of cleaning the cells, etc. I shall have to say more about them in my experiences, but I cannot restrain myself against mentioning the name of Gangappa. He became a most efficient nurse to me. His scrupulous regard to every detail, his always anticipating every want of mine, his readiness to serve me at all hours of the night, his loving nature, his strict honesty and his general observance of the Jail rules and the Jail discipline commanded my admiration. I wonder how society can punish a man capable of showing such lofty character and how a Government can keep such a man in prison. Gangappa is unlettered. He is not a political prisoner. He was convicted of murder, or some such crime. But I must not pursue this subject any further. I must postpone its consideration to a future date. I have mentioned Gangappa merely to pay my humble tribute to fellow-prisoners like him.

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 28-2-1924

## 26. STATEMENT ON OPEN LETTER TO AKALIS<sup>1</sup>

*February 28, 1924*

I have just read a paragraph in the news column of *The Bombay Chronicle* of the 28th February about the Jaiton tragedy in which it is suggested that my open letter to the Akali Sikhs is based on wrong information supplied to me and that “in this respect people mostly suspect Lala Lajpat Rai”. In justice to Lalaji, I wish to state that, before he saw me, I had read all I could about the tragedy and that, when the telegram inviting me to go to the Punjab was received, I had made up my mind, before Lalaji had seen that telegram, that I should make some such statement as ultimately I did make. As the telegram asking me to come down and stop Akali Jathas was received from Zira and I did not know anybody there and as was anxious that the advice I

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Open Letter to Akalis”, 25-2-1924.

tendered should reach the Akali Sikhs as early as possible, I adopted the method of the open letter. My letter was based purely on the information gleaned by me from the papers and the knowledge acquired by me after my release about the state of the spirit of non-violence in thought, word and deed in the country. Lalaji did see the letter and under his pressure I struck out a large number of passages which otherwise I would have retained and which were stronger than the final letter. Lalaji further pressed me to end the letter at the clause advising the Akali Sikhs not to send another Jatha before deliberation with non-Sikhs advisers, but as I felt that a general reference to the implications of non-violence at this moment was of vital importance, I was obliged respectfully to differ from Lalaji's advice and retained the passages regarding non-violence.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5212; also *The Hindu*, 29-2-1924

## 27. INTERVIEW TO SIND DEPUTATION

POONA,  
*February 28, 1924*

A deputation consisting of Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram, Khazi Abdul Rehman, Seth Isserdas and Mr. R. K. Sidhwa waited upon Mahatma Gandhi this morning requesting him to come to Karachi to restore his health. Mahatmaji was lying in bed and received the deputation cheerfully.

Mr. Sidhwa acted as spokesman and said: "Your health will be immensely improved on the sea beach of Karachi where the weather is excellent." Mahatmaji replying said:

I would wish I could come to Karachi to gain health because I know Clifton is an excellent place, but I wish to remain in a central place so that friends would not find it inconvenient to see me from places far off. Hence I have decided to stay in Andheri<sup>1</sup> near the sea.

MR. SIDHWA: We look to your health first and those intending to see you could come even from thousands of miles. So you should come to Karachi. People are more anxious about you health.

It is true, friends could come to see me from any distance, but I don't want to trouble them. I had an invitation from Ceylon also and, although I have not seen Ceylon—I am told that it is a beautiful and

<sup>1</sup> A suburb of Bombay

lovely place for the convenience of visitors with whom I have to consult often, I have decided to remain near Bombay. I had once decided to live at Dadabhoy Naoroji's house and I was glad that I would be staying in the house of persons under whom I had learnt politics.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-3-1924*

## 28. *LETTER TO G. N. KANITKAR*

POONA,  
*February 29, 1924*

MY DEAR KANITKAR,

You are hatching before the hen has come to the roost. I have no idea when the autobiography will be commenced. If, however, it ever sees the light of day, as far as I am concerned, you shall have the right of translation. But I am afraid Kaka or Anandaswami will have the final say in the matter.<sup>1</sup> If you, therefore, want to take premature precaution, please write to one of them, or both.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K GANDHI

GAJANAN N. KANITKAR  
MANAGING TRUSTEE, S. R. PATHSHALA  
CHINCHWAD

From the original: C. W. 956. Courtesy: G N. Kanitkar

## 29. *LETTER TO D. V. GOKHALE*

SASSOON HOSPITAL,

POONA,  
*February 29, 1924*

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

I was pained to see a paragraph in the *Kesari* referring to what little I am doing to understand the dispute between the Moslem trustees and the Hindus concerned. I would like you, if you could,

<sup>1</sup> Kaka Kalelkar and Swami Anand were connected with *Navajivan* and *Young India*.

to prevent further reference to my work in connection with it. Any such publicity, in my opinion, lessens my usefulness for the cause.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SH. D. V. GOKHALE  
POONA

From a photostat: G. N. 5213

### *30. MESSAGE TO POONA MEETING<sup>1</sup>*

POONA,  
March 1, 1924

I wish the meeting every success. Had we developed enough strength, we could have secured Mr. Horniman's return long ago. The Government have sinned doubly, first in deporting him and secondly in not permitting him to return, but they have sinned because we were weak.

*The Hindu*, 3-3-1924

### *31. STATEMENT ON AKALI MOVEMENT*

[POONA,]  
March 4, 1924

If I am entirely satisfied as to the nature and implications of the present Akali movement and the methods adopted to gain the end, I should have no hesitation in throwing myself heart and soul into it and even in burying myself in the Punjab, if it became necessary in order to guide the movement. The satisfaction that I require is on the following:

- (1) The strength of the Akalis.
- (2) (a) A clear manifesto publicly stating the minimum, which I understand to be the performance of the *Akhand Path* ceremony in Gangsar Gurdwara, the Sikhs openly and sincerely declaring that it has no political end and that they do not desire,

<sup>1</sup> This was a meeting of citizens held under the presidentship of Prof. R.P. Paranjpye to protest against the refusal of the British Government to issue B. G. Horniman a passport. Horniman had been deported in 1919. Gandhiji's message was read out by C. F. Andrews at the meeting which adopted a resolution holding Horniman's deportation illegal and demanding facilities for his return.

through the *Akhand Path* movement, in any shape or form, to carry on an agitation, directly or indirectly, for the restoration of the Nabha Maharaj<sup>1</sup>. The agitation which the Akalis intend to carry on in connection with such restoration will be on an independent footing and will be purely a separate movement.

(b) In connection with the movement for control of gurdwaras in every case of disputed control or possession, the matter should be referred to arbitration. In the case of historical gurdwaras, it will be assumed that all such gurdwaras must remain in the control of the S.G.P. Committee. But the question of fact whether a particular gurdwara is or is not historical will be a subject matter of arbitration, and the burden of proving that it is so will lie on the shoulders of the S.G.P. Committee.

With reference to all other gurdwaras, all the facts in dispute should be a subject matter of arbitration.

In the event of the party in possession of such gurdwaras declining to surrender control to the S.G.P. Committee or to refer the matter in dispute to arbitration., the Akalis would be free to take such direct action as is consistent with non-violence in the strictest sense of the term.

(3) Full assurance and, therefore, a document intended for publication signed by all the principal leaders or on behalf of the S.G.P.C., giving a description of the methods which will clearly set forth all the implications of non-violence. By the term I do not wish to convey that non-violence is to be regarded in the document referred to above as the final creed of the Sikhs, which I know it is not. but I do understand that their methods, so far as this Gurdwara movement is concerned, will be absolutely non-violent, that is to say, the Akalis will be non-violent in thought, word and deed in connection with all persons, whether Government officials, English and otherwise, or whether members of the public belonging to any denomination whatsoever, who may be regarded as opponents of the

<sup>1</sup> The Maharaj of Nabha abdicated in early 1923 and the Government of India took over the administration of the State. The reason apparently was the friction which had lately developed between Nabha and the neighbouring State of Patiala. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee, a body in charge of Sikh religious affairs, contended that the abdication was not voluntary and demanded that the Maharaja be restored to his throne. *Vide India in 1923-24*.

objects of the Akali movement. Absolute adherence to truth I regard as an integral part of any scheme of non-violence, whether it is temporary or permanent and whether it is restricted to persons or places. It, therefore, admits of no diplomacy, as we understand the term, and it rejects altogether the prevailing normal idea that it is legitimate to have surreptitious methods with regard to opponents. It follows that there is to be no secrecy.

(4) That the movement is neither anti-Hindu nor anti any other race or creed.

(5) That the S.G.P.C. has no desire for the establishment of Sikh Raj and, as a matter of fact, the Committee is purely a religious body and, therefore, as such can have no secular object or intention.

As to the restoration of Nabha Maharaja:

In my opinion, whatever the true facts may be, the Maharaj has by his writings made it practically impossible for his well-wishers to carry on an effective agitation for his restoration. If, however, he makes a public statement that all the writings were practically extorted from him and that he is quite willing and anxious that all the facts against him should be published and if he is prepared to face all the consequences of the agitation, viz., deprivation of titles, annuity, etc., and if all his allegations regarding duress can be proved, it is possible to carry on an effective and even successful agitation.

In any event, when the declaration of the kind mentioned is made by the Maharaja, the agitation should be an all-India agitation. The Akalis should merely assist in the observation of faith.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 3766 and 3767

### 32. *LETTER TO SIKH FRIENDS*

[POONA,]

*March 4, 1924*

DEAR FRIENDS,

I learnt through Punditji Motilal after you had gone that the S.G.P.C. was actually defending the accused in the matter of the prosecution of Akalis. I learnt, too, that a Hindu temple within the

precincts of the Golden Temple had been destroyed by the Akalis and that the latter took their stand upon religion. In your letter, which you have promised, I would like you please to deal with all these questions.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 3767

### 33. *LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI*

SASSOON HOSPITAL,

POONA,

*March 5, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

My whole heart goes out to you in your distress. Hayat has given me a painful account of Amina's illness.<sup>1</sup> I read in the paper, too, that you could not attend the Khilafat Conference in Sind --that fact by itself shows how serious the illness must be. God testes us in many ways. He wants to know how His creature acquits himself in the presence of calamities he would gladly avoid. I know how you will come out of the fire, whatever the result. Please comfort Amina on my behalf and tell her it is well with those who have their trust in God whether they remain on earth or whether they are taken away. I know that your brave wife is passing through the ordeal in a manner worthy of her.

I have read Reuter's account of the Khilafat resolution in the Turkish Assembly.<sup>2</sup> I know that the decision must cause deep grief and anxiety to you, the more so as domestic sorrow must have, for the time being, taken up most of your time, but I have always held that, whilst the future of everything rests in the hands of God, the future of Islam rests in the hands of the Mussalmans of India.

*Yours ever,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-3-1924*

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Hayat, of Aligarh National University, wrote to Gandhiji on February 28. Amina, Mahomed Ali's daughter, passed away a month later.

<sup>2</sup> This supported the deposition of the Khalifa and abolition of the Khilafat. The Indian Muslim delegation to Angora and the Khalifat had been denied passports.



### 34. LETTER TO THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD<sup>1</sup>

POONA,  
March 5, 1924

YOUR EXALTED HIGHNESS,

I am in receipt of Your Exalted Highness's letter of the 1st instant with reference to your letter to His Excellency the Viceroy in the matter of the Province of Berar<sup>2</sup>. Sir Ali Imam was good enough to send me a copy of his circular letter<sup>3</sup> enclosing a copy of Your Highness's letter. But my illness has prevented me from reading the important document. I am just now attending only to those matters in which I have always been specially interested and in which our people look to me for guidance. I ask your Highness, therefore, to forgive me for my inability to attend to the question of Berar for the time being.

*I remain,*  
*Your Exalted Highness's Faithful friend,*  
M. K.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8428

<sup>1</sup> This letter seems to have miscarried; *vide* "Letter to the Nizam of Hyderabad", 5-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> In this the Nizam had written, *inter alia*: "I have sent an official letter to His Excellency the Viceroy asking the Government of India to restore to me the province of Berar. . . I have promised to grant autonomy to the inhabitants of Berar in case they come under the aegis of my Government as an integral part of the Hyderabad State. . . I am writing to ask whether, on the broad principle of sympathy for the aspirations of mankind in general, and a desire for the amelioration of their condition, you will be able to lend me such support as you can in my present endeavour." S.N. 8424.

<sup>3</sup> In this the Nizam had written, *inter alia*: "I have sent an official letter to His Excellency the Viceroy asking the Government of India to restore to me the province of Berar. . . I have promised to grant autonomy to the inhabitants of Berar in case they come under the aegis of my Government as an integral part of the Hyderabad State. . . I am writing to ask whether, on the broad principle of sympathy for the aspirations of mankind in general, and a desire for the amelioration of their condition, you will be able to lend me such support as you can in my present endeavour." S.N. 8424.

### 35. NOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>

The result of the correspondence was that the Government at last gave their reason for prohibiting the visits referred to, viz, it was in the public interest that the said visits were prohibited, but that, if in future I wanted to see anybody in particular, the Superintendent was to send the name or names to the Government. I may add that to the last moment the names of all who wanted to see me had to be submitted to the Government. In spite of the Government statement, in my case and [in the case of] those who were in the same block with me, the Superintendent had no discretion to grant permission to visitors, which he had in the case of all the other prisoners.

*Young India*, 6-3-1924

### 36. COMMENT ON PRISON CONDITIONS<sup>2</sup>

For reason I do not wish to enter into at this stage, I am unable to publish further correspondence in this matter. But I may state that I was permitted to see two of the leading hunger-strikers in the presence of the Superintendent of the Jail and the Inspector-General of Prisons. The result was that Messrs Dastane and Dev, the two prisoners, appreciated the moral argument I advanced, and at once broke their long fast. The Government, after investigating the cause of flogging and surrounding circumstances, issued instructions that no flogging was to be administered by the Jail Superintendent without previous sanction from the Government except in the case of assault by prisoners upon Jail officials, or like conduct. I have observed that exaggerated reports were published about the conduct of Major Whitworth Jones, then Superintendent, and that he was described as an inhumane Superintendent, and his conduct as inhuman. Whilst, in my opinion, the flogging in question was a grave error of judgment on the part of the Superintendent, it was nothing more. Major Jones was often hasty but so far as I am aware never heartless. On the contrary, [in] all I saw of him and heard about him from those prisoners with

<sup>1</sup> This was published under "Letter to Jail Superintendent, Yeravda" 16-4-1923. The other letters sent by Gandhiji to the Jail authorities are placed in their chronological order.

<sup>2</sup> This was published under "Letter to Jail Superintendent, Yeravda" 29-6-1923.

whom I came in contact, he was a most sympathetic Superintendent, ever willing to listen to the prisoners and to take severe notice of the subordinates who in any way ill-treated them. He was ever willing to admit his mistakes—a rare quality in an official. At the same time he was a disciplinarian, and a hasty disciplinarian is often likely to make mistakes. The two floggings of satyagrahis were such mistakes. They were of the head, not of the heart. The fact is that the powers of indiscriminate flogging should never have been vested in the hands of Superintendents of Jails. They were taken away none too soon. A detailed examination of the prison administration and of these floggings must be reserved for a further occasion.

*Young India*, 6-3-1924

### 37. COMMENT ON PRISON REGULATIONS<sup>1</sup>

This letter was written as a result of His Excellency's visit at which I discussed with him, when he pressed me as to whether I had anything to say, the question of Special Division. I told him in effect that, in my opinion, the Special Division Regulations were an eyewash and were designed merely to deceive the public into thinking that something was done to accord to the political prisoners a treatment that their general upbringing rendered necessary. But the Governor told me with the greatest assurance that he had no authority whatsoever in law to bring rigorous-imprisonment prisoners within the Special Division. And when I ventured to question the accuracy of his legal knowledge, he told me he ought to know inasmuch as he had framed the regulations himself. I was amazed at the industry of a Governor who went so much into details as even to draw up regulations—a work that is generally left to legal officers. Although my knowledge of law has become rusty for lack of use, in spite of the authoritative manner in which the Governor spoke, I could not reconcile myself to the fact that the law had given the Government powers to specially classify only simple-imprisonment—and not hard-labour—prisoners, and that it gave no discretion to the Government to reduce sentences. Hence the foregoing letter. The reply received was that H.E. was mistaken about the law and that the Government had the necessary powers, but that in spite of that

<sup>1</sup> These observations were made by Gandhiji while publishing in *Young India* his "Letter to Governor of Bombay", 15-8-1923.

discovery he could not see his way to revise the regulations so as to include all political prisoners, whether undergoing simple or rigorous imprisonment. My suspicion, therefore, that the Special Division Regulations were a mere eyewash became, I am sorry to say, confirmed.

*Young India*, 6-3-1924

### 38. COMMENT ON LETTER TO JAIL SUPERINTENDENT,

YERAVDA<sup>1</sup>

The reader is warned not to read a meaning into the letter which it was never intended to bear. The letter is only published in order to explain the incident referred to in the letter, as it has been the subject matter of much talk and speculation. And as the renunciation of fruit is said to have hastened my collapse, it is necessary to make it clear that it was in no way a protest against the Superintendent's refusal to grant Mr. Abdul Gani's request. Moreover, Mr. Abdul Gani had the right under the Special Division regulations to send for fruit and any other food that he wanted. But he, Mr. Yagnik and I had come to the conclusion that it would not be proper for us to send for food from outside. The authorities could, therefore, be in no way blamed for the consequence of my abstention. The Superintendent as well as the Inspector-General of Prisons pleaded with me to desist from enforcing my decision. They warned me of the possible serious consequences of abstention, but for the peace of my mind, I had to take the risk. And after all the serious illness I have gone through, I do not feel sorry that I took the step I did. Nor should the reader in any way blame Mr. Abdul Gani for having asked for a change of his diet. He asked for it after full consultation with me, and I approved of the change not knowing that the regulations would not allow the Superintendent to grant the changed diet. I was misled into thinking so because, as stated in the letter, Mr. Yagnik and other fellow-prisoners were allowed by the previous Superintendent to change their diet from time to time. When I decided to renounce fruit after the refusal to Mr. Abdul Gani, he tried his utmost to dissuade me from the course, but it was not possible for me to forgo the experiment until it was absolutely clear to me that fruit was necessary for my constitution.

*Young India*, 6-3-1924

<sup>1</sup> This was published along with "Letter to Jail Superintendent, Yeravda", 12-11-1923.

### 39. MESSAGE TO DELHI PROVINCIAL POLITICAL CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

POONA,

[On or before *March 7, 1924*]

Your Conference has no more important work before it than the promotion of Hindu-Moslem unity. It will be like balm to my troubled heart to know that Hindu and Moslem members of the Conference have resolved with God as witness never to distrust each other, but are prepared to die for one another. May God guide you all right.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10366

### 40. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[Before *March 8, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I cannot restrain myself from writing to you after reading your letter to Krishnadas. Your complaint is literally true. The questions you have raised did occur to me. But, being an invalid, I could not do more. Having got ready at the last moment, I naturally could not leave instructions. I ought to have given you instructions about the red and green lines. So also about numbers. The numbers were changed twice. You must have, therefore, read two figures, 8622 as 827. I don't remember if it was 8622 or some other number.

Devdas is industrious, but lazy in writing letters. I think one who writes a bad hand is slow to write letters. Pyarelal is a day-dreamer and lacks energy. Krishnadas is still a newcomer and nervous; you cannot take from him any urgent work. In these circumstances, you have to put up with the discontent prevailing there.

Let me give you the gist of my talk with Motilalji. He remained firm in his view favouring Council-entry, but could not convert me. I too could not convert him. He, Hakimji and the others will come to

<sup>1</sup> The Fourth Delhi Provincial Political Conference was held on March 7 and 8, 1924, at Meerut under the presidentship of Asaf Ali.

<sup>2</sup> This was written before March 8, i.e., Saturday preceding March 11, when Gandhiji reached Bombay.

meet me again in the last week of this month<sup>1</sup>. At present some Sikh leaders are here for consultation. I am having discussions with them. I shall let you know the result after the discussions are over. Andrews, of course, is here. Jairamdas, Rajagopalachari and Shankerlal are also here. In fact, Jairamdas has been here nearly for ten days. I shall probably go to Juhu next Saturday, though it is not definite. My going will depend on the condition of the wound. I do hope you will not publish anything from my letters in the papers. Most probably I shall write to you at least once a week.

Now there are no more Jail letter to be given in *Young India*, I cannot say when I shall be able to write down my experiences [in Jail].

How is Mani? Tell her, that, if she keeps on being ill, I shall have to put myself to the trouble of writing to her. She ought to get well even to save me from this labour.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 8443

#### 41. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHIN

*Saturday [March 8, 1924]*<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MAGANLAL,

One statement in your letter worries me. You said that, owing to fear of thieves, you have to keep half awake. How long can you carry on like this? If we cannot get a good watchman, we should arrange among ourselves to keep watch by turns. The more essential thing, however, is that we should give up all our jewellery altogether. No one in the Ashram or in the school should have with him even a grain of gold or silver. I was shocked to read Hanumantrao's<sup>3</sup> letter received a couple of days ago. Do you know what happened to his wife? Read the letter I am enclosing. No wonder if a similar thing occurs in the Ashram. One needs no ornament for the ear. For the wrists one may have very pretty shell-bangles. We should reduce, as much as possible, our other possessions too and live without fear, and not worry if these

<sup>1</sup> They met Gandhiji again on March 29. The discussions with Motilal Nehru and other swarajist leaders lasted several days.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji arrived at Juhu on Tuesday, March 11. The preceding Saturday fell on March 8.

<sup>3</sup> Member, Servants of India Society.

things are stolen. we should also approach people in the neighboring villages. You have already done this. You may speak to them again if you think that necessary. All the three courses—watch, reducing of possessions and appeals to the villages—should be adopted simultaneously.

Please let me know in Juhu about Radha's<sup>1</sup> health. I intend sending for her there if circumstances permit and if she can undertake the journey.

Ramdas is much unsettled in mind. He is very unhappy. Take him under your care. Let him have your sympathy without talking about the cause of his suffering. Ask Surendra or someone else who has the time to keep him company. If he does not go there on some work, please invite him to do so. This is only a suggestion. Do what you can in the circumstances there.

I shall most probably reach Juhu on Tuesday. The wound is still bleeding a little.

*Blxessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6042 Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

#### 42. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[After *March 8, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

CHI, MAGANLAL,

1. Please write to the *Mahajan* about the dogs if you have not yet done so.
2. Consult the watchman about the thefts.
3. Think over the suggestion about someone going to the neighboring villages.
4. Just as attending prayers is compulsory, so too is coming to the dining-room at 10.45.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6043. courtesy "Radhabehn Choudhri

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

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, this was written as a reminder to the preceding item dated March 8, 1924.

### 43. ADVICE TO AKALIS<sup>1</sup>

[March 9, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

1. In my opinion, in order to bring the whole of the Akali movement to successful issue, it is absolutely necessary that their minimum should be unmistakably stated. This alone can evoke universal approval and sympathy, provided that the minimum is just and reasonable in the sense that it appeals to the reason of a common-sense, godfearing man. It will not, therefore, do to say that a particular claim is a religious claim. All religious claims must necessarily appeal to reason.

In a movement of non-violence, the minimum is also the maximum, just as the minimum is not capable of reduction even though the difficulties may be insurmountable, similarly under favourable weather, there can be no addition to the minimum.

This follows from the fact that non-violence includes truth and truth admits of no expedients

2. It is, therefore, necessary for the S.G.P.C. to state the implications of the Gurdwara movement, i.e. which gurdwaras are claimed by the Akalis to be historical or otherwise falling within the movement and without which an Akali, to be true to his faith, may not rest. Second, what are the implications with reference to the present *Akhand Path* affair in the Gangsar Gurdwara.<sup>3</sup>

Third, what is the movement in connection with the forced abdication or deposition of the Maharaja of Nabha.

3. In my opinion, with reference to the gurdwaras, the mode of procedure should be, in the case of disputed possession, (i) through private impartial arbitration without reference to or intervention of the present courts of law; (ii) where the opposite party refuses to submit to reason or arbitration, by satyagraha, i.e., non-violent mode of asserting S.G.P.C.'s right to possession. In order that the method is and

<sup>1</sup> Recitation from the Granth Saheb had been going on at Gangsar Gurdwara near Jaiton since October 1923. Every day a batch of 25 Sikhs was sent to the Gurdwara for the reading of Granth Saheb and was promptly arrested.

<sup>2</sup> The source carried, at the end, a paragraph which forms a part of the following item bearing this date. It appears that both the items are of the same date.

<sup>3</sup> Recitation from the Granth Saheb had been going on at Gangsar Gurdwara near Jaiton since October 1923. Every day a batch of 25 Sikhs was sent to the Gurdwara for the reading of Granth Saheb and was promptly arrested.



remains strictly non-violent throughout, it is not enough that there is absence of active violence, but it is necessary that there is not the slightest show of force.

It follows, therefore, that a large body of men cannot be deputed to assert the right of S.G.P.C.'s possession, but one or at the most two men of undoubted integrity, spiritual force and humility may be deputed to assert the right. The result of this is likely to be the martyrdom of these pioneers. My conviction is that from that moment the possession of the Committee is assured, but it may so happen that martyrdom is postponed and intermediate stages such as pinpricks, serious assault or imprisonment might have to be suffered. In that case and in every case till actual control is secured, there must be ceaseless stream of devotees in single or double file visiting the gurdwara in assertion of the right of the Committee. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that, if the possessor for the time being may consent to submit to arbitration, the Committee should be ever ready to accept the offer when the asserting of the right by means of satyagraha ceases. In such a case, it goes without saying that if there are any of the devotees who have been imprisoned in prosecution of the object of the Committee, they should be discharged simultaneously with the acceptance of the arbitration.

#### NABHA

I understand the position regarding the Nabha State to be as follows-and as explained by the Akali friends who have been kindly sent by the S.G.P.C. for the purpose:

1 The S.G.P.C. contends that the Maharaja has been forced to abdicate, that there is no sufficient warrant for the step and that the Committee is in a position to prove that the Maharaja has been forced to abdicate not because of the charges vaguely referred to by the Viceroy or of any other charges such as would justify the extreme punishment, but for his public-spritedness exhibited on several occasions and for his known active sympathy for the Akali cause. The Committee invites an open and impartial enquiry by a competent authority into the whole case before which the S.G.P.C. should have the right to give evidence and the Committee would be satisfied with the findings of such an enquiry. It has been suggested that the Nabha Maharaja has voluntarily abdicated in consideration for the Government suppressing certain charges which they hold are of an extremely damnatory character. If the Maharaja's own writing can be produced

in proof of the statement, the Committee will naturally have nothing further to say. Such a writing should be given by the Maharaja without any veiled pressure from the Government and should be a fresh document. The Committee have no desire at present for any direct action. At the same time, it is but fair to say that if all the efforts at impartial enquiry for obtaining strict justice fail and when the public have been put in possession of all the facts known to the Committee and public opinion has been fully matured and cultivated, the Committee may be reluctantly compelled as a matter of honour and chivalry to resort to direct action. No mention, however, of direct action will be made in any manifesto stating the Committee's position regarding Nabha that may be issued by the Committee.

The above position appears to me to be unexceptionable and I heartily endorse it.

#### SHAHIDI JATHA

Had it been possible for me to have met the Akali friends before the Jatha which is now on its way to Jaiton had started, I would, even after having heard all that the friends had to say, have adhered to my advice that it should not be sent before perfect stock-taking and a review of the whole situation, but I wish to cast no blame on anyone for the delay in the friends meeting me or, if there is any blame to be attached to anybody, I must take it upon my own shoulders because I omitted to take the precaution of wiring the full text of my message to S.G.P.C. at the same time that I handed it to the representative of the Associated Press. I was under the mistaken belief that Press messages having precedence of private messages the A.P. message would be earlier in the hands of the Committee. I foolishly wanted to save public money. Could I be present in the Punjab and see things face to face, I would not hesitate, even though the Jatha is nearing its destination, to tender my advice for its recall in order to enable us to review the situation, to take certain steps which I hold are necessary before taking further direct action, but I cannot undertake the responsibility, lying on a sick-bed, of advising the recall. I dare not place such a burden on the friends who have come to discuss the Gurdwara affair with me. In the circumstances, therefore, I fear that Jatha must be allowed to proceed to its destination. I understand that elaborate precautions have been taken to prevent admiring crowds or others from following or accompanying the Jatha. I understand too that strictest instructions have been issued to the Jatha to adopt and con-

tinue a perfectly non-violent attitude in spite of the gravest provocation. This is all to the good.

But I understand further that the Jatha has also been instructed, in the event of its receiving orders, to leave the State boundary to disobey and, arm in arm, the Jatha has been instructed to present a solid living wall to the State soldiery and to draw upon their devoted heads with unflinching courage the fire that can be poured upon them. The idea is no longer to submit to pinpricks and prolongation of the agony by way of forcible deportation, but to end it by every member of the Jatha sitting at his post and dying there with calm resignation without any retaliation. This plan is conceived in a most lofty and daring spirit. The bravery of who conceived it and still greater bravery of those who are expected to carry it out in its entirety cannot be questioned and, if the Nabha authorities are so foolish as to fire upon the Jatha till everyone lies dead at his post, it will certainly stagger humanity, thrill the world and command universal applause for matchless heroism, but I am sorry to say it could not be recorded as an act of non-violence. This proposed action can be described as civil disobedience, but in reality it would not be civil disobedience, for civil disobedience [is] perfect submission to orders which are given as punishments for the breach of primary orders which a civil resister holds against conscience to obey. But such disobedience to be civil requires perfect obedience to be sanctions small or great, and disobedience of smaller sanctions in order to invite larger sanctions is not civil but is rowdy and therefore violent. The faith of the civil resister must be a living faith in the ultimate success of the spirit of suffering and forbearance. Infinite patience must, therefore, be our badge.

Let us now apply this principle to the proposed action: to sit tight in the face of an order of deportation or an imprisonment in order to invite shooting is to avoid the intermediate sanctions and the possibilities of prolongation of slow suffering and also the struggle. Such avoidance is not permissible in civil disobedience; it is calculated to give an excuse to the opponent that they are not non-violent. The natural course would be to obey the order of deportation when it is accompanied by physical force, be it ever so slight. Therefore, even if a youngster duly authorized came to enforce the order of deportation, 500 strong men would in honour be bound meekly and joyously to march out with a young deporting officer whom by the heroic forbearance the 500 are likely to convert into a friend. Once put across the border, the right of marching back and be treated similarly

or worse accrues to the 500. The idea underlying meek suffering is that ultimately it is bound to melt the stoniest heart. It further deprives disobedience of the slightest trace of violence either active or passive.

I wish to analyse the proposed action still further. What is the locking up of arms of the whole Jatha, if it is not passive violence? It is clear that such a solid wall cannot be broken by one man, whereas the creed of non-violence presupposes that a move of violence by the opponent is enough for him to push back a crowd of 20,000 non-violent men.

If, therefore, the Committee accept all the implication of non-violence, I am firmly of opinion, instructions already given as to the action to be taken by the Jatha when it comes in conflict with authority should be revised in terms of what I have sketched above. In that event, only one or the other thing can happen, either the 500 will be deported or imprisoned. But, in both the cases, the act will have been performed with complete meekness on our side. I know the difficulties of following the procedure. The authorities may endlessly continue the seesaw business in order to tire us out. But this difficulty vanishes if we, as a body, claim to be incapable of being tired out. Non-violence, depending as it does on an unquenchable faith in God and in the persistence only of that which is good, does not know what it is to be defeated or to be tired out. If the plan suggested by me is adopted, any number of men may march in and at any time of the day. It will be found in practice that no authority can possibly afford to play the game of seesaw with a people so determined. So much regarding the Jatha now on the march. When the present manoeuvre is finished, I would suggest a review of the whole situation. So far as I know, the aim of the *Akhand Path* movement is to assert the right of the community to have *Akhand Path* in the place [of] that which was interrupted on the. . . <sup>1</sup> and to vindicate the right to have the *Akhand Path* as often as the community considers it necessary. The authorities state that they do not wish to prevent the *Akhand Path* ceremony, but they will not allow under its cover the massing of a large number of Sikhs from outside who may carry on open or secret propaganda regarding the Nabha Maharaja and thus create and keep up the ferment in the State. In order to meet this objection, I would advise the Committee to make a declaration in the clearest possible terms that the

<sup>1</sup> The date is not given in the source. It is, however, likely that this is February 21, 1924; vide "Open Letter to Akalis", 25-2-1924.

object of the Jatha is purely to assert the aforementioned right, that it has no desire to carry on, under cover of the *Akhand Path* ceremony, any political propaganda in the Nabha State, whilst the Committee in no way binds itself to refrain from pressing forward the claims of the Nabha Maharaja and agitating for the Nabha question. But that agitation will stand on its merits and will have no connection with the *Akhand Path* affair. The Committee will also in that case be satisfied with sending a Jatha of 25 without in any way admitting the right of the State to limit the number. It would be purely a voluntary act with a view to disarming suspicion.

But If my advice is accepted, for the time being no Jatha will be dispatched, but negotiations should be a third party with the State authorities with a view to clearing away misunderstanding and removing the deadlock.

If, then, the sending of a Jatha of 500 is suspended for the time being and the declaration sketched above is made, it opens the way for a third party to negotiate with the authorities with a view to removing the deadlock.

#### GURDWARA REFORM MOVEMENT

In connection with the Gurdwara movement I am asked to state the procedure that, in my opinion, should be adopted prior to the direct action sketched in the foregoing notes. The first thing is to state the case fully and publicly as to the conditions of the Gurdwara's mismanagement, e.g. character of the occupant, etc., or notices should also be served on the occupant stating the position of the Committee and asking him to submit to its jurisdiction and control, and informing him that, in the event of his wishing to contest the Committee's possession, the latter would be willing to submit the case to arbitration. The names of the arbitrator or arbitrators on behalf of the Committee should be given in the notice and, in the event of the occupant ignoring the notice or declining to submit to arbitration, the Committee would be free to take direct action<sup>1</sup>.

With reference to the Gurdwaras already possessed by the S.G.P.C., as a matter of truth and justice, I am convinced that, if the party dispossessed disputes this right of the S.G.P.C. to the possession, the Committee should be ready [to] have the matter reopened and settled by arbitration. But I recognize that it would be dangerous and

<sup>1</sup> In the source, the following footnotes are given to this paragraph: 1. "Truth and non-violence," and 2. "A word to Pandit Malaviya."

detrimental to the best interest of the Committee to make any such public announcement at the present moment and whilst the Government is trying its best to injure the Committee and in every way interfere with its activity. With reference to the Gurdwaras claimed to be historical, the only thing, so far as I can see, the Committee can be reasonably expected to do is to prove the historical nature and, If it satisfies the arbitration regarding its possession must rest with or rest in the Committee without any further proof being necessary regarding any other matter.<sup>1</sup>

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 3769

#### 44. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS<sup>2</sup>

[March 9, 1924]

I had long and cordial conversations with the Akali friends. In the course of the conversations, I tendered to them my opinion on the several matters under discussion. The public will not expect me to divulge the matters discussed between us or the opinion given by me, but I am free to state this, that the Akali friends told me that my letter was not received by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee with apathy, and they satisfied me that, under the circumstances, it gave it all the consideration. Unfortunately, my letter was seen by them in the Press so late that they were unable to do more than they did in the matter.<sup>3</sup> My friends informed me to my surprise that there was a general misapprehension in the Punjab that, after the Nankana tragedy I had expressed an opinion that the Gurdwara movement should have been postponed till after the attainment of swarajya and that my recent letter was intended to renew that opinion. I never once expressed the opinion attributed to me, as can be amply verified from my writings and speeches of the time. My recent letter<sup>4</sup> was merely an

<sup>1</sup> In the source here follows a paragraph which forms part of G. N. 3768; *vide* the following item..

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji made this statement to the representative of the Associated Press who called on him to ascertain the result of the week-long discussions between him and the Akali deputation led by Sardar Mangal Singh in regard to Akali activities.

<sup>3</sup> The text that follows is also available from a handwritten, signed draft, dated March 9. G.N. 3768

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Open Letter to Akalis", 25-2-1924.

advice to suspend and not necessarily to stop altogether the sending of the then impending Shahidi Jatha till after deliberation with a Committee of non-Sikh friends, and full introspection and searching of the heart.

From a photostat: G.N. 3768 and 3769; also *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11-3-1924

#### 45. TELEGRAM TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

[Before March 10, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

SRIRAMULU<sup>2</sup> FASTING AT NELLORE UNDER MY ADVICE FOR OPENING A TEMPLE TO HARIJANS. PLEASE GO IF PHYSICALLY ABLE OR SEND SOMEONE AND DO WHAT IS PROPER. I HAVE CONFLICTING WIRES.<sup>3</sup> WIRE POONA.

From a photostat: 117A

#### 46. MESSAGE TO KHADI EXHIBITION, BOMBAY <sup>4</sup>

March 10, 1924

It is beyond doubt that exhibitions of pure khadi are very useful in propagating khadi. But how strange it is that we still have to hold khadi exhibitions! If anyone talks of holding an exhibition to propagate our country's wheat and *bajra*, we consider him an idiot. Is khadi, then, less useful than wheat and *bajra*? If we do not wish to eat oats imported from Scotland in place of our wheat and *bajra*, why do we then insult khadi by importing and wearing cloth from Manchester or Japan? Every patriot and everyone who loves his or her religion must consider this point. We shall surely remain under foreign rule as long as we cannot do without foreign cloth. It is strange that compli-

<sup>1</sup> This telegram was evidently sent from Poona before March 10 when Gandhiji left for Bombay.

<sup>2</sup> Potti Sriramulu Naidu, once an inmate of Sabarmati Ashram, started his fast on March 7 for securing Harijans' entry to the Venugopalaswami Temple at Mulapet. In 1952, he fasted unto death in connection with the formation of an Andhra State.

<sup>3</sup> Earlier, a Press report had described Sriramulu's condition as weak, and stated that the managing trustee of the temple had tried to persuade him to break the fast on the assurance that he would try and induce this co-trustees to throw the temple open to Harijans.

<sup>4</sup> Read out by Kasturba Gandhi after declaring open the exhibition at Mandvi, Bombay.

cated arguments appeal to us rather than this simple one. and until we all learn to take to the royal road of khadi, hand-woven from hand-spun yarn, we have to continue holding khadi exhibitions. Hence I wish all success to the exhibition at Mandvi.

[From Gujarati]

*Gujarati*, 16-3-1924

#### 47 FAREWELL SPEECH, POONA<sup>1</sup>

*March 10, 1924*

In making a speech, I am respectfully disregarding Col. Maddock's instructions. But if I did not speak, I would be doing him an injustice. Ever since he was sent by Government to examine me in Yeravda Jail, Col. Maddock has become my friend. I was reluctant to have an operation, but was so impressed by him that I had to trust him completely. I have full faith in his skill. Of course, it is not for me to give him a testimonial, but the fact of his skill remains. I hope Col. Maddock will devote his leisure hours to the cause of humanity wherever he goes.

Non-violent non-co-operation means goodwill and sympathy towards everyone. I would feel pained if I heard it said that I had ill will towards any person. The pain would persist even after my death. I thank all those who have helped me. You have assured me that you will wear swadeshi clothes. This assurance gives me great pleasure. Swadeshi does not mean ill will towards anybody. May God grant long life and prosperity to Col. and Mrs. Maddock wherever they may be.

[From Gujarati]

*Gujarati*, 16-3-1924

<sup>1</sup> Delivered before the students of the B. J. Medical School, Col. Maddock and other members of the Hospital staff who had met to bid farewell to Gandhiji.



#### 48. *TELEGRAM TO GHANSHYAM JETHANAND*<sup>1</sup>

[On or after *March 10, 1924*]

PLEASE CONVEY LATE MR. BHURGRI'S FAMILY RESPECTFUL  
CONDOLENCES. INDIA HAS LOST IN HIM SINCERE PATRIOT.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8466

#### 49. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*<sup>2</sup>

[After *March 11, 1924*]<sup>3</sup>

Keep your body fit. Then only can I take sufficient work from you and give you some more still.

Take milk at least for fifteen days, if you think you need it. Eat fruit, *roti* will do you harm. Take curds without fail.

Your pronunciation is no doubt bad, but do not worry much over that. English is not our language. The way the French pronounce [it] is very bad, but no Englishman ever complains about it.

From the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5999. Courtesy: G. D. Birla.

#### 50. *INTERVIEW TO "STEAD'S REVIEW"*

[After *March 11, 1924*]<sup>4</sup>

I begged Gandhi to continue his simple meal, tended by an Indian nurse, and he munched an orange while he talked. People came and went silently all the time. Admiring countrymen who flocked to Andheri—often at great inconvenience and

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Ghanshyam Jethanand's telegram to Jairamdas Doulatram, dated March 10, 1924, which read: "Bhurgri expired last night."

<sup>2</sup> Ghanshyam Das Birla; industrialist and philanthropist who gave financial assistance for Gandhiji's schemes of social welfare; member, Second Round Table Conference, 1931.

<sup>3</sup> This is the earliest available letter to G. D. Birla. Its exact date is not ascertainable. It is, however, likely that it was written from Bombay. Gandhiji arrived at Juhu, a sea-side suburb of Bombay, on March 11 and stayed there till May 28 to recoup his health. This and the several letters that follow were written from Juhu during this period, though some of them carry the postal address: Andheri, another neighbouring suburb.

<sup>4</sup> The exact date of this interview is not available. It took place at Juhu, Bombay: some time after March 11, 1924.

expense—to behold their revered leader, made obeisance and withdrew. Others who listened at respectful distance drank in every word that fell from his lips, fervent approval shining in their dark eyes. Yet though the audience gradually swelled to quite fifty, our conversation was never interrupted by so much as a cough. Thus was the naturally loquacious Indian overawed by the presence of his venerated Mahatma.

“Mr. Gandhi.” I said, “I am going to ask you ten questions. You will, of course, reply or decline to answer at your will. Now, why do you make such a feature of preaching home-spinning to Indians? Is it because you hold that India’s economic dependence contributes to its political dependence?” Gandhi declared without hesitation:

Absolutely, when Indians were spinning and weaving their own cotton, they were well off and happy. From the day on which they attempted to sell their cotton to Lancashire, and buy their cloth from Lancashire, they have become increasingly lazy and poor, 85 per cent of India’s population loafs now for 4 months in the year. Foreign cloth has made a nation of idlers and beggars. The charkha (spinning-wheel) will restore to the villager not only prosperity, but also self-respect and hope. For the last fifty years Indians have been losing hope. The charkha is a symbol of a new life which will save them from despair.

Then you put home-spinning even above the crying need of elementary education of your masses?

Why should I wait for my country to be educated in the European sense, before saving it from starvation? Do you know that at least one-third of our 350,000,000 are chronically underfed? They want bread and butter before education. Besides, it is open to question whether Western education would benefit Indians any way. We were happy and prosperous in the old days, without education. We are wretched and poor today, amidst all the vaunted blessings of English civilization. No, I find no difficulty in spreading my gospel of the charkha through lack of understanding. The illiterate villagers welcome the spinning-wheel like a ray of heavenly hope. It is the shortage of trained instructors which hampers our propaganda.

I asked Mr. Gandhi whether he considered the Indian masses ripe for Home Rule.

Certainly, for that kind of Home Rule which I understand under swaraj. But nobody, not even the English people, can “give” us swaraj. We can only give it to ourselves. Home Rule, on the pattern of the Australian or Canadian constitutions, is not swaraj. Still, it will be

infinitely superior to our present state of servitude. If Britain is unwilling to give to us complete independence, I would welcome and accept Home Rule. And I say India is certainly able to enter the British community of nations on that footing.

What is your answer to the generally accepted theory of the advocates of the present political system that India could not rule herself because of the irreconcilable differences of her castes, religions and tribes? Mr. Gandhi smiled.

Of course, there are differences. No nation is without them. The United Kingdom was born amidst the Wars of the Roses. Probably we, too, shall fight. But, when we are tired of breaking each other's heads, we shall discover that, despite the disparities of our races and religions, we can live together, just as the Scotch and Welsh manage to live together. The gravest of India's admitted abuses and prejudices, such as that fatal theory of untouchability of certain Hindu castes, will disappear when the people are emancipated.

Would Indian Home Rule give universal suffrage to the masses?

Practically. I mean that every citizen desirous of vote would get a vote. I do not see the use of compulsory enrolment without compulsory voting. Votes of people who must be driven to the poll are of questionable value. My idea is to open enrolling depots all over the country where those desiring to vote can register their names on payment of a small fee—just enough to make the voting machinery self-supporting. I am convinced that we shall obtain in this way popular mandates as intelligent as in any other country.

Is there not this danger, in a country like India, that released from British restraint, the small intelligentsia of Bengalis, Brahmins, etc., might seize the reins of Government to their own aggrandizement, and the utter enslavement of their ignorant countrymen? Such things, as you are aware, were not unknown in the history of India.

But what makes you anticipate them in these days? What power could such usurpers command today to enslave the people? They would have no army, none of the impregnable entrenchment of the English in this country. Why, if any Indians tried to enslave the people, they would tear them to pieces.

Next to homespinning, Mr. Gandhi, what do you counsel your countrymen to do to attain swaraj?

We must get rid of the unsympathetic domination by a foreign people who only come here to drain our wealth. I have nothing against the English individually. They probably treat us as well as any

other foreign nation would. Of course, there are many minor irritations, inseparable from foreign rule. But our greatest grievance against the English is that they have steadily impoverished India. If Englishmen living in India became loyal, useful citizens of this country, as they became in Australia or South Africa, I should welcome them as my brothers. But they only come here to exploit my people, and to draw the substance from the land. After a century of this steady drain, we are nearing exhaustion. We must either stop this drain, or lose the last traces of our one-time greatness and culture. That is why I ask the English to go away. I am certain we can force them to go, by non-co-operation, without violence. The English may pass laws, but they cannot force us to obey them. They may prescribe taxes, but they can compel only comparatively few to pay them. non-co-operation and non-violence are more potent weapons than guns.

Still, guns have their uses. Mr. Gandhi, you may deprecate them because they are not at your disposal. If you had arms, would you consider yourself justified in using them to drive out the English?

Heaven forbid! Contemplate the carnage and misery wrought by the small nations of Europe during the late War, and then, imagine the terrible consequences of 30 crores of Indians seizing arms! Besides, force never settles one single problem. Behold the present plight of Europe after such a "settlement" by force! We have no right to use force even against our oppressors; but it is our duty to refuse to help them to oppress us further. That is why we must not co-operate with the English till they co-operate with us.

You have studied and travelled much, Mr. Gandhi, and must admit that India would have fared worse under any but British rule, that England has shown much patience and forbearance under many provocations. What more would you have the English do?

The whole of our demands can be compressed into one word, Retire! And if you are not yet willing to retire completely, give us at least the autonomy of your self-governing dominions. We have enough common sense to prefer the half loaf to no bread at all. But if we are to join the family of British nations, we demand a say, not only in our own affairs, but in those of the whole Empire, in proportion to our population. In other words, we shall expect the centre of Imperial interests to be shifted to India, as its most populous component. Any member of the Empire objecting to this change would have the remedy of leaving the Commonwealth of British nations.

As a man of the world you realize that the English are not likely to relinquish, at your mere bidding, their enormous interest, material and political, which they have built up in India by so much labour and sacrifice. How do you picture to yourself the practical fulfilment of your aims? Do you believe that your own efforts, or outside pressure, will eventually bring about your liberation?

Our own efforts can and will end any foreign rule. If all my people understood and practised the true doctrine of non-co-operation and non-violence, we should have swaraj tomorrow. It would descend to us as from Heaven. Indians being frail, like other mortals, we shall have to wait. But our lesson is going home to the remotest villages, and every spinning-wheel that hums in a mud cottage is bringing us nearer our inevitable liberation.

One question more. How do you view Australia's virtual embargo against Asiatics?

I cannot understand this short-sighted policy of a nation which I otherwise admire. It is bad on economic, ethical and political grounds. But I admit that I have not given much attention to Australia's problems. I am too much engrossed in Indian affairs. Therefore, I would not like to express more than my personal, unauthoritative opinion on a question which I have not studied.<sup>1</sup>

*The Searchlight*, 27-6-1924

## 51. LETTER TO MRS. MADDOCK

POST ANDHERI,  
March 14, 1924

DEAR MRS. MADDOCK<sup>2</sup>,

Here is a brief statement of my activities as per my promise:

- (1) Removal of the curse of untouchability among the Hindus.
- (2) The spread of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and the advocacy of the use of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth to the exclusion of all foreign cloth and even cloth woven in Indian mills.
- (3) Advocacy of simple life and, therefore, of the avoidance of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

<sup>1</sup> The report of the interview concludes "This subtle defence precluded any discussion on a controversial subject. . . Gandhi was visibly tired. . . So I wished my courteous informant speedy recovery to complete health, shook hands, and went to ponder over this old new message of non-violence. . ."

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Col. C. Maddock

(4) The establishment of unaided national schools both for the purpose of weaning students from Government institutions as a part of the Non-co-operation struggle, and of introducing education, including industrial training, in keeping with the national problems.

(5) The promotion of unity amongst Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians, Parsees, Jews etc.

I carry on these activities through two institutions. The first is an Ashram near Ahmedabad established in 1916<sup>1</sup> where all those who desire to work out these ideals are invited to join. Its expenses are defrayed out of private contributions made by monied friends who are interested in the activities named. It has at the present moment nearly 100 inmates, both male and female, who include several families from the so-called untouchable class. There is a carding, spinning and weaving school and an ordinary literary school attached to the Ashram. Simple agricultural work also is done there, and an attempt is being made to grow our own cotton.

The second institution is the National Congress which is a vast political organization with a very simple but, in my opinion, perfect constitution. This has adopted practically the whole of the foregoing programme. It has branches in every part of India and has thousands of members who elect representatives annually. Payment of 4 annas and acceptance of the Congress creed entitle an adult male or female to the membership of the Congress and to vote for the election of delegates. The Congress naturally has a larger programme of work than the activities abovenamed, and being a representative body, has no permanent programme, but can change it from year to year. Its aim is the attainment of swarajya, that is, self-government, by peaceful and legitimate means. For the last four years it has sought to attain its end by non-violent non-co-operation with the Government.

My own motive is to put forth all my energy in an attempt to save Indian, that is, ancient culture, from impending destruction by modern, that is, Western culture being imposed upon India. The essence of ancient culture is based upon the practice of the utmost non-violence. Its motto is the good of all including every living thing, whereas Western culture is frankly based upon violence. It therefore, does not respect all life and, in its progress onward, it has not hesitated

<sup>1</sup> This is a slip. The reference is to the Satyagraha Ashram founded at Kochrab, near Ahmedabad, on May 20, 1915, and shifted, on the outbreak of plague in 1917, to Sabarmati.

to resort to wholesale destruction of even human life. Its motto is: Might is Right, and it is essentially individualistic. This does not mean that there is nothing for India to learn from the West, for in spite of the acceptance by the West of the Doctrine of Might is Right, the human touch has not altogether disappeared in the West. The relentless pursuit of a false ideal conceived as truth has opened the eyes of numerous men in the West to the falsity of that ideal. I would like India to copy that spirit of search for the truth in the place of being satisfied with tradition without question, but India can safely copy nothing before she has come to her own and realized that her culture has a very important place in universe and it must be defended at all costs. The importation of Western culture by the British in Indian has meant exploitation of her resources for the supposed benefit of Great Britain. It has brought millions of people to the verge of starvation, and it has almost emasculated whole nation.

The foregoing programme is an attempt to prevent the impending ruin not by Western methods but by Indian methods, namely, by internal reform and self-purification from the very bottom. To remove the curse of untouchability is to do penance for the sin committed by the Hindus of degrading a fifth of their own religionists. To remove the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs not only purifies the nation, but it also deprives an immoral system of Government of an immoral source of revenue to the extent of nearly 25 crores of rupees. To revive hand-spinning and hand-weaving brings back to millions of cottages of India their supplementary industry, revives the old Indian art, removes the degrading pauperism and provides an automatic insurance against famine. At the same time, it deprives Great Britain of the strongest incentive for Indian exploitation, for if India can clothe herself without importing foreign cloth and foreign machinery, the relations between Great Britain and India become natural and almost idealistic. They take the form then of a voluntary partnership resulting in mutual benefit and, probably, benefit to mankind in general. Unity between the different religionists of India prevents Great Britain from pursuing the immoral policy of Divide and Rule, and the practice of non-violence in resisting exploitation and degradation, if it becomes successful, is likely to serve as an example for the whole world to copy.

In following out the programme, mistakes and miscalculations have undoubtedly been made. Regrettable incidents have also taken place, but I make bold to say that no movement in which millions of

people have taken part has yet taken place with so little bloodshed or interruption of the ordinary activities of the people.<sup>1</sup>

I do not know whether I have succeeded in giving you what you wanted. I have endeavoured to be as brief as it was possible.

Please tell Col. Maddock that it was not without grief that I left the hospital. I shall always remember the tender care and attention bestowed by him upon me. I appreciate the gift of his portrait. My very best wishes will accompany you during your voyage and stay at home. I shall prize a line from you or him whenever you think of me and have the time for writing. The place in which I am housed is most delightful. The sea is in front of me. The bungalow is surrounded with the cocoanut palm. The nights are very cool, and generally there is a gentle breeze all the day long. Mr. Andrews and I take a walk along the beautiful sandy beach in Juhu for about half an hour. I fancy that I shall gain strength day by day.

With kind regards,

*Yours sincerely,*

[PS.]

My permanent address is Sabarmati, near Ahmedabad.

MRS. MADDOCK

POONA

From a photostat: S.N. 8488

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Andrews released this part of the letter as a statement in the *Manchester Guardian*, 24-4-1924, with the following observations, *inter alia*: "... This is, I believe, the first concise statement of his aims made by Mahatma Gandhi himself that will have appeared in the English Press. . . . It will come with a surprise to most people because of its economic rather than political character. The truth is not yet realized in England that what is being aimed at by Mr. Gandhi is a revolution far more radical than any mere refusal to enter the Reformed Councils. . . . It appears to have hidden from view the far deeper and more penetrating change of social and economic life which is making India a new country, a country that will not merely be a dreary repetition of the dullness and drabness of the West." *The Searchlight*, 18-5-1924



## 52. STATEMENT ON POTTI SRIRAMULU'S FAST

BOMBAY,  
*March 15, 1924*

Shri Sriramulu is an unknown poor Congressman and servant of humanity working in Nellore. He has been labouring singlehanded for the cause to the Harijans of that place. There was a time when high hope was entertained about removal of untouchability and other social work in Nellore. An ashram was built near Nellore, but for variety of causes the activity received a set-back. Desabhakta Konda Venkatapayya was, and still is, though very old, the moving spirit in connection with these activities. It is in this place that Shri Sriramulu has been quietly and persistently working for the removal, root and branch, of untouchability.

He has been trying to have a temple opened to Harijans. He asked me the other day whether, in order to awaken public conscience in favour of such opening, he could, if all others efforts failed, undertake a fast. I sent him my approval.

Now the place is astir. But some persons have asked me to advise Shri Sriramulu to suspend his fast for removing legal difficulties of which I have no knowledge. I have been unable to give such advice.

As I am anxious that an unobtrusive servant of humanity may not die for want of public knowledge and support, I bespeak the interest of the journalists of the South, if not of all India, to find out for themselves the truth of the matter and, if what I say is borne out by facts, shame by public exposure the opposing parties into doing the right and save a precious life.

From a photostat: 117 A

### 53. LETTER TO ERVIN BAKTAY

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND.

I was very glad indeed to receive your letter<sup>1</sup> of the 8th February. It pleases me to think that the humble work I am doing in my own country is being understood and appreciated in Europe and more so by those who, like my own people, are labouring under oppression. Though my activity is confined to India, I do share with you the belief that the means being adopted in India with non-violence as the corner-stone are of universal application in like circumstances, and if we achieve our true freedom demonstrably by non-violent means, the rest of the world will have no difficulty in putting faith in the invincibility of non-violence in every walk of life.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

ERVIN BAKTAY, ESQ.  
11 MESR. UTEA 12  
BUDAPEST  
(HUNGARY)

From the photostat: G.N. 2831 and S.N 8493

<sup>1</sup> In the course of his letter Ervin Baktay had written: “. . . there are men very far away from India who have faith in your person and your work. I believe that the work which is done by you has a great importance for the whole humanity; the West does not understand it clearly today what your work represents in human history, yet it can be observed that there are many in the West who have a clear or a less distinct feeling about it. . . Even in England and France or America there are men who understood that the Western way of solving great problems by everlasting wars cannot lead but to a general ruin. And the whole world begins to listen more and more to India's message for mankind and this message is yours. Since several years I study Indian religion. Philosophy and literature, and I have the conviction that India's thought has a very great importance for humanity. I believe that Rabindranath Tagore was right in saying: 'the greatest event of our age was the meeting of East and West in India.' Yes, India will pour fresh water into our dried-out wells, for our wells which were once filled to the brim by another holy water (Christ's message) were abandoned by us. Truth is but *one* and the truth in the message of the Upanishads, of Buddha, or

54. *LETTER TO A. A. VOYSEY*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR MR. VOYSEY,

I thank you for your letter of the 14th February.

You will be glad to know that the wound has healed completely and that I am now having my convalescence at a seaside retreat. I shall look forward to the further letter<sup>1</sup> which you promise. If you are writing after receipt of this, it will be better to send your letter to my permanent address, namely, Sabaramati, near Ahmedabad.

Thanking you for your kind thoughts,

*Yours sincerely*

A. A. VOYSEY, ESQ.  
ST. ISIDORE  
PRESS NICE (FRANCE)

From a photostat: S. N. 8494

55. *LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK*

POST ANDHERI  
*March 15, 1924*

MY DEAR HENRY,

I have your letter<sup>2</sup> enclosing your Note on Kenya and a newspaper cutting<sup>3</sup>. I shall read the Note as soon as I have energy enough for taking up my normal activities. For the time being what I have of it I devote to only those matters on which I must express an

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Christ cannot be different. The words and the forms can differ, but the living essence is the same. And there is nobody in this world today whose words and deeds could better express this truth than yours. In you I see the personification of all truth which was ever given to mankind." S.N. 8303

<sup>1</sup> In this Voysey wrote of "a special aspect of human progress which engages my thoughts and which you may feel has some bearing on your work in India, though your work is truly a world work and for all humanity. Blessed and happy are you." S. N. 8329

<sup>2</sup> Not available

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

opinion without delay. I hope you have received my letter<sup>1</sup> posted at Poona. At present I am in Mr. Narottam's<sup>2</sup> bungalow near Andheri. It is delightfully situated, faces the sea, and the waves wash its boundary.

Mr. Andrews is staying with me. He has been sent by the Poet specially to keep me company and to look after me. I am permitted to walk about 30 minutes which I do in the evening.

My love to you all.

*Yours sincerely,*

HY. S. L. POLAK, ESQ.  
47-48, DANES INN HOUSE  
205, STRAND  
LONDON, W. C. 2

From a photostat: s. N. 8495

## *56. LETTER TO ALFRED C. MEYER*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 2-2-1924.

There is at present firm of booksellers in Madras known as S. Ganesan who sell a collection<sup>5</sup> of most of my articles in a weekly called *Young India* and edited by me. It will give you all the information that you are likely to desire.

*Yours sincerely,*

ALFRED C. MEYER, ESQ.  
181, VINE AVENUE  
HIGHLAND PARK  
ILLINOIS, U.S.A.

From a photostat: S.N. 8496

<sup>1</sup> Not available

<sup>2</sup> Narottam Morarji, Agent of Scindia Steam Navigation Company

<sup>5</sup> This refers to the two volumes for 1919-22 and 1922-24.

## 57. LETTER TO V. K. SALVEKAR

POST ANDHERI  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR MR. SALVEKAR<sup>1</sup>,

I thank you for your letter offering me the use of your bungalow in Nasik. I know that the climate of Nasik is very salubrious, but at the present moment I am having my convalescence at a pleasant seaside retreat near Andheri. If this place does not suit me and I am advised to go to a dry place, I shall bear in mind your kind offer.

*Yours sincerely,*

V. K. SALVEKAR, ESQ.  
HATTIKHANA ROAD  
NASIK CITY

From a photostat: S.N. 8501

## 58. LETTER TO S. E. STOKES

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of the 7th instant.<sup>2</sup>

An unknown friend wrote to me that you had asked him to send me some hill honey, and he kindly sent me 5 lbs. It was very good indeed. I understood subsequently that Mohanlal Pandya<sup>3</sup> had written to you for hill honey for me. I know that you have I was then getting good honey from Mahabaleshwar. During my illness I have been so overwhelmed with kindness from those whom I knew and those whom I had never the pleasure of knowing that I feel it was almost worth

<sup>1</sup> Vishwanath Keshav Salvekar, proprietor of Sardar Griha, a hotel in Bombay, had been introduced to Gandhiji by Tilak, who used to stay there occasionally.

<sup>2</sup> Stokes had urged upon Gandhiji that it was in the interests of the country that he should relax. Gandhiji appears to have written earlier to him: "It is my duty before coming to a final decision to understand thoroughly the viewpoint of those who advocated Council-entry." This letter is not available.

<sup>3</sup> A worker of Kheda district

having that illness.

With love from both of us to both of you.

*Yours ever,*

[PS.]

The memoranda have not yet reached me.

S. E. STOKES, ESQ.

HARMONY HALL

KOTGARH

SIMLA HILLS

From a photostat: S. N. 8497

### *59. LETTER TO FRASER ULSINS*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of the 10th February.<sup>1</sup>

I send my autograph on a separate piece of paper. I am sorry I cannot send you one in ink as my hand is yet too shaky for me to write a firm hand with an ink-pen.

*Yours sincerely,*

FRASER ULSINS, ESQ.

THE HILL SCHOOL

POTTSTOWN

PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A.

From a photostat: S. N. 8498

<sup>1</sup> Ulsins had written that he was collecting autographs of famous men and would consider it a great honour to add Gandhiji's signature to his collection.

60. LETTER TO S. A. BRELVI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 15, 1924

DEAR MR. BRELVI,

I have your letter enclosing a synopsis of a novel written by Professor K. T. Shah<sup>1</sup>. I shall go through it as soon as I get the time for it and let you know whether I shall want the whole manuscript.

*Yours sincerely,*

S. A. BRELVI, ESQ.  
“BOMBAY CHRONICLE” OFFICE  
FORT  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8504

61. LETTER TO M. PRATAP

POST ANDHERI,  
March 15, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I was glad to receive your letter. When I went to Prem Vidyalaya, I believe Bhai Kotwal talked to me about you. Whilst it is true that we seem to see in Nature both the benignant and the malignant forces in full activity, I am convinced that it is the prerogative of man to rise superior to the eternal duel and to attain equanimity, and the only way we can do so is by practising to the fullest extent the truth-force, otherwise described as love-force or soul-force. You will not expect me to argue out the point. I can only place before you my conviction based upon prolonged experience during which I cannot recall a single occasion when this force has not completely answered. No doubt it requires the cultivation of patience, humility and the like.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. PRATAP, ESQ.  
BAGH BABER  
KABUL

From a photostat: S.N. 8499

<sup>1</sup> Economist and author; secretary, National Planning Committee, set up by the Indian National Congress. He had written a historical novel in English dealing with the Non-co-operation movement with Gandhiji as the central figure.

## 62. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI<sup>1</sup>

POST ANDHERI,  
March 15, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND,

“Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow.” Why worry about anything? There is an under-note<sup>2</sup> of sorrowful despair about your letter<sup>3</sup>. Better that, however, than nothing. You want me to whip you into cheerfulness and for my encouragement you cite the noble example of your cousin in Zanzibar. Only, he had a black boy who was really a boy to deal with, whereas I have the very difficult task of correcting a grown-up old boy with a hoary beard and a fair face. It was a comparatively easy task to brave the operation for appendicitis. But how shall I, a mere youngster compared to you, perform the task you expect me to handle? However, when we meet, I shall endeavour to prepare myself for it. You<sup>4</sup> do not know that at the present moment I am sporting a proper Afghan stick. Therefore better beware. Permission to lodge with me is only granted to fellow-patients. You are suffering from melancholia and are hereby permitted to come whenever you choose and can. Only the upper floor rooms are all practically taken up. If, therefore, you want privacy, I shall have to condemn you to a first-floor room, but I have just received a letter from Devchand Parekh of Kathiawar that that tyrant-king of Gujarat, Vallabhbbhai, is packing you off to Kathiawar.

I am making steady progress. I am putting through a fair amount of work every day. I am not yet capable of much physical exertion.

How is Mrs. Abbas? Where are the girls? What are they doing? Devdas told me that Fatima had at last been married. To whom was she married? Are the couple happy? Where are they staying? What is the hasband doing? You see I am interested in all the members of the family because for so many years now it has made me one of the

<sup>1</sup> Abbas Tyabji (1853-1936); former judge of Baroda High Court; nationalist Muslim leader of Gujarat. He was one of the Commissioners appointed by the Punjab sub-committee of the Congress to report on the Punjab disorders.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a slip for “undertone”

<sup>3</sup> This was dated March 13.

<sup>4</sup> The source has “we” which is a slip.

<sup>5</sup> This was a form of greeting used by Gandhiji and the addressee for each other.



members! You must excuse a dictated domestic letter. My hand is too shaky to write as much as I should like to, and as I wanted to give you a fairly long letter, I had to choose between not writing such a letter or<sup>1</sup> dictating. I have chosen the latter course.

With love to you all and *bhurr*<sup>4</sup> to you in addition.

*Yours,*

M. K. G.

ABBAS TYABJIESQ.

BARODA CAMP

From a photostat: S.N. 9595

### 63. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

POST ANDHERI,

*March 15, 1924*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter, and I had your and Mahomed Ali's telegrams regarding Panikkar.<sup>2</sup> Your letter embarrasses me a little. I have not intended, nor do I intend now to form any decided opinion about making appointments, fixing salaries, etc. As I shared Joseph's opinion that he should be by his wife's side when she was so much troubled, and as the Sikh friends who came to see me seemed to be very anxious to have a substitute for Gidwani, a substitute who could also edit their paper *Onward*, I was on the look-out for one. They wanted Sundaram who used to be on the *Independent* and suggested

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a slip for "and"

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji appears to have wired Jawaharlal Nehru on March 12. The telegram is not available. Nehru replied to it on March 13. He had written: "I have known Panikkar by repute for several years and met him for a short time in Cocanada. I am sure his presence will be very useful in Amritsar. His ignorance of Hindustani will be a drawback, but this will be more than compensated by his other attainments. He will be an excellent man for publicity work. Perhaps, owing to his language difficulty, he might not be very helpful in bringing the Sikhs and Hindus nearer to each other. But on the whole Panikkar will be an acquisition in Amritsar. As regards terms, anything that you consider reasonable will surely be agreed to by all others. Technically, the Working Committee will not meet till the 21st April. The terms suggested in your telegram are rather complicated, but that is for you to decide. I am glad that Panikkar contemplates a lengthy stay at Amritsar. Personally, I doubt if it will be necessary for him to stay for many months. There is just a possibility of Gidwani coming out sooner and an equal possibility of Gidwani's successor going in. Of course, Panikkar will not unnecessarily invite jail, but neither did Gidwani."

that he could do both the things—publicity and editing. On my arrival at the retreat near Andheri, I saw Panikkar who had come to see Mr. Andrews in order to discuss the advisability of an offer that was made to him by the *Indian Daily Mail*. He had hesitation in accepting the offer because the *Mail* politics were not his. I then thought of the publicity work and asked Panikkar whether he would shoulder the burden, and as I did not know him well, I consulted Mr. Andrews too, and when Panikkar was prepared to go to Amritsar if you wanted him and as Mr. Andrews thought that he would make a very good substitute for Gidwani, I wired. But I had no desire that you should be influenced in any way by the wire because it was from me. If I was well and could acquaint myself with all the details, I should certainly have given my advice and opinion as to the selection, but for the present beyond interesting myself in the few things in which I must, I really do not want to tax my energy.

With reference to the salary the position was this. Panikkar was in the *Swarajya* office at Rs. 700/- per month, but as the paper is not, self-supporting, it has not been able to pay him a few months' salary. He left it because he could not hit it off with Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. He has to discharge a debt of Rs. 900 in Madras. He needs Rs. 300 per month. I therefore thought that if he was paid Rs. 900 in advance, he could discharge the debt and proceed to Amritsar. He would still want his expenses [to be met] at Amritsar. For this Rs. 100 monthly should be paid to him by way of loan. At the end of 3 months' service, therefore, he will be owing to the Congress Rs. 300. This may again be deducted from his salary at the rate of Rs. 100 per month. That means that he has to serve for 6 months in order to discharge the loan he would be receiving. I am now perturbed because I gather from your letter that he may not be wanted for that length of time. I would not like to be the instrument of useless expense to the Congress. I propose, therefore, to place the whole situation before Panikkar, and he will probably agree that if his services are dispensed with before 6 months, he should be liable for the unpaid balance of the loan. He is not here at the present moment, or I should have sent you a more decisive letter.

I do not feel that you would want me, if it was possible, to cancel the engagement with Panikkar and am therefore letting it stand and sending him to Amritsar tomorrow. In accordance with your latest telegram, he will be going direct to Amritsar. Please authorize the

Treasurer to reimburse to me the amount that I shall be paying Panikkar.

Indeed, if I was minded to influence you, I should ask you to reconsider the question of each appointment for two reasons:

- (1) Should the Congress spend money on non-Congress work?
- (2) What should be the maximum the Congress should pay its servants?

So much for business. My wound is completely healed, but the affected part is yet tender and requires care and attention. The seaside convalescence is likely to suit me. I propose, if all goes well, to stop here for 3 months. During the time I shall be doing as much writing work as I can and conferring with the leaders upon the Council-entry, etc. Father, Hakimji and others are expected here by the end of the month. You need not hesitate to come down for consultation whenever you wish. I expect in any event to see you on the 20th prox. as I understand the Working Committee meets on that date. I do hope you are keeping well and taking care of yourself.

Panikkar has seen this letter and he will hold himself ready to be relieved whenever you think it necessary and would be liable for repayment of the loan.

*Yours sincerely,*

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

From a photostat: S.N. 8503

#### 64. LETTER TO A. A. PAUL

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 15, 1924*

DEAR MR. PAUL,

I have your letter of the 8th inst. enclosing a copy of Mr. Aitken's letter. I believe he and I know each other. If he is the Mr. Aitken I know, he knows my views very well. However, I shall jot them down here for what they are worth.

The Indian community of South Africa includes people from all provinces and represents Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. There are many South Africa-born Indians who are Christians and are highly educated and therefore naturally very sensitive about self-respect. The restrictive legislation of South Africa applies to them although South Africa is their home and although the majority of them never expect to see India at all. It is not known here that rightly

or wrongly these young men and women have adopted European customs, manners, dress, etc., but neither their Christianity nor their education nor their Europeanization has saved them from the bar sinister. I mention this fact not to show that they should have a special or separate treatment (they would themselves object to any such distinction), but to emphasize the fact that the restrictive legislation in South Africa is predominantly racial in character. The economic aspect occupies a subordinate position. The Indian claim is exceedingly simple and reasonable. They have voluntarily accepted administrative restriction of Indian immigration and, as a matter of fact, hardly any Indian who has not previously resided in South Africa and practically made it his home is admitted. In exchange for this voluntary self-denial, the domiciled community claims equality of treatment. This position has been always regarded by the thoughtful Europeans of South Africa as eminently reasonable, and in 1914, an agreement was arrived at between the South African Government and the Indian community to which both the Imperial and the Indian Governments were party, whereby it was understood that no further restrictive legislation should be passed and that the position of the domiciled Indians would be steadily and progressively ameliorated.<sup>1</sup> The local Indian community, therefore, has a double grievance in respect of the present anti-Indian agitation in South Africa. The vast majority of Europeans in South Africa are nominally Christian. I have the privilege of claiming many of them, especially the missionaries, as my life-long friends. What is wanted is for the real Christians to dare to stand for truth and justice. There is unfortunately too much of expedience even amongst some of the best of them. They think that standing for truth in the face of prejudice will impair their usefulness for service. I have always dissented from this view, and my humble opinion based upon extensive experience is that such an attitude is a concession, although totally unconscious, to Satan.

I need hardly assure you that Mr. Aitken's letter will be regarded as strictly confidential and, on that account, I shall make no use of my letter to you either.

*Yours truly,*

A. A. PAUL, ESQ.  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF INDIA, BURMA & CEYLON  
6, MILLER ROAD, KILPAUK  
MADRAS

From a photostat: S.N. 8500 and 9927

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Cable to G. K. Gokhale", 22-1-1914.

## 65. CABLE TO EAST AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS<sup>1</sup>

[On or after *March 15, 1924*]

CONGRESS  
MOMBASA

DELIGHTED      COMMUNITY      GOING      FORWARD      WITH      PRO-  
GRAMME      SUFFERING      SUCCESS      YOURS      IF      YOU  
CONTINUE.      REGRET      UNABLE      SEND      ANYONE.      ANDREWS  
JOINS.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat: S.N. 9926

## 66. CABLE TO SAROJINI NAIDU<sup>3</sup>

[Before *March 16, 1924*]<sup>4</sup>

PRAY      TELL      GENERAL      SMUTS      AND      RESPONSIBLE  
EUROPEANS      THAT      THE      CLASS      AREAS      BILL<sup>5</sup>      IS      A  
POOR      RECOMPENSE      FOR      THE      LOCAL      INDIANS'      EX-  
EMPLARY      SELF-RESTRAINT      THROUGHOUT      THE      INTEREST-  
ED      CAMPAIGN      AGAINST      THEM.      EUROPEANS      SHOULD  
REMEMBER      THAT      THE      LOCAL      INDIANS      VOLUNTARILY  
SUBMITTED      TO      THE      ADMINISTRATIVE      RESTRICTION      OF  
FURTHER      INDIAN      IMMIGRATION.      REMIND      THE      UNION  
GOVERNMENT      OF      THE      ASSURANCE      GIVEN      TO      GOKHALE.<sup>6</sup>  
THAT      NO      FURTHER      DISABLING      LEGISLATION      WILL      BE

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a cable from the East African Indian Congress dated March 15, which read: "Non-payment going ahead. Government callous imprisoning attaching property. Request send four workers preferably Andrews, Vallabhbbhai, Mahadevbhai, Devdas. You visit Kenya recovery health."

<sup>2</sup> At the end of the draft telegram Gandhiji wrote: "Let Mr. Andrews see this and forward tomorrow if the approves."

<sup>3</sup> Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949); poetess, social reformer; lectured widely in India and the U.S.A. in 1928-29; first woman President of the Congress, 1925. She was in South Africa at this time.

<sup>4</sup> *Gujarati*, 16-3-1924, carried a translation of this cable.

<sup>5</sup> This, though not specifically directed against Indians, contained provisions which could be used in urban areas for the compulsory segregation of Asiatics", and "might well have led to the utter ruin of many Indian traders. . . . "The bill lapsed for the year 1924 as a consequence of the unexpected dissolution of the South African House of Assembly.

<sup>6</sup> On his visit to South Africa in 1921.

PASSED. ALSO THE COMPACT OF 1914<sup>1</sup> NOTHING SINCE  
 DONE BY THE LOCAL INDIANS DESERVES THE PROPOSED  
 TREATMENT . ACCEPTANCE OF THE CLASS AREAS BILL  
 IS TANTAMOUNT TO POLITICAL AND CIVIL SUICIDE.  
 I TRUST YOUR WINSOME ELOQUENCE WILL DISARM  
 OPPOSITION AND MAKE THE LOT OF YOUR COUNTRY-  
 MEN EASIER FOR YOUR PRESENCE.

From a microfilm of a newspaper cutting: S.N. 8535

## 67. LETTER TO J. P BHANSALI

POST ANDHERI,  
 March 16, 1924

MY DEAR BHANSALI,

How glad I was to receive your letter! I have gone through the greater part of it. I have not yet read the cuttings you have attached to it. I want to write out my jail experiences. Your notes<sup>2</sup> will be valuable. I propose to send them to Jairamdas for him to add, amend or merely corroborate. Having remained in perfect isolation from you all, my statement must in some respects be one-sided. Your notes will, therefore, as I have said, be of value.

I confess that I had not thought of referring to you or Jairamdas at the time of writing my experiences. Nothing had matured in my mind as I am just now occupied with the things on which I must give my opinion. Your letter, however, has come at a most opportune moment. You have said nothing about yourself. Do please let me have a line. Hardly a day has passed but I have thought of you. I had inquired of you of everyone who had come from the Ashram.

*Yours,*

SJT. J. P. BHANSALI  
 SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM  
 SABARMATI

From a photostat: S.N. 8506

<sup>1</sup> Made between Gandhiji and General Smuts, on January 22, 1914, it bound the Government to the principle of consultation with Indians before any legislation affecting them was passed. *Vide* "Cable to G. K. Gokhale", 22-1-1914, "Interview ti *Rand Daily Mail*", 23-1-1914, "Letter to Bhavani Dayal", 23-1-1914, "Cable to G. K. Gokhale", on or before 25-1-1914, "Speech at Mass Meeting", 25-1-1914, "Cable to G. K. Gokhale", 26-1-1914, "Letter to Indian Grievances Commission", 26-1-1914 and "Smuts-Gandhi Correspondence", 28-1-1914.

<sup>2</sup> These are not available. It is however likely that these related to Bhansali's own experiences of jail life; *vide* also the following item.

68. *LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 16, 1924*

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

Bhansali has sent me the accompanying notes. I would like you to go through them and add, amend or corroborate. It will help me to supplement my own jail experiences so that I may not give a mere rosy picture. Do also tell me when you write as to how you are getting on and tell me all about Dr. Choithram's health. He must get well very quickly.

SJT. JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM  
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a photostat: S.N. 8507

69. *LETTER TO A. D. SKENE CATLING*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 16, 1924*

DEAR MR. CATLING,

I thank you for your note sent through Mr. Panikkar.

I shall be delighted to see you and Mr. Iyer on Wednesday at the time stated by you.

*Yours sincerely,*

A. D. SKENE CATLING, ESQ.  
MESSRS REUTERS LIMITED  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8509

70. *LETTER TO D. HANUMANTRAO*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 16, 1924*

MY DEAR HANUMANTRAO,

I have your long but welcome letter. You need not apologize henceforth for the length of your letter because you never write idly.

The only way for those of us who, living in isolated, unprotected places, rely for protection upon God's grace and not upon force of arms, is to have as few valuables as possible whether in the shape of money or otherwise, and to cultivate fellowship even with the roughest element surrounding us. That is what is being attempted at Sabarmati.

I appreciate your suggestion regarding the founding of an Ashram like the Sabarmati one in the different Provinces of India. I would like to do so, but they cannot be founded for the mere wish. We need the proper stamp of men and I have no knowledge of them. You have established one and you realize the difficulty of carrying it on. There is another at Wardha, as you know, conducted by Vinoba, whom you know. It came into being because a Vinoba was found. There is another near Andheri, because a Keshavrao Deshpande has been found. All the four are struggling. Such Ashrams are an organic growth and they will come into being in their own time, but I like the centre of your suggestion, namely that I should remain at the Sabarmati Ashram and endeavor to make it perfect. I would love to do it. The external political activity is not of my seeking. I therefore cannot give it up of my will. If God desires that I should develop the Ashram by being in it, He will make my way clear. If it is a real organic growth, I know that it will continue to make progress whether I am in it or outside. After all, if any such institution has to depend merely upon one man's existence on earth, it has to perish with him, but if it is to be of a permanent character, it must depend for its existence upon its own independence and internal vitality. Nor need we be impatient about their progress or success. It is sufficient if we do the best according to our lights and leave the rest to Him who disposes of everything. I think you have done well in not taking upon your shoulders the grave responsibility of taking young women in the Ashram so long as you have no woman worker who can stand on her own and who can become a wall of protection to such girls. I shall hope that your own wife will be such in time.

Now about the Nature-cure. Every change at Sabarmati, so far as diet and medicinal aid are concerned, is, I know, a fall. It commenced with my first serious illness. It shook me and I lost confidence in myself, whereas at Kochrab I handled fearlessly and with confidence in Nature's healing power two cases of confluent small-pox in the face of medical opposition and serious enteric fever at the same time. At Sabarmati, after my illness, I have not been able to handle even trivial cases. My theory is that a man who himself becomes a prey to



illness is unfit to guide others. I tried almost to the point of obstinacy to do without milk and ghee, but I failed. Had the illness not overcome me, I would have continued my experiments, but I was nonplussed, and I must make the same sad confession about medicine. A man who advises abstention from such things must be prepared with an effective substitute. Having myself become a broken reed, I have allowed things to take their own course. This breakdown in the application of Nature-cure is a tragedy of my life. Not that I have lost faith in it, but I have lost confidence in myself. Help me to recover it. You can see how Maganlal understands me through and through. He has sent Shivabhai to you without any reference to me, because he realizes our tragic fate just as much as I do. We shall all, therefore, be watching your progress with greatest sympathy and attention. You will therefore not hesitate to write to me about this whenever you have anything new to tell me.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. D. HANUMANTRAO  
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM  
PALLEPADU (NELLORE DIST.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 8508; also C.W. 5113

### *71. LETTER TO MANGAL SINGH*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 16, 1924*

DEAR SARDAR MANGAL SINGH,

This will introduce to you Mr. Panikkar who is coming there to replace Professor Gidwani. You may know that Mr. Panikkar is an M.A. of Oxford with First Class Honours. He was a Professor in the Aligarh Muslim University and non-co-operated on my imprisonment. He was in the *Swarajya* office with Mr. Prakasam for some time. If you want him, he will edit the *Onward* also. I have given him the purport of our conversations. I believe that Mr. Panikkar has assimilated the essentials of the doctrine of non-violence. I have told him that he is to give the public an unvarnished and impartial statement about all the happenings in connection with the movement of the S.G.P.C. Whilst he must necessarily be sympathetic in his consideration of the situation as it presents itself to him from time to time, he must not hide short-comings if he notices any, and I have told

him too that not to hide them would be the best service he can render to the cause. He will, of course, show the head of the S.G.P.C. all the reports that he makes to the Congress Committee from time to time previous to their despatch to the Secretary.

Will you kindly make arrangements for Mr. Panikkar's lodgings and ordinary comforts and also take him to Mrs. Gidwani and Mrs. Kitchlew.

I hope the work is going on smoothly. Please remember me to the friends who accompanied you. I hope to hear from you in due course. I need hardly say how glad I was to find that the Jatha allowed itself to be arrested without a murmur and in a dignified manner.<sup>1</sup>

M. K. GANDHI

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH  
AMRITSAR

From a photostat: S.N. 9929

## 72. TELEGRAM TO SHUKLA<sup>2</sup>

[On or after *March 16, 1924*]

CONGRATULATIONS	COMMUNITY	FOR	JATHA'S	DIGNIFIED
PEACEFUL	SURRENDER.	ANDREWS	JOINS.	PANIKKAR
REACHING	THERE	TUESDAY.	PLEASE	MEET.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 9928

<sup>1</sup> On March 17, Mangal Singh replied, saying that the earlier instructions to the Jatha to "sit tight" and "not willingly give themselves up for arrest" were later revised and they were asked to "gladly surrender". 500 of the Jatha accordingly surrendered. He spoke of the "splendid behaviour, cool courage and remarkable restraint displayed by the Jatha" and requested Gandhiji to address them a few lines on this point.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to a telegram from Shukla of Akali Sahayak Bureau dated March 15 received on March 16, 1924, which read: "Second Shahidi Jatha on receiving order of arrest surrendered itself in exemplary manner. Official poster at Amritsar admits their peaceful behaviour."

### 73. THE ROOT OBJECTION

ANDHERI,  
*March 17, 1924*

A document dated the 1st of February 1920 and signed by me at Lahore and handed to Dr. (now sir) Joseph Nunan<sup>1</sup> has been reproduced in an elaborate paper (dated 22nd November, 1923) on the status of Indians abroad. As it has been used in support of a scheme of Indian colonization in British Guiana and as it is stated in that paper—"so far as is known, it still expresses Mahatma Gandhi's attitude towards British Guiana," it is necessary to make my position clear. The statement made by me in the February of 1920 is as follows:

Lahore, 1st February, 1920

From the outset Mr. Gandhi made it perfectly clear that he was not prepared to take any step that could be construed as a personal encouragement by him to Indians to leave India. He was not in favour of the emigration of Indians. At the same time he realized that many held different views on this point and he was equally not in favour of using compulsion, by legislative or

executive action to compel Indians to stay at home. They should be treated as free citizens at home and abroad. They should certainly, however, be protected from misrepresentation. He knew nothing to prevent people emigrating now except a Defence of the Realm Regulation which would expire six months after the War. (This is the regulation preventing the emigration of unskilled labourers for work abroad, until six months after the War, unless under special or general licence.)

Once assured that equal rights for Indians existed in regard to political, municipal, legal, commercial and industrial matters in British Guiana, and that they were not alone receiving fair treatment from the administration and the general community, but would be guaranteed the continuance of such fair treatment, he would not oppose any scheme of free colonization by Indian agricultural families.

He was satisfied that the Colony had liberal constitution, and that Indians could be and were elected to membership of the Legislature and to municipal office. He was satisfied that they had equality of rights with other races, and that there were opportunities of acquiring land for settlement. He was in favour of allowing a test of the scheme subject to a report at the end of six months on its working by Mr. C. F. Andrews or some other representative

<sup>1</sup> Attorney-General of British Guiana. In 1920 he led a deputation to India to recruit emigrants for colonization in British Guiana.

of the Indian popular leaders. The deputation accepted this proposal of a report by a popular representative independently of any supervising officer nominated by the Indian Government, and offered to pay all expenses.

Mr. Gandhi agreed that all necessary guarantees for the continuance of equal treatment could be furnished by the Colonial Office and British Guiana Government through the Government of India to the Indian people and its popular leaders.<sup>1</sup>

It was hardly fair to use this statement in support of any scheme. It could only be used for supporting a trial shipment under the supervision of Mr. C. F. Andrews or someone having the same status and having the same intimate knowledge of the position of British Indians abroad. But I admit that if such a trial proved successful from the Indian standpoint, I should be bound, under the foregoing statement, not to oppose a scheme of colonization under proper safeguards. My views, however, since the February of 1920, about the British system of Government have, as is well known, undergone a revolutionary change. At the time I gave the statement, my faith in that system, in spite of bitter, hostile experiences, had not altogether disappeared. But now I am able no longer to rely upon verbal or written promises made by persons working under that system and in their capacity as officials or supporters. The history of Indian emigrants to South Africa, East Africa and Fiji is a history of broken promises and of ignominious surrender of their trust by the Imperial Government and the Indian Government, whenever it has been a question of conflicting interests of Europeans against Indians. The handful of Europeans have almost succeeded in East Africa in bullying the Imperial Government into sacrificing the prior rights of Indian settlers there. In South Africa, the Indian settlers' fate is trembling in the balance. In Fiji, the Indian is still the underdog. There is no reason to suppose that British Guiana, if the test came, will be an exception. The moment Indians become successful rivals of Europeans in that colony, that very moment all guarantees, written or verbal, will disappear. Filled as I am with utter distrust of the British Imperial system, I am unable to countenance any scheme of emigration to British Guiana, no matter how promising it may appear on paper and no matter what guarantees may be given for due fulfillment of the pledges given. The benefit that must accrue to the Indian emigrants under any such scheme will be illusory. I am,

<sup>1</sup> For Gandhiji's views on the question expressed in 1920, *vide* "Punjab Letter", 2-2-1920 & "British Guiana and Fiji Deputation", 4-2-1920.

therefore, unable to countenance the proposed scheme of Indian colonization in British Guiana. I do not hesitate to give my opinion without consultation with the British Guiana deputations because of the root objection stated above. If I had to express an opinion upon the merits of the scheme, the ordinary rule of courtesy would have bound me, before saying anything hostile to it, to meet the British Guiana deputation's and understand their view-points. Not till India has come to her own and has a government fully responsible to her people and able effectively to protect Indian settlers abroad from injustice can any advantage accrue to Indian emigrants even under an ideal scheme.

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 20-3-1924

#### 74. LETTER TO A. W. BAKER<sup>1</sup>

POST ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR MR. BAKER,

I was delighted to receive your letter with *The Key to Happiness. Be Careful for Nothing* has ever been with me, and did I not place all my worries at the feet of God, I should have gone mad by this time. All I can say at present about the other part of your letter is that I am endeavouring to follow where God leads me. Nothing can possibly keep me away from that light except my ignorance. I have no axes to grind, no worldly ambition to serve. The only purpose of life is to see God face to face, and the more I see of life and its experiences, the more I feel that everyone does not receive the light in the same way even as, though the sun is the same, we see it differently from the equatorial regions, from the temperate zone and from the frigid zone. But I do not wish to argue with you. I have simply stated what has become a deep conviction with me.

<sup>1</sup> Attorney for Dada Abdulla Sheth, whom Gandhiji met in Pretoria in 1893; introduced the latter to Christian friends. Gandhiji wrote of him: "He still corresponds with me. In his letters he always dwells on the same theme. He upholds the excellence of Christianity."

Do please remember me to the friends I had the privilege of knowing there.

*Yours sincerely,*

A. W. BAKER, ESQ.  
HILLCREST  
P. O. NORTH RAND  
TRANSVAAL

From a copy: S.N. 8528; also C.W. 5128

## 75. LETTER TO HARDAYAL NAG

POST ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR MR. NAG<sup>1</sup>,

I have your letter of the 9th instant.

Thanks for your inquiry about my health. I am making steady progress and am able to attend to my correspondence. Do please therefore write whatever you wish to.

*Yours sincerely,*

BABU HARDAYAL NAG  
CHANDPUR  
DIST. TIPPERAH (BENGAL)

From a photostat: S.N. 8519; also C.W. 5122

## 76. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR DR. ANSARI<sup>3</sup>,

How relieved I was to receive your comforting wire. Many thanks for it. The Big Brother cannot afford to be laid up in bed. The work before [us] is appalling and we are so few to do it. Please keep me informed of the patient's progress from day to day.

<sup>1</sup> President, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to Dr. Ansari's telegram of March 18, concerning Shaukat Ali's illness, which read: "Blood examination proved mild typhoid infection. Temperature varies 101 to 104. No complications, no anxiety." S.N. 8517. Gandhiji also wrote to Shaukat Ali; *vide* the following item.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari (1880-1936); nationalist Muslim leader; President, Muslim League, 1920; President, Indian National Congress, 1927.

Pray remember me to Begum Ansari, Dr. Abdur Rahman and other friends.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8521

*77. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI*

*March 18, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND AND BIG BROTHER,

It will becomes you to have typhoid fever or any fever. Let illness be only my lot in our circle. But I do not want to inflict a long letter on you. May God soon restore you.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8520

*78. LETTER TO N. K. BEHARE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 18, 1924*

DEAR MR. BEHARE,

I have the text of the resolutions passed by the Depressed Classes Conference held at Koteshwar. You may depend upon my doing all that is possible for me to do in the common cause.

*Yours sincerely,*

N. K. BEHARE, ESQ.  
NORMAL SCHOOL  
WARDHA

From a photostat: S.N. 8522; also C.W. 5121

## 79. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR MOTILALJI<sup>1</sup>,

I have your telegram about rejection of the Finance Bill.<sup>2</sup> I rejoice because the victory gives you joy, but I cannot enthuse over it, nor am I amazed at the victory. With proper discipline and tact it was not an impossible feat, and I never doubted your very great tactfulness and persuasive eloquence and your patience with threats, and I entirely agree with you that, if you had more time for organization and a larger backing from the country, you would have carried everything before you in the Provincial as well as the Central Legislature. What, however, I cannot get over I explained somewhat to Lalaji<sup>3</sup>. Since then my views have developed further along the same line, and at one time I thought of dictating a fairly long letter setting forth my views, but I held back for three reasons. I doubted the wisdom of the course. Knowing how busy you are, I felt I ought not to inflict a long letter on you, and thirdly, I wanted to conserve my energy for the things I must do from day to day. If you are able to carry out the original programme, we shall meet before long.

I hope in the midst of your very wonderful activities you are keeping good health.

*Yours sincerely,*

[PS.]

I have just received your second wire. How I wish I could see eye to eye with you and thus share your joy to the full.

PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU  
25, WESTERN HOSTEL  
DELHI

From a photostat of the typewritten office copy: S.N. 8525; also C.W. 5118

<sup>1</sup> Motilal Nehru (1861-1931); lawyer and politician; co-founder of Swaraj Party; elected to Central Legislative Assembly in 1923 and 1926; presided over Committee which drafted Nehru Report, 1928; President of the Indian National Congress, 1919 and 1928

<sup>2</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai

<sup>3</sup> On March 17, on a motion by Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Central Legislative Assembly had withheld leave to introduce the Finance Bill by 60 votes against 57. Motilal Nehru's telegram, dated March 18, said: 'Finance Bill again introduced today with Viceroy's recommendation. Assembly refused leave without division.'



## 80. LETTER TO FRANCIS LOW

POST ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR MR. LOW,

I have your note of the 17th instant.<sup>1</sup>

I shall be glad to see your representative on Thursday next at 9 a.m.

*Yours sincerely,*

FRANCIS LOW, ESQ.  
“EVENING NEWS OF INDIA”  
TIMES BUILDING  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8524; also C.W. 5123

## 81. LETTER TO FRANK P. SMITH

POST ANDHERI,  
March 18, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I must thank you for your letter of 5th February and for [your] appreciation.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

FRANK P. SMITH, ESQ.  
MESSRS THOMPSON & SMITH  
LAWYERS  
SAPULPA, OKLA.  
U.S.A.

From a copy: C.W. 5119

<sup>1</sup> Francis Low, then Assistant Editor, had proposed that, in view of Gandhiji's health, the interview should not be long or of an exhaustive character, but should deal with the representative's impressions of his visit. For the report, *vide* "Interview to *Evening News of India*", 20-3-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Frank P. Smith, of a firm of lawyers, Oklahoma, U.S.A., had written: "With all of the world figures of statesmanship in mind, I greet you as the foremost one from a real Christian standpoint. The great principle of all wisdom, progressing materially with all power that works anywhere to its infinite ends, will vindicate my esteem of you. Your policy is the first one which practically concedes the supremacy of the spiritual over the material, the superiority of the power of love over that of physical force. We could well follow. . . your example to a peace that will be universal and lasting. . . ." S.N. 8234

## 82. LETTER TO HOWARD S. ROSS

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 18, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter<sup>1</sup> of the 15th February.

In the present state of my health, I am able only to give my attention to things I know and which I dare not avoid.

*Yours sincerely,*

HOWARD S. ROSS, ESQ.  
MESSRS. MONTY, DURANLEAU, ROSS AND ANGERS  
BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS  
VERSAILLES BUILDING  
90, ST. JAMES STREET  
MONTREAL (CANADA)

From a photostat: S.N. 8523; also C.W. 5120

## 83. LETTER TO K. P. KESAVA MENON

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 19, 1924*

MY DEAR KESAVA MENON,

I have your letter.<sup>2</sup>

I know that the condition of the suppressed classes is the worst in your part of India. As you say, they are not merely untouchable, but they may not walk through certain streets. Their condition is truly deplorable. I do not wonder that we have not yet attained swaraj. To vindicate the right of these countrymen of ours to the use of public streets, the Provincial Committee is organizing a procession containing

<sup>1</sup> This referred to a scheme for the substitution of a 'work-unit' for a 'result-unit', which, it claimed, was the 'cause of all trouble' in labour relations. Ross also sent Gandhiji a copy of *Equitist*, organ of the 'Equitist' movement. S.N. 8336

<sup>2</sup> Kesava Menon, Secretary, District Congress Committee, had informed Gandhiji in his letter of March 12 that a procession of the *Ezhavas*, the *Tiyyas* and the *Pulayas*—the 'unapproachables'—would be taken on a 'prohibited' public road round the temple, "to be conducted in the most orderly way possible". *Vide* Appendix "Extract from K. P. Kesava Menon's Letter", 25-3-1924.

them that shall pass through the forbidden streets.<sup>1</sup> This is a species of satyagraha. At this stage I do not need to draw attention to its conditions. There should be no show of force if any of our people oppose their progress. You should meekly submit and take all the beating, if any. Everyone taking part in the procession should be acquainted with the conditions and be prepared to fulfill them. There should be only a limited number. There should be no defiance, and if you find that the processionists are not likely to comply with the conditions, there should be no hesitation in postponing the procession. I fear that we have not canvassed enough the opponents of the reform. Caution, therefore, is all the more necessary. The problem, I know, is very difficult. To advise from my sick-bed is easy enough. The best thing, therefore, that I can do is, after uttering the caution, to wish you every success in the proposed enterprise.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. K. P. KESAVA MENON  
CALICUT

From a photostat: S.N. 10262; C.W. 5124

#### 84. *LETTER TO D. R. MAJLI*

*March 19, 1924*

MY DEAR MAJLI,

My hand is a little steady now. How delightful to have your postcard! Do write whenever you can. You will soon be calm, I have no doubt. Do not fail to come here whenever you are permitted and able.

M. K. GANDHI

D. R. MAJLI  
BELGAUM

From a copy: S.N. 8530

<sup>1</sup> A newspaper report said: "Arrangements are briskly going on in Vykom to start satyagraha in case the authorities prohibit the unapproachables from passing along the Temple Road." The Untouchability Committee was to meet at Vykom on March 28 to decide the line of action.

## 85. LETTER TO C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR<sup>1</sup>

POST ANDHERI,  
March 19, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was able today to read your interview<sup>2</sup> from first to last.

You have touched upon topics on some of which I am pledged to silence till I have met the leaders who have warmly advocated Council-entry.

Whether the last Congress<sup>3</sup> was a success or not is a question upon which I can say nothing because I was not an eye-witness. Your remarks on the question are most interesting.

You seem to think that the Congress has done very little in the matter of untouchability and general national education. I venture to dissent from the view. The removal of untouchability has been brought within the range of possibility in the near future because of the incessant propaganda by Congress Hindus. No doubt a great deal still remains to be done. It is not an easy feat to root out prejudices which have acquired an undeserved sanctity because of their age. But the barrier is breaking down.

I heartily endorse your remark that it is the duty of the Hindus to move and win over all the minorities to the service of the country.

I wish that your pronouncement against untouchability was more precise and uncompromising. I am not concerned with its origin. I have no manner of doubt that the higher orders are entirely responsible for perpetuating the sin. It is unfortunate, too, that you have likened the untouchability of women and others on certain occasions with the permanent untouchability under every circumstance of the suppressed classes and their descendants. Nor am I enamoured of the method you have suggested for the amelioration of the condition of these classes.

You say that the boycott of law-courts and Government schools should be removed. I venture to doubt the soundness of the

<sup>1</sup> C. Vijayaraghavachariar (1852-1943); lawyer and Congressman; presided over the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress, 1920

<sup>2</sup> This had appeared in *The Hindu* and *Voice of India*. Vijayaraghavachariar had sent a copy to Gandhiji which, however, is not available.

<sup>3</sup> The Cocanada session of 1923 over which Mahomed Ali presided

proposition. Its value is at the present moment negative, but none the less great on that account. Both these institutions have lost prestige. What is wanted is removal of the slightest trace of bitterness against those who do not comply with the boycott, that is, lawyers who still practise law and boys who still make use of Government schools. We shall win both over if we are not bitterly hostile, but concede to them the right of free judgment or sympathize with them for their weakness. I am convinced that, whenever we have not succeeded well or at all, the primary reason has been our inability or unwillingness to enforce non-violence with all its implications in our personal conduct.

I do not wish to say anything about your suggestions as to the position after swaraj, if only because methods that ultimately bring about swaraj will largely decide our programme after swaraj.

You seem to think that “for years to come, perhaps for a century or for ever” we are bound to be partners with England not from choice, but because we must. Therefore, for you evidently swaraj without the British connection is unthinkable. In my opinion, if British connection is a necessity of our existence, whatever the measure of freedom we may enjoy under that connection, it cannot be described as full swaraj, for full swaraj means, in my humble opinion, our ability at any moment to sever the connection. Partnership for me has no meaning if one party is too weak to dissolve it. It will also follow from your reasoning that swaraj will only have to be a grant from the British Parliament. You know my view. The very definition that I give to swaraj is that we have to take it and, therefore, we have to grow to it. It is an eternal condition, whether with an individual or with a nation. Moreover, if swaraj has only to be received as a grant from the British Parliament, the whole of the argument against Council-entry, in my humble opinion, falls to pieces.

I hope you are keeping well. I am making slow but steady progress.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR  
THE ARAMA  
SALEM

From a photostat: S.N. 8526; also C.W. 5125

<sup>1</sup> Vijayaraghavachariar replied to this letter on March 23; *vide* “Letter to C. Vijayaraghavachariar”, 28-3-1924; also *vide* Appendix “Letter from C. Vijayaraghavachariar”, 23-3-1924.

## 86. *LETTER TO S. E. STOKES*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 19, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I got the registered packet<sup>1</sup> on Sunday, and yesterday being my first Monday of silence after admission to the Sassoon Hospital, I was able to read both the papers. The written memorandum I am sending up as desired by you. I found both to be useful and instructive as giving me the mentality of one of whose impartiality I am certain and whose opinions I value. If I could but accept your premises and your view of non-co-operation, there is not much with which I should disagree. I entirely endorse your opinion that, if there is any Council-entry at all, it should not be for mere obstruction. On the contrary, we should take advantage of everything good that may be offered by the Government measures and endeavour to do our best to correct the evil in them. Accepting your reasoning, I would also endorse your view that the embargo upon lawyers and law-courts should also be lifted. But I think that, perhaps, there is a fundamental difference between us as to the interpretation and implications of non-violent non-co-operation and, therefore, what appeared to you to be a dismal outlook on your coming out of prison would not have set me thinking of other means of getting rid of the paralysis which you felt and saw had overcome all Congress activities. I would have regarded it as a necessary stage in the evolution of the public life of the country. It would have been for me a rare opportunity and still rarer privilege for redoubling my efforts and testing my faith in the programme. You have cited your own personal experiences and naturally concluded that there was something wrong about the programme in that the work that was patiently built by you and your co-workers had been almost undone in a moment. But there is a saying among lawyers that hard cases make bad law. Properly applied, it is a sound truth. Paraphrased in religious terms, it means that because, under some exceptional circumstances, departure from religious truth may appear to be advantageous, it furnishes no ground for losing faith in the truth. In your own case I would have reasoned to myself: This

<sup>1</sup> This contained "memorandums which put the case for Council-entry more completely".

undoing of the work must be regarded as the people's sacrifice in order to get the real thing. And what is that real thing? For the common masses to rid themselves of the fetish of power. For ages they have been taught to look to a Government to do everything for them, to protect them. The Government, instead of being regarded as an instrument in their hands for their advantage, is looked up to as something beyond and apart from them which, like a deity, whether benignant or malignant, has got to be propitiated. Non-co-operation as conceived by me is ceasing to co-operate with that idea of Government and teaching the people to feel that the Government is their creation and not they creatures of the Government. I should not therefore wonder that many of the so-called advantages that we have hitherto enjoyed through the instrumentality of such a Government have to be sacrificed. If the non-co-operation was not non-violent, we would seek, as all nations in history have sought, to beat Governments with their own weapons, that is, force of arms. In such a fight it would be folly not to make use of the whole of the Government machinery. People in a violent struggle do not expect to sacrifice though they are prepared for it and, if they have at their disposal arms superior to those possessed by the Government, beat it down without any sacrifice. But in a non-violent struggle resort to arms is eschewed, and sacrifice for the moment is a necessity of the case. In practice, too, in our own struggle, ever since the September of 1920, we have been sacrificing. Lawyers, school-masters, schoolboys, merchants, every class of people who have realized the implications of non-violent non-co-operation, have sacrificed to the measure of their ability and understanding. I know men who have lost money because they would not go to a court of law. I know cases in which the Government officials have chuckled with pride and pleasure that men who before used to gain advantages through their instrumentality were losing, but those who lost with a full knowledge of the struggle counted their loss as gain. It is my firm conviction that you cannot enter the Councils at the present moment with the present system and the administrators with their present mentality without participating in violence of an extremely bad type which is the basis of the Government of India. Take again the history of the other Governments of the world. By way of illustration I cite the Egyptian Government. They are in a fair way to attaining to what they want. They have resorted to ordinary means hitherto adopted. The Egyptians are trained for the use of arms. It was open to them to take part in the Councils and all administrative

machinery because they were able and willing to vindicate their position by force of arms. In India we have a state of things, so far as I am aware, without a parallel in the world. The people as a mass are neither willing nor able to take up arms. If you go to the Councils and are defeated in your purpose by the Government, you must be prepared for raising a rebellion. It cannot be successfully raised in India. Nor are the present Councillors men who can give that training to the people. My endeavour was and is to find a substitute for ordinary rebellion, and that is civil disobedience. The Councils are no training-ground even for the Councillors for civil disobedience. They believe in the "tooth for tooth" law. The sophistry, evasion and even fraud of the Government benches are returned in [their] coin. Their manifest purpose is to embarrass the Government. Their appeal is to fear. The non-co-operator's manifest purpose is never to embarrass, and his appeal must always be to the heart, therefore, to love and trust.

You evidently seem to think that mystical and religious non-co-operation can run side by side with the purely political non-co-operation of the Councils. I hold that the two are mutually destructive, and my faith in religious non-co-operation is so immutable that, if I find that it would not answer the needs of India and that the masses would not respond to it, I should be content to be alone and rely upon its ultimate invincibility to convert even the masses. Indeed, I see no escape for this world except through the acceptance of non-violence as the predominant and ordinary rule of life. The present society is ultimately based upon force. That is violence. My endeavour is no less than to get ride of this worship of force, and my conviction is that, if any country is ready, for assimilating the doctrine in its entirety in a large and workable measure, it is India. And having that conviction, I have no other remedy for the needs of our country.

I think I have already said more than I wished to. It is possible to amplify what I have said, but I have no doubt that you will yourself dot the i's and cross the t's. I am almost impatient to express my opinion upon the Council-entry and kindred matters, the more so after reading your memorandum, but I am under promise to Motilalji, Hakimji and other friends not to give public expression to my views till I have met them again and discussed the whole thing. When I am free to say all that I have in view on this question and If you have time to spare from your writings, you will see the development of the



outline I have sketched above.<sup>1</sup>

With love,

*Yours sincerely,*

S.E. STOKES, ESQ.

KOTGARH

SIMLA HILLS

From a photostat: S.N. 8527

### 87. STATEMENT ON OPIUM POLICY

Mr. C. F. Andrews has shown me a paragraph in his writings in *Young India* regarding the opium policy of the Government of India. In that paragraph he quotes Mr. Campbell, the Government representative at the Geneva Conference held in May 1923.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Campbell is reported to have stated that “from the beginning India had handled the opium question with perfect honesty of purpose, and not even its most ardent opponents including Mr. Gandhi had ever made any reproach in that respect”. The statement Mr. Andrews has shown me was written whilst I was a prisoner in the Yeravda Jail. Mr. Andrews tells me that, knowing my views in the matter of opium, he did not hesitate to contradict Mr. Campbell’s charge against me, but in view of the importance of the matter, he wants me to state my position clearly regarding the opium policy of the Government of India. I do so gladly. I confess that my study of the opium question is very cursory, but the campaign against drink, that was taken up in 1921 with such great enthusiasm and even fierceness, was a campaign not merely against the drink curse but against all intoxicating drugs. It is true that opium was not specifically mentioned, nor were opium dens picketed, except perhaps in Assam; but those who know anything of the history of the anti-drink campaign, know that sustained agitation

<sup>1</sup> To this Stokes sent a lengthy rejoinder on March 25, “trying to show that, to me, it is not the actual form of the expression of our non-co-operation which would determine whether it is non-violent or not; but the spirit in which the people learn to carry it out. . . In whatever I do not agree with you, I believe you will be patient with me, and I trust that you know how profoundly I am convinced of the greatness of the work you have to do. . . ” S.N. 8581. Gandhiji’s reply to this, if any, is not available.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian delegate at the Conference opposed the setting up of a board of inquiry by the League of Nations which would investigate and report on the quantity of opium required for strictly medicinal purposes.

was led against all manner of intoxicants not excluding even tea. During my travels in Assam, Mr. Phookan, the Assam non-co-operation leader, told me that the campaign had come to the Assamese as a blessing, because more than any other part of India Assam had a very large number of its population addicted to opium in a variety of ways. The campaign, however, Mr. Phookan said, had brought about a wholesale reform, and thousands had vowed never to touch opium. I should have thought that the severe condemnation that I have repeatedly expressed of the liquor policy of the Government would include condemnation of the whole of its policy regarding intoxicating drinks and drugs and that no separate condemnation was needed regarding opium, *ganja*, etc. If there was no ruinous and growing expenditure on an army kept not for the sake of preventing encroachments from without, but for suppressing Indian discontent due to the exploitation of India for the sake of Great Britain, there would be no revenue needed from immoral sources. In saying that India (meaning the Government of India) has handled the opium question with perfect honesty of purpose, Mr. Campbell evidently forgets that, in the interest of revenue, opium was imposed upon China by force of arms.

*Young India*, 20-3-1924

## 88. LETTER TO R. N. MANDLIK

POST ANDHERI,  
March 20, 1924

DEAR MR. MANDLIK,

I have your letter.<sup>1</sup>

I have not seen the *Nava Kal*. I must not therefore express any opinion whatsoever. I have too great regard for Mr. Khadilkar to venture any opinion on what he might have written without knowing it and without seeing him personally about it, if I was not satisfied with it. You will therefore please excuse me for not giving any opinion on

<sup>1</sup> On March 19, Mandlik had reported Khadilkar as suggesting in *Nava Kal* that if the Viceroy issued the Finance Bill, which had been rejected by the Assembly, Motilal Nehru and other Swarajist leaders should be ready for a non-co-operation movement under the leadership of Gandhiji, by March end. He asked Gandhiji if such really was the case, whether he approved of the suggestion and believed such a campaign would be successful.

the question raised by you at the present moment. Will you please send me a marked copy of the *Nava Kal* referred to by you.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

R. N. MANDLIK, ESQ,  
"LOKAMANYA" OFFICE  
207, RASTIBAI BUILDING, GIRGAUM  
BOMBAY, NO. 4

From a photostat: S. N. 8544: also C. W. 5129

### 89. *LETTER TO MANGAL SINGH*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 20, 1924

DEAR SARDAR MANGAL SINGH,

I was delighted to receive your letter.

I hope my telegram<sup>2</sup> of congratulations was duly received. I have hitherto refrained from saying anything publicly because I do not know what our friends there would wish me to do in the matter, and on receipt of your letter, I was inclined to make use of it in order to enable me to make appropriate reference to the splendid behaviour of the Jatha.<sup>3</sup> But doubting whether you would approve of such a step, I have framed an independent message<sup>4</sup> of which I enclose a copy herewith. Please keep me informed of further developments.

Please remember me to the other friends.

*Yours sincerely,*

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH  
"AKALI-TE-PARDESI"  
AMRITSAR

From a photostat: S.N. 8541; also C.W. 5127

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the paper appears to have been sent to Gandhiji. *Vide* "Letter to R. N. Mandlik", 28-3-1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Shukla", on or after 16-3-1924.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the second Shahidi Jatha of the Akalis which reached Gangsar Gurdwara, near Jaiton, towards the middle of March and peacefully allowed itself to be arrested.

<sup>4</sup> Not available

90. *LETTER TO RAJ BAHADUR*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 20, 1924*

DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

I have your letter.

It was certainly naughty of you not to obey your father when he asked you to do a thing which was in itself pure and certainly not impure, even if your conscience would not allow you to call it pure. But after your admission that it was a mistake, father awarded punishment out of all proportion to the measure of your disobedience. When a parent denies himself something for the misdeeds of a child, it is a kind of punishment. You have not done me wrong, and there is nothing for me to pardon. Still, in order to induce father to relent and to recall his vow, you have a thousand pardons from me. Show this letter to him and let me know that he has commenced to take food offered or touched by you.

SJT. RAJ BAHADUR  
CLASS VIII, SECTION B  
SANATAN DHARMA HIGH SCHOOL  
ETAWAH CITY

From a photostat S.N. 8546; also C.W. 5131

91. *LETTER TO K. G. REKHADE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 20, 1924*

DEAR MR. REKHADE,

I have your letter of the 18th instant.<sup>1</sup>

I would suggest that you see Vinoba who is conducting the Satyagraha Ashram in Wardha. You would have seen him already. I know of no one more fitted to help you in the direction you wish than Vinoba. He is a disciplinarian, and discipline may be very hard, but I know that it is necessary and beneficial.

With reference to the pecuniary difficulties you are labouring

<sup>1</sup> This letter is not available.

under, my sympathies are with you, but they are of little value. I am helpless to guide you.

*Yours sincerely,*

K. G. REKHADE, ESQ.  
PLEADER  
WARDHA

From a photostat: S.N. 8547; also C.W. 5128

## 92. *LETTER TO SHERIF DEOJI KANJI*

JUHU,  
*March 20, 1924*

DEAR SHERIF DEOJI KANJI,

You have read to me an extract from an article in the *Kesari* to the effect that, with reference to the proposed Madrassa near Poona, you went to the Government in disregard of the fact that I was mediating between the Madrassa Trustees and the Hindus concerned in the matter. I was grieved to note that reference, and I have no hesitation in saying that so far as I am aware, you have done nothing to injure the mediation and certainly you have not gone to the Government in disregard of such mediation. I remember too that, in the course of one of our conversations, I told you that my ability for effective intervention was very slender, and that, if for nothing else, for reasons of health I could not possibly become an arbitrator. All I am doing and should still, if it was possible, like to do is to offer friendly offices. I told you therefore that you should not stop any methods that were open to you for conserving the interests of the Trust in the hope that I should ultimately be able to effect a final settlement. I told you, too, that I was hampered in my negotiation for a settlement because of the fact that I did not know the parties concerned well enough to be able to say anything with confidence. You are at liberty to make any use you like of this letter.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHERIF DEOJI KANJI, ESQ.

From a photostat: S.N. 8548

93. *LETTER TO N. S. PHADKE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 20, 1924*

MY DEAR MR. PHADKE,

I have your letter.

The article on Continnence<sup>1</sup> referred to by you was written by me not because I believed that India was over-populated, but because I believed that self-restrain was good in every case and much more so at a time when we were ourselves in a state of slavery. I am totally opposed to artificial means of controlling the birth-rate, and it is not possible for me to congratulate you or your co-workers on having brought into being a League whose activities, if successful, can only do great moral injury to the people. I wish I could convince you and your co-workers to disband the League and devote your energy to a better purpose. You will please pardon me for giving my opinion in such a decisive manner. I have not hesitated to do so because I know something of such activities in England and France.

*Yours sincerely,*

N. S. PHADKE, ESq.  
HON. SECRETARY  
BOMBAY BIRTH-CONTROL LEAGUE  
GIRGAUM  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8538; also C.W. 5130

94. *LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 20, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I hope you have received my letter written in reply to yours.<sup>2</sup> I have now another letter from you more difficult to deal with than the

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, the reference is to the article "In Confidence" published in *Young India*, 13-10-1920.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Abbas Tyabji", 15-3-1924.

first because the second is a business letter.<sup>1</sup>

I must not make any engagements in anticipation of the completion of my convalescence. Much will depend upon how I feel then and what the position is in the country. At the end of the convalescence, I must be totally untrammelled with any previous engagements, and this in the interest of the common cause. Do you not agree? Nor must I seek to influence Sir Prabhashanker Pattani.<sup>2</sup> That would be going out of my beat and, after all, what is the worth of a Parishad for the holding of which the permission is obtained through the intervention of a stranger, and for purposes of the Parishad I must be considered a stranger. The proposition that no permission is required from the head of a State for holding conferences is really untenable. That ordinarily conferences are held without permission does not mean that the right of interference is waived by the head of the State concerned or that an absolute right of holding a conference accrues to the conveners. I would therefore strongly advise the conveners of the proposed conference that they should formally and courteously ask for permission. If it is refused, it may be a proper ground for leading an agitation against such decision. Why would you not write to Sir Prabhashanker? He knows you well enough to secure a favourable reply.

I hope that you will be successful in your begging mission.

I quite agree that Kathiawar educational institutions should receive aid from the Provincial Committee wherever, in its opinion, such aid is necessary.

You are quite right in stopping Devchandbhai from coming to me. The message I sent to him was that he would be welcome when he came, and if he does come, I shall enlarge upon the reasons for not pressing upon me the invitation for Presidentship.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9596

<sup>1</sup> This largely dealt with collection of donations from the public for a political conference.

<sup>2</sup> Diwan of Bhavnagar. Abbas Tyabji had suggested that Gandhiji should write to Pattani for securing permission to hold the Conference at Bhavnagar.

## 95. INTERVIEW TO “THE TIMES OF INDIA”

JUHU,  
March 20, 1924

In answer to questions, Mr. Gandhi very willingly gave a few details of his daily routine. He gets up at four o’ clock, a practice which he invariably follows. After family prayers in which the household join, he reads religious literature for a time and then goes off again in a short-sleep. At six he has his breakfast of milk—Mr. Gandhi confessed with a twinkle in his eye that he was following scrupulously Colonel Maddock’s instructions regarding food—and afterwards still following his old medical advisers’ advice, he takes a walk on the verandah and treats his wound to a sun-bath. Immediately after this, he attends to his correspondence, both English and Gujarati. In order to deal with the former he has been provided with shorthand typists who greatly facilitate his work. His time until midday is occupied by correspondence, the study of political problems and the seeing of important political and other friends by appointment. Early in the afternoon he has his bath and at four o’clock is ready to see the very large number of visitors who call on him.

In the evening, about six, Mr. Andrews takes him for a walk along the sea-shore, and this walk has now been prolonged to about forty minutes. The day’s work is over by about eight, at which hour Mr. Gandhi usually retires for the night. He explained:

Later on, I hope to take up spinning, once I am able to sit up without fatigue.

“What do you think of new Labour Government?” was one of the first political questions which our representative put to Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi evidently did not think much of it.

It has a precarious existence. It has to depend on the good-will of the other parties, and if it isn’t to break in pieces, it has to conciliate its very exacting constituents and follow out its special domestic programme. I have no doubt that in trying to acquire the support of the majority of the House in pushing through its domestic programme, it will not hesitate to sacrifice its principles regarding Imperial policy affecting India, or Indians in South Africa and Kenya. In fact, I should not be surprised, seeing it is so weak, if the Labour Government does worse even than its predecessors so far as Indian policy is concerned.

Mr. Gandhi concluded by admitting that he was not much perturbed over the Labour Government, because India had to rely upon her own strength and resources.

When she becomes irresistible, I have no manner of doubt that



any Government, whether Labour, Conservative or Liberal, will fall in with India's demands.

On the subject of Council-entry and recent events in the Central Provinces and in the Assembly, Mr. Gandhi frankly confessed he could say nothing. The Swarajist leaders are coming down from Delhi to see him at the end of the month, and he cannot give any opinion on their actions until he has discussed the whole position with them. After having done this, he will be in a position to formulate his policy.

Interrogated regarding the Colonies Committee, which has just sailed in connection with the Kenya question, Mr. Gandhi thought that the Committee could do a great deal if it was not fettered by too many restrictions. He added:

Whether the personality of the Committee is strong enough to assert itself is very difficult to say. Speaking apart from my views as a non-co-operator, I cannot help noticing the absence of Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Andrews from the Committee. They are the men who had studied the question and know it in all its bearing, while Mr. Andrews is an expert. I cannot help saying that these omissions are glaring and inspire me with distrust as to the Committee's findings.

Mr. Gandhi gave an interesting explanation of the South African Government's decision to omit the Cape Province from the operation of the Class Areas Bill. He said:

This is merely an instance of selfishness on the part, principally, of the Dutch population. Nearly all the house-work in the Cape is done by Malay women, and if the Segregation Act came into force, these Malay women would be affected by it. This would mean depriving a major part of the white population of its domestic help, which would give no end of inconvenience. Consequently, as the Indian population of the Cape is small—about 10,000 in all—the Cape people decided that they are not worth worrying about as far as segregation is concerned in view of the difficulties which segregation would bring in its train.

In the course of the conversation, Mr. Gandhi paid a tribute to Col. Maddock—"Who was more than my doctor; he is my friend"—and to Mr. Andrews—or "Charlie Bhai" as he is familiarly known—who is his right-hand man at Juhu and who writes articles incessantly from morning till night.

"I hope when India gets swaraj, you will not pack us poor but honest European journalists back home," laughingly remarked our representative. Gandhiji replied with a bright smile as he shook hands:

Nothing is farther from my mind.

*The Times of India*, 21-3-1924

96. *LETTER TO D. V. GOKHALE*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 21, 1924

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

Mr. Sherif Deoji Kanji showed me an extract from the *Kesari* in which he is charged with having gone to Government in disregard of my mediation. I was greived to see the extract. I have given him a note<sup>1</sup> which probably he would publish and you would see. I observe, too that a proper campaign has been started in the Press in connection with the matter. I wonder if all this was necessary. Is all hope of arbitration gone? Mr. Sherif Deoji Kanji told me that he and his co-trustees were ready to arbitrate. If it is at all within your power, I would like you to stop this agitation and induce the parties to consent to arbitration. I thought that you were waiting for Mr. Kelkar's return. I presume he will be back at the end of the month. I plead for patience.

*Yours sincerely,*

D. V. GOKHALE, ESQ.  
EDITOR, "THE MAHRATTA"  
POONA

From a photostat: S.N. 8553; also C.W. 5134

97. *LETTER TO SHEVAKRAM KARAMCHAND*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 21, 1924

DEAR MR. SHEVAKRAM,

I have your letter.<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion, God's name and God's work go hand in hand. There is no question of preference because the two are indivisible. A parrot-like repetition of the name is worse than useless, and service or action without the consciousness that it is done in God's name and for God's sake is also valueless, and if we sometimes pass our time in

<sup>1</sup> Shevakram, in his letter of March 17, had stated that according to Guru Nanak two things were essential for *Mukti*, namely, prayer and a guru. He wanted to know what views Gandhiji had on the matter and also whether he had any guru.

merely repeating the name of the deity as we have to, it is simply a course of preparation for self-dedication, that is, service for the sake of and in the name of God, and when we are thoroughly attuned, continued service in that spirit is itself equal to the repetition of the name of the deity. In the vast majority of cases, however, the setting apart a part of our time for prayer is a vital necessity. So far as I am aware, all scriptures and, certainly, the Indian scriptures, hold a guru to be absolutely indispensable, but if we cannot get a real guru, a sham substitute is not only useless but injurious. That is one of the reasons why I suppose the tenth guru established the Granth Sahib as the last Guru.

I have no spiritual guru, but believing in the institution, I have been in search of one for the last thirty years. The very search is the greatest consolation to me.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. SHEVAKRAM KARAMCHAND  
GURU SANGAT  
HIRABAD  
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a copy: S.N. 8554; also C.W. 5135

### 98. *LETTER TO M. REINER*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 21, 1924*

DEAR MR. REINER,

I have your letter of the 20th instant.<sup>1</sup>

I shall be pleased to see you on 26th instant at 5 p.m.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. REINER, ESQ.  
ROOM 23, GRAND HOTEL  
BALLARD ESTATE  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8551; also C.W. 5133

<sup>1</sup> Reiner had introduced himself as a visitor from Australia much interested in Gandhiji's work and personality, and wanting to have a clear impression of his doctrines of which he had heard a great deal.

## 99. LETTER TO GEORGE JOSEPH

POST ANDHERI,  
March 21, 1924

MY DEAR JOSEPH,

I read your letter to Devdas. I hope that Mrs. Joseph is much better. I write this, however, to tell you that I hope to take charge of the editing of *Young India* from next month.<sup>1</sup> I am doing so not without some hesitation, but I feel I may no longer shirk the duty. I would like to know what your plans would be in the near future. I need hardly tell you that the assurance I gave you in Poona stands. If you have leisure for it, I would like you to give me a weekly article well thought out, packed with facts and written in your best style. It must not, therefore, be hurriedly written, but you should put yourself to pains for collecting information. Nothing would please me better than to have figures regarding the khaddar work, untouchability, national education, etc., in your district. You need not send such an article to the Sabarmati address, but send it directly to me.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. GEORGE JOSEPH

CHENGANUR (TRAVANCORE)

From a photostat: S.N. 8552; also C.W. 5136

## 100. LETTER TO LAJPAT RAI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 21, 1924

DEAR LALAJI,

Andrews has shown me your letter to him. I have seen also Gourishanker Misra's letter to you. As you are due here on the 27th instant, I need not say anything at the present moment. When we meet, we shall discuss the special case of Gourishanker Misra and the cases of lawyers similarly placed. So far as I am concerned, I have no doubt whatsoever about the propriety of your going to Switzerland for regaining health and strength. What is the use of your remaining here with a lingering sickness and unable to make collections or to do

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji resumed editorship with the issue of April 3, 1924.

other strenuous work for which you are specially fitted? You are going not for enjoyment but for the purpose, on your return, of doing work in your own old effective manner. You would be running away from trouble if you projected a trip round the world or went like a millionaire to see exhibitions and shows. I wish, therefore, that you would get rid of the mood of dejection and take your trip to Switzerland as part of national service.

*Yours sincerely,*

LALA LAJPAT RAI  
LAHORE

From a photostat: S.N. 8555; also C.W. 5137

### *101. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 21, 1924*

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I hope you are still putting on weight, avoiding fever and making steady progress.

From next month, I am taking charge of *Young India* and *Navajivan*. I feel I may no longer postpone, but I do not think I shall be able myself to provide all the matter as I practically used to. Please, therefore, regard yourself as bound to send something every week. You are specializing in khaddar. Therefore, I do not mind your articles being always on that subject, but treat it from week to week in a new way, giving new facts. But, of course, I do not want you to be tied down to that alone and you may write on any other subject which you think will be of interest to the readers. I thought that I would be able by this time to write down my views on Council-entry and the Hindu-Muslim problem, but I am sorry I have not been able to do so as yet. Please do not blame me if you do find these views expressed in the columns of *Young India*. I wish you were here during the first month so that you may see everything previous to its being published, but we must do the best in the circumstances facing us. After all, it is not of much moment if I cannot avoid mistakes. I know I have the courage and wisdom to admit and correct them. There is the other side no doubt. People may be misled and it may be too late to set them right. Is not that also a part of the training?

Someone must have told you that Golikere<sup>1</sup> is already with me and his assistance is a great thing. He is to help me for the next three months at the most. Meanwhile Kristodas and Pearilal<sup>2</sup> will try to pick up enough shorthand writing for my purpose. In any case the pressure after I go to Sabarmati or after I begin to travel will not be so great. The bulk of the steady writing I want to finish during convalescence.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI  
THE EXTENSION  
SALEM

From a photostat: S.N. 8556; also C.W. 5132

*102. INTERVIEW TO "LIVERPOOL POST" AND  
"MERCURY"*

*[March 21, 1924]*

Today I talked for over an hour with Gandhi. Somewhere outside the verandah hovered his son, and C. F. Andrews, an Englishman who espoused the cause of the African Indian and whose long beard and native garments and bare feet proclaimed one voluntarily quitting his own caste. Despite the countless visits which the Swarajist inflict upon Gandhi, I gained the impression that his gentle spirit is chastened through long imprisonment and illness. Gandhi admitted repeatedly the breakdown of that strange creed of his by which he hoped to make India a nation such as this materialistic world never saw—simple and non-violent, maintaining independence amidst opportunist Asia by the quality which he called "soul-force".

Now that they in the Legislative Assembly have voted down the Government's demand for money grants, they want Gandhi's consent to a campaign of civil disobedience throughout India which means an agitation against the payment of all taxes. It is known that Gandhi originally opposed participation in these Government Assemblies and cast no favorable eye on the Swarajist game of obstruction. But the Swarajist success has taken the country by storm, and the leader who made the swaraj movement before other politicians were heard of must bow to the reputation formed while he was in prison.

Civil disobedience is always an advisable weapon when governments are not based on the will of the people, but it is

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's stenographer

<sup>2</sup> Pyarelal Nayyar, Gandhiji's secretary, since 1920, and biographer

practicable only when the masses are imbued with a spirit of non-violence.

Gandhi remarked:

India is now ready for swaraj if granted, but India is unable to seize swaraj, either by force, which I oppose, or by disciplined non-violence.

Gandhi then defined swaraj:

It means Parliamentary Government, but I hope not in the sense of Western nations where selfish interest reigns supreme. It means also the return to India's ancient life. Despite years of sneering, I still believe that the home spinning-wheel can oust the British factory. If so, how can British capital, which is the sole reason for British dominion, expect compensation? Myself, I do not believe in a tariff wall against foreign imports.

Concerning the famous triple boycott against British courts, schools and Councils, Gandhi was pessimistic. He said he would now organize panchayats or courts of arbitration, resembling Sinn Fein tribunals, by which suits would be settled outside the King's writ. Concerning the schools, Gandhi hoped only to make the non-Government institutions more attractive. Asked what advantages the curriculum of swaraj schools had over Government schools, Gandhi said they teach freedom of thought, whereas the British schools inculcate only fixed rules which fit the natives for service under the present regime. Gandhi declared that such schools as on the Western plan make of the natives automatons. He added that complete boycott of British goods would drive the British from India; but he admitted that the time was not yet ripe.

Asked to state what hopes he had of early attainment of swaraj, Gandhi answered only in the negative. From experience in England, when he was a student. . . he declared that Labour would think first of British constituencies, last of all, [of] India. But on hopes from the present Swarajist obstruction in the Assembly, Gandhi was ominously silent. He thought the British, whom he did not regard as a bad people, would eventually hit upon an honourable agreement, and declared that he had good reason for this hope.

Passing to the matter of the army, he announced that he would reduce this to a fourth of its present establishment, and would change the whole railway system, which he thought followed too closely upon strategic lines.

"You have no enemies to fear?" Gandhi was asked. He replied:

We fear the Afghans. Once the Hindu-Muslim unity [is] established, the Amir of Afghanistan would not attack fellow-Muslims.

If Russia attacks us, we expect the militaristic nations of Europe to come to our aid to prevent Russia becoming too strong, and we should welcome help. What do I think of the present rulers of Russia? I take them at their face value. What builds on force ends by force.

Do the Indian masses understand your preachings on non-violence when at the same time they are told the British have done wrong?" I asked him. Gandhi replied:

Yes, but nowhere outside India would this be possible. You Westerners are unable to understand this, but it is the spirit of the Indian people.

Asked if his attitude was unchanged regarding the "evils" of Western civilization, Gandhi replied that he would not abolish the railways since they were already established; he approved of modern farm implements since Indian agriculturists needed help. Concerning the British factories, he hoped the spinning-wheel would prove their doom.

I asked Gandhi concerning Kemal Pasha's deposition of the Khalif. Gandhi replied that it did not effect Hindu-Muslim unity which, however, he confessed was not so strong as formerly. On this unity all resistance to the British depended.

The King of the Hedjaz won't do. All Islam feels he is a British representative.

Gandhi declared that India is suffering a grave disadvantage as the natives have been "emasculated" as soldiers since the British came to India.

What I want to end is the Indian's mortal fear of the white skin which was more prevalent when I was a boy than now.

*The Hindu*, 14-4-1924

### 103. ADDRESS TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS, BOMBAY<sup>1</sup>

[March 21, 1924]

I need not say that I am pleased to see you all today. I am thankful to you for the little presents offered to me by you. Two at least of your presents convey a special meaning to me at present. The mat for carding and the slivers prepared by you remind me that I must immediately take up the work of spinning and carding. I assure you that when I am engaged in doing that work, I feel swaraj approaching nearer and nearer. Therefore, I request you all to pray for my

<sup>1</sup> A party of students and teachers of the Bombay Rashtriya Shala met Gandhiji at Juhu. They presented him with an address and some articles of handicraft prepared by them.



complete and immediate recovery in order that I may be able to take up that work as early as possible. I desire that you also should devote yourselves to the spinning-wheel and I am sure you will also feel that it brings Swaraj nearer and nearer. If we concentrate upon the constructive programme, we are sure to get all we want. You must have heard the beautiful song of Poet Narasinh Mehta sung by Lalitji. I wish you understand the meaning of such religious songs, and I appeal to you that you will make all efforts to translate the noble ideals of such poems into your actions. But I warn you that even for teachers it is a very difficult thing to act according to the ideals inculcated in these beautiful songs.

I remember that when I first visited your school, I told you that you had to learn much in the art of music. Today I again have heard some of the students singing, but I am sorry to remark that you have not as yet made sufficient progress to earn my certificate. Still, however, I do hope that when I next visit your school after my complete recovery, you will make yourself fit for passing—though complete mastery over that art may not be possible for you even then.

*The Hindu*, 26-3-1924

#### 104. MESSAGE TO SOUTH AFRICAN EUROPEANS

[Before March 22, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

If you continue to oppress us, we shall leave your Empire and, if we do, where will your Empire be then?

*The Hindu*, 26-3-1924

#### 105. LETTER TO DWIJENDRANATH TAGORE

ANDHERI,  
March 22, 1924

DEAR BORODADA,

It was good of you to send me two copies of your essays on the *Bhagavad Gita*. I note with gratitude your affectionate inscription in one copy. I shall prize it and endeavour at the earliest opportunity to understand your interpretation of the message of the *Gita*.

Mr. Andrews always gives me your kind messages. His presence

<sup>1</sup> Sarojini Naidu quoted this in the course of a speech at a gathering at Cape Town on March 22.

is a great comfort to me. It was so good of you to have let him come to me.

With much respect,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8564

*106. LETTER TO R. PIGGOTT AND A. M. WARD*

POST ANDHERI  
*March 22, 1924*

DEAR MISSES PIGGOTT AND WARD,

I have your letter of the 16th instant.

I am ashamed to say that I have entirely forgotten the interview mentioned by you. However, I am sending your letter to a friend in Sindh who, if he can see his way, I am sure, will assist you. You will please excuse me if I have not addressed you correctly. I showed your letter to Mr. Andrews. He distinctly remembers having met you, but cannot give me any information about you.

*Yours sincerely,*

MISS R. PIGGOTT AND MISS A. M. WARD  
HYDERABAD (SINDH)

From a photostat: S.N. 8562; also C.W. 5140

*107. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 22, 1924*

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

I enclose herewith a letter received from Sindh. Probably you know the ladies. As you will note, they ask me to bring their activity to the notice of those who have much to give. I do not put you under that category, but I thought I should pass the letter on to you so that, if it is a deserving activity, at least it does not remain without any notice by us. You will, therefore, please write to me and let me know what exactly this activity is and what you think of it. I do not want you to go out of your way to make inquiries. There is no hurry about the matter. I know that every moment of true workers is too precious to be spent in anything but the task immediately before them.

Lalaji is coming to Andheri on the 27th instant.

I am sorry I have not yet been able to frame the draft statement regarding Council-entry and Hindu-Muslim unity. I am afraid, therefore, that you will not see it before publication as I had hoped you would, but you will see it only after it is published.

*Yours sincerely,*

Enclosure

JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM, ESQ.

HYDERABAD (SINDH)

From a photostat: S.N. 8560; also C.W. 5139

### *108. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

ANDHERI,

*Saturday, March 22, 1924*

DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

This is hand-made paper. I understand it was specially got and printed for me. I am using it for the first time today. It is now after 3.30 a.m. I have hardly slept during the night after 12. You are one of the reasons. I had a chat with your son last night. Incidentally, I asked him whether he wrote to you and you to him in English or Tamil. When he told me it was English, the information cut me to pieces. We had then a discourse upon the possibilities of Tamil. Young Ramaswamy thought that it was not capable of being used for high and scientific thought. My brain then began to work and it is still working. You are my greatest hope. Why this, as it seems to me, grave defect? If the salt loses its savour, etc. What are the Tamil masses to do, if her best sons neglect her? What is the future before poor Ramaswamy as a worker among the masses? Do enlighten me or promise henceforth to write to the young man in your best Tamil. It was good of the *Hindu* people to offer to lend services of the shorthand-writer.

With deepest love,

M. K. G.

From a photostat: S.N. 8566

109. LETTER TO MRS. EMMA HARKER

POST ANDHERI,  
March 22, 1924

DEAR MRS. HARKER,

I have your letter.<sup>1</sup> The sad note about it grieves me. The progress continues. Could you come on Tuesday next at 5 p.m.?

*Yours sincerely,*

MRS. E. HARKER  
C 3, DATUBHOY MANSIONS  
MAYO ROAD  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8563; also C.W. 5138

110. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND<sup>2</sup>

ANDHERI,  
March 22, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I appreciate your loving card. What does it matter that you have in places made mistakes in your essay? The wonder to me is that you have made so few and that you have succeeded, though living in a different and distant atmosphere, in so truly interpreting my message. It demonstrates once more the essential oneness of human nature though flourishing under different skies.

With much regard,

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

<sup>1</sup> This read: "I am going through rather a critical and sad time and ask you to pray for me. I know I shall find comfort in seeing you." S.N. 8549.

<sup>2</sup> Romain Rolland had written to Mahadev Desai on February 24: "If I have unconsciously committed a few mistakes in the little book that I have dedicated to him, let Mahatma excuse me—for the sake of the great love and veneration that his life and philosophy have inspired in me. A European may often be deceived in his judgment about an individual or a nation of Asia. But his heart cannot be deceived, when he finds in them the common God and universal love. As our European Mahatma—Beethoven—sings in his 'Ode to Joy'; let us millions of human beings embrace each other." S.N. 8573

[PS.]

Pray excuse the pencil hand. My hand is yet too shaky to manage the ink-pen.

M. K. C.

M. ROMAIN ROLLAND

From a photostat: S.N. 8565

### *111. STATEMENT TO PRESS<sup>1</sup>*

BOMBAY,

*March 23, 1924*

The following cablegram has been received from Cape Town signed by Mr. Pather, General Secretary, South African Indian Congress:

South African Indian community submits notwithstanding strongest protests Union Government determined carrying through Class Areas Bill violating pledges given. Bill indefensible. Foreigners, also Euro-Africans, Malays and Natives being exempted. Bill will apply only to Indians. Euro-Africans, Malays and Natives assembled in thousands Cape Town assured Mrs. Sarojini Naidu of support to Indians in opposition to Bill. Indians will never submit segregation. Inform India. Please take such action as you think best. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has made deep impression and won many hearts. Mrs. Naidu deferred leaving South Africa until 30th April owing great demand on her in interest of the cause.

This is startling news, almost too bad even for South Africa to be believed. I have already endeavoured to show why the Cape was to be excluded from the operation of the measure. If the information cabled by Reuter as to the exclusion of the Cape is correct, there is something wrong in the foregoing cable, or the information contained in it is applicable to the other three Provinces only, namely, Orangia, Transvaal and Natal. The position will be that, so far as the Cape is concerned, the Cape Indians will still remain exempted from the operation of the measure, whereas, in the other provinces the measure will apply only to Indians. There is no difficulty about understanding the exemptions, because the idea of segregation of Natives and Malays in the extreme sense is new. Every European

<sup>1</sup> This was published generally in the Press. *Young India* reproduced it under the title "The Class Areas Bill".

household has Natives of South Africa as domestic servants. Malays, as I have shown in a previous communication<sup>1</sup>, are negligible quantity except in the Cape. We have, therefore, the naked truth before us that the Bill in question is aimed merely at Indians and that it connotes not only segregation but indirect expulsion. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's visit to South Africa and her inspiring presence there will undoubtedly steel the hearts of the Indian settlers for further effort. Her presence is also bringing Europeans and Indians on the same platform. Let India, however, not be lulled into a sense of false security because of the commanding presence of Mrs. Naidu in the midst of the sorely-tried Indian settlers. After all, the cultured Europeans of South Africa are gentlemen, and I have little doubt that Mrs. Naidu is receiving all the attention that is due to her for her many and matchless gifts, but the South African Europeans have also a fixed and determined anti-Indian policy. General Smuts is a finished diplomat. On due occasions he can speak honeyed words, but he knows his mind, and let there be no mistake that unless India can make an effort adequate to the situation, the Bill will be carried through the Union Parliament in spite of Mrs. Naidu's resource-fulness.

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 27-3-1924

## 112. LETTER TO S. A. BRELVI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 23, 1924

DEAR MR. BRELVI,

I thank you for your note.

That, in spite of the unanimous public opinion so emphatically expressed demanding the removal of the ban against Mr. Horniman, the Government should remain adamant is to me an index at once of our weakness and the Government's studied defiance of public opinion so strongly and unanimously expressed as in Mr. Horniman's case. Assuming for the sake of argument that we are in error in demanding the removal of the ban, it is evident that the Government will not leave us room even for making mistakes. The only use, therefore, of our public meetings is to show Mr. Horniman that his services are not forgotten and that, if he has not received the passport

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Anti-Indian Campaign in South Africa", 14-2-1924

to return, it is not for want of will on our part but for sheer want of ability. Even that is no small use. I therefore wish your meeting every success.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

S. A. BRELVI, ESQ.  
"BOMBAY CHRONICLE"  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8567; also C.W. 5142

### *113. LETTER TO D. R. MAJLI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 23, 1924*

MY DEAR MAJLI,

Early in the morning my first thought went out to you, and I asked myself how I could help you to be yourself again. Belgaum is to have the honour of holding the next Congress Session.<sup>3</sup> I know you want to take your part in the preparations. I know also that you are one of the best of workers. All that you need do is to become perfectly calm and get rid of excitement. I fear that you have been thinking too much, in the jail, of our country's troubles; but it would not do for us merely to be thinking of the troubles. What are we? We should leave all the cares to God. Ours is to do our level best in lightening the burdens of India. Have you ever read Tulsidas's *Ramayana*? If you do not know Hindi fairly well, probably you have not read it. The great saint wrote his *Ramayana* in my opinion, to glorify Rama's name. For me it has been a talisman. My nurse, whom I used to love as my mother, and in whose company much more of my time was passed in childhood than in my mother's, used to tell me that if I thought of evil spirits at night and dreaded them, I could ward them off by repeating the name of Rama. Having faith in the nurse, I followed her prescription, and whenever at night vague fears seized hold of me, I used to recite the sacred name, and it answered the purpose. As I grew old, the faith weakened. My mentor, the nurse, was

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph constitutes the message which was read at a meeting of the Journalists' Association at the *Voice of India* Office, Bombay, on March 25; K. Natarajan, editor of *The Indian Social Reformer*, presided.

<sup>2</sup> This was held in December 1924 under Gandhiji's presidentship.

<sup>3</sup> Shankerlal Banker, who was his co-prisoner in Yeravda

dead. I ceased to take the name of Rama, and my fears revived. In the jail I read the *Ramayana* with greater attention and still greater devotion than ever before, and whenever I felt lonely or felt the pride in me rising and telling me that I could do something for India, to give me due humility and to make me experience the presence of the Almighty, and thus to remove my loneliness, I used calmly to recite the name Rama with all the halo that Tulsidas has surrounded it with. I cannot put in words the indescribable peace that then came on me. As you know, Mr. Banker<sup>1</sup> was torn away from me for some time. When he rejoined me, he related his own experiences to me. He used to experience all kinds of dreadful things after the cell-door was cruelly locked upon him. But he related to me graphically how the recitation of the name calmed him and gave him strength also to shed all those unbecoming fears. I, therefore, send you the much-tried prescription. Think, whenever you feel you are excited, of Rama and the peace-giving nature of the recitation. Continue to recite the name slowly, forgetting everything, and considering yourself as one of the tiniest atoms in the mighty universe, and God willing the excitement will subside, and you will experience a blissful peace. The sages of old knew from experience what they were saying when they prescribed for troubled souls *Ramanama*, *Dwadash Mantra*<sup>2</sup> and such other things. The more I think of them, the more true all those *mantras* appear to me today. I wish you could have faith enough to repeat *Ramanama* or such *mantra* which memory might have hallowed for you, and I know that you will soon be yourself again.

*Yours sincerely,*

[PS.]

You know that you owe me a letter. I wrote immediately in reply to your postcard. I await your acknowledgment of my letter.<sup>3</sup>

SJT. D. R. MAJLI

BELGAUM

From a copy: C.W. 5141. Courtesy: Krishnadas

<sup>1</sup> Majli wrote a postcard in reply, which was published in *Young India*; vide "Notes", 3-4-1924.

<sup>1</sup> A sacred formula of 12 syllables: *Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*

<sup>2</sup> Majli wrote a postcard in reply, which was published in *Young India*; vide "Notes", 3-4-1924.



114. LETTER TO GANGADHARRAO B. DESHPANDE

POST ANDHERI,  
March 23, 1924

MY DEAR GANGADHARRAO,

I was thinking this morning very early what I could do to help Majli. The result was a letter of which I send you a copy.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. GANGADHARRAO B. DESHPANDE  
BELGAUM

From a photostat: S.N. 8568: also C.W. 5143

115. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Monday [On or before March 24, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MANI,

Bhai Manilal told me today that you are now free from fever, but still very weak and are living at Dr. Kanuga's. I should like you to come over here, if father and the doctor permit. Here you will have both rest and peace of mind, and will soon recover your strength. And then, I shall be able to take work from you. Neither you nor your father need fear that you will be a burden to me. For you will be a burden only to the floor, and the floor is pretty strong and capable of bearing the weight of a hundred girls like you! Another [person] on whom the burden will fall is the cook. But Revashankerbhai has given us a stalwart cook as strong as the floor itself! If you come here, I shall be free from anxiety on your account. For every man or woman engaged in the service of the nation and falling ill away from me adds to my worry. If they are under my observation, I would be free from worry to that extent.

I am sure Dahyabhai is giving more time to spinning to make up for your not spinning.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro —Manibehn Patelne, p. 12*

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

<sup>2</sup> The letter appears to have been written on a Monday prior to March 25, the date on which Gandhiji wrote to Mahomed Ali referring to the ailment of Manibehn Patel.

## 116. APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC<sup>1</sup>

JUHU,  
March 24, 1924

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I address this appeal to such of you as come to see me daily, or intend doing so.

I appealed to you sometime ago through the Press that those of you who must see me may do so between the hours of 4 and 5 in the evening. You are either not aware of this or come before or after these hours just because you cannot help coming. The result is sad for me. The little service that it is given to me to render is disturbed.

The capital of energy at my disposal is very small, and I want to utilize it only in service. I wish to resume editorship of *Navajivan* and *Young India* from next week. And I need absolute quiet for that work. If all my time and energy are taken up in seeing and entertaining you, it will not be possible from me to edit the weeklies in the way I desire.

Moreover, seeing me is not likely to be of any benefit to you. It is an indication of your love for me, but it is an exaggerated indication. The love itself is a great force, and I should have you apply that force not to seeing me, but to the service of the people. I would have you send me on all the money that you have to expend on a visit to me for being spent on the production and propagation of khaddar. I would have you devote all the time a visit to me would take up to all or any of the following objects:

- (1) Spinning or carding and making slivers;
- (2) Khaddar propaganda;
- (3) Teaching spinning or carding to your friends and neighbours.

To such of those as are not prepared to do any of these things and still cannot restrain themselves from seeing me I would appeal to restrict their visits to the time between 5 and 6 on all evenings *except Monday*, my day of silence—when I cannot possibly see any visitor. It is evident that I cannot see them individually. I shall have to ask them to be satisfied with seeing me all at a time.

<sup>1</sup> This open letter, the original of which was in Gujarati, was published generally in the Press.

I may also request intending visitors to bring with them yarn spun by them or money for khaddar work. The yarn will be turned into khaddar and the money used for khaddar production.

I shall feel grateful if you will kindly accept my request and all the time thus saved will be saved for the service of the country.

*I am,  
Your faithful servant,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India, 27-3-1924*

### *117. LETTER TO D. V. GOKHALE*

ANDHERI,  
*March 24, 1924*

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

I thank you for your letter. I understand your position. But I do think that the trustees' approach to the Government is consistent with their readiness to go to arbitration. I promise not to misunderstand you. I may be grieved over certain actions and yet respect honest differences of opinion.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

As you had marked your letter private and confidential, I have destroyed it.

M. K. G

From a photostat: S.N. 8576

### *118. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

*Monday, March 24, 1924*

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

The son has begun before the father. That is as it should be. You can see how the discovery has preyed on my mind.

I had a long chat with Natarajan<sup>1</sup> and Jayakar. They are coming

<sup>1</sup> K. Natarajan

again tomorrow. I wish I could write out the statement<sup>1</sup> and let you see it before it goes to the Press. I shall make an effort but may fail. The uninvited visitors take away much of my time. I am trying to cope with the evil.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8577

*119. LETTER TO K. G. REKHADE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 25, 1924*

DEAR MR. REKHADE,

I have your letter. I do not think you will be satisfied with the Ashram life in Sabarmati. All attention there is today concentrated upon the development of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. The literary side of the Ashram takes the background. Though, therefore, there is a very good library attached to the Ashram, I cannot say that the atmosphere is favorable for philosophical studies. One cannot be reading and thinking whilst all around one are away working for all that they are worth. The Ashram has been given that turn because I am convinced that we have had an overdose of philosophical and political studies. The faculty of working with our hands and feet is all but atrophied. An attempt is being made at the Ashram to revive the taste for hand labour. Nor is it possible at the Ashram to provide for your financial wants. Have you met. Jamnalalji? He might be able to guide you.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. K. G. REKHADE  
WARDHA (C. P.)

From photostat: S.N. 8582; also C.W. 5144

<sup>1</sup> This was presumably one on Council-entry and Hindu-Muslim unity which Gandhiji was contemplating at the time.

## 120. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 25, 1924

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I have your letter<sup>1</sup>. I am following your movement through the papers, and I see that you have borne the domestic affliction<sup>2</sup> with the courage and resignation worthy of you. I had myself expected nothing less. I regard it as a privilege of friendship to receive the account you have given me of Amina's last moments. She was a dear good soul. It would be exceedingly good if you could pass a week with me. I would love to have you, Begum Saheba and the whole of your suite, but the accommodation in this big bungalow is now limited. I could easily take care of you, that is to say, you will be left to take care of yourself and make yourself as comfortable as it is possible in a place that has been turned into an hospital. I am lying in the midst of patients. Maganlal's daughter Radha and Vallabhbhai's daughter Manibai are both here and they are much weaker than I am myself. Prabhudas though not bed-ridden is also an invalid, and I have invited mad Majli too to come here. And how I would love to nurse the Big Brother also. But that can only be after convalescence. Let there be no mistake about the motive in having all these patients here. You may know that I am a better nurse than a politician, if I am one at all, and what is more, I felt ashamed to be occupying a big bungalow like this all alone when there were patients, some of whom, brought up under me from infancy, requiring far greater care, attention and change than I did. They are all here, therefore, not for my consolation but for their own good; but having turned the bungalow into an hospital, I have disabled myself for looking after guests, whom I would not have if I could not give them the attention they deserve. And while I should be quite glad to leave you to yourself, and feel that I have done enough, I could not feel likewise regarding Begum Saheba.

Now you know all about me. Tell me when you are coming. I wish you were here to join the discussions with the leaders who are coming over in the course of the week. Please tell Shaukat he had no

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

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the death of Amina, Mahomed Ali's daughter.

right to be bed-ridden. The next best thing for him to do is to get well quickly.

How is Hayat? He owes me a letter.

With love to you all,

*Yours affectionately,*

MAULANA MAHOMED ALI

ALIGARH

From a photostat: S.N. 8584 C.W. 5345

### *121. LETTER TO CHILDREN OF FREEDOM SOCIETY*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 25, 1924*

DEAR BOYS,

I was so delighted to receive the parcel containing yarn spun by you continuously for seven days and nights. It was a very happy idea. I am sure that, if boys of all the National Schools were to put forth the same zeal that you have, we should be much nearer swaraj than we are today.

Hoping you will religiously set apart a certain time for spinning every day.<sup>1</sup>

*Your well-wisher,*

THE MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN OF FREEDOM SOCIETY

NATIONAL SCHOOL

DHARWAR

From a photostat: S.N. 8585; also C.W. 5149

### *122. LETTER TO RAGINI DEVI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 25, 1924*

DEAR SRIMATI RAGINI DEVI,

I thank you for your kind letter<sup>2</sup> of the 11th February and the interesting cutting containing your article on Indian music.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Notes", 3-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Ragini Devi had written on February 11, emphasizing constant American interest in Gandhiji and his interpretation, and seeking his blessings for her work of popularizing Indian music in the United States.

I thank you for your kind inquiry about my health, and I am glad to be able to tell you and other friends who are interested in it that I am making steady progress towards complete recovery.

*Yours sincerely,*

SRIMATI RAGINI DEVI  
1240, UNION STREET  
BROOKLYN  
NEW YORK

From a photostat: S.N. 8586; also C.W. 5148

### *123. LETTER TO S. A. BRELVI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 25, 1924*

DEAR MR. BRELVI,

I have now glanced through the synopsis of Professor Shah's novel. I wish I had time for going through the whole work in manuscript which he has kindly offered to lend me. In view of the fact that I am resuming editorship of *Navajivan* and *Young India*, I feel I must deny myself the pleasure. Every available moment must remain mortgaged for that purpose until I regain my won energy, I ever do. Do you want me to return the synopsis?

Devdas has written to you about your letter. I need not confirm what he has said—that you will be welcome whenever you come. Do please pass a whole day here. The place is certainly delightful and you will like it.

*Yours sincerely,*

S. A. BRELVI, ESQ,  
"BOMBAY CHRONICLE"  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8587; also C.W. 5147

### *124. LETTER TO DR. SATYAPAL*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 25, 1924*

DEAR DR. SATYAPAL,

I was glad to receive your letter giving me so much information about tension between Hindus and Muslims. I await the second instal-

ment regarding Sikhs and Hindus with interest. I know that the problem before the country is very serious and very complex, and in our ability to solve it satisfactorily and permanently lies the road to swaraj. I have been thinking over it day and night ever since my release, and as soon as I have seen the leaders, I shall begin to write upon it.

I thank you for your inquiry about my health. I am making steady progress. I observe you are not now in Amritsar, but in Lahore. Why the change?

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

DR. SATYAPAL  
LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 10460; also C.W. 5146

### *125. TELEGRAM TO BALIBEHN VORA*

[After *March 26, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

BALIBEHN  
CARE HARIDAS VORA  
RAJKOT

SEND KANTI AHSRAM TODAY.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 8588

### *126. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"*

JUHU,  
*March 27, 1924*

He said he was satisfied with the progress and, though he needed much rest, he had resumed his practice of getting up at four o' clock in the morning. To a further question he replied that he had already begun the indispensable work of spinning. As for the books he had written in the Jail, he gave our representative to understand that the History of Satyagraha in South Africa would be soon published by the Navajivan Publishing House, while the text books for children were made over to the Gujarat Vidyapith authorities for publication.

<sup>1</sup> This was written on the reverse of the telegram received from Kitchlew, dated March 26, 1924.



Pointing out *The Times of India*'s leaderette on Mrs. Naidu entitled "Mrs. Naidu's Poetics", our representative asked Mahatmaji what he thought of Mrs. Naidu's mission.

I am sorry to see *The Times of India*'s leaderette. All the charges levelled against Mrs. Naidu in the leaderette are really answered in the special cable to *The Times of India* published in the same issue. All cable messages, being a summary of speeches or writings, have to be taken with the greatest caution.

Illustrating this from his own life, as rich in varied experiences as in suffering, he said:

I was myself lynched in Durban because Reuter had cabled in 1896 a summary in a few sentences of pamphlet<sup>1</sup> I wrote in India describing the position of Indians in Natal. It was not a conscious misrepresentation; nevertheless the intensive condensation of a 30-page octavo-size pamphlet gave a very inaccurate account of what I had written. The Europeans of Natal, when they understood what I had already stated in India, repented of the wrong they had done me.

Referring to the "Message from Mr. Gandhi" facetiously alluded to by the *Times*, Mahatmaji observed:

My message to Mrs. Naidu was published in the *Times* and other newspapers. I am inclined to believe that Mrs. Naidu has undoubtedly made a forcible, but in no sense irritating, speech. She is too shrewd not to understand the gravity of the situation in South Africa. the special cable to the *Times* would almost go to show that, if anything, she is too conciliatory. For instance, she is said to have admitted that there is some economic menace owing to the low standard of certain classes of Indians. It can be proved that their mode of life is no worse than that of the retail traders of the same standing. I am not giving my own testimony but that of Europeans. Nor can it be a grievance against Indians that they sent money to India. It can be proved from statistics that Europeans sent out of South Africa ever so much more than Indians. I should not be at all surprised if the full statement made by Mrs. Naidu to the *Times* correspondent has clauses qualifying the statements. Anyway, according to the *Times* view of things, if she has erred, she has erred on the right side. I have no fear whatsoever of her presence in South Africa doing any harm to India by her unguarded language.

<sup>1</sup> This was written on the reverse of the telegram received from Kitchlew, dated March 26, 1924.

The interview which was gradually drifting to grave political problems was at this stage enlivened by the appearance of Mr. Andrews in khadi shirt and dhoti with a copy of the latest London *Punch* in his hand. "You are now immortalized, Mahatmaji, if you are not already so," humorously remarked Mr. Andrews with a broad smile.

"Here is 'Charivaria' in *Punch* about you," said he, handing over the number of *Punch* to Mahatmaji.

Gandhiji replied as he briskly noted the contents:

I am indeed immortalized, all the more so for the reasons that the reference to me occurs on the very first page and just after the picture of Pussy.

And then followed a loud burst of laughter ringing in the gallery, attracting the attention of two patients resting at a small distance.

Asked as to what he thought of the non-payment of the Poll-tax organized by the Kenya Indians, Mahatmaji replied:

As the Poll-tax affected only 4, 000 Indians, its non-payment is not calculated to develop into a sharp struggle. It is, however, bound to result in securing discipline and order amongst the Indians, though it does not involve intense suffering. Europeans must feel that Indians are determined and would no longer submit to injustice.

Pointing to Mr. Sastri's attitude, he said that Indians here must continue to give their moral support even as Indians in Kenya must persevere in the struggle.

Further asked as to what he thought of the Congress proceedings of the past two years, Mahatmaji frankly confessed that he had not been able to study the Congress proceedings of the past years.

Current events so much occupy such time as my feeble health allows me to spare. But even if I had leisure to study the Congress literature during the past two years, I should hesitate to judge or criticize the action of my co-workers. It is so easy to be wise after the event. But it is not equally easy to come to a just decision. But I have faith enough in the probity, single-mindedness and devotion of the principal Congress workers whether they were for entering the Councils or against. It was an honest difference of opinion. Such honest differences will remain so long as we are what we are. In my opinion, it is a healthy sign when people refuse to surrender their opinions for the sake of achieving a superficial unity.

Our representative further asked, "I have noticed your remarks about the Labour Government's Indian policy in the *Times*. Would you give the same opinion even if the Labour Government were in power with an over-whelming majority?"

I do not think I should much alter my view because, even with an overwhelming majority, unless a Labour Government places

principles before popularity, it will be difficult for it to shoulder a really liberal measure for India without risking its domestic policy.

As the talk drifted to the political events of the past two years, Mahatmaji expressed his profound satisfaction at the result of the Borsad satyagraha and remarked:

The lesson that Borsad satyagraha teaches is of inestimable importance. Whilst it is true that the Government of Bombay deserved to be complimented upon its reasonableness and sagacity in truly sizing up the situation, the Borsad satyagrahis by their utter non-violence, determination and the justice of their cause, made themselves invincible. And if it was possible to organize whole taluka for successful satyagraha in respect of a small and particular evil, it must be possible to organize satyagraha on a larger scale in respect of a general and deep-seated evil. The only thing required is sufficient workers with an unquenchable faith in their cause and their means. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel himself had that faith and he had workers who were infected with the same faith.

Asked as to what he thought of doing after he fully gained his health, Mahatmaji said that would depend upon the situation that might face the country at that time.

I have no settled programme of the work after the completion of my convalescence. As I want to hold myself free for any emergencies that may arise, I am accepting no appointments in advance.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 29-3-1924

## 127. LETTER TO GANGADHARRAO B. DESHPANDE

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

MY DEAR GANGADHARRAO,

I read a paragraph in *The Mahratta* saying that Mangalore people are still disputing the resolution of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee fixing the Congress venue at Belgaum. Is it a fact and, if it is, please give me some details and tell me also whether I can help in any way. You may also give me the names of parties who are agitating for a reversal of the Committee's decision.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. GANGADHARRAO B. DESHPANDE  
BELGAUM

From a photostat: S.N. 8590; also C.W. 5158

128. *LETTER TO T. A. SUBRAMANIA ACHARY*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

MY DEAR SUBRAMANIA,

I was delighted to hear from you from Durban.

I thank you for your good wishes and inquiry. I am making slow but steady progress towards complete recovery. You need not feel sorry about your inability to serve your country. I cannot ask you to be spinning there, but you can certainly make use of khaddar so far as it is possible even there, and out of your spare earnings you can contribute to the public funds required for carrying on the struggle at home.

*Yours sincerely,*

T. A. SUBRAMANIA ACHARY, ESQ.  
175, UMGANI ROAD  
DURBAN

From a photostat: S.N. 8591

129. *LETTER TO OMEO K. DAS*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

DEAR MR. DAS,

I have your letter. I do not know whether it is to be published in Assamese or Hindi. In order not to delay the matter, I send you the following in English:

The only thing I can think of at the present moment as a remedy for our ills is for every one of us to take up the spinning-wheel or some activity directly connected with it such as carding, making slivers, hawking of khaddar, collecting cotton, distributing it, etc. I know that the universal spread of the charkha is indispensable for swaraj.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. OMEO K. DAS  
EDITOR  
"THE ASSAMIYA"  
DIBRUGRAH (UPPER ASSAM)

From a photostat: S.N. 8593; also C.W. 5151

### 130. LETTER TO GEORGE JOSEPH

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

MY DEAR JOSEPH,

Here is a letter which speaks for itself. Will you kindly let me know what the facts are, and if it is a fact that you have threatened civil disobedience, the grounds for it.

I am sorry that you have not yet been able to get any conclusive report about Mrs. Joseph's illness. Patients are indeed kings, as you say in your letter to Devdas, but they form a huge confederacy, and decent ones live under one rule without their kingly glory in any way being diminished. But I have so filled this place that even if Mrs. Joseph could be persuaded to come here, I am afraid she would not feel comfortable. I have already Radha, Mani Ben, Kiki Ben, Prabhudas, and I make the fifth. I invited mad Majli to join me here even whilst I was in Poona, and he may come if he is at all capable of being moved. Will you care to put her under Dr. Jivraj Mehta's treatment in the State Hospital at Baroda? I would like you to consider the proposal seriously in consultation with Mrs. Joseph. Dr. Mehta is a specialist in tuberculosis. Of course, I know nothing of the arrangements at the Baroda State Hospital, but if Mrs. Joseph is at all prepared to be under Dr. Mehta's care, I would immediately inquire.

With love to both of you,

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. GEORGE JOSEPH  
CHENGANUR  
TRAVANCORE

From a photostat: S.N. 8594 also C.W. 5155

### 131. LETTER TO E. R. MENON

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

DEAR MR. MENON,

Mr. Andrews has given me your letter for reply. I have forwarded it to Mr. George Joseph.<sup>1</sup> I know nothing of the threatened

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

civil disobedience. It is very difficult for me to give any opinion until I know the actual facts. Generally speaking, it is quite true that I have been averse to civil disobedience being started in the Indian States.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. E. R. MENON  
C/O "THE INDIAN SOCIAL REFORMER"  
EMPIRE BUILDING, HORNBY ROAD  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8592; also C.W. 5152

### *132. LETTER TO P. SIVASAMBA IYER*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 27, 1924*

DEAR MR. SIVASAMBA IYER,

I have your letter of the 14th instant.

I appreciate your difficulty, but I do not know how to advise you or help you. I can only say if you have not received a letter from Deshabhakta Konda Venkatappayya, you should go and see him and explain to him your position. If it is any comfort to you to know, I may mention that the difficulty you find yourself in is not an exceptional case. It is the common lot of many a non-co-operator. And what is equally true is that many co-operators also labour under similar difficulties without the solace which is open to non-co-operators that their difficulty is due to obeying the dictates in their conscience.

Regarding the thieves of your cocoanuts, there are two ways open to you: either you continue to labour on their account and let them steal the fruit till they have had enough. I admit that this is a counsel of perfection. The other is suggested by yourself, namely, you cease to water the tree and let it die unless you can find some way of protecting it by means of a fence or some such contrivance.

*Yours truly,*

SJT. P. SIVASAMBA IYER  
KIL PUDUPAKKAM VILLAGE  
CHEYZAR TALUQ  
TIRUVETIPURAM POST

From a photostat: S.N. 8595

133. CABLE TO H. S. L. POLAK<sup>1</sup>

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

KALOPH<sup>2</sup>  
LONDON

NOT READY GIVE OPINION COUNCIL ENTRY TILL  
LEADERS SEEN. IF ARTICLE WANTED NOTWITHSTANDING  
CAN POST NEXT WEEK. ANDREWS MUST NOT  
LEAVE.<sup>3</sup>

From a photostat: S.N. 8596; also C.W. 5159

134. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

MY DEAR HENRY,

I have your cable. In the absence of precise instructions in the cable, I have taken it to mean that the *Spectator* wants my article by post, not by cable. The following was the reply sent to you today:

Not ready give opinion Council entry till leaders seen. If articles wanted notwithstanding can post next week. Andrews must not leave—Gandhi.

I feel that it is useless to send any article till I can give my views definitely on Council-entry. This I am unable to do till I have conferred with the leaders who are responsible for the change in the Congress programme. They are expected here next week.

I expect to be at the above address till the end of May at the longest, but I may remove to Sabarmati about the middle of May.

With love to you all,

*Yours sincerely,*

HY. S. L. POLAK, ESQ.  
LONDON

From a photostat: S.N. 8597; also C.W. 5156

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Polak's cable of March 22: "London *Spectator* wants from you article of fourteen hundred words giving summarily your present programme. Reply." S.N. 8566

<sup>2</sup> Polak's cable address

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji also wrote to Polak; *vide* the following item.

135. *LETTER TO SIR DINSHAW MANECKJEE PETIT*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 27, 1924

DEAR SIR DINSHAW,

Perhaps you have heard of the late Sorabji<sup>1</sup> of Adajan. As you know, he was in South Africa for a long time. He was one of the satyagrahis who suffered the longest term of imprisonment. After he qualified as a barrister, he went to South Africa to do public work there. His expenses were paid by a friend. He has left a widow and a daughter. Mr. Pallonjee is a near relative of the Sorabjee family. The widow and her daughter are at present living in Bombay for the sake of the daughter's education. The mother has to pay a very high rent. she tells me you have some decent houses for poor Parsees at a very cheap rent. I do not know the terms under which these tenements are let. There was very little left by Mr. Sorabjee. I think it was under Rs. 1, 000. This was all paid to the widow before I went to prison. If you can, consistently with the terms under which the tenements referred to are let to poor people, give a lease of one of them to Mrs. Sorabji, you will confer a personal favour on me. The late Sorabji was one of the dearest among my comrades. Among my many Parsee friends he was one of the most selfless. Mr. Gokhale himself was so much struck by the beauty of his character that he implored him to become a member of his Society, and had he lived and come back to India and had Mr. Gokhale also lived, it is highly likely that he would have joined the Society. I relate this not to influence your decision, because that would have to be arrived at in terms of the conditions guiding the lease of these tenements, but I mention the fact to show why I am interested in everything connected with the deceased. And, could I have persuaded the widow to throw in her lot with me at Sabarmati, I would not have troubled you; but I can well appreciate her desire to give her daughter a training such as is given to the general body of Parsee girls. For this I have no provision in the Ashram where we only turn out spinners and weavers and endeavour

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Late Sorabji Shapurji Adajania", 27-7-1918.



to find the inmates as good a surrounding as is humanly possible for the formation of character. The literary training occupies but a subordinate position.

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

SIR DINSHAW MANECKJEE PETIT

From a photostat: S.N. 8598; also C.W. 5157

### *136. LETTER TO R. B. SAPRE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 27, 1924*

DEAR MR. SAPRE,

I have your letter of the 11th February, for which I thank you.

I did receive the cable referred to by you, for which please accept my thanks for yourself and the other members of the Club. If you could give me some details of the Indian population in Germany, their occupation and the relations between Germans and the Indian residents, I shall be obliged.

*Yours sincerely,*

R. B. SAPRE, ESQ.

SECRETARY, INDIAN MERCHANTS' CLUB

GLOCKENGIESERWALL 2

HAMBURG (GERMANY)

From a photostat: S.N. 8599; also C.W. 5153

### *137. LETTER TO R. N. MANDLIK*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR MR. MANDLIK,

I thank you for sending me a marked copy of *Nava Kal*<sup>1</sup> referred to by you in your letter of the 19th instant.

In my opinion, the context gives a somewhat different meaning to the one put upon the sentences in question by you. I had those sentences and previous ones translated by a friend. The meaning that I gather is that Mr. Khadilkar puts the logical position to which our

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had asked for this earlier; *vide* "Letter to R.N. Mandlik", 20-3-1924

leaders are driven. You will see that the concluding sentence is interrogative. So far as I am myself concerned, there is no question of my leading a programme of preparations for civil disobedience. Whether the country is in a fit state for starting a campaign of civil disobedience is a question on which I dare not pronounce an opinion when I have hardly studied the condition of the different provinces. But of this I am sure that we shall gain nothing worth having until the country is ready for civil disobedience, and therefore, whether I am well or ill, the course is, in my opinion, quite clear. Enforcement of the Bardoli programme will make the country ready for civil disobedience in the quickest time possible.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. R. N. MANDLIK  
EDITOR, THE "LOKAMANYA"  
207, RASTIBAI BUILDING,  
GIRGAUM, BOMBAY NO. 4

From a photostat: S.N. 8612; also C.W. 5170

*138. LETTER TO A. W. MCMILLAN*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR MR. MCMILLAN,

I thank you very much for your letter.

I wish you every success in your efforts in Fiji on behalf of Indian residents there. My message to them is that they must so prepare themselves as to be able to help themselves under every form of difficulty.

I thoroughly endorse your sentiments that you do not want to live in constant antagonism with your own fellow-countrymen in Fiji. I am sure that you cannot serve Indians if you become antagonistic to your own fellow-countrymen. What is needed, I suppose, is a plain statement of truth and insistence upon justice at all cost. Neither can ever necessitate antagonism to anybody.

*Yours sincerely,*

A. W. MCMILLAN, ESQ.  
BENARES CANTT.

From a copy: S.N. 8622

*139. LETTER TO K. SRINIVASA IYENGAR<sup>1</sup>*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR MR. SRINIVASA IYENGAR,

Mr. Rajagopalachari writes to my son<sup>2</sup> saying that, on his mentioning to you the need of shorthand assistance, you immediately offered to send me your shorthand reporter without any charge whatsoever. I need hardly say how deeply grateful I am to you for the offer. I would have gladly availed myself of it had it not been for Mr. Golikere having, before my son received Mr. Rajagopalachari's letter, offered his services to me as soon as he came to know that I needed him. He had assisted me just before I went to prison.

*Yours sincerely,*

K. SRINIVASA IYENGAR, ESQ.

"THE HINDU" OFFICE

MADRAS

From a photostat: S.N. 8615; also C.W. 5169

*140. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I have written to Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's son thanking him for the free offer of the services of a shorthand reporter.

Mahadev has shown me the extract from Maulana Mahomed Ali's speech. It does not make good reading. I expect to see him shortly in any case.

Motilalji and Lalaji are coming tomorrow, and Hakimji the day after. I shall be, therefore, in the thick of the fight, and hope to be free to air my views on Council entry next week. How did you manage to get the recent attack of asthma? Was there no contributory cause?

<sup>1</sup> Son of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, editor, *The Hindu*

<sup>2</sup> Devdas Gandhi

When do you propose to return here? Is it not possible to come here a few days before the Working Committee's meeting?

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

SALEM

From a photostat: S.N. 8613; also C.W. 5161

### *141. LETTER TO A. M. JOSHI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR MR. JOSHI,

You have written<sup>1</sup> to Mrs. Gandhi kindly inviting her to open the Khadi Exhibition to be held in connection with the forthcoming Maharashtra Provincial Conference. Mr. Dastane however told me that he was inviting Mr. C. Rajagopalachari to perform the function. I am positive that it is much better to have him. Mrs. Gandhi can only become a figure-head, and what we need at present is a combination of heart and head in connection with this, the only real constructive movement of a universal character before the people.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. A. M. JOSHI

SECRETARY, EXHIBITION COMMITTEE

MAHARASHTRA PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

JALGAON, EAST KHANDESH

From photostat: S.N. 5614; also C.W. 5171

### *142. LETTER TO C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter<sup>2</sup>, for which I thank you.

Of course, I considered your statement<sup>3</sup> without thinking of

<sup>1</sup> This was on March 24. S.N. 8575

<sup>2</sup> For Vijayaraghavachariar's reply of March 23 to Gandhiji's letter of March 19, *vide* Appendix "Letter from C. Vijayaraghavachariar", 23-3-1924.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to Vijayaraghavachariar's interview, the text of which is not available.

your other declarations. I quote the sentences from the very last answer at pages 34 and 35:

The most vital interests of the country demand the continuance of the organic relations between India and England for many a long year to come. . . Several politicians maintain that the alternative to the free grant of swaraj by the people of England is the sword. But the preachers of this gospel, whether Indians or Englishmen, forget that the employment of the sword and the establishment of Home Rule within the Empire are wholly inconsistent with, if not entirely antagonistic to, each other. . . Independence outside the British Empire now is fraught with most disastrous results for us and would practically be the enthronement of King Stork in the seat of King Log.

. . . We must not . . . rush into the abyss of total estrangement from England. That way madness lies. For years to come-it may be for centuries or for ever, I do not know, and cannot tell-our destiny is self-rule within the ambit of Great Britain.

I understand what you say about untouchability, and I agree with much of what you say therein. I think I gave you my impression gathered from your statement. Of course, I have not said anything with reference to your remarks on what is gone by. I have purposely refrained because it will serve no useful purpose.

I hope you will soon be better.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

THE ARAMA

SALEM

From photostat: S.N. 8616; also C.W. 5166

143. LETTER TO SHIVDASANI

POST ANDHERI,  
March 28, 1924

DEAR MR. SHIVDASANI,

I have your interesting letter.<sup>1</sup>

With the views I hold you will not, I trust, expect me to do anything in connection with your scheme. All the energy I have I must devote to the immediate work before me. Your argument about machinery is not at all convincing. There is a tremendous fallacy lying underneath your broad statement: "Machinery can only supplant machinery." If you will visualize the whole process in detail, you will find that it is totally unnecessary to import machinery in order to supplant machine-made cloth we receive from outside. Do you not see that the whole of the energy and cost of sending cotton say from a village in the centre of India to Manchester, to have it converted into cloth there and re-import it, is saved by the villages themselves converting their own cotton into cloth? It should surely strike you that no machinery in the world can compete with these villagers who need no other machine than their own willing hands and feet, and a few simple wooden instruments which they can devise themselves. I would like you again to consider it from your own standpoint. Multiply the cost of installation in one village by 700,000 and then ask yourself who is to find the capital and to what end? Would you impose all these complications on villagers who are well able, during their leisure hours, to turn their cotton into cloth? I hope not.

*Yours sincerely,*

MR. SHIVDASANI, L.C.E., BAR-AT-LAW  
HIRABAD  
HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a photostat: S.N. 8617; also C.W. 5167

<sup>1</sup> Writing on March 22, Shivdasani had expressed veneration for Gandhiji, out feared he could not follow Gandhiji's logic in his advocacy of hand-woven khadi. Detailing a sugar factory scheme he had formulated, he sought Gandhiji's assistance to raise the necessary capital.

*144. LETTER TO JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR SIR JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE<sup>1</sup>,

I thank you very much for your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 5th instant.

I would be delighted indeed to see you and Lady Bose on your return if you could find time to motor down to Juhu. It is a pleasant retreat near Andheri.

*Yours sincerely,*

SIR JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE  
C/O V. N. CHANDAVARKAR, ESQ.  
PEDDER RD., CUMBALLA HILL  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8619; also C.W. 5162

*145. LETTER TO RAMANAND SANYASI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

DEAR RAMANAND SANYASI,

I have your letter of the 23rd instant, for which I thank you. It is difficult for me to give you advice without knowing full particulars:

- (1) Has the recruiting started only now and, if it has, from what date?
- (2) Was there no recruiting prior to that?
- (3) If there was none, when did the stoppage begin?
- (4) What inquiry is to be made in the plantations?

<sup>1</sup> 1858-1937; eminent Physicist, Botanist and author; founded Bose Research Institute, Calcutta.

<sup>2</sup> In this Bose had written from London: "It was with great anxiety that we learnt of your serious illness; we are somewhat relieved by the news of your slow recovery. May you live long to serve the cause of righteousness all over the world. We shall return to Bombay about the 16th April and will proceed to Calcutta in 3 or 4 days. I should have liked to have seen you if you were near Bombay at the time. My address will be C/o Mr. Chandavarkar (Son of the late Justice Chandavarkar). With all best wishes."

The condition cannot now be better than before unless the terms offered by the planters are different. If they are different, you should be able to get a copy of those terms in the villages where recruiting is going on. I therefore do not know what purpose can be served just now by going to the tea plantations and making inquiries. Moreover, the Provincial Congress Committee in Assam should be corresponded with before any steps are taken. I would therefore suggest your writing a letter<sup>1</sup> giving full particulars of the recruiting going on in the districts mentioned by you. If you adopt my suggestion, when sending your reply, please send me a copy of your letter to the Assam Committee also.

*Yours sincerely,*

RAMANAND SANYASI

BALDEV ASHRAM

KHURJA, U. P.

From a photostat: S.N. 8620; also C.W. 5172

#### *146. LETTER TO P. K. NAIDU*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

MY DEAR NAIDU<sup>2</sup>,

I was delighted to see your writing after such a long time. I am watching the course of events in South Africa with the greatest attention and anxiety. If any one person can possibly influence the course of events in our favour, it is certainly Mrs. Naidu<sup>3</sup>. She has a wonderful charm of manner and is tireless in her duty. She is staying up to the end of this month and probably longer still. I only hope that if, in spite of all the efforts, the Class Areas Bill does become law, you will be able to persuade our people to get up satyagraha if it becomes necessary. At the same time, I would say, do not launch it unless you are absolutely certain that you will be able to carry the thing through.

<sup>1</sup> Ramanand Sanyasi wrote again on April 1, furnishing the particulars asked for by Gandhiji and enclosing a copy of his letter to the Assam Congress Committee. *Vide* Appendix "Letter from ramanand Sanyasi", 1-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> A passive resister and associate of Gandhiji in South Africa

<sup>3</sup> Sarojini Naidu



Do please keep me posted with all the particulars. sending me cuttings.

*Yours sincerely,*

P. K. NAIDU, ESQ.  
P. O. BOX NO. 6522  
JOHANNESBURG

From a copy: S.N. 8623, also C.W. 5164

*147. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

I have your telegram which I shall bear in mind. In no case would I have made any specific mention of Sindh if I could not have shown the statement previously to you. Of course it is not yet ready. I shall therefore not be able to send you a copy before publication. Therefore there will be no reference to Sindh in it.

I am looking forward to receipt of your letter which I hope will contain full information, as also good news about Dr. Choithram's health.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM  
HYDERABAD (SINDH)

From a photostat: S.N. 8621; also C.W. 5163

*148. LETTER TO D. R. MAJLI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

MY DEAR MAJLI,

I was extremely delighted to receive your postcard. I am glad you are now comparatively at peace with yourself. The fever was probably a good outlet. By careful nursing you will soon get rid of your fever. I am certainly going to make use of the information you give me regarding your treatment. I like your thought: "I am not worth anything." How nice it would be if everyone of us would think so? Then nobody would want to be leader, but all would be servants

and fellow-workers. It would be the nicest thing to achieve and run swaraj if everyone sincerely felt that he was nothing and that the cause was everything. I propose to use this letter of yours for the first issue of *Young India*<sup>1</sup> under my editorship, which I resume next week.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. D. R. MAJLI

BELGAUM

From a copy: S.N. 8610; also C.W. 5160

### *149. LETTER TO A. CHRISTOPHER*

POST ANDHERI,  
*March 28, 1924*

MY DEAR CHRISTOPHER,<sup>2</sup>

I was so glad to see your familiar writing after so many years. I am anxiously and closely watching the events in South Africa and will do all that is possible for an ailing man to do. I know that the presence of Mrs. Naidu is a source of great joy and strength to you. Do please keep me well informed of the progress of events, sending me all the cuttings and other documents that you may think I should see. You have asked me to send a cable-gram about unity amongst our people. I think it will serve no useful purpose. Your letter is dated 11th February. It is now 28th of March. All that I infer from the cable-grams being received about Mrs. Naidu's progress in South Africa goes to show that you are presenting a united front. Why should I therefore assume disunion when everything points to the contrary?

I received a cablegram from Pather.<sup>3</sup> You will have seen that I have made full use of that cable also. In view of my long message to Mrs. Naidu<sup>4</sup> which I cabled in reply to your cable, I have not sent any further cables.

I am making fair progress. Mr. Andrews is with me and looking after me and helping me.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Notes", 3-4-1924

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's co-worker who actively participated in the Great March of 1913.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Statement to Press", 23-3-24

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Cable to Sarojini Naidu", before 16-3-1924.

With regards to you all from Mr. Andrews and myself.

*Yours sincerely,*

A. CHRISTOPHER, ESQ  
156, VICTORIA STREET  
DURBAN

From a microfilm: S.N. 8624; also C.W. 5165

*150. LETTER TO MAHADEV PANDAY AND CARAMAT  
ALLI MACDOOM*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 28, 1924

DEAR FRIENDS,

I have your letter of the 25th inst.

As my difficulty is fundamental, I fear I can do nothing to help you. You state that the Negroes are clamouring for the conditions offered to our Indian colonists. Personally I do not mind it, nor need our countrymen in British Guiana fear the proposed influx of the Negroes. If the 1, 30,000 Indians give a good account of themselves, they will bless themselves and bless the Negroes and everyone else who goes there. Surely out of that population you should be able to raise enough doctors, Pundits, Maulvis and all other professionals. I cannot help observing, too, that even at the present moment there is nothing to prevent a single Indian from freely emigrating to British Guiana if he chose to. What I dread and what I do not want in the present helpless condition of India is a stimulated or assisted emigration. You may know that hundreds of free Indians go to the Straits, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zanzibar and several other parts of the world without let or hindrance. What baffles me is this feverish agitation and great waste of money in connection with a scheme of colonization. If you do not mind my telling you that, on that very account, apart from the fundamental difficulty, I thoroughly distrust it.

*Yours sincerely,*

MESSRS MAHADEV PANDAY AND CARMAT ALLI MACDOOM  
MAIDEN'S HOTEL  
[DELHI]

From a copy: S.N. 8625; also C.W. 5168

*151. LETTER TO A. G. ADVANI*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 29, 1924

DEAR MR. ADVANI<sup>1</sup>,

I have your letter.<sup>2</sup>

I knew nothing of what you referred to, but I am immediately doing all I can to ascertain the truth. I would like you to send me all the proof you have in support of your statement. I take it that you do not want me to regard your letter as confidential, because I must use it if I am to know the truth. I do not wish to publish it in the Press without it being absolutely necessary, and certainly not before I hear from you.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. A. G. ADVANI  
S. J. CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY  
ELPHINSTONE STREET  
CAMP KARACHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8626

*152. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM*

POST ANDHERI,  
March 29, 1924

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

Here is a copy of a letter<sup>2</sup> received by me, which speaks for itself. Please let me know what truth there is in the charges, and if you do not know anything, please inquire and advise me as to what should be done.

*Yours sincerely,*

ENCL

SJT. JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM  
HYDERABAD (SINDH)

From a photostat: S.N. 8627

<sup>1</sup> Sindhi leader who suffered imprisonment in national cause.

<sup>2</sup> Dated March 24, this drew Gandhiji's attention to the non-publication of the report of the Karachi Congress Committee for the period July 1921 to March 1922 with a view to covering up an alleged misappropriation of funds. Advani had asked for an inquiry into the matter.

<sup>2</sup>*Vide* the preceding item.

153. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Saturday [March 29, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAMNALAL,

It was good that you gave up the idea of going to Kanpur. Is there any complaint still, besides weakness?

You know about the institution<sup>2</sup> at Chinchwad. It is facing a good deal of opposition and is always short of funds. I think it is necessary to help the workers. I am considering how this can be done. In all, they need Rs. 15, 000. If they get this help, they will want no more and they are prepared to take a vow that they will not ask for more. If you feel with me that they deserve this help and if you are in a position to give it, then I should like you to do so.

Rajagopalachari is again suffering from asthma. I think the climate of Nasik would suit him. If you can accommodate him, write to him at his Salem address and ask him to stay with you for some time. He is already under the treatment of the Poona *vaidya*, and the latter will be able to examine him. I have indeed written to him suggesting that it would be better if he went to stay at Nasik while you are there.

You must have learnt that the Poona *vaidya* has started treatment of Vallabhbbhai's Manibehn, Maganlal's Radha and Prof. Kripalani's [sister] Kikibehn. This was done at the suggestion of Devdas.

Let me know what your experience of this *vaidya* is.

Malaviyaji left for Kashi yesterday. We had some discussion about the Hindu-Muslim problem. Hakimji had also been here. With him also I discussed the same subject. Motilalji who has been here will stay on. He has been discussing the issue of Council-entry.

I have been thinking about all these things.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2845

<sup>1</sup> The discussions with Madan Mohan Malaviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Motilal Nehru referred to in the letter took place during the last week of March 1924 at Juhu. The last Saturday of the month fell on March 29.

<sup>2</sup> Svavalamban Pathshala, a national school then run by Shri Kanitkar at Chinchwad, village near Poona

154. *LETTER TO K. T. PAUL*<sup>1</sup>

[On or after *March 29, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

Do come on Tuesday. If, in the midst of other friends, I can spare the time, I shall do so. Otherwise you should come again on Thursday. You should take your meal here.<sup>3</sup>

From a photostat: S.N. 8628

155. *SPEECH AT JUHU*<sup>4</sup>

[Before *March 30, 1924*]

How can you account for cases of pneumonia and other diseases in this beautiful spot where there is no shortage of houses, where light and air are unlimited and where you seek escape from the squalor and congestion of Bombay? I simply cannot understand this. Rather than that I, an invalid myself, should reproach you for this, I think I should try to explain to you that it is we ourselves who are responsible for these conditions. I look upon mosquitoes, fleas, flies and other agents which spread disease, as correctives provided for us by Nature. Were it not for them, would we ever wake up? Living here, I can add to the filth to any extent I choose to. I can also generate any number of flies, fleas and mosquitoes. But, as you see, I do nothing of the kind. On the day I arrived I said that we required no sweeper. True, there is a sweeper here now, but half of the refuse is removed by the children, Devdas, Pyarelal and Krishnadas. If you see anything left undone, it is due to some negligence on the part of these children. If, however, I

<sup>1</sup> K. T. Paul, a friend of C. F. Andrews, was connected with the Federation of National Youth Associations at Calcutta. In a letter of February 11, he had wished to meet Gandhiji for "a quiet and unhurried conference". Gandhiji appears to have written to Paul on March 1 saying that he had forestalled him in regard to a method of dealing with the intercommunal problem. This letter, however, is not available.

<sup>2</sup> On March 23, Paul wrote back, stating at length his faith in Christ's rich, human personality. In his letter dated March 29 to Devdas Gandhi, on the back of which this reply was scribbled, Paul had expressed a desire to see Gandhiji on April 1.

<sup>3</sup> The letter has, in the end, the following note in Gandhiji's hand: "Dr. Kitchlew can take and have the letter delivered."

<sup>4</sup> This speech, reported by Mahadev Desai in *Navajivan*, 31-3-1924, was made before a small gathering of teachers, members of the Managing Committee and guardians of the pupils of the National School at Vile Parle, near Juhu. Orthodox guardians did not like the teachers' idea of admitting children of Harijans.

allow dirt to accumulate, you can easily see that all the pleasure of natural scenery will be lost. You should also understand the close connection between sweeping out dirt and swaraj. Imagine that we have already won swaraj. If, now, we still remain careless and indifferent to the rules of hygiene, there is little doubt that the British will again kick us out of power. The question of *Dheds* and *Bhangis* is intimately connected with this matter. If we continue to harass them and regard them as untouchables, with what face can we demand equality with the British? It is necessary that we understand this before talking of equality.

#### THE SHASTRAS

What shall I say about the attitude of religion in this matter? In my opinion, not everything in our religious books or all the various unrelated sayings of Yajnyavalkya<sup>1</sup> and other sages can be regarded as eternal verities. Conditions are different now from what they were in those days. If they were the same, since we look upon Draupadi<sup>2</sup> as a superhuman being, take her name every morning and regard the five Pandavas with reverence, would we not regard as a saint any women who took to herself five husbands? It is for their deeds that we revere the Pandavas and Draupadi. We should appreciate others' virtues and be eager to acquire them. It is, then, because of their extraordinary qualities that we cherish their memory. This about the *Mahabharata*. There is no work I love more than the *Ramayana*. Yet, do I for that reason accept everything which Tulsidas attributes to Shastras in his work<sup>3</sup>? The *Manusmriti* is an authoritative book. It is categorical in permitting flesh-eating. Will you, therefore, eat meat? When I say these things to you, you are taken aback. If any people eat meat on the sly, that is another matter, but according to the *Manusmriti*, eating meat is nothing to be ashamed of; it may be done openly. And yet we regard meat-eating as forbidden. What is prohibited in *kaliyuga*<sup>4</sup> was freely permitted in *satyayuga*<sup>5</sup>. Does it not seem strange that, during that golden age, meat-eating should have been permitted, but in this Age of Kali? But the truth is that much depends on the way we look at religion. And here there are two points to be kept in mind. The first is that matters of religion should be decided not by the intellect but by

<sup>1</sup> Vedic sage, reputed author of a Smriti (code of laws)

<sup>2</sup> Wife of the five Pandava princes, in the Mahabharata

<sup>3</sup> Ramacharitmanas or the Ramayana

<sup>4</sup> Age of strife

<sup>5</sup> Age of truth

the heart, and the second that we should not follow, in the name of dharma, the opposite of dharma. You should know that the *Gita* can be interpreted so as to justify crimes. Bhima<sup>1</sup> used his club against Duryodhana<sup>2</sup>. If someone says that cousins are, therefore, free to regard each other as enemies and kill each other, I would say that such a person does not know how to read the *Gita* aright. This whole matter falls within the province of the heart. My religion does not trust reason; it trusts only the heart. I, therefore, pray that you look into your hearts.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 30-3-1924

### 156. MESSAGE TO “BHARATP”

[End of *March 1924*]<sup>3</sup>

The only message that I have for men and women of India, but more especially for the latter, is that of the spinning-wheel. The non-violent movement is one to enable the weakest of human beings to vindicate their dignity without an earthly protector. Woman has been regarded as weakness personified. She may be weak in body, but she can be as strong in soul as the strongest. The spinning-wheel, with all its implication, is the weapon, in India at least, of the strong in soul. The universal adoption of that wonderful wheel robs Great Britain of her purely selfish interest in India. It is only then possible for the connection between India and England to become pure and predominantly unselfish, and therefore, for the good of the world. May the women of India adopt hand-spinning as a part of their daily duty, and take their full share in the struggle for the freedom of the weakest in body of our country.

From a photostat: S.N. 8618

<sup>1</sup> The second and the strongest of the Pandava brothers

<sup>2</sup> The eldest of the Kaurava princes, in the Mahabharata

<sup>3</sup> The exact date of this message which Gandhiji sent to Saraladevi Choudhrani is not ascertainable. She proposed to start a journal at Lahore in the third week of March 1924. The photostat source is also located among S.N. records and papers relating to that month.



157. LETTER TO K. P. KESAVA MENON

ANDHERI,  
*April 1, [1924]*

MY DEAR KESHAV MENON,

Messrs Shivram Iyer and Vancheswara Iyer have come here in connection with your satyagraha<sup>1</sup>. They tell me that the roads in dispute are private property belonging to the temple to which they lead and that it is in exclusive possession of Brahmin trustees who, these gentlemen claim, have perfect right to regulate entry. I then asked them if these roads were private property, exclusively belonging to the Brahmins, whether any non-Brahmins had the use of them, and they admitted that they had. I then told them that, so long as a single non-Brahmin was allowed the use of the roads, the so-called untouchables and unapproachable must have the same right as other non-Brahmins. They agree, but they say that it will take some time before they can bring round to their view of thinking the trustees and other Brahmins who are interested in temple and roads.

I understand, too, that Malaviyaji is going to the South in two months' time. If the trustees of the temple agree, in the event of any dispute between you as representing untouchables and unapproachables and themselves, to refer all such disputes to the sole arbitration of Malaviyaji, his award to be delivered within a fixed time, I would advise you to suspend satyagraha, publicly announcing the cause of suspension, namely, its reference to arbitration.

Naturally, this advice is tendered in the belief that the main facts stated by the Iyer brothers are correct. They tell me that they are as anxious as we are to carry out this reform in its thoroughness and, if they are sincere in their professions, we should reciprocate and accommodate them in so far as it is consistent with our principles.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm of a newspaper cutting: S.N. 10273; also *The Hindu*, 4-3-1924

<sup>1</sup> Vykom Satyagraha for access to temple and public roads to Harijans; *vide* "Letter to K. P. Kesava Menon", 19-3-1924

*158. TELEGRAM TO AGRAWAL CONFERENCE, KANPUR<sup>1</sup>*

[On or after *April 1, 1924*]

AGRAWAL CONFERENCE  
CAWNPORE

WISH CONFERENCE SUCCESS. HOPE CONFERENCE WILL  
HELP KHADDAR WHICH ALONE CAN REMOVE STARVATION  
MILLIONS COUNTRYMEN AND HINDI PRACHAR SOUTHERN  
INDIA WHICH AGRAWALS HAVE HITHERTO SO GENER-  
OUSLY SUPPORTED. SETH JAMNALALJI TOO WEAK TO  
UNDERGO FATIGUE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8642

*159. TELEGRAM TO K. P. KESAVA MENON*

[On or before *April 1, 1924*]<sup>2</sup>

MY CONGRATULATIONS SATYAGRAHIS. HOPE STREAM WILL  
CONTINUE TILL SUCCESS ACHIEVED. WE HAVE TO  
CONQUER OPPONENTS BY PERFECT LOVE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10265

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a telegraphic communication received by Gandhiji: "All India Marwari Agrawal Conference on 5th, 6th 7th April. Seth Anandilalji Podar Bombay president-elect reaching here 4th. Seth Jamnalalji also expected. Your blessings and spiritual message earnestly solicited. Swagath". S. N. 8641

Jamnalal Bajaj had also sent on April 1 a telegram to Devdas Gandhi, which read: "Cawnpore Agrawal Conference forcing attendance. Please request Poona *vaidya* to personally advise. Must start third if allowed, Bapu's advice also solicited." S.N. 8642.

<sup>2</sup> This was in reply to telegram from K. P. Kesava Menon received on April 1, 1924, which read: "Vaikom satyagraha started yesterday. Three volunteers peacefully entering prohibited area were arrested. Their dignified behaviour greatly impressed public. Conduct of police praiseworthy. Another batch three proceeded today also arrested. Orderly crowds witnessing satyagraha every day. First batch sentenced six months." S.N. 10265

*160. FOR THE READERS PAST AND PRESENT OF “YOUNG INDIA”*<sup>1</sup>

It is not without much hesitation that I resume the editorship of *Young India*. I do not know whether my health can yet sustain the energy required for conducting the paper. But I cannot foresee. I can only dimly understand God's purpose in bringing me out of my retirement in Yeravda. In taking up the editorial control of *Navajivan* and *Young India* I am following the Light as far as I see it.

Nor have I any new message to deliver to the reader. I had hoped for release by an act of a Swaraj Parliament and to be able to take my humble share in serving Free India. That was not to be.

We have yet to attain freedom. I have no new programme. My faith in the old is just as bright as ever, if not brighter. Indeed, one's faith in one's plans and methods is truly tested when the horizon before one is the blackest.

Though, therefore, so far as my mind can perceive, there will be no new method or policy developed in the pages of *Young India*, I hope they will not be stale. *Young India* will be stale when Truth becomes stale. I want to see God face to face. God I *know* is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence-ahimsa-love. I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God. I work for India's freedom because my swadeshi teaches me that, being born in it having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve *her* and *she* has a prior claim to my service. But my patriotism is not exclusive; it is calculated not only not to hurt any other nation, but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world.

But if it is not to be such a menace, the means adopted for gaining it must be strictly non-violent. My interest in India's freedom will cease if she adopts violent means, for their fruit will be not freedom but slavery in disguise. And if we have not yet attained our

<sup>1</sup> On April 2, 1924, about the same time as this article, Gandhiji prepared, at Juhu, Bombay, the preface to the “History of the satyagraha in South Africa”, which he had commenced writing in Gujarati on November 26, 1923 and thirty chapters of which he had completed in Yeravda Jail. The preface, not reproduced here in its chronological order, is given along with the text in Volume XXIX.

freedom, it is because we have not been non-violent in thought, word and deed. It is true that non-violence has been adopted as a policy, i.e., because we are convinced that by no other means can *India* achieve her freedom. Our policy is not, must not be, a camouflage. We may not harbour violence under cover of non-violence. Whilst we claim to be non-violent for a particular purpose and a particular period, our thought and word must accord with our practice for that purpose and that period. Even so does an honest jailer act towards a condemned man. He protects his life at the peril of his own till the date of the extreme penalty. He thinks and speaks of his safety. He is, for the time and the person, non-violent in thought, word and deed.

We pledged ourselves to be non-violent towards each other and our opponents, whether administrators or co-operators. We were to appeal to their hearts and evoke the best in them, not play upon their fear to gain our end. Consciously or unconsciously the majority of us-the articulate portion-have not been true to our pledge. We have been intolerant towards our opponents. Our own countrymen are filled with distrust of us. They simply do not believe in our non-violence. Hindus and Mussalmans in many places have provided an object lesson, not in non-violence, but in violence. Even the 'changers' and the 'no-changers' have flung mud against one another. Each has claimed the monopoly of truth and, with an ignorant certainty of conviction, sworn at the other for his helpless stupidity.

The pages of *Young India* can only, therefore, illustrate the utility and the necessity of non-violence in dealing with the questions that engage public attention. So much for the central policy of *Young India*.

A word as to the business side. Some of the readers will recollect that I announced that, when at the instance of Mr. Shankerlal Banker and other friends, I took up the editing of *Young India*, I told the public that it was run at a loss and that I would be obliged to give it up if the loss continued. I do not believe in publishing newspapers indefinitely at a loss or by means of advertisements. If a paper supplies a felt want, it must pay its way. The subscription list, however, ran up steadily week by week and it began to yield profits. But, during the last two years, as the reader is aware, the list has fallen from 21, 500 to 3,000 and it is now being run at a loss. Happily, *Navajivan* has made up for it. But even that method is wrong. *Young India* must

stand on its own bottom or fall. It is likely that, if I still retain the personal affection of the old readers, *Young India* will soon pay its way. But I have mentioned the loss not only to acquaint the public with the true state of affairs, but also as an introduction to an important announcement.

When Messrs Banker and Yagnik suggested that the Gujarati *Navajivan*, which was then a monthly, should be turned into a weekly and edited by me and when I undertook the responsibility, I announced that it would be given up if it proved a loss and that if there were profits, they would be utilized for some public purpose<sup>1</sup>. *Navajivan* soon became profitable, but at the instance of Sheth Jamnalalji, *Hindi Navajivan* was commenced.<sup>2</sup> It too had just begun to pay its way when my arrest took place and the circulation steadily fell. It is now again being issued at a loss. But, in spite of these losses, the large circulation of *Navajivan* and other publications enables the management to devote Rs. 50,000 to public work. Swami Anandanand who is managing the *Navajivan* press has left it entirely to me to allocate the money and, as I know no other and better method of utilizing it, I propose to devote the sum through the agency of the Provincial Congress Committee to the spread of the spinning-wheel and khadi in Gujarat, including Kathiawar. Preference will be given to their spread among poor women and the suppressed classes. It is due to my co-workers that I should inform the public that with some of them the work is a labour of love. Where they receive payment, it is just enough for their wants. The result of such work is before the public, I know that, if from the sweeper upward I could secure selfless workers, with the efficient management I have the good fortune to have today, it would be possible to show a better surplus.

I should also like to add that, if *Young India* again shows profits, as it did before my imprisonment, they will be distributed for all-India work. If any profits are derived from *Hindi Navajivan*, they will be devoted to the spread of Hindi.

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 3-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> Vide "To Readers", 25-4-1920.

<sup>2</sup> On August 19, 1921

## 161. NOTES

### THANKS

It would be ungrateful for me if I did not publicly tender my thanks to the editors who one after another took charge of *Young India* at a most critical period in its career. Shuaib Qureshi, with his sledge-hammer style, proved too strong for the Government and they hardly allowed him breathing time. Then followed Rajagopalachari with his scholarly contribution, exhibiting a wonderful grasp of the deep truths of satyagraha. George Joseph's trenchant style is still fresh to the reader. To all these friends my deepest thanks are due for coming to the rescue. The management staff was no less industrious in its zeal for the national cause.

### THE KHLAFAT

I have been asked to give my opinion on the Khilafat trouble. I have none to give. It were impertinence for me, an outsider, to thrust my views on my Muslim brethren. It is a question which the Mussalmans must settle for themselves. All that non-Muslims can do is to assure them of their deep sympathy in their affliction. The existence of the Khilafat is an essential part of their faith. Everyone who holds his own religion to be dear to himself is bound to express genuine sympathy with those of a different faith. The heart of every Hindu who values Muslim friendship must go out to the Mussalmans in their great sorrow. They have a more anxious time now than when the Khilafat was attacked from without. But now that the danger comes from within and several sections are contending for their own views, it must tax the utmost resources of those who are engaged in solving the problem in a manner that is consistent with the deep truths of their own faith and acceptable to all sections. This much is quiet clear to me that the future of the Khilafat, indeed of Islam itself in so far as it can rest with man, lies in the hands of Indian Mussalmans. Theirs is the burden, theirs the privilege. May God grant them the power to see the right path and the strength to follow it.

### 'COMMERCIALIZING VICE'

This is the expression that Mr. Andrews has used in connection with opium traffic on which the reader will find in another place an

informing contribution from his pen.<sup>1</sup> As he handed it to me, he said he had improved upon my description of the traffic. I have described it as 'organizing vice'. Mr. Andrews calls it 'commercializing vice'. I dare not dispute with a scholar of Mr. Andrews' stamp the superiority for choice phrase-making. But I would commend to the reader's careful attention Mr. Andrews' essay. And when he has digested the gruesome facts with which Mr. Andrews has fortified his impeachment of the opium traffic let the reader recall the fact that it is British India that grows and supplies opium to British Singapore, and then recall the further fact that our children are educated in Government schools from the proceeds of this organized and commercialized vice.

#### SPARE HOURS

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's appeal<sup>2</sup> to the students printed elsewhere deserves the careful attention of all students not merely of national schools but also of Government schools. Scholastic non-co-operation like every other had a touch of violence about it. Hence the gulf between the boys and girls belonging to national and Government schools. As a matter of fact, there should be no such gulf. Mr. Rajagopalachari's suggestion, if adopted, will serve a double purpose. The adoption will bridge the gulf and provide a means beneficial to the nation of utilizing the spare hours that students get during vacations. The advance must be made by non-co-operation students. They will not only thereby not surrender an iota of their principle but they will actually emphasize its non-violent and, therefore, vital part. There need be no despair if the advance is rejected. This suitor may feel sure of success, if it is fellowship that prompts the advance.

#### AN EXAMPLE TO COPY

The boys of the National School at Dharwar have sent me a parcel of yarn spun by them and written to me that it was spun continuously for seven days and nights. I learnt in the Sassoon Hospital that the boys of the Chinchwad institution kept several wheels going continuously for a month and a half. If all who can spin were to follow the example of these good boys, we should solve the khadi problem in no time, and as I believe in the capacity of the spinning-wheel, if it was universally adopted, to give us swaraj, I have no doubt

<sup>1</sup> This was published in *Young India*, 3-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> In his article "Vacation Thoughts", he had suggested to the students that they utilize their leisure for khadi work.

that the devotion of the boys of the Dharwar National School and the boys of the Chinchwad institution will take us many a step in the direction of swaraj. And a such spinning can only be a labour of love, it enables us either to reduce the price of khadi or to give better wages to those who spin for their livelihood or for supplementing it.

#### MR. MAJLI AND THE JAIL TREATMENT

As a fellow-patient, I wrote a brief note<sup>1</sup> to Mr. Majli of Belgaum by way of consolation. Mr. Majli, as the reader is aware, was discharged from prison because he was ailing rather seriously. In reply to my note, he writes:

Your letter in your own hand-writing could not but make me feel at first highly pleased, but soon after highly obliged. Yesterday I had as usual high fever lasting for full sixteen hours—I am getting fever every alternate day—but your advice remained stamped on my brain throughout and I succeeded at last in observing silence throughout the period of fever. I am now perfectly at peace in mind, but my body is again showing signs of diminishing vitality as a result of the new development of this fever of alternate days.

I read in the papers an interpellation and a reply thereto regarding the treatment I received. Out of the three facts stated, two are misstatements. I was not given spinning as stated on behalf of Government, but twisting yarn (1 lb. a day). Secondly, I was kept in utter seclusion under lock for all the 24 hours of the day except 15 minutes' walking. Though Government says I was ill when I was [sent] to jail, I was refused even the rice diet, but given the *jowari* bread which I could not digest. I leave it to you to give publicity or not, because I am not worth anything.

Mr. Majli is a great worker. The readers will share the hope with me that he may be soon free of all ailments and find himself in harness. Regarding the contradiction, the uninitiated reader may not be able to notice much distinction between twisting of yarn and spinning, as a mere piece of work. The distinction for Mr. Majli was vital. Thousands of Indians today regard spinning as a sacred duty and, therefore, a pleasure, whereas twisting has no such value for them. Whilst, therefore, in his weak state Mr. Majli would regard twisting as an insufferable task, he would regard spinning as balm for his afflicted soul and a diversion to take the thoughts of his ailment away from him. Moreover, whilst a practised worker can twist one pound of yarn without much difficulty, an ailing person like Mr. Majli can

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to D. R. Majli", 23-3-1924.



hardly twist a quarter of a pound. Let the reader understand that I know what twisting yarn means, and as I like physical work, I assure him that I do not exaggerate when I say that Mr. Majli can hardly twist a quarter of a pound a day without undue strain on his frail body. The seclusion under lock for 24 hours of the day, with 15 minutes' walk in the open, was a torture and if Mr. Majli was given *jowari* bread and refused the rice diet, it was the surest method of making him worse. I do not, however, print the foregoing letter by way of complaint against the Jail authorities, because very often these things happen without any deliberate intention of inflicting hardship on prisoners. What is at fault is the whole system of Jail administration which I have already described as soul-less, and much worse is an attempt made by the Government to deny or twist facts. Mr Majli has apologized for sending the contradiction. There was no occasion for it. He is, after all, a prominent worker in Karnatak. How nice, however, it would be if everyone of us could sincerely say to himself: "I am not worth anything"! Then we would all be fellow-servants and fellow-workers among whom the only competition would be to do the maximum of work without the slightest desire for gaining prominence or publicity. Swaraj could then be won and run without any difficulty. Innumerable difficulties arise when everyone wants to lead and advise and nobody wants to work.

*Young India*, 3-4-1924

## 162. MY MISSION

Pundit Ghasita Ram, "President, All-India Sub-Assistant Surgeons Association, Punjab Province, Amritsar" sent to the Editor some days ago an "open letter" addressed to me. After omitting from it laudatory phrases and sentences of good wishes and after correcting obvious grammatical errors, the letter reads:

I am a Brahman, a doctor and an old man like you. It will not be out of courtesy if I in this triple capacity offer you a piece of counsel. If you see wisdom and truth in it and if it appeals to your common sense and sentiments, kindly take it to heart.

You have seen much of the world; you have read much of it. Consequently you possess a wonderful experience of it, but in this world of mortals none till now has been able to accomplish the task he has undertaken in his lifetime. Buddha in spite of his high morality could not convert the

whole of India to Buddhism.

Shankaracharya in spite of his high intellectuality could not make all India Vedantist. Christ in spite of his high spirituality could not bring into the fold of Christianity the whole Jewish nation. I do not think, and I am not prepared to believe for a single moment about the accomplishment of your task. Still in face of these historical facts, if you believe in its accomplishment in your lifetime, then Sir, I venture to say that it is nothing but a dream.

This world is a place of trials, troubles and turmoils. The more a man sinks into it the more he is restless and, eventually, he loses his spiritual calmness and peace of mind. Consequently, the Mahatmas of olden time kept themselves aloof from worldly worries, anxieties and cares and strove to gain perfect peace and true quality of mind and enjoyed an everlasting happiness and bliss thereby.

The Jail life has brought a great change in your life and vigour and the disease has reduced you much. Therefore, in the fitness of things, you may live a calm life and spin the thread of your remaining days in a certain solitary cave in the meditation of God, and in realization of your own self in perfect spiritual tranquillity and calmness, because your health will not allow you to bear the burden of the worldly cares any more. It shall not be out of place to mention that you are absolutely convinced of the goodwill, mercy and sympathy of good officers. That very system of European medicines and surgery, which you condemned more than once, has saved you from the jaws of monstrous death. The English officers helped you in time of your troubles and needs.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed”. Now it remains for you to show your true friendship and to become the true ally of the British Raj in gratitude for the safety of your life and your release from the jail. If anyhow you cannot do so by your words and deeds, then pray do not come into the arena of political activity, but still if your restless soul does not allow you to sit in rest, then in this *Bhumi*, the motherland of great sages and saints, *Rishi* and *Munis*, take up the task of spiritualizing your brother Indians, teach them a lesson of true realization of the self. By doing so, instead of gaining this Kingdom of Earth, you will gain the Kingdom of Heaven.

In my opinion, the writer is desperately in earnest and merits an answer on that account if for nothing else. But it enables me too, to clear up certain misapprehensions about my mission in life.

Let me first, however, dispose of the advice about my views on

medicine. I have not *Indian Home Rule*<sup>1</sup> before me, but I recollect sufficient to be able to say that I have nothing to revise about the views set forth there. If I had written it for English readers and in English, I would have put the same thought in a manner that would have been more acceptable to the English ear. The original is in Gujarati and was written for the Gujarati readers of *Indian Opinion* of Natal. Moreover, what is written there has reference to an ideal state. It is a common error to think that condemnation of measures involves that of men. Medicine does often benumb the soul of the patient. It may, therefore, be considered evil, but not, therefore, necessarily medicine-men. I had precious medical friends when I wrote the book and did not hesitate to seek their advice in times of need. That was, as the writer implies, inconsistent with my belief regarding the use of medicine. Several friends have said to me the same thing in so many words. I plead guilty. But that is to admit that I am not a perfect man. Unfortunately for me, I am far from being perfect. I am an humble aspirant for perfection. I know my way to it also. But knowing the way is not reaching its end. If I was perfect, if I had acquired full control over all my passions even in thought, I should be perfect in body. I am free to confess that daily I am obliged to expend a great amount of mental energy in acquiring control over my thoughts. When I have succeeded, if I ever do think what a store house of energy would be set free for service. As I hold that appendicitis was a result of infirmity of thought or mind, so do I concede that my submission to the surgical operation was an additional infirmity of mind. If I was absolutely free of egoism, I would have resigned myself to the inevitable; but I wanted to live in the present body. Complete detachment is not a mechanical process. One has to grow to it by patient toil and prayer. As for gratitude, I have more than once publicly expressed my gratitude to Col. Maddock and his staff for the kindness with which they overwhelmed me. But there is no connection between the kind treatment I received from Col. Maddock and the system of Government I condemn. Col. Maddock himself would think little of me, if I revised my views about Dyerism because he, Col. Maddock, was a competent surgeon and did his duty as such, Nor have I any cause to be thankful to the Government for providing me with best surgical assistance or for prematurely releasing me. The former they were bound to provide for every prisoner. The latter has

<sup>1</sup> This was translation of *Hindi Swaraj*; vide "Hind Swaraj", 22-11-1909.

embarrassed me. I knew my course in prison whether well or ill. Outside the prison-walls, although I am slowly regaining my health, I do not know with certainty how to shape my course.

Now for the central point of the letter. The confusion in the writer's mind has arisen because of his misconception of the work of the prophets he names and of an awkward (for me) comparison between them and me. I do not know that Buddha did not accomplish his task which was to reach *Nirvana*. Tradition has it that he did. Conversion of others was a by-product, if one may so describe a sacred function. The Gospels record it of Jesus that he testified on the Cross of his own work, 'It is finished.'<sup>1</sup> Nor has their work of love died after them. The truest part of it will live for ever. The two or three thousand years that have gone by since their ministry are but a speck in the vast time circle.

I do not consider myself worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the race of prophets. I am an humble seeker after truth. I am impatient to realize myself, to attain *moksha* in this very existence. My national service is part of my training for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh. Thus considered, my service may be regarded as purely selfish. I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven which is *moksha*. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it. A cave-dweller can build castles in the air, whereas a dweller in a palace like Janak has no castles to build. The cave-dweller in who hovers round the world on the wings of thought has no peace. A Janak, though living in the midst of 'pomp and circumstance', may have peace that passeth understanding. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there through of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the *Gita* I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. Though, therefore, A Mussalman or a Christian or a Hindu may despise me and hate me, I want to love him and serve him even as I would love my wife or son though they hate me. So my patriotism is for me a stage in my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul.

*Young India*, 3-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> John, 19-30

### 163. PLEA FOR PATIENCE

Some correspondents are anxious for my views on Council-entry<sup>1</sup> and Hindu-Muslim questions. Others are equally insistent that I make no hasty pronouncement. I am myself most eager to express my opinion on both these questions, but I want to avoid all avoidable mistakes. I owe a duty to those who differ from me. They are valued co-workers. They love their country just as much as I claim to do. Some of them have recent sacrifices to their credit to which I can lay no claim. They have a longer first-hand experience of the country than I have. Their opinions, therefore, deserve all the respect and consideration that are due to their position and ability. Above all, I must not embarrass them by any ill-considered opinion. Theirs is a thankless task. The Government have rejected every advance made by them. The former have stood defiant behind their armed entrenchments even in such trifles (to them) as the removal of the prohibition against Mr. Horniman<sup>2</sup> and the release of Maulana Hasrat Mohani<sup>3</sup>. In these circumstances, it would be improper on my part without the utmost consideration to say anything that may in any way disturb the plans the Swarajists may develop for meeting the emergency. I am trying to grasp the situation and understand their view-point. Nothing can possibly be lost by patience. Haste may cause unnecessary mischief.

The same may be said of the Hindu-Muslim question with greater emphasis. It is a problem that requires the most delicate handling. Every thought has to be examined. Every word weighed. A hasty adjective may cause an explosion. Though, therefore, I hold decided views on the question and am most anxious to express them, I must forbear. Both Hindus and Mussalmans occupying front positions in the community are asking me not to say a word without fully studying the situation. I have a letter which goes so far as to say that I shall know little until I have travelled and seen things for myself.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Thoughts on Council-entry", before 11-4-1924, and the item following it.

<sup>2</sup> B. G. Horniman (1873-1948); journalist and politician; editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*. He was deported from India in April 1919 and could return only in 1926.

<sup>3</sup> 1875-1951; nationalist Muslim leader, took active part in the Khilafat movement.

Without going so far with my correspondents, I give my assurance to them and all who think with them that I shall not write or say a word without a careful and prayerful study of the question. For me the attainment of swaraj depends not upon what the English Cabinet thinks or says but entirely upon a proper, satisfactory and lasting solution of the thorny problem. Without it all before us is dark. With it swaraj is within immediate reach.

Whilst, therefore, these conferences are going on, I respectfully urge those who are interested in my opinion on these important questions to go on with the constructive programme. Every yard of yarn spun or khaddar woven is a step towards swaraj. Everyone who refrains from harbouring an evil thought of his Hindu or Mussalman brother as the case may be contributes to the solution. Every writer in the Press who economizes his adjectives and ceases to impute motives or inflame public opinion makes easy the path to a proper solution. The other day *The Times of India* published illuminating extracts from the vernacular Press showing the present mentality of some writers. They tell us how not to do the thing. Granting that a Hindu or a Mussalman utters a hasty word, it is no business of a Pressman who wishes well to his country immediately to advertise it. It would be criminal to exaggerate such blunders. I am not sure that the statements advertised in those extracts were even made by the parties concerned. No expression of opinion from anybody is needed to demonstrate the necessity of being accurate, of curbing our tongues and checking our pens.

*Young India*, 3-4-1924

#### 164. TO READERS OF “HINDI NAVAJIVAN”

*Thursday, Phalgun Krishna 14 [April 3, 1924]*

It has always been a matter of regret to me that, although I am the editor of *Hindi Navajivan*, I do not write anything for it. For this reason I do not consider myself fit to be its editor.

I accepted the post of editor out of my affection for Shri Jamnalal Bajaj. I cannot be satisfied so long as the paper carries only translations from Gujarati and English. I shall now try, when I have time, to write something for *Hindi Navajivan*.

But there is some other reason for my writing this article. I see that *Hindi Navajivan* runs at a loss. At one time it had 12,000

subscribers, but now their number is 1,400. For *Hindi Navajivan* to be self-supporting, it needs 4,000 subscribers. If this number of subscribers is not forthcoming soon, it is my intention to close down the paper. I have always held the view—which became strengthened while I was in jail—that newspapers that are not self-supporting and have to depend on advertisements should be closed down. In keeping with this principle, it is desirable that *Hindi Navajivan*, if it cannot pay its way, should be discontinued. If you feel the need for this paper, a very good way to increase the circulation is for you to try and enroll your friends as subscribers. I may as well let you know that I have expressed a similar intention with regard to *Young India*. It is only on moral or spiritual grounds that I base this decision of mine.

The Gujarati *Navajivan*—although it has had to bear the brunt of the losses incurred by *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan*—has shown profits. In the five years of its life it has saved Rs. 50,000. This amount will be spent on public work—on the propagation of the charkha and khadi. You shall find details of it in translations from the Gujarati. If *Hindi Navajivan* shows a profit, the money will be used for spreading Hindi in the South. I feel that there is a great need to propagate in the South a form of Hindi which is simple and easily understood by Hindus and Muslims alike. If you approve of the idea, please do your best to push the sale of *Hindi Navajivan*.

*Your servant,*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

## 165. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

*Thursday [April 3, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letters. I follow what you say about Kashi. I had Chi. Prabhudas examined by Dr. Dalal, also by a famous Poona *vaidya* who had been here yesterday. Both approve of his living on a milk diet. At present he takes four and a half pounds of milk and is stronger than he was before. Dr. Deshmukh also examined him and gave the same opinion. I have made full inquiries about the sea here.

<sup>1</sup> The postmark carries this date.

Thousands of people bathe in it. what you have heard relates to the sea at Versova<sup>1</sup>. Here everyone bathes without any fear.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: S.N. 8658

### *166. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI*

*Thursday [April 3, 1924]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I have your letters. I shall by and by write in *Navajivan* and *Young India* about the things you have mentioned and give what explanations I can. Dr. Dalal thoroughly examined Radha and other patients. Besides, an eminent *vaidya* from Poona is also here. She is getting stronger under his treatment. She sleeps by my side. I shall not give more details. I shall not now send away Ramdas from me. I will gladly give him some time myself. I have already talked about this to Surendra. I cannot say when they will come. I hope to reach there . . . ,<sup>3</sup> and do not propose afterwards to go out for at least a month and a half.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. MAGANLAL GANDHI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

SABARMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W, 6041 Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

### *167. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"*

*[April 3, 1924]*

In spite of the heavy burden of work Mahatma Gandhi has begun to shoulder even in his days of convalescence, he was pleased to accord an interview to our representative who called at his abode at Juhu yesterday morning. The callers yesterday morning included Messrs Shuaib Qureshi, D. Chamanlal and Dr. Kitchlew.

"It is not my purpose to trouble you again so soon after last week's long talk we had", said our representative apologizing for trespassing on his quiet and rest, and

<sup>1</sup> A village near Andheri, suburb of Bombay



as he was reminded of Mahatmaji's appeal in Gujarati in the course of which it was stated:

"The capital of energy at my disposal is very small, and I want to utilize it only in service. I wish to resume editorship of *Navajivan* and *Young India* from next week. And I need absolute quiet for that work. If all my time and energy are taken up in seeing and entertaining you, it will not be possible for me to edit the weeklies in the way I desire.." <sup>1</sup>

"Will you not, however, make just a short statement to me on the result of the conference you are holding these days with the Swarajist leaders and others?" our representative inquired.

Mahatmaji was in an exceedingly humorous disposition. He remarked that he was still a patient and little could be expected of him on the present situation till he finished his study of the current events and had had a full talk with the leaders who were there. However, he light-heartedly suggested, as he laughed heartily, our representative could "pad" his interview with the descriptions of shady palm groves and the gently rolling ocean.

Hindu-Muslim unity and untouchability both were questions of paramount importance and it was not decided whether one of them would be tackled first or both of them would be dealt with simultaneously, replied Gandhiji to the question whether he had definitely arrived at a decision, as a result of consultations, to handle one or both of these vital problems.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 4-4-1924

### 168. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[After April 3, 1924] <sup>2</sup>

BHAI MAHADEV,

This much should of course be taken. It will certainly do for Gujarati *Navajivan*. If, therefore, you can drop some other times and include these, please do so or take out a supplement. Do what you think is proper.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 8571

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Appeal to the Public", 24-3-1924

<sup>2</sup> The letter seems to have been written after Gandhiji resumed the editorship of his weeklies, which he did on April 3.

169. TELEGRAM TO VYKOM SATYAGRAHIS

[April 4, 1924]

BEING OVERWHELMED WITH WORK UNABLE WRITE.  
YOU ARE DOING SPLENDIDLY. CONTINUE AS YOU  
HAVE BEGUN.

From a cutting from *The Hindu*: S.N. 10300

170. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POST ANDHERI,  
April 4, 1924

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I have your most touching letter. I was at peace with myself immediately after that morning note. Ramu's unhesitating acceptance of my suggestion added pleasure to that peace. What is going on today with Motilalji and others can hardly be described as a conference, though I have used that word myself in the columns of *Young India*.<sup>1</sup> We are having desultory talks. Hakimji merely discussed the Hindu-Moslem problem. He is gone already. Malaviyaji is still here. He too talks only about Hindu-Moslem unity. Motilalji alone is naturally interested in the Council-entry because he has to shape his policy. We have, however, come to no conclusions, and I am not going to be in a hurry. I see that I cannot even draw up a tentative statement. So much for the conference or the talks.

A suggestion has been made that I should make no declaration of my views without a conference of young workers. The idea has appealed to me, and I am thinking seriously of issuing a general invitation<sup>2</sup> through *Young India* for some day this month for all workers who are interested in the Congress programme and who would give me the benefit of their advice. Please wire your opinion on this matter and send me also a convenient date. I should like you to be present. Is it not possible for you to pass a month with Jamnalalji? He is at Nasik where the climate is dry and salubrious. He gets the Poona physician also now and then. I would very much like you to give him

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Plea for Patience", 3-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Notes", 17-4-1924

a full trial. He has been here at Devdas's instance to see my fellow-patients. He insisted that you should not take any food but papaw and raisins.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

EXTENSION

SALEM

From a photostat: S.N. 8652

### *171. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 4, 1924*

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

You will have read in the papers of the visit to Bombay of Malaviyaji, Motilalji, Hakimji and other leaders. What is going on today at Andheri can hardly be described as a conference, though I have used that word myself in the columns of *Young India*. We are having desultory talks. Hakimji merely discussed the Hindu-Moslem problem. He is gone already. Malaviyaji is still here. He too talks only about Hindu-Moslem unity. Motilalji alone is naturally interested in the Council-entry because he has to shape his policy. We have, however, come to no conclusions, and I am not going to be in a hurry. I see that I cannot even draw up a tentative statement. So much for the "conference" or the talks.

A suggestion has been made that I should make no declaration of my views without a conference of young workers. The idea has appealed to me. and I am thinking seriously of issuing a general invitation through *Young India* for some day this month for all workers who are interested in the Congress programme and who would give me the benefit of their advice. Please wire your opinion on this matter and send me also a convenient date.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a photostat : S.N. 8653

*172. LETTER TO R. B. PALKAR*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 4, 1924*

MY DEAR PALKAR,

You will forgive me for not writing to you earlier. I wanted to say how good and kind you were all the time I was in the Sassoon Hospital. Yours was a most trying work, and though I rarely came in direct touch with you, I kept myself informed of the devotion and application with which you performed the service voluntarily undertaken by you. At best it was a thankless task turning away or keeping waiting anxious and impatient visitors. Pray accept my thanks for your services. I shall always recall the pleasant memories of kind services done to me by so many friends whilst I was lying on a sick-bed in the hospital. Yours will not be among the least of them.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. R. B. PALKAR  
BHARAT SWARAJYA SEWAK  
NEAR BALAJI VYAPARI SANGH  
BUDHWAR [PETH], POONA CITY

From a copy : S.N. 8654

*173. LETTER TO C. A. PEREIRA*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 4, 1924*

DEAR DR. PEREIRA,

I have your letter of the 26th ultimo.

I am sure that your visit to the leaders of Hindu thought can only advance the cause you have at heart. I do not know that any particular season is better than any other for the purpose of a mission, but for the sake of comfort, the cold season is decidedly preferable.

I must confess my gross ignorance of the subject you refer to. I do not know who is at present in possession, nor do I know on what title the present possessor bases his claim, how and when were the Buddhists ousted from possession. I have visited the shrine myself.

Probably you know that there is no restriction upon visitors, nor is any fee demanded for admission.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

DR. C. A. PEREIRA  
"TAMUND"  
BAMBELA PITIYA ROAD  
COLOMBO

From a photostat : S.N. 8655

*174. LETTER TO H. R. SCOTT*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 4, 1924*

DEAR MR. SCOTT,

I was delighted to receive your note.

I thank you for your good wishes. I did receive the translation of Fosdick's *Manhood of the Master*, for which I thank you. You will also please convey my thanks to Mr. Manilal Parekh for asking you to send me a copy. I confess my ignorance of the original.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

THE REV. H. R. SCOTT  
MISSION HOUSE  
SURAT

From a photostat : S.N. 8656

*175. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 4, 1924*

MY DEAR MAHADEV,

Please send at the earliest opportunity with someone coming here the file of *Indian Opinion* and Solomon Report<sup>1</sup> if available.

*Yours sincerely,*

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> This was the report of a Commission appointed to inquire, among other things, into the Indian marriages question and repeal of the £3 tax in South Africa; *vide* "The Commission's Report and Recommendations", 25-3-1914, "Extracts from Solomon Commission Report", 25-3-1914.

3 o' clock morning<sup>1</sup>

[PS.]

Kingdom of Heaven—*Moksha*

Paradise—*Swarga*

About the rest, some other time.

This is what is called bungling. I had asked him to write on his own, but the poor man did not understand. Whose fault was this? Mine, of course. Both the changes you have made in *Y.I.* were correct. Keep up this practice.

From a photostat: S.N. 8657

### 176. LETTER TO PAUL RICHARDS

POST ANDHERI,  
April 5, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 3rd March. I received also, some time before your long letter, a brief signed by you and Mons. Romain Rolland.<sup>3</sup>

Ever since my release, I have been trying to feel my way. The situation has altered so much. Of one thing, however, I am certain. My faith in non-violence is unquenchable. All you can do there is to spread the truth of non-violence wherever you go.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

MONS. PAUL RICHARDS  
138, ROUTE DE CHENE  
GENEVA  
SWITZERLAND

From a photostat: G.N. 871

<sup>1</sup> Golikere, who was at this time working as Gandhiji's typist, typed the postcard and left it for Gandhiji to sign. Gandhiji signed it in Gujarati early morning the next day and added the remarks which follow. These had to be clarified in a letter a week later; *vide* "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 11-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Richards wrote of his travels in the Middle east and Southern Europe and of his taking khadi "from East to West on his person" Richards had met Romain Rolland, whom he called the 'Rishi of the West' in Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> Dated February 17, this letter read: "We join together to send you our message of love and admiration. There you are free again, after the glorious shade of the jail, in the sunshine of the battlefield. May India be ready this time. And may Europe also hear your voice in her wilderness. Yours is the love of India and the service of humanity."

177. LETTER TO THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD

POST ANDHERI,  
April 5, 1924

TO

HIS EXALTED HIGHNESS THE NIZAM OF HYDERABAD  
HYDERABAD  
(DECCAN)

YOUR EXALTED HIGHNESS

I beg to acknowledge Your Exalted Highness's letter of the 1st April.<sup>1</sup> I received also the letter of the 1st ultimo to which I replied on the 5th ultimo.<sup>2</sup> I am surprised that the reply did not reach Your Exalted Highness. I now enclose a copy thereof.

*I remain,  
Your Exalted Highness's faithful friend.*

Encl.

From a photostat: S.N. 8428

178. LETTER TO H. WALTER HEEGSTRA

POST ANDHERI,  
April 5, 1924

DEAR MR. HEEGSTRA,

I thank you for your letter.

This is my reply to the first question: My platform is India. My goal is to attain self-government for India. The means adopted to attain the end are Non-violence and Truth. Therefore, Indian self-government not only means no menace to the world, but will be of the greatest benefit to humanity if she attains her end through those means and those means alone. The spinning-wheel is the external symbol of internal reform, and its universal re-adoption in India

<sup>1</sup> It read: ". . . if the Beraris decline to avail themselves of this . . . autonomy now within their grasp, (which the Nizam has spontaneously offered to them on condition [that] they express to the British Government their desire to come back under the Hyderabad State), then the logical conclusion to be drawn from this would be that they must give up all claims to self-government for which so much noise and agitation is now going on all over India. . ."

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to the Nizam of Hyderabad", 5-3-1924.

ensures her economic salvation and frees millions of Indian peasants from growing pauperism.

My message to the businessmen of America is: Understand the inner meaning of the message of the spinning-wheel and you will probably find the solution for the World Peace which I know so many Americans sincerely desire.

I am sorry I have to disappoint you about my portrait because, as I told you, I do not possess a single portrait or print.

I thank you for the book you have sent me, and in accordance with your suggestion, I am keeping it.

Pray give my regards to Mrs. Heegstra and accept same for yourself.

*Yours sincerely,*

H. WALTER HEEGSTRA, ESQ.  
SHEPHERD'S HOTEL  
CAIRO (EGYPT)

From a photostat: S.N. 8662

### *179. LETTER TO V. V. DASTANE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR DASTANE,

I have seen the Mulshi Peta papers. I have not been able to go through the whole literature. It appears to me that the movement<sup>1</sup> has got to be dropped for two reasons or rather for three:

(1) I understand that the vast majority of the men affected have accepted compensation and that the few who have not cannot perhaps even be traced.

(2) The dam is nearly half-finished and its progress cannot be permanently stopped. There seems to me to be no ideal behind the movement.

(3) The leader of the movement is not a believer out and out in non-violence. This defect is fatal to success. I see the illuminating

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Maharashtra Provincial Conference, Bassein", 7-5-1921.



verses at the end of one of the pamphlets giving a definition of true dharma.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. V. V. DASTANE  
C/O CONGRESS COMMITTEE  
JALGAON (KHANDESH)

From a photostat: S.N. 8663

### *180. LETTER TO BADRUL HUSSAIN*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR BADRUL HUSSAIN<sup>1</sup>,

I rejoiced to receive your letter and that too on swadeshi paper. You have certainly neglected me though I have enquired about you of everyone who has come from Hyderabad and who, I thought, was likely to know you. What have you been doing with your health? Young men cannot afford to adopt the pace of old men. I expect you, therefore, to be up and doing long before I can. Do come as soon as you are healthy and can undertake a long journey.

*Yours sincerely,*

BADRUL HUSSAIN, ESQ.  
ABID MANZIL  
HYDERABAD (DECCAN)

From a copy: S.N. 8664

### *181. LETTER TO H. M. PEREIRA*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR PERIRA,

I thank you for your letter of the 25th February last.

I have received the interesting cutting you have sent me. Please continue to send cuttings that you may come across in connection with the national movement.

<sup>1</sup> It is likely that 'Badrul Hussain', is a slip for "Badrul Hassan", author of *The Drink and Evil in India*, to which Gandhiji contributed a foreword; vide "Foreword" 5-3-1922.

I remember your father well. What are you doing there?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. M. PEREIRA, ESQ.

MERRICK

LONG ISLAND

NEW YORK, U.S.A.

From a photostat: S.N. 8666

*182 LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

I am deeply thankful to you for the attention you are giving Ramdas. I think that the regular training he is having at present is likely to do him good and steady him.

I hope your mother is making satisfactory progress. Please give her my very kind regards.

*Yours sincerely*

M. R. JAYAKAR, ESQ.

391, THAKURDWAR

BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8667

*183. LETTER TO MULK RAJ*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

DEAR LALA MULK RAJ,

I have your letter of the 1st instant, for which I thank you.

Deshbandu Das has not yet come here. Pandit Malaviyaji had to leave for Benares before finishing the conversations. He returns again at the end of the month. Pandit Motilalji is here, and I hope to discuss the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial as soon as the present deliberations are

finished. I shall take care of the original plans and return them after use.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

LALA MULK RAJ  
AMRITSAR

From a photostat: S.N. 8668

*184. LETTER TO J. M. GOKARN*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

DEAR MR. GOKARN,

I have had your letter regarding the venue of the Congress in Karnatak. I am already in correspondence with Mr. Gangadharrao.<sup>1</sup> I want to do all I can to prevent a prolongation of the dispute referred to by you.

Please note that even if I was dictator in 1922, I am no longer that now.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

J. M. GOKARN, ESQ.  
AMBEWADI, "D" BLOCK  
GIRGAUM  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8669

*185. LETTER TO GANGADHARRAO DESHPANDE*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR GANGADHARRAO,

I have your letter of the 31st March. I have seen it only today. As I do not know the latest development, I am not writing anything in

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

*Young India*, but I am sending a letter to Sadashivrao<sup>1</sup>. Herewith a copy of that letter.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

Encl.

SJT. GANGADHARRAO B. DESHPANDE

BELGAUM

From a photostat: S.N. 8670

*186. LETTER TO D. HANUMANTRAO*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR HANUMANTRAO,

I have your letter. You need not apologize for its length. It is all very interesting and shows the deep interest you are taking in the Ashram and Nature Cure. My difficulty is to digest milk made out of nuts. I tried it during my convalescence after that violent attack of dysentery. I should love to give it a re-trial, but I do not want just now to make any risky experiment in dietetics. The earth bandage you suggest is not now required because the wound is already healed.

With love to you all,

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8671

<sup>1</sup> Karnad Sadashiv Rao (1881-1937) ; lawyer, social worker and Congress leader from South Kanara, Mysore ; four times president, Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Not available

*187. LETTER TO EDWARD MURPHY<sup>1</sup>*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of good wishes.

You ask for a word from me. Here it is: There is no search greater than that of Truth. The only means of finding it out is through non-violence in its extreme form. It is because we have ignored it that we seek to impose by force what we consider is truth upon others,

*Your sincere friend,*

EDWARD MURPHY, ESQ.

SECRETARY, THE GANDHI CLUB

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

NEWBURGH

NEW YORK, U.S.A.

From a photostat : S.N. 8673

*188. LETTER TO GORDON LAW*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

DEAR MR. GORDON LAW,

I thank you for your letter of the 27th February.

I remember our meeting<sup>2</sup> and also your having given me Moffatt's Translation of the New Testament.<sup>3</sup>

I have sent a reply to the Gandhi Club also.

I am sending you a copy of Young India, the first number after resumption of my editorship, and I am asking the Management to

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Edward Murphy's letter of February 27, in the course of which he had said: "Since the club bears your name, its object is to study, discuss and read of your life and works. We find the study of your life very interesting." S.N. 8381

<sup>2</sup> In 1920, at Lahore

<sup>3</sup> Law had also presented Gandhiji a book on children by an American author.

send a copy regularly to you.

*Yours Sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

GODRON LOW, ESQ., M. B. E.  
THE GANDHI CLUB  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION  
NEWBURGH  
NEW YORK, U. S. A.

*189. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 5, 1924*

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

I have read your pathetic letter to Devdas.

I have already sent my assurance to Mahomed Ali that I am going to issue no statement till I have met him. You will see how I have met the growing demand for some statement from me. I am myself eager to make my views known on the Hindu-Moslem question, and I am now held back only by Mahomed Ali's desire for postponement, as also Pandit Malaviyaji's, with whom I had a fairly long chat yesterday on this very question. But you do not want me to keep silent about the Tibbia College incident, for instance. I want to deal with that as also the charge against Mahomed Ali. I have not got his reply to Swami Shraddhanand. Though I am trying to overtake the vernacular Press, it is very difficult to do the thing single-handed. If you could send me all the choice cuttings from both Hindu and Moslem newspapers, I would like to deal with them with all the firmness I can command. So much for the general question.

Not a day passes when I do not think of the Brothers and their sorrows. The Khilafat is dear to every Mussulman, but the Ali Brothers have made its prestige and honour their life-work. I can therefore understand how the decision of the Turkish Assembly must have shaken them. Amina's death and Shaukat Ali's serious illness filled the cup of sorrows. How I wish I was by your side to nurse Shaukat Ali back to his former health and vigour! It is so difficult to think of him lying prostrate on a sick-bed. May God soon restore him to health! I wish I could go to Bombay to meet him when you arrive. But I must not make the attempt. One such journey may mean nothing,

but you know my method. If I break the self-imposed restriction once, I shall have to do it many a time, and I should be nowhere. Even in this retreat I have no rest. Crowds of visitors would not leave me alone, and from today I am commencing some hours' silence practically ever day so that I might have some quiet and I might also be able to overtake the correspondence which is daily growing in volume. I have already added Wednesday as a day of silence to Monday so that I may be able to cope with the editing of *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

I should not dream of Shaukat Ali coming to Juhu in his present state of health. You must therefore, take him to Matheran, and when you can spare a day yourself, I certainly want to see you. Mahomed Ali will bring me all the messages from Shaukat Ali and that would be quite sufficient to go on with. As far as I am concerned, there is not much really that I now want to know except the views of yourself and the Brothers and of a few others whose opinions I value. My mind is practically made up, and I am becoming impatient to deliver my soul.

My love to you, the Brothers and all other friends, and please remember me to Begum Saheba.

*Yours sincerely,*

DR. M. A. ANSARI  
1, DARYAGANJ  
DELHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8674

### *190. LETTER TO P. A. NARIELWALA*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

DEAR MR. P. A. NARIELWALA,

I thank you for your letter enclosing a ten-rupee note.

I am glad you did not believe that statement that I would love less those who did not wear khaddar. I am sure that not one of my co-workers would make such a statement to anyone, but there was a self-appointed volunteer in Poona who must have spoken to you in these offensive terms.

As for the wearing of khaddar, why do you associate all the

noble qualities with it? Surely, in that event no one is fit to wear khaddar garments. The wearing of khaddar should be considered on its own merits, whether from the economic aspect or from the political. As a matter of fact, the political is a corollary to the economic. I would not hesitate to urge the most viciously-minded person to use khaddar in preference to foreign cloth or even Indian mill-made cloth, because thereby we put the money paid for carding, spinning and weaving into the pockets of our poor brothers and sisters. Whilst, therefore, I would very much like you to separate the wearing of khaddar from acquisition of noble qualities, and I doubt not that the adoption of khaddar will enable you all the more to cultivate those qualities.

*Yours sincerely,*

P. A. NARIELWALA, ESQ.  
ROSE LEA, ALTAMONT ROAD  
CUMBALA HILL  
BOMBAY

From a copy: S.N. 8675

*191. LETTER TO SIR DINSHAW MANECKJI PETIT*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

DEAR SIR DINSHAW PETIT

I thank you for your letter of the 31st ultimo and appreciate the reasons you give for your decisions against Mrs. Sorabjee.<sup>1</sup>

I thank you too for your kind inquiry. I am making slow but steady progress.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SIR DINSHAW MANECKJI PETIT  
41, NICOL ROAD  
BALLARD ESTATE  
Bombay

From a photostat: S.N. 8676

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had appealed to Petit for help to her; *vide* "Letter to Sir Dinshaw Maneckjee Petit", 27-3-1924.



192. LETTER TO DR. G. B. TALWALKAR

POST ANDHERI,  
April 5, 1924

DEAR DR. TALWALKAR,

I thank you for your letter.

After I wrote to you, Dr. Dalal paid his weekly visit to examine my progress. I had all the three patients examined by him also, and he suggested cod-liver oil injection for both Kikiben and Radhaben , and prescribed some pills and mixture for Maniben. The Poona physician came after him and he also examined the three patients. He felt very confident of success, and all the three are at the present moment under his treatment. They appear to me to be better than they were, but I ascribe all the little improvement there is to more cheerful surroundings and the bracing sea air. It is too early yet to say anything about the physician's treatment. When Dr. Dalal comes again, I propose to discuss the Poona physician's treatment of the patients. My unfortunate position is that I have faith in the Ayurvedic drugs, but very little in the diagnosis of the physicians. I therefore never feel sure about a patient under an Ayurvedic physician if his diagnosis is not checked by a trustworthy practitioner under the Western system. I am keeping a chart of the temperatures of all the three patients, and I feel fairly safe so long as the temperature is not high and the patients keep cheerful. Do please give me further guidance if you consider it necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*

DR. G. B. TALWALKAR  
AHMEDABAD

From a copy: S.N. 8677

193. LETTER TO MANGAL SINGH AND RAJA SINGH

POST ANDHERI,  
April 5, 1924

DEAR FRIENDS,

I have received a copy of the *Onward Special* dated 17th March. I was deeply hurt on reading it. Don't you think that it reeks

with gross exaggeration and falsehood? Those of you who believe in the religious nature of the struggle should wash your hands clean of these tactics. If *Onward* is to be run as the official organ, you should have a sober and truthful editor.

*Yours sincerely,*

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH AND SARDAR RAJA SINGH  
AMRITSAR

From a photostat: S.N. 9953

### *194. LETTER TO K. M. PANIKKAR*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 5, 1924*

MY DEAR PANIKKAR,

I have your letter of the 1st instant.<sup>1</sup> What you say does not surprise me. The friends who were here will tell you what I had to say to them. It is so difficult for me to say anything till I hear from the friends with reference to the memorandum I have given them. Do you get all your letters regularly and without any tampering? How is it possible to issue any statement after reading the *Onward Special*? There is not a trace of the religious spirit about the writer, and it is so highly colored and untruthful. It is impossible for me to throw myself heart and soul into a struggle which, claiming to be religious, requires to be supported by inflammatory and untruthful writings. You may read this to our friends. Yours is a very delicate position. I hope you will have the strength and the courage to live up to the creed we profess.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. K. M. PANIKKAR  
AKALI SAHAYAK BUREAU  
AMRITSAR

From a photostat: S.N. 9954

<sup>1</sup> Panikkar had written earlier on March 29 forwarding to Gandhiji a report of an informal inquiry he had conducted into the jail occurrences.

195. TELEGRAM TO ALMORA CONGRESS COMMITTEE<sup>1</sup>

[On or after April 5, 1924]

THANKS. UNABLE ACCEPT KIND HOSPITALITY .

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8679

196. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

Saturday [After April 5, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHRI VALJI,

Indeed, there was dearth of matter last time too. One must not keep awake out of obstinacy.

We have no need to employ more men. You may, therefore, carry out the last of your suggestions right now. I shall see it that adequate stamps are affixed. I hope the mistake will not be repeated. You did well in changing 'Imposture'. The title you have given brings out the sense more clearly. There will be no difficulty in changing the order of the items under "Notes", so long as they are not interrelated.

Introduce one change. The practice of reserving the fourth page for the leader may be discontinued. Let the leading article commence from wherever the "Notes" end. Only it should start with a fresh column so that we can dispense with the practice of giving the name of *Young India* and date-line inside.

I have not received a single copy of the current issue of *Y. I.* I see that more than five columns of matter are already lying ready with you and I send a little today. More I shall be able to send only on Monday. I hope to send some tomorrow also. I shall try not to send anything on Tuesday. I may send at the most two columns.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6201. Courtesy : V. G. Desai.

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the telegram from secretary, Almora Congress Committee, dated April 5, 1924, which read: "Congratulations. Happy new year Almora climate excellent for recuperation. Bungalow arranged. Kindly do come."

<sup>2</sup> It is presumed that the letter was written by Gandhiji from Juhu after he resumed the editorial responsibility of *Young India*, on April 3, 1924. The Saturday following fell on April 5.

## 197. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[Before April 6, 1924]

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I send you herewith eight chapters of the history of satyagraha.<sup>1</sup> See that not a single correction in it is left out. You will see that they are all essential. I have cancelled the last paragraph.

Why are you still sore about that translation? A ‘ja’ may be placed at the wrong place. There is nothing whatever to be said against [your translation of ] ‘Kingdom of Heaven’.

There are two remedies for you. One, that you should forget your malady. It may be a sort of mental hypochondria, in the same way that some imagine a physical malady where there is none. We should know our faults, but at the same time should not exaggerate them. There is always a middle path in all things, which is really not the middle but the true path. The other remedy is to throw off your cowardice. Being a coward, you make Durga suffer, and for the same reason you beat that coachman. Why did you get frightened because he beat you? Cowards also lose patience sometimes. You are not lacking in love, but you do not examine yourself carefully. You have no self-confidence. Why don’t you always say to yourself, “I will never give way to fear”, “I will always correct myself whenever I make a mistake”? As a last resort, you have the *mantra* of Rama [nama]. Did you read the letter I wrote to Majli on the subject?<sup>2</sup> you must have got a copy.

Do write a letter about Mahomed Ali. Such questions may arise in the minds of others also. If you write, I shall get an opportunity to give an explanation. In any case, I shall write something [about it] tomorrow. Write after my article reaches you. We shall put Durga under the treatment of the Poona *vaidya*. Will she come here on Thursday? The *vaidya* comes on Thursday. Let her come to stay here for a few days. Do expect some fresh crowding here. In a dharmasala

<sup>1</sup> These were the first in a series which started appearing in *Navajivan* from April 6; the English version of the chapters started appearing in *young India* from April 17. The latter was published in book form, as *Satyagraha in South Africa*, in 1928. The Gujarati edition was released in two parts during 1924-25.

<sup>2</sup> Vide “Letter to D. R. Majli”, 23-3-1924.

everyone can come and find room. Is it truly a place of dharma? If it is, there should be no need for hesitation.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8762

## *198. INTERVIEW TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

BOMBAY

[On or before April 6, 1924]

I have carefully read Mr. Duncan's<sup>1</sup> speech delivered by him at the second reading of the Class Areas Bill in the Union Assembly. I have not before me the letters exchanged between General Smuts and myself. I have sent for the file of the *Indian Opinion* which I have at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati. It contains the text of the two letters, but for my purpose I do not really need them. I am surprised at Mr. Duncan's assertion. The two letters do not form the whole of the agreement. It is necessary to remember that the Indian struggle commenced with the Asiatic Registration Act of 1907, which was vetoed as an ordinance and passed, almost word for word, by the first responsible legislature of the Transvaal. Finally, in 1914, the struggle reached its climax and embraced all the four provinces of the union. 'Vested rights' has been a phrase requiring interpretation from time to time. My contention is that the whole tenor of the agreement pledged the Union Government not only not to curtail vested rights, but gradually to remove the restrictions that existed in 1914.

I have already cited Sir Benjamin Robertson and Mr. Andrews as my witnesses in support of my contention. I have asked Mr. Andrews, who was present at the negotiations that were going on between General Smuts and myself, and he completely supports me.<sup>2</sup> The Indian struggle extending over a long period of eight years could not have been undertaken so that, after a full and honourable settlement, it was open to the Union Government to take away the rights already possessed by the Indians.

The whole of Mr. Duncan's speech is a curious exhibition of

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Duncan, member of the South African Cabinet, Governor-General in 1927

<sup>2</sup> For Andrews's statement substantiating the position taken by Gandhiji, *vide* Appendix "C. F. Andrews' Interview to Associated Press", 7-4-1924.

inconsistency and refusal to do the right thing. As the speech itself shows, the Class Areas Bill is introduced not because it is necessary for the conservation of European predominance, but because interested Europeans are clamouring for it. Mr. Duncan himself admits that the Indian population is gradually decreasing, because immigration has ceased. His distinction between segregation and separation is, to say the least, hypocritical. And in spite of his statement to the contrary, I venture to state that, whatever the idea underlying the Bill may be, its effect must be to ruin the Indian settlers.

*The Hindu*, 7-4-1924

### 199. TO READERS OF "NAVAJIVAN"

After a separation of two years, I meet you through this letter. I look upon *Navajivan* as my weekly letter to my Gujarati brothers and sisters. Through it I have come closer to you. As for myself, I can say that separation has strengthened rather than weakened the ties that bind us together. Ever since my release, I have been longing to get in touch with you again. I used to be overwhelmed with joy whenever I thought in jail of your affection for me. I used to wonder when I would be able to place before you my reflections while in jail. I thank God that today I can do so.

I beg you not to feel bored with me if I am not able to present new ideas to you. I have not discovered any new means for our country's progress. The conviction has grown stronger in me that we can gain our objective only by the means we were employing two years ago-and by no other means. How much faith I have in these means you will see in the pages of *Navajivan*. But will the continuous discussion of the same means in *Navajivan* be of any use? Will that not weary you? You alone can answer the question. If you get bored, you will stop reading *Navajivan*.

I insist that *Navajivan* should not be run at a loss. I would regard it as being run successfully only if it could pay its way through subscriptions.

Truth is as old as creation. Yet we have not got tired of it truth is not out of our mind even when we indulge in untruth. Truth is our yard-stick. We relish as ever new the lesson we draw from our experience of it. *Navajivan*, which serves and will continue to serve you, has placed and will continue to place before you chiefly lessons

of experience; hence I have no misgiving about its future. When Shankerlal Banker and Indulal Yagnik entrusted the editorship of *Navajivan* to me<sup>1</sup>, I had told them that neither my co-workers nor I wanted for ourselves the profits out of the paper, even if there were any. They would be utilized for some sort of public work.

You have exceeded all expectations. You have not only borne the expenses of *Navajivan*, but also made good the loss incurred in running *Hindi Navajivan* and the English *Young India*. This is not the place to record the labours which my comrades put in during my absence. They have given a new impetus to the activities of the Navajivan Press. The latter has published many books. I know that so many books would not have been published if I had not gone to jail. In the first place, they would not have had so much enthusiasm. By publishing new books they have made a contribution to the task of winning swaraj early. Moreover, had I not gone to jail, I would not at all have been able to publish so many books. They did not sell the books at cost, but included profit in the sale price. They had no self-interest to serve in doing so, but they knew that, if there was any profit, it would be used only for some public purpose. If an anna is added to the price of a book, probably it will not put a strain on the buyer; but if there are many buyers, there will certainly be a good profit. I must tell the reader that, just as there was a profit in that enterprise, there was a loss, too, in it. The sales of all books have not been uniform. The result is a big stock of unsold books.

Despite these ups and downs, despite the two other weeklies running at a loss, *Navajivan* has, during the five years of its existence, done so well that we are now in a position to appropriate Rs. 50,000 for public benefit. We intend to use this sum for popularizing the spinning-wheel and khadi through the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee. In this way, it will be utilized for giving encouragement to poor sisters, the *Antyajas* and other classes of people.

This amount represents a saving. You alone have been mainly instrumental in making it possible. But if I do not acknowledge that my comrades too have contributed to this, I shall be failing in my duty towards them. Swami Anandanand, whose energy, untiring like that of the elements, and matchless devotion to *Navajivan* have enabled this enterprise to expand so much, does not accept even a pie for his labours. Many of those who are engaged in carrying on the

<sup>1</sup> In September 1919

routine work content themselves with accepting no more than what is necessary for their bare subsistence. Should I mention the names of those who have been writing for *Navajivan*? They receive absolutely nothing. if we calculate the salaries of all of them at market rates. they will surely amount to at least Rs. 1,000 a month. That works out to Rs. 60,000 for five years. Now you will see that a saving of Rs. 50,000 is no very big achievement. If the number of subscribers to *Navajivan* were not as small as it is, if there were no loss in the publication of books as at present, if *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan* were to pay their way, a sum larger than Rs. 50,000 could easily have been saved. If any profits should accrue hereafter, we intend to distribute them every year. Swami Anandanand does not like to deposit even a pie in the bank. He believes, and I agree with him, that public institutions should accumulate no surpluses with them. He tries to act in obedience to God's law, as far as possible. God always provides daily food for all created beings. If many people had not hoarded food in excess of their needs, no one would have died of hunger in this world. Moreover, public institutions have no right to subsist on reserves. A public institution ought to exist only as long as it is popular. When the people stop supporting it, it must close down.

In the case of *Navajivan*, by now five years have passed in this manner and you can easily understand the reasons. Even before I went to jail, we had discussed the question of utilizing profits for a public purpose. Almost all my co-workers too went to prison and that is why the surplus remained unspent.

Let me say one thing more. We do not intend to run *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan* at a loss much longer. I am sure you will not mind it if those papers are run on profits from *Navajivan*. Perhaps you may wish them run that way. But I believe that it is certainly wrong to run periodicals in that manner. Hence I have been warning the readers of both that, if the loss continues for long, they should be closed down.

Readers, you do not read *Navajivan* for mere pleasure. You read it in order to understand your post of duty in the great *yajna* which is in progress in our country. If the readers of *Navajivan* realize their duty, you may rest assured that swaraj is as good as in your hands.

Only truthful and non-violent soldiers are required in order to win swaraj. A true cause never suffers from dearth of funds. Our



weapon is the spinning-wheel; our ammunition hanks of yarn. A friend has made and left with me a spinning-wheel shaped like a gun ; he has fixed to it a belt containing cartridges which are nothing but cotton slivers. This friend's labours prove his faith in the spinning-wheel. Up till now we have not been able to win swaraj. This is so not because of any defect in the means, but because of our lack of faith in them, want of effort and skill, and so on. *Navajivan* will strive to bring these defects to your notice again and again with a view to making you render more and more service to the country. I want you to help in the effort.

*Your servant,*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

## 200. MY NOTES

### PATIENCE BEARS SWEET FRUIT

I am aware that readers of *Navajivan* are eager to know my views about Council-entry. It is not easy for me, however, to give my views. If it was the first time the problem had been raised, I could have immediately replied that we should not enter the Councils. My opposition to Council-entry stands. The Congress, however, has allowed the advocates of Council-entry to seek elections<sup>1</sup> and some of them have already entered the Councils. Under these circumstances, it is as difficult to answer the question what should be done as it is easy to ask it. Moreover, the advocates of Council-entry are eminent leaders of the nation. I should first understand from them their reasons for this decision. Several of them have made big sacrifices and served the country long. Their patriotism is inferior to nobody else's. I do not, therefore, wish, and leaders too would not expect me, to express any views before studying the question carefully. The value of my views depends on their being the result of careful deliberation. I have also to take care lest I thoughtlessly enable the Government to

<sup>1</sup> The special session of the Congress held at Delhi in September 1923 permitted the Swaraj Party to contest the elections which were to be held by the end of the year. Later, in December when the annual session of the Congress was held at Cocanada, the elected members of the Swaraj Party were granted permission to enter the Councils.

use my views for its own purposes. Hence I request readers to be patient for the present.

In my humble opinion, the most important task before us today is to repair the breach in Hindu-Muslim unity which has occurred at many places. Till there is genuine love uniting the followers of the different faiths, we should not hope for swaraj or prosperity. I am fully convinced that, without such love, all our efforts will be in vain. I am eager to give my views about how the breach may be repaired, but I request readers to have patience in this matter also. I must discuss this problem, too, with the leaders.

#### MEETING LEADERS

I am being acquainted with the situation by Bharat Bhushan Pandit Malaviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb, Pandit Motilal and others. I am trying to understand their points of view. Maulana Mahomed Ali has wired to say that he will be coming in a few days. Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das<sup>1</sup> is also likely to arrive after the 4th. I am looking forward to meeting them.

#### MEANWHILE

No one should stop working and wait for my views. Whatever views I may express about Council-entry, they will make no difference in regard to the spinning programme or national education. These two tasks cannot be completed or organized well in a short period even if we devote all our time to them and, till then, we shall not be ready for civil disobedience.

Similarly, whatever the remedy I prescribe for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity, there is no question that the two communities need to cultivate sincere friendship for each other. No one should doubt, either, that they must help each other. If we reflect thus, we shall realize that, after I have expressed my views, we shall have to carry on with greater determination and efficiency the tasks which engage our attention today. Those persons, therefore, who put their faith in my views should, if they have been neglecting their work, bestir themselves and start working .

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> 1870-1925; lawyer, orator and founder of the Swaraj Party; President-elect of the Ahmedabad Congress, 1921 but arrested and imprisoned; presided over the Gaya Congress in 1922

## 201. GUJARAT'S EFFORTS

Gujarat's record during the last two years does honour to Gujaratis. Anything which brings honour to Gujarat brings honour also to India. Our movement is such that anything which benefits one province benefits the country as a whole. Hence the entire country has advanced in the measure that Gujarat has advanced. Vallabhbhai's<sup>1</sup> ability is seen in every field. His co-workers are as capable as he is. The satyagraha in Borsad<sup>2</sup> is a shining example of conscientious effort on their part.

This satyagraha is in many ways superior to the Kheda satyagraha<sup>3</sup>. The victory in Kheda satyagraha was one which merely saved our face. The victory in the workers' satyagraha<sup>2</sup> in Ahmedabad was tainted by my fast, since that fast had brought undue pressure on the mill-owners.

In Borsad, satyagraha by itself has completely succeeded. It upheld our honour and also protected our material interests, and no other means, legitimate or otherwise, was employed along with it for securing victory.

Let no one think, either, that the victory was made possible by favourable circumstances, since the Governor proved to be a good man. We may thank him for doing justice, but would it have been possible even for a hard-hearted Governor to suppress the pure struggle of Borsad? One who believes in God will also trust that circumstances will favour good men conducting a movement in a good cause. Satyagraha aims at converting an opponent into a friend, that is, at creating circumstances favourable to a good cause.

If Gujarat had rested on its oars after Borsad satyagraha no one would have blamed it. But how can a satyagrahi rest? A holiday means for him a fresh task. Satyagraha can also be interpreted to mean self-

<sup>1</sup> Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950); Congress leader of Gujarat; Deputy Prime Minister of India after independence.

<sup>2</sup> This was started in Borsad taluka of the Kheda district in 1923, under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel, against the punitive cess imposed on the taluka because the local Government was not convinced that the inhabitants of the area were doing their duty by the State in connection with the dacoities of Babar Deva, an outlaw. The satyagraha was successful and the punitive cess was withdrawn in early 1924.

<sup>3</sup> Of 1918.

examination. The people of Borsad did this and saw that they were responsible, partly at any rate, for the imposition of punitive police on their taluka. One error having been understood, others are understood as a matter of course. Hence internal reform is now being carried out there. This work is more valuable, and more difficult, than fighting the Government. Fighting the Government and winning against it was like a weeding operation. Now we have to raise and harvest the crop, and this is a more difficult job and takes more time. I hear that this work is also proceeding very well. The strength and fitness of the people and volunteers of Borsad taluka will be measured by their success in it.

Gujarat is not likely to fail in regard to other aspects of non-co-operation too. No other province has as many non-co-operation schools as Gujarat has. The province has done fairly good work in regard to khadi, removal of untouchability and other items. It need not fear comparison with other provinces. There has been no breach in Hindu-Muslim unity, though I notice some effects of the prevailing atmosphere. I congratulate Gujarat on all these efforts. I wish to add, however, that very much more yet remains to be done. The education imparted in national schools has still to be infused with a national spirit. The number of these schools is much too small yet. Efforts need to be made to popularize khadi on a large scale. The spinning-wheel has yet to find a place in every home. A great deal remains to be done in the way of service to untouchables. A large number of hard-working, able and honest volunteers are needed to undertake these activities. As long as we have not made sufficient progress in all these fields, we cannot afford the luxury of resting.

When I think of all these tasks, I remember the quiet of prison life. I know, however, that this is a sign of cowardice. When I was in jail, people carried on a great agitation for my release. But can I enjoy peace outside till we have won swaraj? On coming out of jail, I have realized that being in jail can also be a form of self-indulgence. When I think of what I can contribute to these activities, now that I am out of prison, my weakness pains me and makes me feel ashamed; I am afraid, moreover, that the enthusiasm produced by the demand for my release may now subside and this increases the pain. I, therefore, wish to remind Gujaratis of the warning which I gave two years ago. All our work must aim at swaraj. As long as the entire country remains imprisoned, we can have no rest or peace. I request my Gujarati

brothers and sisters to let whatever love they have for me inspire them to take up the tasks connected with the struggle for swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

## 202. *SHRIMATI SAROJINI AND KHADI*

I received a letter from East Africa when I was in the hospital in Poona. It purported to give Shrimati Sarojini Naidu's views on whether Indians in East Africa should wear khadi. The letter has been lost, but the following is a summary of the views attributed to Shrimati Naidu in that letter :

“It is Gandhi's view that the vow of khadi applies only within India. Not only is there no need to wear khadi outside India, but actually it should be avoided and one should dress like an Englishman. If Gandhi himself went to East Africa, he would not wear a khadi loin-cloth but, like Mr. Verma, put on English dress, and you also should do the same.”

I doubt if Shrimati Naidu spoke in this vein. The correspondent from East Africa has asked for my comments on these views. He says that a number of Indians in East Africa dress in khadi and also wear khadi caps. They have been confused by Shrimati Naidu's speech.

I do believe that the vow of khadi is intended to be observed in foreign countries. In some cases, it may be altogether impossible to keep it. Moreover, the object of this vow is to secure economic freedom for India; it is, therefore, not necessary to observe it outside India. But it has never been my view, nor is it today, that khadi should not be used outside India even if it can be used conveniently. I feel, too, that Shrimati Naidu would never express such a view. In countries like East Africa or a place like Aden, khadi can be used without any inconvenience. In South Africa, too, it can be used in summer. That is, there will be no difficulty in wearing it in hot countries. Further, most of the articles for use in the home should be of khadi.

I would, however, take the view that, if we go to a country which grows cotton and which weaves its own khadi, we should wear the cloth produced locally. We should follow in other countries the rule which we apply in our own. When foreigners come to India, it is desirable that they should use goods produced here. We should, therefore, act on the same principle in foreign countries. In countries

like East Africa, all cloth is imported from outside. I have never heard that they produce their own cloth. Not only, therefore, do we have every right to wear khadi in those countries, but actually it is our duty, I believe, to do so to the greatest extent possible. As my views developed with the progress of the satyagraha struggle [in South Africa] and the more I felt the need to embrace poverty, I increasingly adopted simplicity in my life. Ultimately, I adopted a dress resembling the Indian labourer's and made of cloth imported from India, the *lungi*<sup>1</sup> and shirt in the Madras style, and kept it up afterwards. In winter, I wore two shirts which I would get stitched from coarse cloth. I had discarded the cap there. I used to meet all Government officials in this very dress. I did not notice that my English friends or the officials took offence at it. Many of my English friends even congratulated me when they saw that I was adopting the mode of life and dress of the labourers whose fight I was leading. My only aim in telling this story here is to explain that it will suffice if we wear in foreign countries a dress which will cover our limbs adequately.

In that passage from Shrimati Naidu's speech, there was one point which deserves notice. Her speech dealt with our undesirable habits. It described many of our shabby and untidy ways. To some extent, this criticism is justified. If a khadi dress, or for that matter any other dress, is soiled or shapeless, it does not please the eye. Tidiness is necessary, not as adornment, but for the sake of cleanliness and decorum. One person may wear a dress made from a particular material carelessly and appear untidy and another person may wear a dress made from the same material properly and appear tidy. A proper dress keeps up decorum and shows our regard for others. We should not fail in these. The border line between a becoming tidiness and adornment is very thin, but it is essential that the distinction should be maintained. It is not at all my intention to suggest that men and women must every now and then look into a mirror and arrange their dress. I have, of course, no such fear about friends in East Africa. The clothes we wear must not be the least dirty. White khadi clothes should be regularly washed. In India, it is considered decent enough to wear a short dhoti. Indian civilization is so liberal that it is not considered the least indecent if anyone wears, as I do, a very short loin-cloth. In our country, we do not judge a man by his dress. The loin-cloth would not, however, be looked on with favour in other

<sup>1</sup> Dhoti stitched but plaitless

countries. If I had to go to a foreign land, I would by all means put away my loin-cloth in a trunk. In foreign countries, it is necessary to cover the legs up to the knee. 'Do in Rome as the Romans do' is no idle saying. Everyone would consider us guilty of lack of consideration if we unnecessarily do something that offends the susceptibility of people in foreign lands. I would regard such conduct as a form of violence. There is certainly violence in showing no consideration for others.

While discussing the letter from East Africa, I may also say how khadi could be popularized there. Ready-made dresses are imported in East and South Africa in large quantities. We may have dresses stitched here which will suit the native inhabitants of these countries and the Indians there, and carry them with us. Resourceful traders there can, with patience, sell khadi worth lakhs of rupees. India does not, however, produce enough khadi to meet her own requirements. I am not unaware of the fact that the quantity of khadi produced and sold is no more than a drop in the ocean. The use of khadi is spreading at such a slow pace still that stocks of khadi have accumulated at many places. How strange and how sad! I made the suggestion above with this fact in mind. A single Gujarati trader in South Africa can easily lift the entire stock of khadi which has accumulated in Gujarat.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

### 203. UNTOUCHABILITY AND UNAPPROACHABILITY

The accumulated burden of Hindus' sins is big enough. We have used Shastras, which teach selflessness, as instruments of selfishness. By casting aside the immutable principles enunciated in the Shastras and treating as of permanent application verses which prescribed rules of conduct of temporary utility, we have elevated wickedness to the place of dharma. My conscience tells me ever more emphatically every day that one such wickedness is the practice of untouchability. As if the sin of untouchability was not enough, we started another sinful practice, that of unapproachability, to add to the burden. In the South, that is, in Madras Presidency, the people are familiar with this sinful practice. But with a view to serving these people kept at a distance and atoning for their own sins, Hindu

members of the Congress in Travancore have started satyagraha.<sup>1</sup> Travancore is a Hindu State. There this practice of forcibly keeping people at a distance exists in a cruel form. Many Gujaratis may not be even aware of the meaning of *doorata*<sup>2</sup>. The word is not found in the dictionary. How can it ever be found in the Shastras? *Doorata* means the untouchables keeping at a certain distance from other Hindus. Owing to the belief that the other Hindus, and mainly Brahmins, are polluted even by the shadow cast by these untouchables, the latter are obliged to walk at some yards' distance from the Brahmins and other Hindus. When passing along the same road, if they fail to do so, abuses and even blows are showered on them. There are some streets in Travancore which these poor brethren are forbidden even to enter. Pained by this unbearable evil, Hindu members of the congress have started satyagraha, as I mentioned above. In order to establish his right to walk along a particular street, an untouchable Hindu takes with him another Hindu and enters that street. Three untouchables offer this kind of satyagraha every day and court arrest. Three of them, arrested in this way, are serving a six-month term of imprisonment. There is not the slightest doubt that, if this satyagraha continues peacefully and steadily, people will win.

The Hindus working to eradicate the evil of untouchability in North India have gone much further than this with the help and under the leadership of Bharat Bhushan Malaviya: the *Antyajas* draw water from wells used by other Hindus. The notion of being defiled by their touch seems to have died out in many places. Now the classes regarded as untouchables are able to make use of common wells. The Secretary of the Dohad Taluka Congress Committee reports to this effect.<sup>3</sup> He writes to say that the Hindus did not permit the *Antyajas* to draw water from a well belonging to the local board. A weaver who had passed the vernacular final examination made bold to use the well and persuaded other members of his community to follow him. They agreed and went to fetch water from that well. Other Hindus attempted to stop them from doing so, but the police sub-inspector refused to help them and explained to them that, when a movement was going on in the country against such restrictions, they should not try to stop the *Antyajas*. This calmed the caste Hindus. This was a happy conclusion.

<sup>1</sup> In Vykom

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'remoteness'

<sup>3</sup> This information was later found to be misleading; *vide* "A correction", 27-4-1924.



The incident, however, shows that, even in Gujarat, the *Antyajas* are still prevented from drawing water from public wells. I congratulate the Hindus of Dohad, but at the same time suggest to the Dohad Congress Committee members that they should visit the *Antyaja* locality and instruct the residents in sanitation and persuade them to keep their pitchers, etc., clean. If such an effort to reform them is not undertaken simultaneously, it is likely that, while things are just beginning to change for the better, opposition to *Antyajas* drawing water from public wells may be renewed. I have heard of such a development at many places in the north.

[From Gujarati ]

*Navajivan*, 6-4-1924

## 204. LETTER TO ELIZABETH SHARPE

POST ANDHERI,

*April 6, 1924*

DEAR MISS SHARPE

I thank you for your sincere and frank letter.<sup>1</sup>

I know you do not want me to discuss the various questions you raise in it. You have raised them for me to ponder over which I shall certainly do. I must not, however, conceal from you the fact that there is a radical difference between your view-point and mine. What does it

<sup>1</sup> In her letter of April 3, Elizabeth Sharpe had posed Gandhiji a string of questions:

“ . . . Do you think you have done any good to India by raising in her heart the rankling sense of injustice, true or untrue? Do you think the impassioned speeches of Mrs. Naidu, rousing ‘hate’ are ‘good’ karma? Do you think two wrongs can ever make a right? Or that Temporal Power in India will not be the end of her spirituality? Don’t you feel that it was just because of India’s worldly poverty that she was spirituality rich? That man cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon? Alas! Alas! The mad energy thrown about in India today was once devoted to *Brahma-Darshan*. Even now India is the only spot in the world where in peace and quietness we may renounce the world-good God, Mr. Gandhi, there is more freedom in India today than anywhere else; freedom to wander, beg and love, and have God in our own ways. Isn’t that the highest freedom? You with your true life, your immense possibilities for good, please, please care not at all for man’s condition on this earth, that is past bad karma-care only for the saving of his soul-cutting off worldly bonds. I write this because you, an Indian, will understand thoroughly. The West which only believes in this one birth will not see my point at all. . . ” S.N. 8646

matter, however, so long as we all remain searchers after truth ?

*Yours sincerely,*

MISS E. SHARPE  
SHRI KRISHNA NIVAS  
LIMBDI  
KATHIAWAR

From a copy: S.N. 8684

### 205. LETTER TO JOSEPH BAPTISTA

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 6, 1924*

DEAR MR. BAPTISTA<sup>1</sup>.

I thank you for your letter of the 5th inst.<sup>2</sup>

I wrote to you immediately on receiving your letter. Wednesday, like Monday, is my day of silence. You are quite correct in saying that my views are practically what they were before. At the same time, if you could find time after next Sunday, I should be delighted to give you any day between 5 and 6. p.m., except Mondays and Wednesdays.

*Yours sincerely,*

JOSEPH BAPTISTA, ESQ.  
MATHARPACADY  
MAZAGAON, BOMBAY

From a copy: S.N. 8685

### 206. LETTER TO GURBAKSH SINGH GULATI

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 6, 1924*

DEAR SARDAR GURBAKSH SINGH<sup>3</sup>,

I was glad to receive your letter of the 3rd instant and to hear about all the friends whom you left behind in the jail. I remember them all and I remember my talks with the Kaveeshar.

<sup>1</sup> Nationalist leader, associated with the Home Rule Movement

<sup>2</sup> This is not available. In an earlier letter dated February 8, Baptista had written that he wanted to meet Gandhiji to discuss certain political matters in view especially of the former's impending visit to England.

<sup>3</sup> The original has 'Gushaksha Singh', evidently a typing error.

I thank you for your inquiry about my health. I am making very fair progress. I am able to take a little exercise daily and am gaining strength day by day.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SARDAR GURBAKSH SINGH GULATI  
C/O L. AMRIT LAJ. SETHI  
GUJRANWALA

From a photostat: S.N. 8686

### *207. LETTER TO MRS. M. G. POLAK*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 6, 1924*

MY DEAR MRS. POLAK<sup>1</sup>,

I was so delighted to have from you after so many years your handwriting, your language, your thoughts just the same as they were before. Your description of Waldo makes me think that I would not recognize him if I meet him without notice. I hope he will be successful in the examination and find a naval job to suit him.

I am so sorry to hear about Mater<sup>2</sup> and Maud<sup>3</sup>. Let me hope that this will find them all in good health. I forgot to ask you about Amy, nor have you given any news about her. You may know that Andrews is still with me at this delightful retreat and that he is looking after me like a mother. Ramdas and Devdas are also here. This place has been turned into a cottage hospital. Radha, Maganlal's daughter, is here recovering from a severe attack of pleurisy. Another inmate is Vallabhbhai Patel's daughter whom you do not know. There is also Professor Kripalani's sister whom too you do not know. The fourth, though not laid up in bed, is Prabhudas, Chhaganlal's son. Radha's mother and sister are also here. So you see we are a fairly big family.

Andrews tells me that Henry has grown fairly stout. I wonder if I can recognize him if he comes to me unawares. I am looking forward to his . . .

I am getting on as well as it is possible. Andrews takes me for a

<sup>1</sup> Millie Graham Polak, wife of H. S. L. Polak

<sup>2</sup> Polak's mother

<sup>3</sup> Polak's sister

walk in the evening by the seaside.

With love to you all,

*Yours,*

MRS. M. G. POLAK  
33, MOWBRAY ROAD  
BURNSBURY  
LONDON, N. W.

From a photostat: S.N. 8687

### *208. LETTER TO GEORGE JOSEPH*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 6, 1924*

MY DEAR JOSEPH,

I am delighted you have decided to put Mrs. Joseph under Dr. Rajan's<sup>1</sup> care. He is a skilled physician and I am sure that she will be well looked after under his care.

It would be a splendid thing if you succeed in growing cotton in your district, and if you do not wish to import cotton from the nearest district where it is grown, I would suggest your commencing weaving and importing hand-spun yarn from wherever it is found.

As to Vykom, I think that you should let the Hindus do the work. It is they who have to purify themselves. You can help by your sympathy and by your pen, but not by organizing the movement and certainly not by offering satyagraha. If you refer to the Congress resolution of Nagpur, it calls upon the Hindu members to remove the curse of untouchability. I was surprised to learn from Mr. Andrews that the disease had infected even the Syrian Christians.

With love to yourself and Mrs. Joseph,

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. GEORGE JOSEPH  
KUZHUVAPPURAM  
CHENGANNUR (TRAVANCORE)

From a copy S.N. 8688

<sup>1</sup> Dr. T. S. S. Rajan

209. LETTER TO HARIBHAU PATHAK

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 6, 1924*

DEAR HARIBHAU,

Here is a reminiscence from Lokamanya's conversation with me.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. HARIBHAU PATHAK  
SECRETARY  
CITY CONGRESS COMMITTEE  
POONA

[ENCLOSURE]

I had the privilege of meeting the Lokamanya scores of times. The first time I had the honour of making his acquaintance was in 1896, when I went to Poona to pay my respects to the leaders there, and to canvass their assistance in the cause of Indian settlers in South Africa, and the last was in Bombay when with Maulana Shaukat Ali I went to him at Sardar Griha before leaving Bombay with the Maulana for an Upper India tour. When we returned from the tour, it was only to hear that the Lokamanya was lying dangerously ill. I went in to pay my respects, but that was all. We had no talk. I propose to give only the last reminiscence as it is appropriate to the season. About Hindus and Mussalmans he said, turning to the Maulana: "I will sign anything that Gandhi suggests, because I have full faith in him on the question." About Non-co-operation, he significantly repeated to me what he had said to me before, "I like the programme well enough, but I have my doubts as to the country being with us in the self-denying ordinance which Non-co-operation presents to the people. I will do nothing to hinder the progress of the movement. I wish you every success, and if you gain the popular ear, you will find in me an enthusiastic supporter."

From a photostat: S.N. 8689

## 210. LETTER TO SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTULLA

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 6, 1924*

DEAR SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTULLA,

I was looking forward to meeting you today. I am sorry that you are not able to come, and more so to find that the cause is your indisposition. I hope that you will soon be well. Tomorrow is a blank day, as I keep silence till late at night. Wednesday is another day of silence and all the other free days are filled during the week. May I tentatively fix next Sunday at 6 p.m. ?

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SIR IBRAHIM RAHIMTULLA  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 11402

## 211. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

*Sunday, 3.30 a.m. [On or after April 6, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MAGANLAL,

You will know something about Radha and Kikibehn<sup>2</sup> from the accompanying letter. Radha has enough of mental troubles. I have talked with her a little. I shall have more talks when I get more time. All the three patients' beds are beside me in the open.

I intend to write *Young India* about what you have written in *The Mahratta*. The position will be clearer after we meet and discuss things. On a little reflection, I feel that our real field of work is to support weavers of hand-spun yarn only.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 5786. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji resumed writing for his weeklies regularly after April 3, 1924. The first Sunday following this date was April 6.

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

## 212. TELEGRAM TO GOPALA KURUP

BOMBAY,

[On or After April 6, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

[PANDIT GOPALA KURUP  
TIRUVALA  
TRAVANCORE]

RARELY ANYBODY ASKS PERMISSION DEDICATION.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8680

## 213. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

Monday, April 7, 1924

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I am sending you the material as per list. Correct any errors in language, grammar, etc., which you may notice. I have had sufficient inquiries made. If you think it necessary to omit something, omit "Jail Experiences".

Do not include Andrews' interview and mine to A. P. about South Africa. I do not think this a proper way of preserving things which have already appeared [elsewhere]. A separate file of such items may be maintained, or they should be put in the relevant weekly file of *Y. I.*

Since my "Jail Experiences" have been started, I must continue them. More later on. I had said I would, if possible, write a Gujarati article on the Satyagraha Week. But now you may give in the *Navajivan* Supplement a translation of the English note [in *Young India*].

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

If, after dropping "Jail Experiences", you have still more than

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Gopala Kurup's telegram of April 5, 1924, from Travancore received on April 6, which read: Humbly beg to dedicate my Malayalam book *Swarajya Geetha* pray blessings permission."

enough [this week], you may give the article<sup>1</sup> from *Unity* next week . Make the article on Mahomed Ali the leading article. Try and keep the Notes in the order in which they are placed. You may, however, change the order if necessary

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8696

## 214. CABLE TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

[April 8, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

PRANJIVAN  
RANGOON

MANILAL LEAVING AHMEDABAD TODAY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8692

## 215. LETTER TO J. P. TRIVEDI

ANDHERI,

*Chaitra Sud 4* [April 8, 1924]<sup>3</sup>

BHAISHRI JAYSHANKAR TRIVEDI<sup>4</sup>,

As I was all the time thinking of writing to you, I got your letter. I feel ashamed that I did not write to you first. I only wished to tell you that I have not forgotten your love. I have seen few people in the world who do good to others in a spirit of humility, and you are one of them. I have observed this for years and felt happy.

It is good that you have been able to buy a motor-car.

*Vandemataram* from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G. N. 998

<sup>1</sup> For extracts from and Gandhiji's comments on this article, in the Chicago periodical, *vide* "What It Is Not", 10-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> This was in pursuance of Manilal's telegram, dated April 7, 1924, from Bombay, which read: "Starting tomorrow Rangoon *via* Delhi. Please send some message for Indians particularly Gujaratis in Burma and Burmans care Seth Jamnalalji 128 Canning Street, Calcutta."

<sup>3</sup> In 1924, *Chaitra Sud 4* fell on April 8.

<sup>4</sup> Professor of Agricultural Engineering at the Agricultural College, Poona



## 216. LETTER TO PARASRAM MEHROTRA

*Chaitra Shukla 4 [April 8, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. PARASRAM,

Your letter. I had sent a telegram<sup>2</sup> to the Conference<sup>3</sup>. Any results ?

I hope your work will now be regular.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6202. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

## 217. TELEGRAM TO K. NAMBOODRIPAD

ANDHERI,

[On or After *April 8, 1924*]<sup>4</sup>

CONGRATULATE      MENON      MADHAVAN      ON      ARREST.      HOPE  
FIGHT      WILL      BE      KEPT      UP      TO      FINISH.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10270

## 218. LETTER TO FULCHAND K. SHAH

ANDHERI,

*Chaitra Sud 5 [April 9, 1924]*

BHAISHRI FULCHAND<sup>5</sup>,

Bhai Chunilal has written to me a long letter about the school there. Therein he has made several allegations against you. I trust I can ask you to see him personally, know from him his complaints and

<sup>1</sup> As given by the addressee

<sup>2</sup> Not available

<sup>3</sup> U.P. Political Conference

<sup>4</sup> This was in reply to the telegram from Namboodripad received on April 8, 1924, which read: "Iyer Brothers fact not correct. Campaign resumed today. Kesava Menon Madhavan offered satyagraha and were arrested. Other batches to follow daily."

<sup>5</sup> A constructive and political worker of Wadhwan, Kathiawar

write to me after satisfying him. I want you to do this.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C.W. 2875. Courtesy: Shardabehn F. Shah

## 219. TELEGRAM TO K. M. PANIKKAR

[On or after *April 9, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

MY CONGRATULATIONS ON JATHA'S PEACEFUL SUR-  
RENDER

From a photostat: S.N. 9957

## 220. NOTES

### THE SATYAGRAHA WEEK

The reader does not need the reminder that this is the sacred Satyagraha Week. It was on Sunday the 6th April, 1919, that the first all-India hartal took place as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Act. It was on that day that thousands of men and women all over India kept a twenty-four-hour fast. It was on that sacred day that the nation recognized, with the strength it has never done before, the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity and that Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and others met in hearty co-operation, and it was on that day that an all-India swadeshi spirit, not in vengeance but as a vital necessity in the life of the nation, was born. It was on the 13th that the Jallianwala massacre took place. We have been observing both these days and the intervening days from year to year as special days for purification, searching of hearts, for cultivating better relations among all the different sections and for promoting swadeshi which has centered gradually round the spinning-wheel. I was grieved to learn from a friend that in Amritsar, the scene of the black tragedy, the Week was least observed last year. I wonder how Amritsar and the rest of India will have observed the Week this year.

### AM I UNFAIR ?

I have the good fortune to possess friends who keep me on the right path when I am inclined or likely to stray away from it. One

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Panikkar's telegram of April 8, received on April 9, stating: "Third Jatha surrendered peacefully."

such friend thought that, in my letter<sup>1</sup> last week to the readers of *Young India*, I was less than fair to the Government of Bombay inasmuch as I declined to render thanks to them for having given me best medical assistance and made the path to recovery easy by freely permitting friends to visit me. In my friend's opinion, the treatment was a sign of change of heart due to the advent of the new Governor. I have deeply thought over my friend's argument and I am reluctantly obliged to adhere to the conclusion that I owe no thanks for the best medical assistance and the facilities given to friends to visit me, unless thanks are due to a Government every time it does its duty. I have made ample acknowledgment of the fact that the Government did for me during my illness all that it could reasonably be expected to do in respect of a prisoner. But I am unable to render thanks to the Government as such in the same sense that I have rendered them to Col. Maddock, Col. Murray and Major Jones. They need not have been as kind as they were and I would still have acknowledged that they had done all they could be expected to do in their respective spheres. The personal element was a factor in these gentlemen's conduct towards me, and I was bound to give them my thanks. To finish this part of the argument, if I may state it without indelicacy, I may say that my scrupulously correct conduct as a prisoner had not a little to do with the happy relations that subsisted between the officials and, indeed, also the Government and myself. I state this merely to emphasize the truth tested by me on scores of trying occasions that uniformly correct conduct will disarm the fiercest opposition, prejudice and suspicion.

Now for the supposed change of heart. I wish I could see it. I am longing for it. The reader may know that the slightest real change of heart will make me capitulate without delay. But it will have to be very real. The Government have failed even in so simple a test as the release of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, and the removal of the ban against Mr. Horniman. I own that from a strong believer I have become an equally strong unbeliever in this Government. I am, however, sane enough to be able to perceive a sincere change of heart. It has been suggested that Sir George Lloyd would not have treated me during my illness as His Excellency Sir Leslie Wilson has done. I do not believe it. In spite of Sir George Lloyd's utter dislike of me, he would have given me the same medical assistance and facility that were given

<sup>1</sup> Vide "For the Readers Past and Present of *Young India*" 3-4-1924

to me by the present Governor. Indeed, it was he who sent Col. Maddock to examine me when I first became at all seriously ill in the Yeravda Jail about eight months ago. Col. Maddock was asked to visit me weekly during convalescence and send the Governor weekly reports. I have a higher opinion of the British officials than most people imagine. They have a high sense of duty. Only the honesty of an ordinary official does not travel beyond the line of policy. It is no fault of his. He is heir to a system handed down for generations—a system which is based on exploitation of the weak by the strong. The official breaks down when the system which sustains him is in jeopardy. But it is my belief that no other human being will do better under that system. The sooner, therefore, it is destroyed or radically altered the better for us all.

#### DECK PASSENGERS

I invite the reader's attention to Mr. Chaturvedi's interesting and instructive experiences in East Africa.<sup>1</sup> His bitter experiences as a deck passenger revive painful memories. The picture he has given is not overdrawn. Three parties can change the disgraceful state of things:

- (1) The British India Steam Navigation Company
- (2) The Government
- (3) The passengers.

The British India S.N. Company will not worry because its concern is to secure the largest profits. We may expect nothing from the Government till we have the power to move it. The passengers are the real parties affected. Unfortunately, the majority of them are injured even to avoidable hardship. The others secure relief by bribes. It is only when a sensitive passenger travels as a deck passenger that he causes a stir. He does not make reform in the treatment of deck passengers his life-work and so nothing is achieved. Only when self-respecting persons like Mr. Banarasidas insist on proper sanitation and accommodation, not merely for themselves, but for all, may substantial change be expected.

#### CHARKHA ABROAD

Mr. Chaturvedi's remarks on the spinning-wheel are the most instructive. If Indians of East Africa can popularize the bow, the wheel and the loom among the natives of the soil, they will have rendered

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Young India*, 10-4-1924

them a signal service. The possibilities of the wheel are as wide as the world itself because its spread requires little capital. It merely needs fellow-feeling, ordinary organizing ability and technical skill which can be easily acquired.

#### KHADDAR IN EAST AFRICA

Should the Indians of East Africa wear khaddar? Shrimati Sarojini Naidu is reported to have replied in the negative. I can hardly believe it. Be that as it may, East Africa should use khaddar as far as possible. It is not necessary for them to take or be under the vow of khaddar, as we at home must be. What the Shrimati must have laid stress upon is cleanliness and neatness. Khaddar clothing must be kept spotlessly clean and worn neatly. One often notices a tendency towards neglect of these necessary qualities. If khaddar is to become popular with the upper classes, the wearers must be clean and neat. The roughness and thickness of well-washed khaddar are a recommendation rather than otherwise. The absorbent property of rough khaddar makes it hygienically sound. Its loose texture gives it a softness that is pleasant to the wearer.

#### AS WE HAVE SOWN

Mr. Andrews's pathetic remarks<sup>1</sup> on untouchability deserve to be pondered over by every Hindu. I knew nothing till Mr. Andrews told me that untouchability was practiced even by Syrian Christians of Malabar. As a Hindu I hung my head in shame when I heard the news. For I realized that the evil was copied by them from the Hindus. The retort of his fellow-passengers which Mr. Andrews received when he broached the subject of the disabilities of Indians in South Africa was well deserved. Whilst it is true that the Europeans in South Africa need not treat us as we treat our own people at home, our mouths are shut when our own sins are flung in our faces. We are reaping fruits of what we have sown.

#### MY OFFER

Shrimati Sarojini's splendid work in South Africa has told. Letters received by me from South Africa show that her presence has brought fresh courage to the Indian settlers. Mr. Duncan's fruitless efforts to justify an unjustifiable measure show also that the Europeans of South Africa have felt the force of her wonderful work.

<sup>1</sup> Andrews's article, "Untouchability", was published in the same issue of *Young India*.

Mr. Duncan's assertion that the agreement of 1914 did not bind the Union Government to take away vested rights, as the Class Areas Bill admittedly does, ought to carry with it the understanding that, if such an agreement can be proved, the Bill will not be proceeded with. Even though a non-co-operator, I beg to make the proposal that, if the Government of India receive an undertaking from the union Government that, if the agreement can be proved to the satisfaction of an impartial tribunal, they will suspend the Bill pending such enquiry, I shall be prepared to appear before such a tribunal to prove the agreement. Nor is precedent wanting for such a course. When the interpretation of the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885 and the propriety of its enactment in spite of the London Convention<sup>1</sup> were in dispute, the matter was referred to arbitration by the Imperial and the Transvaal Governments.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS

I have before me a heap of correspondence and other documents for publication. It is impossible for me to find space for it if *Young India* is to retain its present size. The correspondents will please, therefore, forgive me if they miss their contributions in these columns. The fact is that, as an esteemed friend remarked to me, *Young India* is not a newspaper. It is a veiwspaper. And then, too, it is being used today predominantly for distributing my views and in my own way. Its scope being, therefore, circumscribed, correspondents will do well not to send contributions which have no special feature about them and which have no bearing on the message for which *Young India* stands.

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

### 221. CAMPAIGN OF MISREPRESENTATION

At the present moment there seems to be a wilful attempt being made to widen the gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans. Some newspapers, both Hindu and Muslim are leaving no stone unturned to inflame passions and, unfortunately, they do not hesitate to resort to exaggeration and even misrepresentation. Where they are not themselves consciously guilty of such methods, they recklessly copy without verification everything in the nature of a sensation that appears in any other newspaper.

<sup>1</sup> This was signed in 1884.

One such statement was made with reference to Maulana Mahomed Ali. He was reported to have said that an adulterous Mussalman was better than myself. That there should have been found any person willing to believe such a thing of Maulana Mahomed Ali shows the degree of tension that exists between Hindus and Mussalmans. The reader will find in another column a translation of the two letters written by the Maulana, one to Swami Shri Shraddhanandji<sup>1</sup> and the other to *Tej*<sup>2</sup>. In my opinion, the letters dispose of, once for all, the calumny against the Maulana that has been going the round of the Press. Enemies of India's freedom have not hesitated to distort the Maulana's statement and use it for the purpose of setting the Hindus against the Maulana Saheb. I venture to commend his letters to the attention of every thoughtful Hindu. The letters, in my humble opinion, demonstrate the transparent honesty of the Maulana.

What is the original statement which has been so cruelly distorted by some newspapers? He says in effect that the creed of Islam is better than my creed. Is there anything offensive in the statement? So long as there are different religions, is not the Maulana's position the only logical and honest one? I have very dear Christian friends in South Africa and in India. They pray for light for me. One of them, a retired solicitor of standing in South Africa, urges me to accept the Jesus Christ and his salvation. He says that without that all my effort will be useless. Thousands of Christians certainly hold that a righteous man without belief in Jesus Christ is less than an adulterous Christian. Does an orthodox Hindu fare better? If he does, why is there all this feverish agitation regarding *Shuddhi*? In making the choice of a husband for his daughter, will he choose the best character irrespective of religion or the best man in his own sect? And if he will restrict the choice to his own circle, does it not show that he, too, like the Maulana, believes that his creed is the best of all?

The Maulana has stated the religious law in picturesque language and feeling safe, as he had a right to do, that I could not be offended, he chose me as one of his best Hindu friends for his illustration and showed that his creed he held superior to persons, no matter how dear they might be to him. I hold that he deserves to be

<sup>1</sup> Munshiram Nanakchand (1856-1926); later known as Shraddhanand; nationalist leader of Arya Samaj who took a prominent part in public activities in Delhi and the Punjab.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of these letters, *vide* Appendix "Mahomed Ali's Letter to Swami Shraddhanand", 10-4-1924 and "Mahomed Ali's Letter to the Editor, *Tej*", 10-4-1924.

honoured for the staunchness of his faith rather than be accused of coldness for a friend or disrespect for the latter's creed.

Nor need his prayers for me that I should find it in my heart to accept Islam, cause any alarm or surprise. He would not be a true friend if he did not wish the best (according to his belief) for me. My creed is truth and non-violence in their extreme form. I may be wrong. But if I wish well to my friends, I cannot but wish that they may have the same creed so long as I continue to believe it to be the best. I remain within the Hindu fold because it stands best the test laid down by my creed.

The Swamiji in his note, whilst heartily and unreservedly accepting the Maulana's letter, remarked that his creed made no deference between practice and profession as the Maulana's appeared to him to do. The second letter of the Maulana clears up the point and clinches the whole argument when he says that his creed, too, does not divorce practice from profession. He adds that in his letter he merely compared the world's creeds and gave his opinion that his was the best. Could he do otherwise and still be a Mussalman? If he thought otherwise, would he not then, as an honest man, be bound to profess the creed he considered better than that of Islam?

I hope that the heart of every true Hindu will go out to Mahomed Ali when, in the midst of his domestic bereavement and the sickness of his great brother, he is trying his utmost to heal the breach between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Surely Hindus who strive for unity have enough fanaticism within to recognize that Mussalman co-workers fare no better.

The other incident is reported to have occurred in the Tibbia College. I asked my son to write to Dr. Ansari to let me know what actually did happen. I quote his reply in full except six words which give the name of the newspaper which has been offending against the law of self-restraint and verification. I omit the name because the purpose is not to select newspapers for criticism, but to find a remedy for the disease that has become rampant in the Press. Dr. Ansari writes:

The incident in the Tibbia College is a very petty one. On the day of the celebration of Mahatmaji's birthday in the Tibbia College, one of the speakers compared him to Jesus Christ to which a Muslim student took exception and observed that no living person, however eminent in all respects, should be compared to prophets. Some of the students protested against the Muslim student's remark upon which the latter tried to explain



what he had meant and regretted that he was misunderstood. This is the whole story and it is evidently absurd to suggest that members of the staff were involved in it or that there was the slightest likelihood of a breach of peace.

The papers which you mention are extremely partisan ones whose characteristic feature it is to purvey news calculated to set one community against the other and to present trifling incidents in a very highly exaggerated form. It would not have been so very sad if these papers alone were to blame, because they are neither important nor well known. But the misfortune is that the spirit of animosity is swaying almost all the vernacular papers—Hindu and Muslim—in Northern India.

Nor are the incidents referred to by you the only ones reporting which these papers have betrayed such a deplorable and narrow-minded bigotry. Blind fanaticism and a reprehensible desire to run the other community down by every means has today become an essential part of the life of a vernacular paper of Northern India.

The newspaper readers know the exaggerated manner in which the incident has been described. The Muslim student who took exception to the comparison was, after all, justified in so doing. It is not necessary for the purpose of honouring a man to compare him with any other honoured man, much less with revered prophets. The information Dr. Ansari gives about the vernacular Press in Northern India is calculated to cause alarm and anxiety. It is to be hoped that the papers which make a living out of sensations will put patriotism and truth before their pockets. I have heard it suggested that Muslim editors say they will cease to revile Hindus and Hinduism when the Hindu editors leave off reviling Islam and Mussalmans. Hindu editors want to reverse the process. I suggest that both make the desired improvement simultaneously.

I do not wish to suggest that truth should be hushed. There has been that kind of indelicate delicacy before now. What is necessary, however, is that whilst truth may be fearlessly told, exaggeration and innuendos should be scrupulously avoided.

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

## 222. MAULANA MAHOMED ALI ON HIS CRITICS

The following are the letters addressed by Maulana Mahomed Ali, the one to Swami Shri Shraddanandji and the other to the Editor,

*Tej*, Delhi.<sup>1</sup> The letters are referred to in the leading article.<sup>2</sup>  
*Young India*, 10-4-1924

### 223. WHAT IT IS NOT

The situation in India illustrates another curious basis of difference between us. I hold to the "Non-resistance" idea. Gandhi as I understand him proclaims the Way of Love. And yet he does not see that "Non-co-operation is a way of violence". Suppose the milk drivers of New York had a real and just and even terrible grievance. Suppose that they should strike and cut off the milk supply from the babies of New York. They might never raise a hand in violent attack on anyone and yet their way would be the way of violence. Over the dead bodies of little children, they would by "non-co-operation" win their victory. As Bertrand Russell said of the Bolsheviki, "such suffering makes us question the means used to arrive at a desired end" Non-co-operation means suffering in Lancashire and is an appeal, in the end, to violence rather than reason.

This is not quite to the point and yet it does illustrate in a way what I have in mind. The advocates of Home Rule in India are now in the legislative bodies and there they propose to block progress by non-co-operative methods. In England, the country in which by historical accident civil institutions got a chance to develop, as John Fiske pointed out, through absence of war, the process of growth has been by the method of co-operation.

The above is an extract from an article in *Unity* (14th February, 1924) sent by an unknown American friend.

The article is a letter addressed to Mr. Holmes<sup>3</sup> Mr. Arthur L. Weatherly. The letter is an endeavour to show that an idealist, if he will be practical, has to water his ideal down to suit given circumstances. The writer has packed his letter with illustrations in support of his argument. As I am not for the moment concerned with his main argument, I hope I am doing no violence to him by merely giving an extract from his letter. My purpose is to show that Mr. Weatherly's view of Indian non-co-operation cannot fail to be of general interest

<sup>1</sup> Vide Appendix "Mahomed Ali's Letter to Swami Shraddanand", 10-4-1924 and "Mahomed Ali's Letter to the Editor, *Tej*", 10-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Vide the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably, John Haynes Holmes, author of *My Gandhi*

to the reader.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Weatherly has laid down a universal proposition that “non-co-operation is a way of violence”. A moment’s thought would have shown the falsity of the proposition. I non-co-operate when I refuse to sell liquor in a liquor-shop, or help a murderer in his plans. My non-co-operation, I hold, is not only not a way of violence, but may be an act of love, if love is the motive that has prompted my refusal. The fact is that all non-co-operation is not violent and non-violent non-co-operation can never be an act of violence. It may not be always an act of love. For love is an active quality which cannot always be inferred from the act itself. A surgeon may perform a most successful operation and yet he may have no love for his patient.

Mr. Weatherly’s illustration is most unhappy and incomplete for the purpose of examination. If the milk drivers of New York have a grievance against its Municipality for criminal mismanagement of its trust and if, in order to bend it, they decided to cut off the milk supply of the babies of New York, they would be guilty of a crime against humanity. But suppose that the milk drivers were underpaid by their employers, that they were consequently starving, they would be justified, if they have tried every other available and proper method of securing better wages, in refusing to drive the milk carts even though their action resulted in the death of the babies of New York. Their refusal will certainly not be an act of violence, though it will not be an act of love. They were not philanthropists. They were driving milk carts for the sake of their maintenance. It was no part of their duty as employees under every circumstance to supply milk to babies. There is no violence when there is no infraction of duty. Suppose further that the milk drivers in question knew that their employers supplied cheap but adulterated milk and another dairy company supplied better but dearer milk and they felt for the welfare of the babies of New York, their refusal to drive the milk carts will be an act of love, even though some short-sighted mother of New York might be deprived of the adulterated milk and may not have bought better but dearer milk from the more honest dairy company whose existence has been assumed for the purpose of our argument.

<sup>1</sup> There is an error here. Gandhiji later corrected this to read: “My purpose is to show that Mr. Weatherly’s view is altogether wrong. His view, wrong though it is, cannot fail to be of general interest.” *Vide* “Letter to Mahadev Desai”, after 10-4-1924.

From the imaginary heartless milk drivers and the heaps of dead bodies of New York babies, the writer in *Unity* takes us to Lancashire and pictures its ruin when Indian non-co-operation has succeeded. In his haste to prove his main argument, the writer has hardly taken the trouble to study even simple facts. Indian non-co-operation is not designed to injure Lancashire or any other part of the British Isles. It has been undertaken to vindicate India's right to administer her own affairs. Lancashire's trade with India was established at the point of the bayonet and it is sustained by similar means. It has ruined the one vital cottage industry which supplemented the resources of millions of India's peasants and kept starvation from their doors. If India now strives to revive her cottage industry and hand-spinning and refuses to buy any foreign cloth or even cloth manufactured by Indian mills, and Lancashire or Indian mills suffer thereby, non-co-operation cannot by any law of morals be held to be an act of violence. India never bound herself to maintain Lancashire. Visitors to taverns or houses of ill fame would be congratulated on their self-restraint and would be held even as benefactors of keepers of taverns or questionable houses, if they ceased to visit those places even without notice and even if their abstention resulted in the starvation of the keepers of those houses. Similarly, if customers of money-lenders ceased to borrow and the latter starved, the former cannot be regarded as violent by reason of their withdrawal. But they might be so considered if they transferred their custom from one money-lender to another through ill will or spite and without just cause.

Thus, it is clear that non-co-operation is not violence when the refusal of the restraint is a right and a duty, even though by reason of its performance some people may have to suffer. It will be an act of love when non-co-operation is resorted to solely for the good of the wrongdoer. Indian non-co-operation is a right and a duty, but cannot be regarded as an act of love because it has been undertaken by a weak people in self-defence.

Mr. Weatherly's reference to the obstructive programme of the Swarajist cannot for reasons stated last week be examined for the time being.

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

## 224. SAROJINI'S MAGNETISM

Just at the time of sending the last post for *Young India*, I received a letter from my son<sup>1</sup> who is in charge of *Indian Opinion*, Natal, giving a graphic account of Mrs. Naidu's visit. I know that the reader will like to have it at the earliest opportunity. I give below a translation of the letter which is dated 15th March 1924:

This is a hurried note. I have barely two hours to catch the mail.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has been in our midst for the past twenty days. Her work by now has produced a very good effect on the people of this country, particularly the Europeans. Johannesburg was hostile when she came, but her eloquence has disarmed much of the opposition and the mischief-makers have been shamed into silence. Towards the end of her tour in the Transvaal, Europeans attended her lectures in their thousands. I was not at Johannesburg myself. But I managed to meet her at Volksrust, half-way between Johannesburg and here. She was received at every station by large and eager crowds, composed of both Europeans and Indians and her compartment presented the constant appearance of a flower garden. She stopped for two days in Maritzburg. The anti-Asiatic spirit there is acute and the reactionary element holds full sway. There had been a strong movement to disallow the use of the Town Hall to the Indians for Mrs. Naidu's reception and serious consequences were threatened if it was allowed. But the situation was saved at the last moment by the *Maritzburg Times* which, in a leading article, wisely dissuaded the Europeans from any precipitate action. In spite of the indications of trouble, every inch of the Town Hall was packed with Indians and quite a number of Europeans occupied the gallery. The Mayor having refused to preside on the occasion, a European friend was proposed in the chair. He was howled down by the occupants of the gallery as soon as he attempted to speak. Mr. Bhagat, who tried to reason, too, was obliged to sit down. Mrs. Naidu at this stage took charge of the meeting. She had hardly uttered three sentences when the gallery-leaders were seen quitting the hall one after another and, in about twenty minutes' time, the main element of rowdies had retired from the field. When the meeting was over, a number of Europeans, unknown before, showed great eagerness to shake hands with Mrs. Naidu.

The next day, crowds of Indians and Europeans could be seen in front of Mrs. Naidu's residence struggling to have a glimpse of her, the space outside being hardly sufficient to contain them. The European and Coloured women

<sup>1</sup> Manilal Gandhi

felt astounded at her courage. There were missionaries who called on Mrs. Naidu, wanting to make her acquaintance, and the whole dramatic change was quickly followed by a cordial interview between the Bishop of Natal and Mrs. Naidu.

Durban probably excelled all the other places in the reception it gave to the great guest. A special train received her at Maritzburg. The station platform at Durban was packed to overflowing and the road outside, too, was blocked by the mass of spectators. Mrs. Naidu was conveyed to the Albert Park in a carriage drawn by the people themselves. The attendance at the meeting here was easily five thousand men and women of all classes and as many schoolchildren. The women's meeting was unique in the history of South Africa. Mrs. Naidu also delivered two lectures in the Town Hall which was filled to the full on both occasions, some of the people actually having to return disappointed for want of accommodation. The European women had arranged a special meeting of their own to receive Mrs. Naidu. The tour here has now extended up to Zululand. Tongaat and Phoenix yet remain to be done. Mrs. Naidu has for the present left for Cape Town after spending three days here. She intends being present at the debate on the Class Areas Bill. She then tours through some of the towns in the Cape, goes back to Johannesburg on a brief visit, comes back here to spend with us a week and takes the first available boat in April for the Motherland.

Mrs. Naidu's energy is wonderful. She has slight fever and headache at times, but her ailments never come in the way of her heavy programme of journeys and lectures.

The authorities have accorded her excellent treatment. She is invariably given a special saloon on trains and the railway officials are courteous. Mrs. Naidu was anxious to write to you, but it has been quite impossible for her to do so. She has asked me specially to write to you.

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

## 225. LETTER TO ISMAIL AHMED

POST ANDHERI,

*April 10, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter, for which I thank you. I hope to make such use of it as I can in the columns of *Young India*.

I should hope that God will show me the light and the strength to follow it. I am afraid I am beyond redemption if you think that the Bardoli decision was a blunder. I am quite likely to repeat such

blunders if I am to retain my loyalty to truth undiminished.

*Yours sincerely,*

ISMAIL AHMED, ESQ  
KHOLVAD  
SURAT

From a copy : S.N. 8701

## 226. *LETTER TO K. M. PANIKKAR*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 10, 1924*

MY DEAR PANIKKAR,

You are keeping me well posted with all the news. I want to go slowly. I have your telegram saying that the Jatha peacefully surrendered. I know that victory lies in that direction and no other.

I understand what you say about the Vykom temple. You will have seen that my letter<sup>1</sup> was totally non-committal, but since then things have moved fast, and I have kept pace with them. I agree with you that it is a most important movement that has been launched in Travancore. I can only hope that there are enough volunteers to fight the struggle to the finish.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. K. M. PANIKKAR  
AKALI SAHAYAK BUREAU  
AMRITSAR

From a copy : S.N. 8703

## 227. *LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI*

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 10, 1924*

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I have your two letters, one written by your secretary enclosing a letter received by you, the other personal.

I am dealing with the enclosure in my own way. You may come

<sup>1</sup> The reference apparently is to "Letter to K. P. Kesava Menon", 1-4-1924, which was published in *The Hindu*, 3-4-1924.

when you think that you can leave safely the bedside of the big patient.<sup>1</sup>

I have sent you my assurance and give it to you again that I am not going to publish anything of my views on the two questions till I have met you. You may take your own time. You will see how I have dealt with your letter to Swamiji in the columns of *Young India*.<sup>2</sup>

I do not need the slightest persuasion in favour of the proposition that both the parties are to blame for the present tension, and when the time comes, I am hoping and praying that God will give me the strength and courage to say the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as I know it.

I do not know what Devdas wrote to Dr. Ansari, but the poor boy tells me that there was not a word that could have disconcerted either you or Dr. Ansari. I thought you wanted him to post the extracts so that I could know the real state of affairs in order to enable me to deal with those extracts.

I have just received a reassuring wire from Dr. Ansari saying that Shaukat Ali's temperature is again normal.

*Yours sincerely,*

MAULANA MAHOMED ALI  
C/ODR. M. A. ANSARI  
1, DARYAGANJ  
DELHI

From a photostat : S.N. 8704

## 228. TO THE READER

JUHU,  
*Chaitra Shukla 6 [April 10, 1924]*

DEAR READER,

Attempts are being made in many newspapers in North India to create feelings of disaffection between Hindus and Muslims. One notices manifestations of jealousy, exaggeration and lies in these

<sup>1</sup> Shaukat Ali was ailing and had suffered a relapse. Gandhiji had a letter dated, April 6 from Zahir Ali, Shaukat Ali's son, stating that Mahomed Ali was unable to leave for Bombay to meet Gandhiji till his brother was better.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Campaign of Misrepresentation" and "Maulana Mahomed Ali on His Critics", 10-4-1924



newspaper. At such a time your duty and mine is to try our best to put out this fire. It is my firm conviction that there is no cause for disunity and cleavage between us. Each adhering to his own religion, we can maintain mutual brotherliness. I therefore hope that you will try to promote friendship between our two communities. Never accept without examination and scrutiny all that may be written against either Hindus or Muslims.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 13-4-1924

## 229. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[After April 10, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I send herewith matter for *Young India*. Some is already lying with you. Do not hesitate to correct mistakes wherever you notice any.

The following sentences in the current issue is incorrect: "My purpose is to show that Mr. Weatherly's view of Indian non-co-operation cannot fail to be of general interest." This sentence makes no sense. It should be. 'My purpose . . . Mr. W's view is altogether wrong. His view, wrong though it is, cannot fail to be general interest.' The second sentence, indeed, may well be omitted. It is quite unnecessary. But since you have spoken of "general interest", I have retained the phrase to show how you can revise such sentences which seem to make no sense. Though, indeed, care has been taken here, I see that mistakes remain. I would even suggest that you should keep a corrected file of *Young India* so that, if Ganesan<sup>2</sup> or some one else reprints the articles, the correct text may be printed.

We need not at all feel concerned if the sales of *N. J.* and *Y. I.* do not increase. Nobody has taken note of Rs. 50,000/-<sup>3</sup> as everyone has become nervous. Should not something be said about the example

<sup>1</sup> The sentence quoted in the second paragraph appeared in *Young India*, 10-4-1924; vide "What It Is Not", 10-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> S. Ganesan published two volumes of Gandhiji's articles from *Young India*, 1919-22 and 1922-24.

<sup>3</sup> The amount represented savings in the course of five years of the existence of *Navajivan*; vide "To Readers of *Navajivan*", 6-4-1924.

being followed ? How is this to be done? We have never heard of any newspapers having been run on the same lines as ours. You may not therefore be sorry for the absence of the note.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Ramdas is doing well.

“The Maulana’s resignation from the Presidentship’ and ‘Was I Partial?’ are not to my liking. If you too do not approve of them, you may destroy the articles. There is enough material even without these.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 11420

### 230. *THOUGHTS ON COUNCIL-ENTRY*

[Before April 11, 1924]

Pandit Motilalji and I have had prolonged discussions about propriety of non-co-operators entering the Legislative bodies. I had too the privilege of discussion with other Swarajist friends. But in spite of all my effort I have not been able to discover a common meeting ground in terms of non-co-opertion. I retain the opinion that Council-entry is inconsistent with non-co-operation. There is an honest and fundamental difference between the Swarajists and myself. I have failed to convince them that to be out of the Legislative bodies is, to say the least, far more advantageous to the country than to be in them. But I recognize that so long as they think otherwise, their place is undoubtedly in the Councils. It is the best for us all. If their work prospers and the country benefits, such an ocular demonstration cannot but convince honest sceptics like me of our error and I know the Swarajists to be patriotic enough to retrace their steps when experience disillusioned them. I would therefore be no party to putting any obstacle in their way. I cannot actively help in a project in which I do not believe.

<sup>1</sup> The document is in Gandhiji’s handwriting, with several corrections by him. It carries what are evidently his first thoughts on the “vexed question of entry by Congressmen into the Legislative Councils and Assembly” After week-long discussions, from March 29 to April 5, in Bombay, with Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and other Swarajist leaders, Gandhiji formulated his stand on the question. It is likely that Gandhiji put down these thoughts sometime prior to his “Draft Statement on Council-entry”, dated April 11; *vide* the following item.

I differ too as to the method of work in the Councils. I do not believe in obstruction within the Councils. I should only enter a Legislative body, if I found I could at all use it to advantage. If therefore I entered the Councils, I should endeavor to give strength to the constructive programme of the Congress. I should therefore move resolutions requiring the Central and the Provincial Governments (1) to make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, (2) to impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth, (3) abolish the drink and drug reserve and correspondingly reduce the army expenditure. If the Government refuse to enforce resolutions carried in the legislature, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the Government will not dissolve, I should resign and prepare the country for civil disobedience. When that stage is reached, the Swarajists will find me ready to work with and under them. My test of fitness for civil disobedience remains the same as before.

During the state of probation I should advise the No-changers to prove their faith without thinking of what the Swarajists are doing or saying, prosecute their programme with undivided energy and concentration. The khaddar and the national schools are enough to occupy a large army of workers who believe in quiet, honest unemonstrative work. The Hindu and Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. As Vaikom is showing, the Hindus have in untouchability a huge problem before them. In all such work outside the Councils, No-changers and pro-changers can work in unison.

From a photostat : S.N. 8718

### 231. DRAFT STATEMENT ON COUNCIL-ENTRY<sup>1</sup>

April 11, 1924

After having discussed with the Swarajist friends the vexed question of entry into the Legislative Assembly and the Councils by Congressmen, I am sorry to have to say that I have not been able to see eye to eye with the Swarajist Friends. I assure the reader there has been no lack of willingness or effort on my part to accept the Swarajists' position. My task would be much simpler if I would identify myself with the Swarajists' programme. It can be no pleasure to me to oppose even in thought the most valued and tried leaders, some of whom have made great sacrifices in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love for the freedom of the Motherland. But, in spite of my effort and willingness, I have failed to be convinced by their argument, nor is the difference between them and myself one of mere detail. Unfortunately, it goes to the rock-bottom of the principle. Had it been one of detail only, I would immediately have sacrificed my conviction, however strong it might be, and, for the sake of agreement, would have joined the Swaraj Party and advised the No-changers to heartily co-operate with the Swaraj Party and make theirs the national programme. Such an attitude is, however, impossible, the difference being, as I have said, fundamental. It is my conviction-and further thought and observation are making it daily stronger-that the entry into the Legislative bodies has retarded the progress towards Swaraj for the following reasons. In my humble opinion.

(a) The entry into the Legislative bodies is tantamount to taking part, directly or indirectly, in the present system of government, for the Legislative bodies are a chief part of the machinery designed to sustain that system.

(b) The programme of obstruction has a strong smell of

<sup>1</sup> This typewritten document is evidently an elaboration of his "Thoughts on Council-entry" It carried the title "First Draft of Statement on the Councils Question" and the words: "Very rough incomplete draft, unrevised. Confidential-not for publication." Gandhiji forwarded this draft to Motilal Nehru on April 13; *vide* "Letter to Motilal Nehru", 13-4-1924. The latter sent Gandhiji an elaborate note; *vide* Appendix "Motilal Nehru's Note on Council Entry", before 18-4-1924. In this, he critically analysed the contents of Gandhiji's draft and offered his own suggestions. Gandhiji then prepared a final draft which, with a few minor verbal changes, was issued as a statement to the Press on May 22.

violence about it and cannot generate an atmosphere of calmness which is so necessary for preparing the ground for civil disobedience, which the Congress has found to be the only sanction for which the people of India can be made ready and which is regarded as an effective substitute for armed rebellion.

(c) It has retarded the progress of the constructive programme, namely, the charkha, unity between the different communities, removal of untouchability, development of the Panchayat system, National Schools and the collection of subscriptions necessary for carrying on the programme.

(d) Assuming that the entry was desirable, it was premature. It will be admitted that the discipline that the Swaraj Party has shown in the Legislative bodies is due to the intensive and methodical work that the Congress has carried on since 1920. But neither discipline nor methodical work in the face of disappointments has become a habit with Congress workers. The experience of the past four years shows that the habit of discipline and application is likely to vanish under prolonged strain. The present Legislative bodies do not contain an atmosphere disposing one to truthfulness and non-violence. On the contrary, there is in that atmosphere a constant, almost irresistible, temptation to depart from them.

(e) The entry is tantamount to abandoning the Khilafat and the Punjab causes.

I do not wish to enter into detailed argument in support of the objections above set forth. I would say a word only on the fundamental objection, namely that the entry is tantamount to participation in violence. It has been suggested that nobody takes the extreme view of non-violence that I do and that most Congressmen confine the definition of non-violence to mere abstention from causing physical hurt to the opponent. I venture to doubt the accuracy of the statement, but if it is so, it is an argument, not against the fundamental difference I have started, but for revising the Congress creed and removing the adjective “non-violent” wherever it occurs in the Congress resolutions, for it must be plain to everybody that, if a non-co-operator, whilst he refrains from causing physical hurt to his opponent, may wound him with his tongue and in his thought wish him ill, the struggle must break down. Non-violence is a mere camouflage and the atmosphere for civil disobedience can never be created, for we will always be giving tacit approval to every violent demonstration against

the administrators and co-operators. It was in vindication of the view that I have set forth that civil disobedience was suspended during the Rowlatt Act agitation after the incendiarism and murders in Amritsar, Viramgam and Ahmedabad, and during the non-co-operation campaign after the mob violence in Bombay and again in Chauri Chaura. Each time the advice I tendered for suspension of civil disobedience was accepted by the nation and, if it was an honest acceptance, I was justified in thinking that non-violence in its full sense, but restricted as to the cause for which it was taken, was understood and accepted by the nation.<sup>1</sup>

Such being my view of the Council-entry, it follows that, if I could persuade the Swarajists, I would have them retrace their steps and give up the Assembly and the Councils. But if they have failed to convince me of the soundness of the step they have taken, I have fared no better with them. On the contrary, they can show, and with justice, brilliant victories: my release, an ocular demonstration of khaddar in the highest places, almost complete success of obstruction, namely, forcing the Government to resort to certification, which success would have been complete if the Congress had given unstinted support to the Council-entry at Gaya, thus enabling the Swaraj Party to organize so effectively as to prevent a single election from going in favour of non-Swarajists. Naturally, it is vain for me to argue that all such things could have been done even before non-co-operation. If our aim was to get releases of prisoners, we could have got not merely a Gandhi released but many Hasrat Mohanis and all Punjab prisoners. It is idle for me to argue that there is not much in the khaddar demonstration or in keeping so many Moderates out. The machinery of the Government goes unchecked with or without the Moderates and in spite of obstruction. Nor is it much use arguing that all that the entry into the Councils is likely to achieve could have been achieved by fairly-directed agitation even in 1920. It is highly likely that, whilst the Government may not make the admission, some pleasant<sup>2</sup> advance upon the Reforms will be made, but I have no doubt that everything that is likely to be granted will be far short of what the Congress programme was and is designed for.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the final draft of the statement, this examination of the issue of non-violence does not find a place.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a slip for 'present'.

<sup>3</sup> This comparison of the relative impacts of the Non-co-operation and Swarajists' programmes is omitted in the final draft.

It was not to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by any argument. They are many of them amongst the ablest, most experienced and honest patriots. They have not entered the Legislative bodies in the teeth of opposition without full deliberation, and they must not be expected to retire from the position until experience has convinced them of the futility of their programme. The question, therefore, before the country is not an examination and distribution<sup>1</sup> of merits of the Swarajists' views and mine. The question is: regarding the Council-entry as a settled fact, what is to be done now. Are the No-changers to keep up if only mental hostility against the Swarajists' programme, or are they to remain neutral and even help wherever it is possible and consistent with their principles? The Delhi and Cocanada resolutions have permitted those Congressmen who have no conscientious scruples to enter the Councils and the Assembly if they wish to. In my opinion, the Swarajists are, therefore, justified in entering the Legislative bodies and expecting perfect neutrality on the part of the No-changers. They were also justified in resorting to obstruction, because such was their policy and the Congress had laid down no conditions as to their entry.

So far as I am concerned, being an out-and-out believer in non-violence, my position remains the same as at Amritsar in 1919. I do not believe in obstruction in any shape or form within the Councils. It appears to me to be an utter waste of time. I would enter the Councils only if I believed that I could make use of them for the advancement of the country. I must, therefore, have faith of the machinery and those in charge of it. I cannot be part of the machinery and till want to destroy it.

Taking the Council-entry, therefore, as a necessary evil, if I were a member of any to these bodies, I should carry out the constructive programme of the Congress. Two things can be immediately done: a resolution requiring the Central Government and the Provincial Governments in future to buy only hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar for all the departments under them, and another resolution abolishing the whole of the revenue from drinks and drugs, the deficit to be covered by a corresponding reduction in the army expenditure. The Government is likely even to disregard these resolutions. I am unable to say what should be done if the Government refuses to give effect to

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a slip for 'discussion'.

such resolutions. The fact is, not possessing the Council mentality, it is difficult for me to say anything further.

From a photostat: S.N. 8713

### 232. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

Friday [April 11, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

Golikere bungled first. I bungled next and, if you will have it so, after me-you. It seems you always think that in every matter I see your fault. I had asked Golikere to write the postcard in his own name. He thought that he was to write in mine and I was to sign it. When I saw that he thought that I would write to you in English without any particular reason and so typed a postcard and went home and when I saw the letter for signature, I did sign it, no doubt, but remarked, 'This is bungling'. I thought that you would catch the humour underlying the remark. I then remembered your letter referring to the 'Kingdom of Heaven' There was space enough in the card for giving its meaning and so I wrote it down. It had nothing to do with the contents of the card. I had not read your Gujarati translation at all. I wrote with only your letter in mind. I have still not read your translation. Does this explain everything? The first bungling was on the part of Golikere; then, on my part; then, since what I wrote was misunderstood by you, if you care to believe it, on your part, for you did not catch my meaning and misinterpreted my remark. Your interpretation of the 'Kingdom of Heaven' as distinguished from the 'Kingdom' of Earth' was, I think, quite correct. However, as I have not gone through the thing carefully, I cannot say definitely. I cannot enter into a discussion about *moksha*, etc., just now.

I have put down my views up to date about Council-entry; a copy of it is sent herewith.<sup>2</sup> Please share it with Vallabbhai also. Let Kaka and others also read it. You may then express your views if you feel like doing so.

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 8725

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* footnote 2 to "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 4-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.



### 233. TELEGRAM TO GEORGE JOSEPH

[ANDHERI,  
*April 11, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

GEORGE JOSEPH  
COCHIN

OMIT FASTING BUT STAND OR SQUAT IN RELAYS WITH  
QUIET SUBMISSION TILL ARRESTED.

GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 5174. Courtesy: Krishnadas

### 234. LETTER TO GEORGE JOSEPH

*4-30 a.m., Saturday, April 12, 1924*

MY DEAR JOSEPH,

The above is the wire<sup>2</sup> sent to you in reply to yours. Fasting in satyagraha has well-defined limits. You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be as a piece of violence done to him. You invite penalty from him for disobedience of his orders, but you cannot inflict on yourself penalties when he refuses to punish and renders it impossible for you to disobey his orders so as to compel infliction of penalty. Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a parent who drinks. My fast at Bombay, and then at Bardoli, was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say General Dyer who not only does not love me, but who regards himself as my enemy. Am I quite clear?

How is Mrs. Joseph?

You must be patient. You are in an Indian State. Therefore, you may wait in deputation on the Dewan and the Maharaja. Get up a

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a telegram from George Joseph dated April 11, reading as follows: Vaikom Satyagraha assumed new phase. Police preventing access. Refuses to arrest. Satyagrahis have got down front road fasting. More satyagrahis intend following daily. Advise if change procedure necessary. Urgent.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item. The telegram and this letter were released to the Associated Press of India the following day.

monster petition by the orthodox Hindus who may be well-disposed towards the movement. See also those who are opposing. You can support the gentle, direct action in a variety of ways. You have already drawn public attention to the matter by preliminary satyagraha. Above all, see to it that it neither dies nor by impatience becomes violent.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a copy ; C.W. 5174 Courtesy: Krishnadas

### *235. LETTER TO DR. CHOITHRAM GIDWANI*

POST ANDHERI,

*April 12, 1924*

DEAR DR. CHOITHRAM

I have your long telegram. I have not sent you a telegraphic reply. Your wire makes me sad, but not despondent, along my own lines. Every one of us has to be proved to the uttermost. I hope that you will be able to stand the test. Please keep me informed of the events there. Does your telegram mean that you have now regained your health? I am anxiously awaiting reply to my letter to Jairamdas.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

DR. CHOITHRAM GIDWANI

HYDERABAD (SIND)

From a copy : S.N. 8720

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jairamdas Doulatram", 4-4-1924.

### 236. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 12, 1924*

MY DEAR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

Here is a copy of my letter<sup>1</sup> to the Secretaries of the Kerala Provincial Conference.

I sent you yesterday a copy of the draft<sup>2</sup> about Council-entry which I have prepared. I have not revised it, nor is it the final, even so far as the matter is concerned. It is prepared in order to enable the swarajist friends to understand where I stand today.

Do try to attend the Working Committee and therefore come earlier if it is at all possible.

*Yours sincerely,*

Encl.

SJT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

EXTENSION

SALEM

From a photostat: S.N. 8721

### 237. LETTER TO ELIZABETH SHARPE

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 12, 1924*

DEAR FRIEND,

It was good of you to have taken the trouble to write that long letter<sup>3</sup>. I wish the problem was so simple as you state it. It is terribly concrete for me. If I have a duty at all towards fellow-creatures, I must think what it is in the face of those who are simply skin and bone. Is there such a thing as the quality of mercy and pity and love, and if there is, am I to say these men and women who are dying of slow starvation and who are almost naked, are, after all, reaping the fruit of their past karma and I have no duty by them? Each for his own is the

<sup>1</sup> This is not available

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Draft Statement on Council-entry", 11-4-1924.

<sup>3</sup> This is not available.

message for man. As I write these words in cold blood, I feel staggered, and if such was the implication of the law of karma, I should become a rebel against it. Fortunately it teaches me a different lesson. On the one hand it insists on patience, and on the other it peremptorily commands me to undo the past by rearranging the present. Believe me, those politicians whom you are pleased to call vile are not so vile as you think. You are young, as you say. I admire your enthusiasm in this cause of spirituality. May I then, as an old man, tell you that spirituality rejects the doctrine of acquiescence in evil? The spirituality of India is made of much sterner stuff than you imagine it is. I would ask you to pause and think.

*Your sincere friend,*

MISS ELIZABETH SHARPE

SHRI KRISHNA NIVAS

LIMBDI (KATHIAWAR)

From a photostat : S.N. 8722

## 238. MY NOTES

### ANOTHER MISUNDERSTANDING

I have cleared in an editorial the misunderstanding about Maulana Mahomed Ali. Another misunderstanding of the same type has occurred in Hakim Ajmal Khan's Tibbia College. When my release was being celebrated there, a Hindu student compared me with Jesus Christ. When another student hinted that it was not proper to compare an ordinary man with great prophets, the former felt hurt as he took the hint to be an insult to me. Thereupon, the student who had spoken against the comparison explained his standpoint and apologized. Some journalist made a mountain out of this molehill.

I happened to read a news paragraph just when I started writing these notes. Two persons were taking tea in Calcutta. One of them praised me, the other criticized me. My admirer did not like the criticism, so he fell out with the critic. The two heroes then faced each other pugnaciously. Finally, the police had to intervene and separate the violent contestants.

To whom shall I offer the bouquet? To the admirer, to the detractor, to both or to neither of them? It is easy to answer this. The admirer really blackened me by hitting the critic. It is me that he has

hit. Had the critic given me two lashes of the whip, I would have immediately forgiven him in accordance with my religion of non-violence. Possibly, I would have even kissed his whip had I the strength to do so. One who has read *Chaurasi Vaishnavoni Varta*<sup>1</sup> should not see anything surprising in this. By striking the critic my admirer has dealt me a severer lash than that of the whip. The non-violence which I practice now cannot go, at least today, to the length of forgiving him. If my admirer meets me, he will certainly have to bear my displeasure and anger. The critic said what he believed. But my admirer did not act up to his belief. In the language of swamiji and the Maulana, my admirer can be said to have only censured the tenets of his won religion and, howsoever good may be the principle of his religion, his conduct was worse than his critic's.

My bouquet will surely stay with me. I shall certainly not hand it over to my admirer. And since my critic belongs to the opposite camp, how can there be any bouquet for him in the present atmosphere? But if the atmosphere changes and if I must offer the bouquet to one of them, I shall offer it to my critic and go off to the Himalayas.

Tolerance is the prime quality of a Swarajist. As long as this world endures, views are bound to differ from individual to individual. Swaraj will be shared, in common, by men holding different views. If we start cutting off the heads of all people who have necks too long or too short, not even two persons will be left with necks of equal length. Hence we must respect the freedom of others as much as we value our own. What is our quarrel with the Government about? Is it not about freedom of thought? The Government arrested me because it considered my ideas to be wrong. That gentleman in the Tibbia College and the critic in Calcutta also followed the same path as the Government and so they co-operated with it. If the Hindus and the Muslims want unitedly to secure swaraj, they should learn this lesson by heart and act accordingly.

They should tolerate each other's ideas and practices and each should refrain from interfering in the practices of the other.

Those who are the first to implement this principle will score a victory. If one waits for another to give a lead, in the end both will remain where they are. If everyone says "After you", all will miss the bus.

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarati book containing stories of eighty-four devotees of Vishnu

An ordinary supplement to *Navajivan* continues to appear from time to time. The reader will find elsewhere in this number an announcement about a special supplement on education which is to be issued henceforward. This special education supplement will appear on the third Saturday of every month, so that the first such issue will be out on the 19th instant. From the announcement the reader will find that it was I who advised them that, instead of being issued independently, the education number should come out as a supplement to some journal. Many newspapers are published in Gujarat, even books appear in very large numbers. The growth of readership may be considered to be a good thing. Where a thousand subscribers were regarded as satisfactory, even three or four thousand, are now looked upon as ordinary. Thus we must welcome this increase in the love of reading among the Gujaratis. But the responsibility of writers and those running newspapers has increased. The two big problems are: the type of material to be published and the style in which it is to be presented. The habits which the readers will contract today are likely to endure permanently. What is true of children is also true of grown-ups. Even the grown-ups are as good as children where new experiences are concerned. If old people like some new thing and if they get used to it, they will take delight in it even like children. And, if by chance, it turns out to be undesirable, even then they will find it hard to give it up. Thus the increased love of reading among the Gujaratis may in the end prove to be harmful if it is not given a healthy turn. Therefore, the knowledge that a writer has to exercise control over his pen is one of the reasons for my hesitation. It may be doubted whether such a blemish will creep into an education supplement. But is there a limit to methods of education? I for one do not believe that all methods are good enough. There are likely to be many drawbacks in a system devised without regard to time, place and class of students. It cannot be laid down that one working in the education field should have unrestricted freedom.

The other cause of my hesitation is about the reader's pocket. Even the burden of a voluntary tax falling on the reader must not exceed a certain limit. The circulation of all newspapers, books etc., will only be among the class of readers that has now come into being. I am afraid if such a burden becomes heavy, it may kill the desire to read.

I had requested the Vidyapith<sup>1</sup> to consider both these reasons for my hesitation. As a result, it has decided not to issue an independent monthly but to have a special supplement to *Navajivan* every month. Those in charge of the Vidyapith have found it necessary to have a special mouthpiece which will record the activities of the Vidyapith, express its ideas on education, and be of assistance to teachers, parents and students too. Whether they are right in this view experience alone will show. This much is clear that there is a lot for teachers, parents and even students to learn about the important activities of the Vidyapith. Let us all hope that this need will be met by the proposed enterprise. There is no doubt that, if the educated class lends a hand, this venture will succeed brilliantly.

#### SAVED

For the present at least the Indians [in South Africa] appear to have been saved from the sword, hitherto hanging over their heads, in the form of confining their residence to the scavengers' Location. Smt. Sarojini's efforts appear to have succeeded in an unexpected manner. General Smuts<sup>2</sup> has announced his decision to dissolve Parliament and to hold fresh elections as he felt that public opinion did not back the Union Government of South Africa. Hence the new bills which were to be passed by the present Parliament have been postponed, at least for the present. But it is not at all likely that members of the now Parliament will be inclined to do justice to Indians. It will not at all be suprising if their attitude towards the Indians in South Africa is harder even than that of the present members. Still, we should rest satisfied, for the time being at least, as "he who survives a crisis may live up to the age of a hundred years."

#### VALUE OF ALERT PUBLIC OPINION

We have a lot to learn from what is happening in South Africa. General Smuts has suspended the administrative work of the entire country because one representative of his party was defeated in only one city. While dissolving Parliament, he declared:

We cannot introduce new policies contemplated by us if the public opinion does not back us. It is enough for us that the voters of one main city only gave their votes to the opposition party.

<sup>1</sup> Gujarat Vidyapith, a national university founded at Ahmedabad by Gandhiji in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Smuts (1870-1950); South African general and statesman; Prime Minister, 1919-24, 1939-48

In this we see both General Smuts's adroitness and his submission to public opinion. Do we find such a thing in our country?

The Government at least believes generally in flouting public opinion. Look where you will, you find disregard of public opinion. The Government must be considering the case of Hasrat Mohani or Mr. Horniman as of little importance. But even there, it does not wish to act in conformity with public opinion; it is as if it enjoys opposing it!

#### THIS PICTURE AND THAT

While preparations were being made for the visit of the Prince of Wales to South Africa, General Smuts sent a message to the effect that, since the whites would be busy with the new elections, the royal visit should for the present be postponed. Hence it has been put off. This is one picture, that of South Africa .

Now let us look at the picture here in 1921. On one occasion the whole population urged the Government not to invite the Prince here, but the Government did not budge from its position ; it stuck to its guns. The result was so bitter that it has not yet been forgotten. He was insulted, without their wanting it, by the people. The people in Bombay reduced their pledge of non-violence to nothing and, for a time, the game appeared to have been lost.<sup>1</sup>

How long can such disregard of the people continue? The reply to this question given by the Congress at Calcutta and Nagpur<sup>2</sup> in the year 1920 holds good even today. To put it in one phrase: until the people are ready and fit. That is to say-

1. When the people fully wear khadi and discard foreign cloth and cloth made by mills here.

- 2 . Or when the hearts of Hindus and Muslims unite.

3. Or when the Hindus purify themselves by welcoming into their fold untouchables and other excluded classes.

4. Or when the people learn to run the Congress properly.

5. Or when the people accept practical non-violence *in toto*—in thought, word and deed.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji refers to the riot in Bombay in November 1921 when the Prince of Wales landed there.

<sup>2</sup> The special session was held at Calcutta in September and the annual session at Nagpur in December, 1920.



On pondering over the matter, we shall find that if we carry out fully even one item out of these five, the rest will follow of their own accord.

The blame the Government or to hurl abuses at it is not only useless, it is a sign of our cowardice. As we are, so is our Government. The yardstick for measuring the people's awareness is their Government

#### MY "DARSHAN"

A friend has written to me about seeing me. I reproduce from it the following:<sup>1</sup>

What *darshan* of mine will this noble family have? But I for one will be blessed by its *darshan* and it will add to my strength. I shall be meeting them on Sunday and I am looking forward to the day. If all families thus implement the constructive programme of the Congress, their *darshan* will be an unfailing tonic for me and India will easily secure swaraj.

#### APOLOGY TO LATE MOTILAL

Among many gifts, God has given me also the gift of well-meaning friends. They keep a watch over me always and save me from errors, and when I make any, they make me correct them. Three friends have written to me brief, thoughtful postcards and informed me that, while writing in the *Navajivan* issue of last week<sup>2</sup> about the customs cordon at Viramgam, I have referred to the late tailor-friend of Wadhwan as Popatlal. But his correct name is Motilal.<sup>3</sup> These friends' correction is right. Knowing that my memory for names and faces is very weak, the relatives and friends of Motilal will, I hope, forgive me. Though I count myself as well among his relatives and friends, I proved myself to be such a distant relative that I could not even remember his name! But Motilal's soul will certainly pardon me

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here. The writer stated in his letter that he, his mother and sister were able to fulfil the constructive programme by spinning; weaving and wearing khadi. They, therefore, desired to have Gandhiji's *darshan* on the following Sunday.

<sup>2</sup> In the preface to *Satyagraha in South Africa*.

<sup>3</sup> Enthusiastic public worker of Wadhwan, in Saurashtra; he used to visit the Sabarmati Ashram every month for a few days and teach tailoring to students without taking any remuneration.

because I am not so thoughtless as to forget his soul. I thank all the three friends who have drawn my attention to this slip.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-4-1924

### 239. CHARGE AGAINST MAHOMED ALI

A gentleman writes to say that the Gujarati papers report Maulana Mahomed Ali as having said in a speech that Gandhi was lower than the most wretched Muslim. The correspondent suggests that, though the Maulana would never have said such a thing, the true fact should be made known through *Navajivan* so that the misunderstanding might be removed. I must admit regretfully that this report has appeared in English as well as Gujarati newspapers. There has been a lot of discussion on this matter.

God knows what has happened, but at present there is misunderstanding between Hindus and Muslims all around. They do not trust each other. I know there are various reasons for this state of affairs, but I do not consider it necessary in regard to this episode to go into them. The Hindi and Urdu newspapers in northern India have overdone the thing. Dr. Ansari writes to say that those papers regard it as their duty to make allegations against each other, to spread false rumours, to calumniate each other's religion and thereby to vilify each other. It seems this has become a means of increasing the circulation of their papers. How to stop this infection from spreading has become a big problem. To solve it is, in my opinion, much more important than Council-entry. I am sure that our ability to run the administration will be seen in the course of solving it. If we can solve some of the problems confronting the people, we shall have swaraj in our hands right today. There can be no swaraj as long as we are not able to untie these knots. The Councils will not be able to solve these difficulties.

But in this article I do not propose to examine these difficulties. I wish to assess only the allegations against the Maulana.

The Maulana, who was asked in a meeting at Lucknow a question on his first speech, gave this reply: "I consider the religious principles of an adulterous Muslim to be better than Mahatma Gandhi's religious principles." Here the Maulana has not instituted a comparison between "Mahatma" Gandhi and an adulterous Muslim,

but only between their religious principles. Let us also consider for a while why this comparison was made. The Muslims have charged the Maulana with having become a flatterer or worshipper of Gandhi. To worship Gandhi is to deify Gandhi, that is, to believe that there is nothing higher than Gandhi in this world. This amounts to professing Gandhi's religion, and that was the charge against the Maulana. The Maulana gave the reply quoted above to meet this allegation of some Muslims. While trying to please the Muslims, did he annoy the Hindus? If the Maulana had uttered the above-quoted sentence on some other occasion, he would not have been criticized at all. Hindu newspapers gave a distorted report of his speech. They represented that the Maulana considered an adulterous Muslim better than "Mahatma" Gandhi. We have seen that he did not say so. Moreover, in his letter to Swami Sharaddhanand, he has expressed his belief that "Mahatma" Gandhi is the best man in the whole world. But he has assessed the religious principles of that "Mahatma" as lower than those of an adulterous Muslim. There is no contradiction at all in this. Moreover, almost the whole world recognizes the difference between persons and their principles.

Christian friends close to me regard me as a very good man and yet, because they consider their religion better than mine, pray to God that I may become a Christian. I received a letter two or three weeks ago from one such friend in South Africa, in which he writes:

I was glad to hear that you were released. I always pray for you that God may give you good sense, so that you may start believing in Jesus Christ and His power to effect deliverance. if you do so, your work would soon bear fruit.

Thus, many Christian friends desire me to become a Christian.

What do many Hindus do? Do they not consider the principles of their own religion to be far superior to those of the noblest Christian or Muslim? If they do not, will they give their daughter in marriage to the best Muslim or Christian? Again, they would not give her even to the best among Hindus if he does not belong to their own denomination or sub-caste. What does that suggest? They believe their own religion to be better than any other.

In my humble opinion, the Maulana has proved the purity of his heart and his faith in his own religion by expressing his view. He has, in fact, honoured me in two ways-first, as a friend, secondly as a man. He has honoured me as a friend because he has taken it for granted

that I shall not take it ill at all if he says anything about me, that I shall never put a wrong construction on his words. He has honoured me as a man because, despite the difference in our religions and despite his belief that his religion is better than mine, he regards me as the best among men. What an implicit confidence in me! I can understand people's superstition which leads them to regard me as a good man, but how strange it is that a friend who has been in close association with me regards me as the best despite seeing the many defects in me!

I consider it very risky to regard any man as the best. Who can know his heart except God? How dirtier must they be who can hide their evil than those whose evil comes out in the open? The latter has scope for deliverance because, when the evil comes out in the open, the path to get out of it is clear. But in the other case, the evil within, kept concealed as in a box, will eat one up like poisonous germs. Deliverance is impossible for such a one in this birth. And, therefore, the Shastras have placed Truth above everything; for the same reason, they have forbidden us to hide our sins. Even if it is possible to assess any man as the best among men, it can only be after his death.

I for one cannot be confident about myself. I find it easier to be so about others. In doing so if I get cheated, I may suffer some financial loss or the world may consider me gullible. If I place too much confidence in myself and remain complacent, I shall be doomed. Since I have this opportunity, let me tell my reader that, on one occasion, when I was about to be lost through placing too much confidence in my own self, I was saved only through God's grace. On another occasion, and adulterous friend of mine had saved me. It was of course not possible for him to save himself; but because he regarded me as pure-minded and wished that I should not allow myself to be defiled by evil, he shook me out of infatuation. Instead of keeping a watch on others and sitting in judgment over them, we should keep a watch on our own selves. If we become our own judges we shall save ourselves and save the world from our tyranny. Therefore, the true definition of swaraj is this: swaraj is control over one's own self. He who gains such control has gained everything. The saying, "The world is good, if we are ourselves good" is very meaningful.

I have not strayed from the subject and started discussion of any profound problem, but have only discussed issues arising from the subject. I tremble because my friends regard me as the best man. If I

come to believe it, it will bring about my downfall, because I have yet far to climb. My aspiration has no bounds. Many are the inner enemies whom I have to conquer. The deeper I ponder, the better I come to realize my drawbacks. As I do so, I wonder what the truly best men will be like. As I ponder over this, I get some idea of *moksha* and its bliss. Then I get a faint glimpse of Divine Reality.

Now perhaps the reader will realize that the Maulana has done me great honour by regarding me as the best among men. The reader will understand the meaning of his statement better after reading his letter. I give a translation of it in this very issue.<sup>1</sup>

Swamiji has welcomed the Maulana's letter; he has thanked him for his frankness; he regards the Maulana as a friend of the Hindus and has appealed to those who had sent a notice of a resolution making allegations against him and asking him to submit his resignation from the Congress to withdraw that notice. But at the same time, he has also made it clear that in the case of his own religion mere principles did not count and that a man was judged by his character. By giving a reply to this, the Maulana has removed even the doubt arising from the Swamiji's writing. The Maulana does not think that a person who believes in principles need not act upon them. He merely compared two sets of religious principles and gave his opinion as to which was better. He has pointed out in another letter<sup>2</sup> of his that, even if the principles in which a man believes are of the best, they will avail him nothing if he does not act upon them.

Hence what Maulana Mahomed Ali has said only comes to this, that to everyone his own religion appears good. Which Hindu can controvert that statement? We shall consider on another occasion how this molehill was made into a mountain and how we can stop recurrence of such misunderstandings.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here; *vide*, however, Appendix "Mahomed Ali's Letter to Swami Shraddhanand", 10-4-1924 for the original in English.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Mahomed Ali's Letter to the Editor, *Tej*", 10-4-1924.

#### 240. SATYAGRAHA AND CASTE REFORM

As the principle of satyagraha comes to be better understood, it is being put to ever new applications. It is used not merely in fighting the Government, but we find it being applied within the family and the caste as well. In a certain community there prevails the inhuman practice of offering girls in marriage for a consideration and a youth has felt the urge to end it. It has been asked what he should do. An easy form of satyagraha is non-cooperation. The young man wishes to banish this custom from his community. His intention is good. But should he start non-co-operation and, if so, how and against whom?

It is difficult to give a definite opinion in this particular case. But one can suggest some general rules for all situations of this type.

In the first place, one should never embark upon non-co-operation all of a sudden. Evil customs which have prevailed for ages cannot be eradicated in a moment. Reform is one-legged, and so proceeds haltingly. Anyone who loses patience can never become a pure satyagrahi. The first step for a reformer is to educate public opinion. He should meet the wise elders of the community and listen to their points of view. Maybe the reformer is a poor man, no one knows him and the elders will not listen to him. What should he do then? A poor person like this should know that he is not destined to be an instrument of reform. We may all wish that untruth may disappear from the world, but who will bring round the liars? Here is an essential reform, and yet how patiently we mark time!

The thing is that a reformer should be free from egotism. Why should we assume responsibility for ending all evils? We should be content with speaking the truth ourselves and acting truthfully. Likewise, in regard to the evil practices in the community, we should see that our own attitude and conduct are blameless and maintain a neutral attitude towards others.

To think "I do this, I do that" is ignorance, like that of the dog who thought that the cart was being drawn by him.

We should learn these lines by heart and, as they suggest, remain free from pride.

If, even then, we feel that the responsibility is ours, an especial duty devolves upon us. For example, the elders of the community cannot, professing to be humble, condone the prevailing evils, for, by

accepting the position of elders, they have made themselves the guardians of its moral conduct. Even if only one girl is given away in marriage for money, the curse of that innocent girl will fall upon them.

If, however, the leaders of the community do nothing to stop evil practices and themselves follow this one of accepting money for a daughter given in marriage, what should this poor member of the community do? He has made his own life above reproach, and has met all the leading men of the community. All of them have treated him insultingly and driven him away as they might a dog. Abuse has been showered on him. Dispirited, tired and sad, he has returned home. He sees no shelter save the sky above and no support save the earth below. Now, will God hear his prayer for help? But this is only the first step. He has been tested, as he had to be, before he could be fit for *tapascharya*<sup>1</sup>. Now he can hear his inner voice. He asks the God within him: “Though insulted, do I yet love my brethren? Am I ready to serve them? Shall I be able to submit even to blows and kicks with their shoes?” If the in-dwelling God answers all these questions in the affirmative, then he is fit to take the second step.

Now he may start non-co-operation in the spirit of love. Such non-co-operation means giving up all rights-but not duties. What are the rights of this poor servant as a member of his community? To be invited to community dinners and to be eligible for marriage within its circle. He should, with humility, give up both these rights, and then he will have done his duty. If the elders of the community cast him off like a thorn saying in the arrogance of their authority, “One invitee less at dinners, one prospective bridegroom less,” strike his name off the register, the poor servant, instead of despairing, should have confidence that from the pure seed sown by him will grow a huge tree. After fulfilling his duty—not before—may he sing: To work I have the right, never to the fruit thereof.<sup>2</sup>

This poor man of God is now a dweller in a forest. If an unmarried man, he takes a stern pledge that he would remain so until the evil had disappeared from the community and, if married, that he would live with his wife as her friend and not as a husband. If he has children, he would teach them also to observe *brahmacharya*. That he may not have to seek the help of the community or others, he would

<sup>1</sup> Self-suffering as moral discipline

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

have the fewest possessions. To live thus like a sannyasi is what living in a forest means for him. In non-co-operation imbued with love there is no room at all for licence. Self-restraint alone can give it beauty. The seed which has been sown needs to be watered with self-restraint. One who thinks, "If my children do not get partners in my community, I shall find partners for them in another and will enjoy the pleasures of feasting elsewhere", is neither a man of restraint nor a non-co-operator, but a hypocrite. A non-co-operator who is a man of restraint will do *tapascharya*, living in the village of his community. It is said that in the presence of love, hatred vanishes. Living in the Himalayas, this man of God cannot claim to practise non-violence towards the community's leaders and hope to melt their hearts thereby. If the leaders of the community have disregarded him, one reason may be that they have taken him to be a thoughtless, unmannerly young man. He has yet to prove that, though poor and young, he is neither devoid of thought nor unmannerly, but is humble and thoughtful.

Working in such a spirit and serving the members of his community on occasions demanding his service and yet not hoping for a return, he will find others joining the movement for reform. Even though they may not be offering non-co-operation [against the community], their sympathy will be with him. As proud of our sacrifices and in the arrogance of our views, we abuse our friends who co-operate with the Government; this self-controlled young man will not abuse his caste-fellows because they are not with him, or express agreement with his ideas but do not go beyond that and join him in non-co-operation. He will show nothing but love for them and win their hearts. It will be his experience every day that love is the philosopher's stone. But even if he does not have this experience immediately, he will not be impatient, but will keep up his faith that the seed of love can produce nothing but the abundant fruit of love.

In the letter that I have received, I have been asked whether, when our non-co-operating man of God lets go the privilege of attending community dinners, he should also refrain from attending such dinners arranged by his friends in the community. In fact, what is likely to happen is that, on receiving his notice of non-participation in the community dinners, headmen of the caste will excommunicate him and pronounce a punishment on any member of the community who may drink water or eat in his company or enter into marriage tie



with him. That is to say, the question of his refraining from dinners given by particular individuals will not arise at all. If he is thus declared to be an outcaste, it will be the special duty of our man of self-restraint not to attend dinners given by his friends even if they invite him, openly or secretly. If, however, some caste-fellow joins him purposely in his non-co-operation, he may by all means accept an invitation by such a person. Such a thing may very well happen.

But, in general, one can say that he will have no occasion at all to decline invitations to dinners given by his friends. If, however, such an occasion does arise, he need not decline the invitation. Of course, he will never agree to accept an invitation from anyone who approves of the custom of accepting money for offering a girl in marriage.

We have noted from this that:

1. Many steps will have to be taken for educating public opinion before starting non-co-operation.
2. A non co-operator should have the strength to put up with abuse, etc., without losing his temper.
3. There should be nothing but love in non-co-operation.
4. After starting non-co-operation, one should not leave one's town or village.
5. A non-co-operator should observe rigid self-restraint.
6. A non-co-operator should have full faith in the means which he adopts.
7. A non-co-operator should remain indifferent towards the fruits of his labours.
8. There should be judgment, thoughtfulness and humility in every step that a non-co-operator takes.
9. Everyone does not have the right or the obligation to start non-co-operation. Non-co-operation started by those who have no right to do so will fail in its aim.

If some or most people feel that the observance of these rules is almost impossible, they will be right. Pure non-co-operation is impossible without rigid self-restraint. Moreover, in the case which we have considered, that man of God is himself the doer and the beneficiary, the commander and the soldier. If there is anything wanting in him, we may take it that he has only disappointment in store for him. For anyone, therefore, who intends starting non-co-operation in such independent fashion, the first sign of wisdom is to refrain from taking

any such step. But once he has taken it, he cannot give up his ideal even if that means laying down his life.

The other question that arises is, with all this self-restraint, what reform do we hope to bring about in an exclusive institution like caste? Others, moreover, may say that when we want to abolish the caste system itself, why should we fix our attention on particular evils such as the offering of girls in marriage for money? This question is out of place here. Our reformer's question concerns his community alone. If non-co-operation within the family is regarded as proper, we must consider non-co-operation towards caste also as justified as long as castes exist.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-4-1924

#### 241. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

JUHU,

*Sunday [April 13, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

DEAR MOTILALJI,

Here is the draft as corrected by me. If you and other friends pass it, I can issue it as soon as you desire.<sup>2</sup> I feel that I must remove the clause fixing the period of probation. But I can say to the friends definitely that I have no intention of moving the repeal of the Cocanada resolution. Only I do not know the implications of the clause as it stands. The rest of the corrections don't call for any remark. But I draw your attention to the last two sentences added by me. Their meaning is plain. They are intended to embody somewhat the conversation of yesterday.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8715

<sup>1</sup> Sunday following April 11, when the 'Draft' forwarded with this letter was prepared, fell on April 13.

<sup>2</sup> Motilal Nehru embodied his reactions in a lengthy note; *vide* Appendix "Motilal Nehru's Note on Council Entry", before 18-4-1924. He also sent C.R. Das a copy of Gandhiji's first draft. The latter acknowledging this on April 18, expressed his anxiety to discuss it with Gandhiji and requested him to postpone its publication till then. *Vide* Appendix "Extract from C. R. Das's Letter", 18-4-1924.

## 242. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 13, 1924*

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

I have your letter. I have written to Mr. sheriff Devji Kanji.<sup>1</sup> He has written to me in reply raising difficulties as to the terms of reference. I see Mr. Potdar does likewise. I can only suggest that, if you send me the terms of reference, I shall submit them to him and if he suggests any, I shall submit them to you. I have asked Mr. Sheriff Devji Kanji to meet me on Thursday next.

*Yours sincerely,*

N. C. KELKAR, ESQ.  
THE "KESARI" AND THE "MAHRATTA" OFFICE  
POONA CITY

From a photostat: S.N. 8727

## 243. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

[ANDHERI,  
*April 13, 1924*]

Vaikom satyagrahis undoubtedly arrived at a delicate state, so many leaders having been picked up by the Travancore authorities. Appeal has been made to all-India leaders to lead the movement. It is a question how far a local movement, on reaching a critical stage, can be turned into an all-India movement. All-India sympathy I can understand and that Vaikom satyagrahis are having in abundance, but to concentrate active energies of leaders from different provinces on a single local movement seems to be a difficult, if not an impossible, task. I am hoping, however, that leaders in the Madras Presidency will not allow the movement to die for want of proper lead. A telegram<sup>2</sup> was sent to Mr. George Joseph before his arrest advising dropping of fast. As he is not likely to have received my letter which followed the telegram, I hand it for publication, which sums up my position. It is not affected by recent developments.

*The Hindu*, 14-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Sherif Devji Kanji", 20-3-1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to George Joseph", 11-4-1924.

244. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI<sup>1</sup>

ANDHERI,  
[On or after April 13, 1924]

RECEIVED WIRE. IF HEALTH PERMITS YOU MAY  
GO NOT NECESSARILY COURT ARREST BUT REGU-  
LATE MOVEMENT. YOU SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH  
DIWAN AND INVITE IF THEY WILL COME OTHER  
LEADERS PARTICIPATE AFTER ALL YOU ARE BEST  
JUDGE SITUATION. DEVDAS AT YOUR SERVICE IF  
REQUIRED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10279

245 TELEGRAM TO T. R. KRISHNASWAMY IYER <sup>2</sup>

ANDHERI,  
April 14, 1924

KRISHNASWAMIER  
CARE NEWS  
COCHIN

CONGRATULATION OVER SO MANY ARRESTS. DO NOT  
COURT ARREST WITHOUT PROPER ARRANGEMENTS. WILL  
WIRE AGAIN. REPORT SITUATION. WRITING<sup>3</sup>.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10277

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the telegram from C. Rajagopalachari received on April 13, 1924, which read: "Joseph arrested. Telegram asks me take his place. Wire your advice." George Joseph had also wired Gandhiji on April 12: "Am arrested. Satyagraha must continue. Overwhelming public support and numerous volunteers. Leadership only needed. Send Devadas or Mahadeo Wife remains in Chengamer. Asking for blessings."

<sup>2</sup> This was sent in response to the following telegram from Iyer: "All leaders arrested. Volunteers remain seated from tenth morning on prevention. No volunteers arrested. Myself waiting Cochin since Vaikom means arrest. Pray send somebody to lead."

<sup>3</sup> To this Krishnaswamy Iyer replied: "Your message thanks. Arrangements being made. Satyagrahis cheerfully holding on. Instructions given discontinue fasting. Satyagraha headquarter arranged here. Myself charge."

246. LETTER TO H. G. PERRY<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY

[On or after April 14, 1924]

DEAR MR. PERRY,

If you could come on Sunday next at 2 p.m., I shall be glad to see you. I do not know that I shall have much to say, as my talks with the Swarajist leaders are not yet finished.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat: S.N. 8728

247. LETTER TO GANGABEHN MEGHJI <sup>2</sup>

*Chaitra Sud 11*[April 15, 1924]

DEAR SISTER,

Every day I think of writing to you, but what with one thing and another, I forget to do so. Today I am writing this immediately after the morning prayers. I was to have sent Ramdas to you for learning music, but did not, for I did not think it proper to disregard Mr. Jayakar, who has taken great pains for him.<sup>3</sup> It would have been too much of a burden even for Ramdas to be sent to two places on the same day, and so I have dropped the idea for the time being.

Nevertheless, we should thank the music teacher for readily agreeing to teach Ramdas.

Please see me as soon as you get some time.

*Vandemataram from,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7775 . Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Perry's inquiry of April 14 whether Gandhiji could give him brief interview for the *Daily Express*, London, on the subject of "present demands and revised advice for the attainment of swaraj".

<sup>2</sup> Later known as Gangabehn Vaidya

<sup>3</sup> Ramdas used to go to Jayakar for taking lessons in music during the time Gandhiji was staying at Juhu.

## 248. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

BOMBAY,  
[April 15, 1924]

. . . At four in the evening yesterday, when our representative was taken into his presence, Mahatmaji was engaged in reading an Urdu book. There was Mr. Andrews writing in a front room.

Questioned by our representative: "What is your opinion on the untouchability satyagraha organized in Travancore? How can the country as a whole help it and what is the best form of rendering help?" Mahatmaji, replying at length, said:

From what I know of the leaders of the movement I have no doubt that they have acted with great caution and deliberation and that they have embarked upon it after having taken preliminary steps. From the reports I have been receiving, I believe that the Madras Presidency will supply the lead that will be required. I do not think that the leaders from all the parts of India can spare themselves and concentrate their energy directly on the movement. But the whole of the Indian Press can give due prominence to the movement and I am glad to notice that it is receiving such prominence. Beyond this moral support, I hardly think all-India efforts can go further and, if the movement retains its continuous purity and non-violence, public support it must win in the end.

Q. "How would you solve the problem of the lack of leaders even after the few who will have gone there are arrested?" Mahatmaji replied:

A letter that I have received shows that the movement has gone so far that volunteers will continue to offer satyagraha, even when all the leaders are arrested. I would also advise that at least one leader keeps himself in reserve and directs the movement without courting arrest.

To a further question: "Supposing that even the leader who wants to reserve himself is also arrested or finds that he must offer himself for arrest, do you think it possible to conduct such a movement without leadership?" Mahatmaji answered:

In my opinion, satyagraha is one such movement, in which after a certain stage it is the easiest to continue without leadership. This is its inherent quality and strength. In satyagraha there is no such thing as diplomacy and manoeuvring, as we understand the terms. The road is narrow, I admit; but it is straight and, therefore, simple. Only the will is required, but no cunning after all. What have the volunteers to do but

simply to offer satyagraha till the right, for which it is offered, is vindicated? If those who are opposing offer any settlement, they will secure the release of the leaders who are arrested. That was exactly what happened in South Africa. It was when almost all the leaders were arrested that Mr. Gokhale was frightened and sent Mr. Andrews and Mr. Pearson. Whilst their help was invaluable, it was not necessary to keep the sacrificial fire going. They were useful for conducting negotiations. But the real suffering was the privilege of the rank and file.

“Does not the campaign location in an Indian State detract from its value as a part of the great Non-co-operation movement?” inquired our representative.

I do not regard this campaign as a part of the Non-co-operation movement, as such. It is certainly a part of satyagraha. But it has no direct connection with the Non-co-operation movement. Satyagraha is an eternal principle. I am sure that it has come to stay and we shall find, as time marches on, that it is applied in a variety of ways. I have dealt with one such instance in the columns of the *Navajivan*.<sup>1</sup> An enthusiastic reformer wishes to apply satyagraha to the solution of a corrupt practice in his caste, viz., the sale of daughters to the highest bidder. He wants to stop this inhuman practice by courting suffering for the sake of his caste sisters. If he does offer satyagraha in this case, we would not call it a part of the Non-co-operation movement. I know that there is much difference between this instance and the Vaikom movement. The latter is being conducted by congressmen and has reference to one plank in the Non-co-operation movement, that is, untouchability. Nevertheless, it is clear to me that it cannot be called a part of the Non-co-operation movement. Whether such a movement at the present stage should be initiated in an Indian State is a question which should be considered on its merits. If the Vaikom movement was a part of the political movement, which is being conducted in British India, it is absolutely clear to me that it should be dropped. I am personally averse to Congressmen creating directly or indirectly any complications in Indian States, who are themselves no better circumstanced than British Indian subjects. A mere Resident or Political Agent is enough to frighten Rajas and Maharajas out of their wits. They simply cannot resist any the slightest pressure from the British authorities. This Vaikom movement is a socio-religious movement. It has no immediate or ulterior political motive behind it. In its inception

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Satyagraha and Caste Reform”, 13-4-1924.

it was not directed against the Travancore Durbar. It was directed purely against an age-long, intolerable sacerdotal prejudice. So far as I know, the Durbar has intervened purely in the interests of peace, fearing, rightly or wrongly, that the presence of satyagrahis on these prohibited roads would result in a breach of peace. If the Maharaja himself was a reformer and held strong views against untouchability, he might have thrown in his might in favour of the satyagrahis and protected them from molestation. But I am informed he is no reformer in this direction. That being so, his advisers concern themselves merely in taking steps to preserve peace. The leaders on the spot can however still keep the movement within proper bounds and prevent it from becoming anti-Durbar.

“ How has the presence of Mrs. Naidu affected the anti-Asiatic legislation in South Africa? How has it benefited the Indian community?” questioned our representative. Paying a most glowing tribute to Mrs. Naidu, Mahatmaji said:

From all the accounts I have received from Mrs. Naidu herself and from my old South African friends, I am convinced that her presence in South Africa has done much good to our countrymen there. She has undoubtedly given them courage and hope and she has by her matchless gifts won over to our side many Europeans. In any case, the bitter feelings have undoubtedly softened down. In one of her letters<sup>1</sup> to me she says that her words moved her European audience to tears. If that letter was not an exceptionally personal letter, I would have shared it with you. I think that the *Cape Times*' severe judgment on Mrs. Naidu's activity was totally one-sided. It did not reflect cultured European opinion. In my opinion, she has acted with great tact and judgment. It was not to be expected that she would produce any permanent effect upon the European opinion. That can only be produced by the exemplary conduct of the resident Indians and their capacity for united action and suffering.

Asked as to what he thought was the best solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem, Mahatmaji said:

I would prefer not to make any statement in connection with this question, until I have seen the leaders who have made this question

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Sarojini Naidu's letter dated February 29, in the course of which she wrote: “. . . I have been able to move thousands of men and women in these 2 days to tears under the influence and stimulus of your inspiration. Something has come to me since I entered the Transvaal, and the heart of the enemy even as it dissents melts, . . . as I speak. . . .’ S.N. 9918.



their primary consideration. I hold very strong views on it and so far as I can see they are not likely to be affected by further argument. But I do not want to be hasty, and so far as it is possible for a man to do so, I want to keep my mind open till the very last moment.

To the question on *Shuddhi* and *Sanghatan*, Mahatmaji answered:

My views on the question will be expressed when I am ready to make my pronouncement on the whole question.

Till the Council question was fully discussed with the Swarajist leaders and Mr. Das's presence is awaited, Mahatmaji declined to make a statement. Conversations are no doubt proceeding with Pandit Motilal Nehru, who is staying in Juhu at a short distance from Mahatmaji's residence. Mahatmaji, however, was fully alive to the work done by the Swarajists in Council.

To the question put by our representative, "Do you give credit to the Swarajists for your release?" Mahatmaji promptly replied with a smile:

In so far as I may be bound to apportion credit for my release I certainly think that the stand taken up by the Swarajists on the question was one of the chief contributory causes.

*The Hindu*, 17-4-1924

## 249. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

ANDHERI,

[On or after *April 15, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

MY REPLY<sup>2</sup> REGARDING FAST PUBLISHED PRESS HUNGER-  
STRIKE UNLAWFUL. THINK VYKOM STRUGGLE SHOULD  
BE KEPT UP UNDER RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10280

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the telegram from C. Rajagopalachari received on April 15, 1924, which read: "Kerala itself unable without outside help in leaders men money. Myself physically unequal strain of campaign. Tamilnadu can send workers dislocating khaddar work if you consider campaign as conceived worth it. Regarding general question read letters already addressed Devdas, Pyarelal. Volunteers not arrested now but road physically blocked. No alternative but hunger strike. Do you approve this. Wire advice." S.N. 10280

<sup>2</sup> This refers to Gandhiji's telegram and letter of April 12 to George Joseph; *vide* also "Interview to Associated Press of India," 13-4-1924.

## 250. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

[After April 15, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

I am deeply thankful to you for the attention you are giving Ramdas. I think that the regular training he is having at present from you is likely to do him good and steady him.

I hope your mother is making satisfactory progress after her operation. Give her my very kind regards.

*The Story of My Life*, Vol. II, p. 265

## 251. LETTER TO SWAMI ANAND

Wednesday [April 9, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHRI ANANDANAND,

Three letters of yours have remained unanswered. But what could I do? For me too, as for the poor ascetic, the only shelter is the heavens above and the earth below. You will read about this gentleman in today's article. Why did you, even for a moment, think that I praise you because you are at a distance from me? If I have praised you, it must have been necessary at that time. I praise myself, too on occasion. I have praised Ba, and have frequently praised Devdas also. Now tell me who is near and who is at a distance? Do you understand that nothing but a mere hint would have been proper in regard to Mahadev and Kaka? I cherish some pride that, in such matters, I possess a pretty good sense of proportion and, do what I will, I cannot get over it.

I have done exactly according to your suggestion in regard to the History of Satyagraha. I liked it. To make it too long would not have been advisable either.

I cannot say whether it is desirable or not to print the matter for the book, too, right now. In the book, a few changes may have to be made, and it would be better to compose the matter afresh. But you

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Ramdas' taking lessons in music it appears this letter was written after the "Letter to Gangabehn Meghji", 15-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> The letter appears to have been written on Wednesday preceeding the date of publication of "Satyagraha a Caste Reform" pp 432-6. Therefore the item should be read after serial number 312.

know what is best in this matter. I would not blow your trumpet if I did not know this.

Print the Kelavani issue in such a way that it will bring us credit. Do use good quality paper. It must be such that it can be preserved. Let Mahadev or Swami make the necessary corrections in the sentences in that issue as well as in this. They should also let me know whether I should send every time as much as I am sending with this, or more. As for the English material, I shall post all of it tomorrow. I shall send a little on Tuesday, if that becomes necessary.

From time to time give me information about the number of subscribers and sales of *Navajivan* and *Young India*.

Send me immediately the figures of subscribers to *Navajivan* from Kathiawar, from the rest of Gujarat, from Bombay—I include these in the second—and from Ahmedabad too, as also the figures of sales by hawkers and sales in other parts of the country. I shall know then how to distribute the sum of Rs. 50,000.

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 7756

## 252. TELEGRAM TO DR. M. A. ANSARI<sup>1</sup>

[On or after April 16, 1924]

THANK    GOD    HOPE    IMPROVEMENT    WILL    CONTINUE.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 873

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Dr. Ansari's telegram of April 15, 1924, received by Gandhiji on April 16, which read: "Shaukat's temperature normal for greater part yesterday also today. Don't trouble Doctor Mehta. Mahomedali started last night for Bombay."

### 253. TELEGRAM TO KALICHARAN<sup>1</sup>

[On or after *April 16, 1924*]

SORRY

From a photostat: S.N.8733

### 254. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES - I

The reader knows that I am a hardened criminal. It was not for the first time that I found myself a prisoner in the March of 1922. I had three previous South African convictions to my credit, and as I was regarded at the time by the South African Government as a dangerous criminal, I was moved from jail to jail and was able, therefore, to gather much experience of jail life.<sup>2</sup> I had, before the Indian conviction, passed through six prisons and had come in touch with as many Superintendents and many more jailors. When, therefore, during the beautiful night of the 10th of March I was taken to the Sabarmati Jail together with Mr. Banker, I did not feel any awkwardness which always attends upon a strange and new experience. I almost felt I was going from one home to another in order to make more conquests of love. The preliminaries were more like being taken to a pleasure-trip than to jail. The courteous Superintendent of Police, Mr. Healy, would not even enter the Ashram, but sent Anasuyabai with a message that he had a warrant for my arrest and that a car awaited me at the Ashram Gate. I was to take whatever time I needed for getting ready. Mr. Banker, who was on his way back to Ahmedabad, was met by Mr. Healy on the way and already arrested. I was not at all unprepared for the news that Anasuyabai brought. As a matter of fact, after having waited long enough for the coming of the warrant which everybody thought was imminent, I had given instructions that all should retire and I was myself about to lay myself to bed. I had

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Kalicharan's telegram of April 16, 1924 which read: "Resolved to call All-India Depressed Classes Round Table Conference on 31st May 1st June at Gondia through C.P. and Berar Depressed Classes Association's and earnestly request you alone to preside and decide all questions concerning us once for all."

<sup>2</sup> For Gandhiji's earlier jail experiences; a condensed version appeared in *Young India*, 29-6-1922, 20-7-1922 and 10-8-1922.

returned that evening from Ajmer after a fatiguing journey where most reliable information was given to me that a warrant had been sent to Ajmer, for my arrest, but the authorities would not execute the warrant, as the very day that the warrant reached Ajmer, I was going back to Ahmedabad. The real news of the warrant, therefore, came as a welcome relief. I took with me an extra *kuchh* (lion-cloth), two blankets, and five books: *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ashram Hymn Book*, *Ramayana*, Rodwell's translation of the Koran, a presentation copy of the *Sermon on the Mount* sent by schoolboys of a high school in California with the hope that I would always carry it with me. The Superintendent, Khan Bahadur N.R. Wacha, received us kindly, and we were taken to a separate block of cells situated in a spacious, clean compound. We were permitted to sleep on the verandah of the cells, a rare privilege for prisoners. I enjoyed the quiet and the utter silence of the place. The next morning we were taken to the Court for preliminary examination. Both Mr. Banker and I had decided not only not to offer any defense but in no way to hamper the prosecution, but rather to help it. The preliminary examination was, therefore, quickly over. The case was committed to the Sessions, and as we were prepared to accept short service, the trial was to take place on the 18th of March. The people of Ahmedabad had risen to the occasion. Mr. Vallabhhai Patel had issued strict instructions that there should be no crowds gathering near the Court-house and that there should be no demonstration of any kind whatsoever. There were, therefore, in the Court-house only a select body of visitors, and the police had an easy time of it, which I could see was duly appreciated by the authorities.

The week before the trial was passed in receiving visitors who were generally permitted to see us without restriction. We were allowed to carry on correspondence so long as it was harmless and submitted to the Superintendent. As we willingly carried out all the Jail regulations, our relations with the Jail officials were smooth and even cordial during the week that we were in Sabarmati. Khan Bahadur Wacha was all attention and politeness, but it was impossible not to notice his timidity in everything he did. He seemed to apologize for his Indian birth and unconsciously to convey that he would have done more for us had he been a European. Being an Indian, even in allowing facilities which the regulations permitted, he was afraid of the Collector and the Inspector-General of Prisons and every official who was at all superior to him. He knew that, if it came to a struggle between himself and the Collector or the Inspector-General of Prisons,

he had nobody to back him up at the Secretariat. The notion of inferiority haunted him at every step. What was true outside was equally true, if not truer, inside the Jail. An Indian official would not assert himself, not because he could not, but because he lived in mortal fear of degradation, if not dismissal. If he was to retain his post and obtain promotion, he must please his superiors even to the point of ringer and even at the sacrifice of principles. The contrast became terrible when we were transferred to Yeravda. The European Superintendent had no fear of the Inspector-General of Prisons. He could claim just as much influence at the Secretariat as the latter. The Collector for him was almost an interloper. His Indian superiors he held cheap and, therefore, he was not afraid to do his duty when he wished and was equally unafraid to neglect it, when discharge of duty was an onerous task. He knew that, as a rule, he was always safe. This sense of safety enables young European officers often to do the right thing in spite of opposition either from the public or from the Government, and he has also often driven coach and six through all regulations, all instructions and defied public opinion.

Of the trial and the sentence I need say nothing as the reader knows all about it, except to acknowledge the courtesy which was extended to us by all the officials including the Judge and the Advocate-General. The wonderful<sup>1</sup> restraint that was observed by the small crowd of people that was seen in and about the Court, and the great affection showed by them can never be effaced from memory. The sentence of six years' simple imprisonment I regarded as light. For, if Section 124 A of the Penal Code did Really constitute [my action] a crime and the Judge administering the laws of the land could not but hold it as a crime. he would be perfectly justified in imposing the highest penalty. The crime was repeatedly and willfully committed, and I can only account for the lightness of the sentence by supposing not that the Judge took pity on me, for I asked for none, but that he could not have approved of Section 124 A. There are many instances of judges having signified their disapproval of particular laws by imposing the minimum sentence, even though the crime denoted by them might have been fully and deliberately committed. He could not very well impose a lighter sentence seeing that the late Lokamanya was sentenced to six years' imprisonment for a similar offense.

The sentence over, we were both taken back to the prison, this

time as fully convicted prisoners, but there was no change in the treatment accorded to us. Some friends were even permitted to accompany us. Leave-taking in the Jail was quite jovial. Mrs. Gandhi and Anasuyabai bore themselves bravely as they parted. Mr. Banker was laughing all the time and I heaved a sigh of relief, thanking God that all was over so peacefully and that I would be able to have some rest and still feel that I was serving the country, if possible more than when I was traveling up and down addressing huge audiences. I wish I could convince the workers that imprisonment of a comrade does not mean so much loss of work for a common cause. If we believe, as we have so often proclaimed we do, that unprovoked suffering is the surest way of remedying a wrong in regard to which the suffering is gone through, surely it follows as a matter of course that imprisonment of a comrade is no loss. Silent suffering undergone with dignity and humility speaks with an unrivalled eloquence. It is solid work because there is no ostentation about it. It is always true because there is no danger of miscalculation. Moreover, if we are true workers, the loss of a fellow-worker increases our zest and, therefore, capacity for work. And so long as we regard anybody as irreplaceable, we have not fitted ourselves for organized work. For organized work means capacity for carrying it on in spite of depletion in the ranks. Therefore, we must rejoice in the unmerited suffering of friends or ourselves and trust that the cause, if it is just, will prosper through such suffering.

*Young India*, 17-4-1924

## 255. 'THE WHISPER OF THE WHEEL'

The following enthusiastic description of the possibilities of the spinning-wheel cannot fail to be of general interest. The writer is a U.P. graduate and is himself a practised spinner. He does not wish his name to be advertised.

I am a simple thing and anybody can understand my mechanism. I can be bought for a rupee or two. I am portable and easily accessible to all. I am much lighter than the grinding-stone, therefore, I am most popular with the fair sex. I am in demand at the time of marriages. My production satisfies the religious want of the Pundits because I am always sacred. I can give bread to the millions of starving villagers of India, can clothe the farmers, can give a livelihood to beggars, can give a dignified profession to the fallen sisters and those whose modesty is otherwise exposed to the assaults of lustful persons. I

am in the habit of demolishing “devils’ workshops” by keeping busy all idle men’s minds, if they care to turn me. I feed the weavers, the carders, the ironsmiths and the carpenters. I can save the heavy drainage of India that has been sapping her very life-blood—I can effect real unity between the different communities of India by making them independent, I can ameliorate the conditions of the untouchables by making it easy to find a market for the yarn produced by them, I can establish real peace in India by teaching its inhabitants self-respect and self-reliance and thus render it absolutely impossible for other nations to come to India with the idea of exploiting her. I can introduce simplicity in life and make the opulent condescend to talk with the mill-hands. I can destroy the pride of the capitalists by abolishing the factory system and thus putting an end to the ever-multiplying miseries of the labourers, and by being a menace to ambition and love of aggrandisement. I am thus a harbinger of peace and restorer of financial health to India and impartial distributor of wealth.

But to school students I am something more: I am an examiner of their abilities, I am a barometer to their nature. Give me to a rash boy and I will tell all at once that he is such, because his yarn will be untwisted and irregular. Place me in the hands of serious boy: I will at once know that he is promising, because his yarn will be regular, and indicative of a balanced hand. I am not merely an examiner ; I am an instructor too. I can train the mind of a boy (if he turns me daily) so well that he will be a good surgeon if he goes to the George Hospital, Lucknow, with a certificate from me. His operations will mostly be successful and his judgment most accurate. I warrant a regular spinner can be a good mathematician because the law governs both the sciences. It would be no exaggeration to say that spinning is practical mathematics. If you, err, your mistakes will at once be detected.

Just as bluntness in the edge of a razor spoils a shave, just as caustic acid [sic] spoils a picture and just as adoration without faith is meaningless, in the same way no amount of coaching is of any avail without concentration which the youths of these days so utterly lack. I am a specialist in training the boys in concentration and I claim to do immense good in this direction to the boy who befriends me.

*Young India*, 17-4-1924

## 256. SCHOOLMASTERS AND LAWYERS

I hope you have by this time been able to consult friends who were led to modify, at Delhi, the Congress resolution regarding the Triple Boycott. What final decision have you come to? Are you going to preach them over again in the same form?

As to the boycott of Councils, I may not say anything; the leaders of



the Swaraj Party might have clearly laid before you facts and arguments. The work they are doing and are likely to do is before you. As to the boycott of schools and colleges, it has, if I may say from my own experience, completely failed. I may refer to my own case. Here there are two full-fledged high schools, attended by more than 500 pupils each, while the National High School has barely 30 boys on the roll. We have tried all possible ways and means for canvassing boys, but have failed. I have been convinced that people are not prepared for this boycott.

As to the third boycott, there were only a very few lawyers who gave up their practice. Now almost all have rejoined. The number of court-going people never diminished. The *Lavad*<sup>1</sup> Courts established by national workers never thrived and have since died. These courts, having had no power to enforce their decisions, and the people being not trained to submit, cannot be expected to attain any palpable success.

Under these circumstances what are we—who boycotted our further education and prospects at the clarion call of the Congress to sacrifice for the sake of the country only one year—to do? We have sacrificed not only one year but three. We established national schools for the people and the people heed them not. The sacrifice of the workers is not appreciated. Are not the national schools with such poor attendance a useless waste of the public money, energy and life? Does it not mean that our efforts and plans are premature? Our sacrifice gives no satisfaction to ourselves too. It is often a hindrance to patriotism or national enthusiasm. Khaddar is dearer than mill-cloth and our means are poor. Though elected delegates to the Congress, we cannot attend or have to refuse the seat, for want of the necessary money required for travelling and other expenses. We have to earn money not for luxury but as a necessity. But our ways are blocked by the Congress.

I have a family to support and a delicate constitution, and hence cannot bear the hardship of village propaganda. The Congress has practically no work at present. What I think is that the Congress should arrange for the maintenance of workers and admit only those whom it can support. It should give permission to all others to follow their own pursuits patriotically and be soldiers of the Militia (irregular army), ready at the country's call whenever required. Such people will enter Government and semi-Government schools and teach their prescribed books and lessons with a patriotic angle of vision. They will join the Bar and show to the people at every step what a waste of time and money the Courts are. They will enter the military and refuse to fire on their own brethren. And so on. I know not what you intend to do after your recovery. In the meanwhile I seek your advice. I think that I am doing no

<sup>1</sup> Arbitration

better service to the people and to the country by remaining the headmaster of the national school here, which is not appreciated and supported by the public. May I complete my law education and join the Bar and do what humble services I can to the Motherland? Will you advise the Congress to remove these boycotts and devise some other ways and means for attaining freedom?

Or are you going to take up these boycotts in right earnest again? May we wait?

PS. It is no question of conscience and religion. I took at Non-co-operation only as a means.

The foregoing letter sums up succinctly the argument advanced by my correspondents and visitors against the boycott of schools and law-courts. As usual the sting is in the tail. The Postscript yields the secret of unbelief in the boycott. One need not regard everything as a matter of conscience or religion to be able to stick to it through thick and thin. Even one's means may be so vital that giving them up may mean death. Lungs are the means whereby we breathe and sustain life. They are not life. But their destruction is destruction of life itself. No one questions that non-co-operation is a means. The question is: Is non-co-operation as conceived in 1920 the only means of reaching our goal? The Congress decided that it was. But the Congress merely represents the opinion of the delegates for the time being. Some of us evidently consider that it was a mistake to think that it was the only means. Some others think that it was one of the means and many more should have been adopted at the same time. Yet others, through they disbelieved in it, adopted it out of regard for the decision of the majority and because they think that the decisions of the Congress have a mandatory character and bind the minority whether in matters of principle or detail. Yet others adhere to the opinion formed by them 1920 that non-co-operation as then conceived is the only means for achieving our goal. I belong to the last category and it will be my humble duty from time to time to show why it is the only means. My correspondent evidently belongs to the opposite school.

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-points and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we would expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests

of a healthy public life and, therefore, fitness for swaraj. If we have no charity and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must therefore always submit to the arbitrament of a third party, i.e, to foreign domination. I invite the reader, then, to share with me the respect that is due to the view set forth by my correspondent and, if he belongs to the correspondent's school of thought, bear with me even though I cannot see eye to eye with him.

In my opinion, the boycott of schools and law-courts has been both a failure and a success. It has been largely, not wholly, a failure in that schools and law-courts have not been effectively or even appreciably deserted. But it has been a success in that the halo surrounding Government schools and law-courts has disappeared. People believe, much more now than they did before, in the necessity of independent national schools and settlement of disputes by panchayats. Lawyers and Government schoolmasters have lost much of the artificial prestige they enjoyed five years ago. I count these as no small gains. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not undervalue the sacrifices and devotion to the country of schoolmasters and lawyers. Dadabhai and Gokhale were school-masters. Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji were lawyers. But I would not have even these distinguished countrymen of ours to claim the exclusive monopoly of wisdom or ability to guide. The spinner, the weaver, the farmer, the artisan, the trader have just as much right to shape the destiny of the country as the members of the so-called liberal professions. As the latter have represented the arm of authority, we have been awed by them and to that extent they have accustomed us to think that we can satisfy our wants only through the Government instead of teaching us that the Government is a creation of the people and merely an instrument for giving effect to their will. This false prestige of privileged classes has suffered a shock from which I hope it will never recover.

That national schools and panchayats have not flourished, as they might have, is due to a variety of causes, some avoidable and others unavoidable. We have been new to the work and therefore we have not know how to go about it. For me, therefore, the poverty of results is not a cause for disappointment but for greater and more enlightened effort. Our failures we can convert into so many steps to success.

The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it

trying to take to the village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live. Now we might have to die so that they may live. The difference will be fundamental. The former have died unknowingly and involuntarily. Their enforced sacrifice has degraded us. If now we die knowingly and willingly, our sacrifice will ennoble us and the whole nation. Let us not flinch from the necessary sacrifice, if we will live as an independent, self-respecting nation.

The difficulty with the non-co-operating lawyers is greater still. They have unfortunately been used to a highly artificial life totally out of harmony with their national surroundings. I regard it as a crime that any lawyer or doctor should charge or get, say Rs. 1,000 per day or for that matter even Rs. 100 per day. It is no answer to the indictment that it is the monied men who pay and there can be no harm, but it may be all to the good if lawyers take money from the rich people and use a part for the public good. If the profession was disinterested and charged only enough for maintenance, the monied men would also have to revise their budget. As it is, we seem to be moving in a vicious circle.

If under swaraj we shall have to make the town life correspond to the village life, we shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life. The beginning has to be made now. Why should lawyers feel so utterly helpless as they seem to do now? Is starvation the only alternative if they cannot resume practice? Is it impossible for a resourceful lawyer to turn his attention to weaving or any other honourable toil?

It is difficult for me to advise non-co-operating lawyers and schoolmasters. If they believe in the boycott, they should face all difficulties and continue the boycott. If they do not believe in it, they can, without any disgrace attaching to their action, rejoin the profession. As I do not believe in the mandate theory, I do not consider it to be obligatory on any schoolmaster or lawyer to refrain from rejoining Government schools or law-courts because of the continuance of the boycott resolution. I would still advocate the

<sup>1</sup> For Gandhiji's reply to Bhagwandas's criticism of these views, "Note on Bhagwandas' Letter", 8-5-1924.

retention of the boycott, to be worked out not by propaganda for emptying Government schools and courts (that was done and had to be done during 1920 and 1921), but by the constructive method of establishing and popularizing national schools and panchayats.

*Young India*, 17-4-1924

## 257. NOTES

### MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI'S ILLNESS

The readers of *Young India* will be sorry to learn that Maulana Shaukat Ali. who has been ailing for some time and is being treated by Dr. Ansari under his own roof, is not making such progress as was at one time expected. Both Maulana Mahomed Ali and Dr. Ansari say in their letters just received that the patient is feeling very weak and requires most careful nursing. I invite the readers to join me in the prayer that our distinguished countryman may soon be restored to complete health.

### TALKS WITH LEADERS

Statements have appeared in the Press about the talks between the Swarajist leaders and myself. I ask the readers to discount them as altogether premature. No final conclusions have been reached. Mr. C. R. Das has not even been able to attend these talks and, as he has been asked by his medical advisers to take prolonged rest, he may not be able to come at all. In no case is it possible to make any statement before the views of Mr. Das and other friends are known.

I understand that the workers are vegetating because of the suspense caused by the talks and the confusion caused by unauthorized journalistic ventures. I would ask the workers not to worry over the result of the talks. I can give them my assurance that there is not the slightest likelihood of any change being advocated by me in the constructive programme. Anyone, therefore, suspending his activity in that direction will make a grievous blunder and retard the progress of the constructive work which needs all the time of all the workers that can be got together for the work.

### FOR WORKERS

A friend has suggested that I should convene a meeting of workers so as to confer with them even as I am conferring with the leaders. At one time I thought it was a good plan, but I see that it is

not feasible. But what has finally decided me against such a conference is my own physical condition. I can hardly bear the strain of a prolonged sitting at an early date. Any such conference to be useful must be called as soon as possible and not later than the end of this month. But I see that I shall not be equal to the task by that time. And, after all, what will such a conference do? I am gathering all the information I can. I shall soon reach conclusions on the vexed questions of the day. Whatever weight may attach to my opinion, it must remain the opinion of an individual and therefore have no authority. The only authoritative opinion for Congressmen can be that of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee in the absence of the whole Congress. My tentative opinions may form a fit subject for discussion when the All-India Congress Committee meets. The Working Committee meets too early for me and in no case can it lay down any new policy or programme without reference to the A.I.C.C.

Whilst, therefore, there need be no conference of workers, if they will give me as briefly as possible their opinion on all the questions that may be agitating them, it will be of the greatest assistance to me in forming my own judgment. Any such communications should reach me before the end of this month and addressed Post Andheri, Bombay.

#### THE GURDWARA MOVEMENT

Another Jatha of 500 has surrendered peacefully when it was intercepted in its progress to the Gangsar Gurdwara and placed under arrest by the Nabha authorities. If we had not become used to such arrests and the like, they would create a sensation in the country. Now they have become ordinary occurrences and excite little curiosity and less surprise or pain. Their moral value increases in the same ratio as popular interest in them seems to have died. These arrests, when they cease to be sensational, also cease to afford intoxication. People who court arrest in the absence of excitement allow themselves to be arrested because of their unquenchable faith in silent but certain efficacy of suffering undergone without resentment and in a just cause. the Sikhs have been conducting the Gurdwara movement by the satyagraha method now for the last four years. Their zeal is apparently undiminished in spite of the fact that most of their leaders are in jail. Their suffering has been intense. They have put up with beating, they have stood without retaliation shower of bullets and

hundreds have been imprisoned. Victory therefore is a matter only of time. An offensive has been threatened on behalf of the Government. They are imprisoning innocent men who are marching in pursuit of a religious duty. They have declared their associations illegal. One wonders what further steps they can take to frighten the brave Sikhs. The latter's answer to any offensive on the part of the Government is not difficult to guess. They will meet each progressive step in repression with equally progressive determination to do or die.

#### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

Vykom, of which till lately no one outside Travancore, at most the Madras Presidency, knew anything, has suddenly leapt to fame because it has become the seat of satyagraha. The Press contains bulletins of the daily progress of the movement from day to day. It has been undertaken in behalf of the untouchables of Travancore. The movement has given us another word to describe the condition of the suppressed classes. It is unapproachability. These poor countrymen of ours may not only not touch any other caste Hindus, but they may not even approach them within a stated distance. The leaders of the movement, with a view to remedying the evil, have taken up only a fragment of the evil, hoping no doubt that, if they deal with it successfully, they will have dealt it a death-blow at least in that part of India in which direct action is now going on. In the prosecution of the campaign some of the staunchest workers of Malabar have been imprisoned, including my predecessor, George Joseph.

As most of the leaders have been imprisoned, an appeal has been made to the leaders all over India to come to the rescue. Whether such an appeal can or should be met or not need not be considered for the moment, as Madras seems to be responding whole-heartedly. There can now be no receding. The struggle may last long if orthodox Hindu opinion is actively hostile to the movement. The satyagrahis are certain to break down the wall of prejudice no matter how strong and solid it may be if they continue firm but humble, truthful and non-violent. They must have faith enough in these qualities to know that they will melt the stoniest hearts.

#### HOW TO DO IT

Mr. Andrews has endeavoured to answer the query of the secretary of a Bengal Sevak Sangh as to how to combat the drink

evil<sup>1</sup>. His answer is to follow in the footsteps of Pussyfoot Johnson. Whilst he was trying to convert certain English students, he was stoned. The throw resulted ultimately in the loss of one eye. He pardoned the offenders, would not prosecute them and would not take compensation offered by the British Government. That was an instance of non-violence in thought, word and deed. If such non-violence can be insured here, I would not hesitate to revive the idea of picketing liquor shops again. But we stand discredited. In many places, our picketing in 1921 was far from non-violent. The political idea of embarrassing the Government was predominant with us, that of reforming the drunkard was a very secondary consideration. In the struggle of non-co-operation politics are made to subserve the moral end. If we can reform the drunkard, we reform also the administration and the administrators. Whereas, if we suppress the drunkard by force, we may deprive the Government of the liquor or the drug revenue for a time, but in the end the suppressed drinker or smoker will raise his head and the Government will raise an increased revenue. Not until we have men and women enough who would carry on picketing for the love of the drunkard even at the risk of their lives, can we dream of reviving picketing. I am afraid we ill deserve the praise given to us by Dr. Johnson. I was about to expunge the passage in question from Mr. Andrews's article before posting it. But I have retained it to remind us of our duty and spur us to effort enough to deserve such praise.

#### KHADDAR AND PURITY

A friend, in a letter enclosing a Rs. 10 note, writes:

The donning of khaddar without the qualities of sincerity, purity, self-conquest, etc., amounts to a sacrilege, and he adds that as he does not possess these qualities in their fullness, he has not the courage to wear khaddar garments. I wish it were possible to associate all these qualities with khaddar garments. But in that case very few of us will be able to use khaddar at all. The writer has needlessly exaggerated the merits of khaddar. Its one great merit is that it solves, as nothing else can, the economic problem of India and removes starvation. That alone must be all-sufficing to induce high and low to wear and use hand-spun khaddar to the exclusion of every other cloth. We want all, irrespective of their character, to wear khaddar. Scoundrels, drunkards, the very scum of the land, must clothe and feed themselves. I would not hesitate to urge them to wear khaddar

<sup>1</sup> In an article under the title "The Struggle against Alcohol".



even though I cannot induce them to change their mode of inner life. We must cease to attribute to khaddar virtues which it cannot carry.

#### UNREPENTENT

A correspondent has written a furiously earnest letter for publication if I thought it necessary. With due respect to the correspondent, I think it unnecessary to publish the letter. But I am prepared to let the reader guess what it is all likely to be from the following extract:

If you will not condemn the past and present actions of the Swaraj Party in the strongest terms, then you shall fail in your duty towards Truth and thus towards God. If you will not condemn them . . . then it will mean a death-blow to your movement itself . . . Pray do not create a second Bardoli.

I am giving the above extract in order that I may prepare the ground for my fall and thus break its force somewhat. Whatever may be the nature of the statement. I may make regarding the Council-entry, I know this much that I am not going to condemn the Swarjists in any manner whatsoever. I may express my differences in the strongest language, but I cannot condemn them, because they may hold different views from mine. They and their views are at least as much entitled to a respectful hearing as mine or those of the tallest among us. There is no such thing as my movement. But in so far as any movement may be called mine, there is no danger of its failure, so long as I do not fail. Whilst, therefore, I appreciate my correspondent's anxiety for me, I would like him to feel at ease on my score. For, so far as I can foresee, there is not much danger of proving a traitor to myself. Whilst there is yet time, I had better make another confession. I am so proud of my performance at Bardoli that there is every prospect of my repeating it. That clean confession made at a most critical moment did me a world of good. It purified me and I verily believe that it did as much good to the cause. That confession and retracing of our steps gave an object-lesson in non-violence as nothing else could have. I am, therefore, likely to repeat Bardoli as often as the occasion arises and that I shall do even at the risk of finding myself in a minority of one. I should be an unfit servant of nation if I hesitate to tell the truth and do it for fear of losing popularity. What will it be worth when I have lost the only thing for which I live?

*Young India*, 17-4-1924

## 258. MESSAGE TO SUBURBAN DISTRICT CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY,  
[April 18, 1924]

Mahatma Gandhi had sent a message that owing to his illness he was unable to take any part in their Conference, but he fully realized their great love for him. He was sure God would make their Conference a success. But what next? Most important of all their resolutions was the one about khadi, because in it women, men, children, old men, the educated and uneducated, co-operators and non-co-operators could equally take whatever part they liked. They had money and sense. Numerically they were few. Did they not think they could make them all lovers of khadi? If they could not achieve this much in their small community, where all circumstances were favorable to them, then a doubt would arise whether they were fitted to undertake even bigger tasks. He was sure that they would all come to a united resolve to see this work to a successful end.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23-4-1924*

## 259. LETTER TO COL. F. MELL

POST ANDHERI,  
*April 18, 1924*

DEAR COL. MELL,

There is a prisoner in the Sabarmati Central Jail undergoing two years' rigorous imprisonment. For want of a better term he may be described as a political prisoner. His name is Mr. Kalyanji Vithalbhai Mehta. He is a co-worker of mine and I know him exceedingly well. I understand that whereas on admission his weight was 102, it is now 92, that at one time milk formed an item in his dietary, but for some cause not known to my informant, he has been deprived of milk. My informant tells me that the prisoner has been deprived also of writing materials, and that although he is able to weave only 12 yards of strapping, the authorities insist upon his finishing 20 yards. I am loath to publish this information before bringing it to your notice. At first I thought I would write to the Superintendent directly, but finding that he would himself have to refer to you before replying to my letter, I have ventured to send this directly to you, and I shall be obliged if

<sup>1</sup> The Conference, held at Santa Cruz on Friday afternoon, was presided over by Darbar Gopaldas of Duassa.

you will kindly let me know whether the information given to me is correct, and if it is not, what the true facts are.<sup>1</sup>

*I am,  
Yours truly,*

COL. F. MELL, C .I. E., ETC.  
INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS  
POONA

From a photostat: S.N. 8742

*260. TELEGRAM TO VAIKOM SATYAGRAHIS<sup>2</sup>*

[ANDHERI,  
*April 19, 1924*]

BEING OVERWHELMED WITH WORK UNABLE WRITE.  
YOU ARE DOING SPLENDIDLY. CONTINUE AS YOU HAVE  
BEGUN.

*The Hindu, 24-4-1924*

*261. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA <sup>3</sup>*

[BOMBAY,  
On or after *April 19, 1924*]

HOPE YOU ARE IMPROVING. PLEASE WIRE CONDITION.  
DO PLEASE TAKE FULL REST BEFORE MOVING.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8744

<sup>1</sup> Col. Mell replied to this letter on April 21 and again on May 1, furnishing details about Kalyanji's health and diet, denying that he was deprived of writing materials or made to do hard labour.

<sup>2</sup> K. N. Namboodripad, in a letter of April 23, furnishing Gandhiji with details of developments at Vaikom and forwarding a plan of the temple and its prohibited approach roads—"a mere glance of which will reveal the inhumanity of this evil custom"—acknowledged a telegram from Gandhiji dated April 19.

<sup>3</sup> This was in reply to Malaviya's telegram of April 19, 1924, which read: "Sorry health does not permit going Bombay another week."

## 262. MY NOTES

### NON-VIOLENCE IN SILK

A friend points out that, in the process of silk-production, innumerable silk-worms are destroyed, and asks how men and women who believe in non-violence can use it. If they cannot, he adds, the Gujarat Khadi Pracharak Mandal certainly should not undertake to popularize silk.

Here it is necessary to understand what is meant by having faith in non-violence. If a person's acceptance of non-violence is restricted to the sphere of Congress work, there can be no objection to his wearing silk, since his pledge of non-violence has reference only to the Non-co-operation movement. But those whose acceptance of non-violence is absolute cannot be too careful in their efforts to refrain from all violence. Since the world in which we live is full of violence and we see violence at every step, the believer in absolute non-violence has necessarily to live with the utmost restraints. Such a person should give up everything he can and also keep in mind that what we need to get rid of first are desire and anger. There may be greater violence in making a caustic remark than in wearing silk. Only he who has vowed to subdue his senses and has achieved some measure of success in his effort may concern himself with such subtle points. Austerity in dress and food is of value only if it is a sign of inner discipline, otherwise it is likely to be insincere. If my view is correct, there is no taint of violence in the sale of silk by the Gujarat Khadi Pracharak Mandal.

Considering the matter from the point of view of non-co-operation, we have no business to concern ourselves with selling silk. If any organization connected with the Congress sells silk, its activity can perhaps be defended on the ground that it does so in order to popularize khadi. I personally see no necessity for selling silk to make khadi popular. One can, however, understand and condone the use of silk borders to beautify khadi.

### SWADESHI SILK

Besides, there is very little silk made in the country. Silk thread is mostly imported. It is true that some silk thread is produced in Bangalore and a few other places, but the quantity is so small as to be negligible. Moreover, the purpose for which khadi should be

popularized is not served by popularizing silk. The spread of khadi is a moral duty because people in the country depend upon spinning for eking out a livelihood. So long as we are unable to solve the problem of our daily bread, we cannot hope to follow dharma nor to win swaraj. Where only a few thousand can earn their living by producing silk, crores can do so by spinning cotton and crores starve for want of opportunity to spin. If the silk industry went out of existence, these crores or thousands would not starve.

#### MEANING OF KHADI

A friend wants to know the meaning of khadi. His question is whether hand-woven *atlas*<sup>1</sup> made from hand-spun silk thread can be regarded as khadi. Khadi can and should have only one meaning, viz., hand-woven cloth made from hand-spun thread. Silk-thread, jute fibre and wool woven in this manner may be called, if we like, silk, jute and woollen khadi, respectively. But it would be ridiculous for anyone dressed in khadi silk to claim that he was encouraging khadi. Of course, it must be admitted that Indian silk is preferable to foreign silk. But its use cannot serve the purpose which khadi does and may even harm its cause.

#### ABOUT "ANTYAJAS"

Hindu society is still not free from the sin of untouchability; on the contrary, we find that all over the country people are clinging to narrow ideas. In Vykom people have gone to the extreme in this matter. But one need not go so far away from Gujarat. Ventured to do what I could to resolve the crisis which had arisen in the National School at Vile Parle. The teachers of that school want *Antyaja* children to be admitted and many members of the School committee are also in favour of the idea. There has been considerable progress in Vile Parle in this matter. *Antyaja* friends have now asked for a separate school. In these circumstances, I offered the advice that, if the admission of *Antyaja* children just now endangered the very existence of the school, a separate school for them should be established.

Misunderstanding the purpose of this suggestion, which was made in the context of, and to meet, a particular situation, managers of certain schools in Gujarat interpret it to mean that, wherever there are national schools, separate institutions should be opened for *Antyajias*. If their suggestion is acted upon, I believe both types of schools will

<sup>1</sup> A kind of silken cloth

be doomed, mainly because we cannot afford the necessary expenditure. Moreover, once we relax a principle, it will be undermined altogether and the bolt of untouchability will remain. The advice given in special circumstances in Vile Parle cannot be followed elsewhere. As a matter of fact, it is on account of its failing in this matter that the Vile Parle school has not been affiliated to the Vidyapith.<sup>1</sup> The teachers and the members of the Committee are striving hard to make it fit for affiliation. The step of establishing a separate school is a part of these efforts. It is thus clear that this instance cannot be a precedent for schools which are already affiliated to the Vidyapith.

#### CONTRIBUTION BY "ANTYAJA" FRIENDS

Some *Antyaja* friends in Botad have sent me a sum of Rs. 36. Those who have sent this money are illiterate people. They do not read *Navajivan*, but hear it read out to them. I am being pressed to publish the names of these donors and I could not bring myself to refuse. The argument is that, unless the names are published in *Navajivan*, these illiterate friends will not know whether I have received their contribution. Accepting this argument as having some substance in it, I promised to publish the names. I hope, however, that I shall not be put under pressure to publish names of any others who may wish to send me contributions. Rather than take up the space in *Navajivan* with acknowledgments of donations, it would be better to close down the paper altogether. The right thing to do is not to hand over a contribution to a person whom one does not trust. Nor should it be given to anyone who happens to come along. We should give our contribution only to persons who are known to us and whom we can trust. We would not then care whether or not our names were published. To save space, I am leaving out the fathers' names from the list sent to me. When more than one donor has the same name, the father's name has been inserted. The following have contributed one rupee each.<sup>2</sup>

The following have paid 8 annas each:<sup>3</sup>

The following have paid 4 annas each:<sup>4</sup>

Vagha Ramjibhai has contributed Rs. 2 and Dudhabhai Malji

<sup>1</sup> The Senate of this University had passed a resolution on October 31, 1920, to the effect that untouchables could not be excluded from any school approved by the University.

<sup>2</sup> The names of contributors which follow are not reproduced here.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

Rs. 10. I prize these gifts from poor men. The amount will be used exclusively for the benefit of *Antyajas*.

#### MEANING OF ERADICATING UNTOUCHABILITY

I observe that questions are still asked about issues which I thought had been made sufficiently plain. According to the Congress resolution and my personal opinion as well, removal of untouchability can have only one meaning. That is that, we Hindus, must rid ourselves of the sin of untouchability. The four *Varnas*<sup>1</sup> do not regard one another's touch as defiling or sinful. We should treat *Antyajas* in the same way. It has been repeatedly stressed that the resolution has no other implication. As there is no inter-dining or intermarriage among other communities, so also we are not required by the Resolution to have such relations with *Antyajas*. There can be no compulsion in these matters. But the conduct of the person who objects to physical contact as such with another person or looks upon someone as untouchable merely because he is born in a certain community, violates Nature's law, is repugnant to the spirit of compassion and to shastra in the true sense of the word. To mix up the efforts being made to end this sinful practice with inter-dining and intermarriage is to obstruct the progress of the atonement which it is essential for us to go through. The evil of untouchability has struck such deep roots among us that we do not recognize it as evil. One would actually think that it was being carefully preserved as an ornament to the Hindu community. When well-wishers of the community find it difficult to end this evil, practical men would not introduce further difficulties and obstruct the progress of the reform.

Inter-dining and intermarriage are issues relating to reform of the cast system. Those who believe that caste should be abolished are working to bring about these reforms. But it should be clearly realized that their efforts are entirely distinct from, and have nothing whatever to do with, the eradication of untouchability. Those who wish to abolish caste also help in eradicating untouchability, and that is only right. If they understand, however, that the reforms of inter-dining and intermarriage are distinct from efforts to abolish untouchability, they will be able to judge their relative importance on merit.

What, then, is meant by the eradication of untouchability? I thought this was already clear. It means that the so-called untou-

<sup>1</sup> Traditional divisions of Hindu society according to occupations.

chables should be as free as members of other communities to move about as they please, should be allowed to join schools and enter temples are open to others and to draw water from the wells from which the rest draw it.

The argument that the untouchables are dirty in their ways and follow some unclean occupation is, to my mind, the result of ignorance. There are others dirtier than the untouchables, yet they draw water from the public wells. A nursing mother does unclean work, and so does a doctor, but we honour both. If it is said that they wash themselves after they have done their work, so do many untouchables before they go to a well to fetch water. If, however, they do not keep themselves clean, the fault is ours. To despise them, to compel them to live at a distance from the village, to make it impossible or difficult for them to gain access to the means of keeping themselves clean and then to reproach them for being unclean is the height of injustice. It is our sacred duty to help them to shake off the defects which have grown upon them owing to our negligence and our tyranny. To refuse to do this and yet to hope for India's freedom is like turning one's back towards the sun and yet hoping to get a glimpse of it.

#### BREACH OF PROMISE IN JHARIA

When I went to Jharia<sup>1</sup>, accompanied by Maulana Mahomed Ali, many persons offered big sums as contribution to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. We were greatly pleased to see that Marwaris and Gujaratis living in Bihar had promised handsome contributions for the benefit of that province. They had promised that the contributions would be paid soon. Three years have passed since the promise was made. A letter has now been received from Jharia to say that many Kutchi mine-owners have not yet paid the amounts promised. I am sure everyone will be pained by this. The importance of keeping a promise is universally acclaimed in the Shastras. Progress is impossible if promises are broken every time. Families, and even entire nations, have perished as a consequence of not keeping a promise. From the ethical point of view, a one-sided promise is superior to a reciprocal one and an oral promise to a written undertaking. The promises given by these friends were voluntary and their keeping them depends solely on their own integrity. I appeal to them to honour their word. If

<sup>1</sup> On February 5, 1921



they understand the value of a promise, they will offer twice the normal interest on the sums in question.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-4-1924

### 263. *KABULIS' TERROR*

Every day in the newspapers we come across reports of the Kabulis<sup>1</sup> terrorizing people. We seem to have made up our minds that we have only one remedy against this harassment. If the Government does not protect us, we feel helpless.

Non-co-operators have voluntarily forsaken this avenue of redress. If a non-co-operator asks for the Government's help, his non-co-operation will be compromised, and moreover he will feel ashamed to ask for such help. But, even for those who co-operate, it is not right to beg for help from the Government. If they depend all the time on the Government to help them, there would be no Government or it would become a total dictatorship. In no other part of the world do people rely exclusively on their Government; they act on their own, as if they themselves were the authorities, to defend themselves and their honour.

What methods, then, are open to both co-operators and non-co-operators for protecting themselves from the terror of the Kabulis without appealing to the Government ?

One is the commonly accepted method of fighting.

The other is the method of satyagraha.

People certainly have the right to resort to the first method. This is also their duty. If they cannot defend themselves, they will prove themselves unmanly. Even under swaraj, the Government will not be there all the time to protect the people. A Government is equipped to face serious emergencies, but can any government look after all people living in isolated spots? The very policy adopted by the present Government is such as to make it incapable of protecting the people against dangers like this terror of the Kabulis. In following that policy, it goes almost to the length of not permitting us to fight among ourselves lest we should cease to be its petty agents. It considers internal and external security of the country necessary for

<sup>1</sup> Tribesmen, hailing from the borderland between India and Afghanistan, living as petty traders or usurers.

the protection of British commercial interests and is always ready to ensure it to the extent required by these. I do not suggest, or want people to believe, that the Government is not interested in doing anything more than this to protect the people. But its primary concern is not this and, therefore, it is not always equipped for this task. If it decides to equip itself so, it will spend, will indeed be obliged to spend, more than it does at present in the name of defence and security. As it is, we find the expenses on the gate-keeper heavier than on domestic requirements. If, now, the Government were to equip itself fully to rid the country of dangers like the Kabulis' terror, the gate-keeper would certainly have a happy time of it, but the householder would simply shiver in terror inside the house. It is, therefore, preferable that we on our own take measures to protect ourselves against such dangers. True, we are handicapped for want of arms, but more than arms what is needed is courage. What is the use of a gun in the hand of a coward? It will in all probability be used against him. A brave man unarmed will overcome an armed coward and snatch away the latter's gun before he can use it. If stout-hearted men in every town or village come forward to protect the people at any cost to themselves, the harassment by the Kabulis will soon be curbed. It needs to be mentioned here that the pledge of non-violent non-co-operation does not forbid self-defence in this manner.

Would I, then, help such an effort? If asked this question, I would have to reply in the negative. I think I have courage enough. Without it one cannot be a satyagrahi. A coward cannot adopt satyagraha as his dharma. That he may do so out of fear is another matter. But I cannot ride two horses at a time. Ever advancing on the path of satyagraha, I wish to become an image of Truth, wish my whole being to be filled with Truth. I have, therefore, deliberately renounced the path of living by killing others. I wish to learn and act upon, the *mantra* of dying to live. I should like to live only through the world's love. Anyone who regards me as his enemy may kill my body this very moment. It is ever my prayer that, even at such a moment, there should be nothing but love in my heart. Following this path that I do, I cannot help, do not wish to help, any effort of self-defence through using force.

Thus, for me and for others like me, only the second method remains. This method does not require large numbers. It does not permit mass satyagraha. The Shastras promise that, if there is even one

self-controlled person among us, he can touch even a Kabuli's heart. A true Muslim fakir can do this with ease, but it is not impossible for a Hindu sannyasi, either, to succeed. The principle of satyagraha recognizes no distinctions of community or creed. In the ultimate perfection of satyagraha, even speech is superfluous. The heart goes on doing its work then.

What was accomplished in Gujarat by one person, Sahajanand<sup>1</sup>, could not be accomplished by the power of the State. What was achieved by Chaitanya<sup>2</sup> in Bengal has not been possible till now, and will never be possible, for the Government to achieve. The very presence of Chaitanya had a power under the effect of which dacoits and robbers changed their ways. There have been many such examples of Muslim fakirs and Hindu sannyasis in our country. The power of Abdul Kadar Jilani's truthfulness made dacoits return what they had seized from him and give up their criminal ways. If there are any fearless and self-controlled men among the mendicants and ascetics of Gujarat, they can easily save the people from this terror of the Kabulis. The Age of Sahajanand has not come to an end. It is only devotion and self-control like his that are wanted. In these days, even a little less of devotion and self-control will pay, for a patient responds to even a small dose of a medicine which he has never had before.

Of course, some people are bound to comment: "Why not yourself be what you advise others to be? The purpose will be served if you become an ascetic yourself." This, too, is right. If people do not understand my excuse, I cannot explain it by putting it in words. Nor is this article addressed to those who are likely to ask this question. May it not be that I do not have the strength of heart to act upon what my intellect tells me is entirely possible? I claim no monopoly of such strength. There are likely to be many in Gujarat with much greater strength of heart than I possess. My appeal is addressed to them.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> Swami Sahajanand (1781-1830); founder of the Swaminaryana sect

<sup>2</sup> Sixteenth-century Hindu religious reformer who taught that caste was subordinate to faith in Lord Krishna

<sup>3</sup> Sixteenth-century Hindu religious reformer who taught that caste was subordinate to faith in Lord Krishna

## 264. MY FOLLOWERS

A friend has sent me a report of a meeting in which he says :<sup>1</sup>

Neither the person who writes about this incident nor the gentleman who made the speech realizes that I have only one follower and that is myself. It is difficult enough to control one; why, then, think of having more? This follower of mine sometimes plays such antics that I am quite unnerved. But my principles are so liberal that, taking compassion on him, I let him off every time and coax him to go forward. My efforts are even rewarded with some measure of success. But until I achieve complete success, what is the use of collecting more followers? I do not expect perfection from the addition of one imperfection to another. When I have made myself a perfect disciple, I shall not be ashamed or afraid to invite the whole world to follow me and the world too will willingly do so. At present, I am only in search of co-workers in my experiments. They and I are known as satyagrahis. I am a conscientious follower of Truth, and I have hope and faith that God will give me the strength to pass Truth's ultimate test. I am no paragon of Truth. For the present, that is a state as unapproachable for me as the top of the Dhavalgiri. To reach it is by no means easy. Any success which can be set down to my credit should be regarded as success on the way. Such success sustains a satyagrahi and inspires him with hope. When he has attained to perfection in Truth, he will be enthroned in the hearts of crores. I have no doubt of this.

If, therefore, the Chairman of the meeting (referred to in the report) joins me as a co-worker, I shall be completely satisfied. This gentleman has taken a great responsibility upon himself. I have briefly suggested in an article<sup>2</sup> on caste reform, last week the qualifications required of one who would offer satyagraha. I would suggest that the Chairman and others ponder on what I have said.

Satyagraha is an immutable law. We are now applying it to a new field. Till now, its application has been confined to individual family relationships. We have enlarged the scope of its application and have also moved from the individual to the mass. I have realized from numerous experiments that its extension in both respects is possible.

<sup>1</sup> Not given here. The report mentions a statement made by the Chairman that a certain respectable gentleman almost compelled him to become Gandhiji's follower.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Satyagraha and Caste Reform", 13-4-1924.

But, on each occasion, the leader more or less possessed the qualifications described in the last issue and the soldiers were sincere, and thus the conditions relating to them were fulfilled. Our experience in Bardoli taught us that, even with an able leader, only failure could result if the soldiers were not sincere. At Borsad, we witnessed a combination of able leadership and sincere following.<sup>1</sup> The mistaken notion that, on every occasion satyagraha, I must either lead or at least be present in person to give my advice, was effectively dispelled. It must never be forgotten that there has to be a combination of three factors for a successful satyagraha campaign—an able and gifted leader, sincere followers and a pure aim.

The observations of the Chairman on this occasion referred to the proposed satyagraha in an Indian State. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the necessity of resorting to satyagraha in the States. Rajput agriculturists of Bijolia in Udaipur State started satyagraha and won complete victory. A satyagraha campaign is in progress at present at Vykom in Travancore State. In neither instance does the Congress come into the picture, and rightly so. It is, I believe, an accepted principle that the Congress should not conduct or advise a satyagraha campaign in Indian States. This is only correct. The aim of the Congress is swaraj for British India. If, therefore, it associates itself with satyagraha in other areas, it would be transgressing its self-imposed limits. When the Congress has won its goal, the problem of the States will have been automatically solved. On the other hand, if people win swaraj in any Indian State, this will have little effect on British India. Hence, every person working in Indian States should be clear in his mind that no help can be expected from the Congress in the satyagraha campaigns in Indian States.

This restriction does not, however, prevent individual members of the Congress from taking part in such campaigns. Various activities are being carried on at present outside the Congress, and its members give their services to them. The other rule that applies to all voluntary workers also applies to members of the Congress. It is that a Congress worker must not take up any new task to the detriment of the work he is doing for it. It has become a tradition in our country for one person to take upon himself more tasks than he can manage, with the result that all the tasks suffer more or less.

There is, in movements like this, a serious danger that leaders, in

<sup>1</sup> During the satyagraha campaign of 1923-24

their zeal and enthusiasm, may throw themselves into them without due reflection, and then lose heart and give up the struggle when they do not get enough workers. Before starting any movement, it is essential to assess the extent of the support likely to be extended by the people. The enthusiasm of a handful of youths is not sufficient to sustain a big campaign. Where the people are not ready, it is harmful from every point of view to start any movement on their behalf. Anyone who is so moved may light a fire and purify himself by sacrificing himself in it. He must feel neither anger nor hatred. He will immolate himself in this manner for the joy of doing so and not with any philanthropic motives. He would be miserable if he did not throw himself into such a fire. Such sacrifices also are needed, and every person has a right to sacrifice himself. Many great achievements in this world have been the result of such individual sacrifices.

But where mass satyagraha is concerned, individual zeal must be effectively restrained. On such occasions, people need enthusiasm, patience and the strength to suffer. They will fail if they are enthusiastic but lose heart when success is not easily forthcoming. If they do not have the strength to suffer, they will get exhausted when the authorities employ more repression than they had expected. Leaders, therefore, should consider all these points before planning a struggle.

There is one other matter that must also be kept in mind. There is a common tendency to assume that the authorities will surely not go beyond a certain limit. But there is no basis for such an assumption. For the authorities it is simply their duty to suppress opposition. When they cannot concede the people's demands, they regard it as their job to put down the people by every possible means. It is sheer naivete to imagine that they will refrain, out of kindness, from harassing the people too much. It was because of such naivete that the satyagrahis in Vytom believed that the Raja of Travancore would not arrest their leader. Why should the Raja not arrest him? Does the Raja want to assist satyagraha? If a movement can be suppressed by arresting its leader and if it is right to suppress it, it is perfectly right to arrest the leader at the very start. Then the poor followers will be spared suffering. If they are strong enough to take the place of the leader, they will welcome his imprisonment. If the authorities do not arrest the leader, it is in the belief that doing so would only strengthen the movement. One should, therefore, start a movement with a clear realization that the Raja will resort to the severest measures to suppress the movement.

If all these points are carefully considered and we can be confident of the foregoing conditions being fulfilled, satyagraha can be employed in any circumstances and the result will always be good.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-4-1924

## 265. COW-PROTECTION

The issue of cow-protection is intimately connected with the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. But we will not consider it today from this point of view. There is much that I want to write about Hindu-Muslim unity and its bearing on the issue of cow-protection. But that can wait. Nor will we consider the question from the religious point of view. We shall discuss it exclusively from the economic standpoint.

I wish only to place before my readers some of my experiences during my stay here in the quiet of Juhu and the old ideas of mine that they revived. I have invited some persons who live with me or have been brought up by me or have been close to me, persons who have been ill for some time, to share with me the benefits of change of air. Their diet is mainly cow's milk. We found it rather difficult to obtain it here. There are in the vicinity three suburbs of Bombay, viz., Vile Parle, Andheri and Santa Cruz. Cow's milk was very difficult to obtain from any of these places. Buffalo's milk was plentiful. But even that could be had without adulteration only because of friends in the neighbourhood who are solicitous about my needs. Otherwise, pure milk of even buffaloes would be hard to come by. Ultimately, through God's grace and the kindness of friends, I could even get cow's milk. My friends tell me that they send me what they can spare, but I fear that I am, in fact, depriving them of what they need. Not everyone, however, may be as fortunate as I am. Though I persuade myself that I live like a beggar, there is no convenience that I do not enjoy. How far I deserve the unbounded love of my friends will only be known if some person, in his kindness, makes up an honest account after my death.

But this non-availability of cow's milk has again set me thinking. In India, a country in which live countless people whose religion enjoins love for all living creatures, where there are crores of zealous Hindus who venerate the cow as mother, how is it that it is

only here in India that cows are in a wretched condition, that their milk is scarce, that such milk as is available is adulterated, and that milk of any sort is beyond the reach of the poor? For this, neither the Muslims nor British Rule can be blamed. If anyone is at fault, it is the Hindus, and even their indifference is not deliberate but the result of ignorance.

There are *goshalas* in every part of the country and they are all in a pitiable state. Here, too, the cause is simple inefficiency. Enormous sums are spent on these *goshalas* or *pinjrapoles*<sup>1</sup>. Some people say that this stream is also drying up. Be it so. I am convinced nonetheless that, if these institutions are established on a sound footing, devoted Hindus will pour out money to help them. I am sure that the task is not impossible.

*Pinjrapoles* should be located on extensive grounds outside the city. They should house not only aged animals but milch cattle as well, so that pure milk needed by the city could be supplied from them. Many people who do not know me have often misrepresented me, and amused me too, by saying that I am against machines. I promise not to raise my “Mahatma’s” voice against any machines that may be required for these milk centres. I will be, on the contrary, ready to lend them my humble support. If no Indian can be found to administer such a centre, I shall be entirely willing to have an Englishman appointed to that post. If in this way we can convert a *pinjrapole* into a milk centre, breed the best cattle and sell milk and butter at low prices, thousands of animals will be made happy and poor people and children will get pure ghee cheap. Eventually, every such *goshala* will become self-supporting or nearly so. If this experiment is tried in even one *goshala*, it will be possible to test the practicability of my scheme.

I hope that no one will raise the question: “But how does religion come into this? Is it not trade?” If there is any such sceptical reader, I would tell him that religion and affairs of practical life need not be mutually exclusive. When a certain practice is found to be contrary to religion, it should be abandoned. Religion, too, is truly tested only when it is followed in daily life. It demands more than ordinary efficiency, for without discrimination, thoughtfulness and other like qualities, religion cannot be followed in practice at all. At the present day, many rich people who are totally engrossed in the

<sup>1</sup> Institutions for care of old and infirm cattle



pursuit of wealth contribute, in their simple-mindedness, to all manner of funds without giving any thought to the matter. Those in charge of the management of the institutions which become the victims of such contributions run them in an unimaginative way and we then proceed to give them our support. Thus, all the three parties deceive themselves and believe that they are doing good. The truth is that what is thus done in the name of dharma is often the very opposite of dharma. If these three parties use their discretion and understand dhrama properly and follow it, or even if one party does so, every institution will breathe the true spirit of dharma.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-4-1924

## 266. TELEGRAM TO K. M. PANIKKAR

[On or after *April 21, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

DOUBT    ADVISABILITY    FREE    KITCHENS.    WRITING.

From a photostat : S.N. 10288

## 267. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*Wednesday [April 23, 1924]*<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

Herewith some Gujarati material. Vallabhbhai has passed on to me the bundle you sent through him. However, I am not taking anything from it this time. Your description of [the incident in] Visnagar is beautiful from the point of view of language. From the point of view of the contents, it is enough to bring tears to one's eyes. But I have made my heart as hard as stone. As physical objects, we are more insignificant on this earth than even the ant. To us the latter seems as of no account. And what are we in the eyes of the Lord of the Universe? How, then, can we, mere insects, rejoice or weep at anything?

A Muslim gentleman has addressed an open letter to me

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a telegram from K. M. Panikkar received on *April 21*, which read: Shiromani Committee has decided open free kitchen. Vaikom Jatha leaving early. Hope approve.

<sup>2</sup> The article "Mari Bhasha" mentioned in the letter appeared in *Navajivan*, 27-4-1924. The Wednesday preceding this date fell on April 23.

through the *Prajamitra*. It is, of course, full of venom, but contains a fine piece of advice: “if you cannot promote harmony between the two communities, please keep quiet and watch the game like an onlooker.” Please go through my article, “Mari Bhasha”, first<sup>1</sup>. You know, I am sure, who the dweller on the peak is. With what laborious care has Valji read *Navajivan*! Many of his corrections put us all to shame. I would certainly hold you responsible for those mistakes if you regularly went through *Navajivan* articles before they were printed. However, I have an impression that you had not read them. You saw them only after they were printed. Who, then had read them? If it was not Swami Anand either, whom should I hold responsible? The children? If, indeed, we cannot correct I glaring mistakes of language, have we any right to run *Navajivan*? I myself am not yet in a position to go carefully through everything I write, and that, too, from the point of view of language. And if you or Swami do not take the responsibility of going through the matter carefully, I would not hesitate even to stop publishing *Navajivan*. A person who cannot do his work to his own satisfaction had better leave it alone. It is his duty to do so.

I would very much like to write on other subjects, but for the present, I must content myself with what little will serve our purpose. One of you two should carefully go through the material sent this time.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I have used the word *vicharmanyata* for “creed”. Please replace it by a better word if you can think of one.

Why should anyone there feel worried about Radha? She is all right now. Show this to Swami.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 8760

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, before it was printed in *Navajivan*.

## 268. *SOME REMARKS*

[On or after *April 23, 1924*]<sup>1</sup>

How dare they elect the President ?

I can give my opinion only after I have discussed the matter with Vallabhbhai.

Let them postpone the meeting.

How can even a wire reach them now?

Knowing this, we need not send any and let them do what they think best.

If they have nothing in particular to do and if they do not like to remain idle, they have the spinning-wheel to keep them busy.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 5730

## 269. *NOTES*

### VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

The anti-untouchability campaign at Vykom is providing an interesting study in satyagraha and, as it is being conducted in a calm spirit, it must prove of great use for future workers along similar lines. The Travancore authorities, whilst they still remain unbending regarding the prohibition order, are carrying out their purpose in a courteous manner. The public already know how quickly the authorities tried to check violence against satyagrahis. The treatment in the jails too is in keeping with their conduct in the open. Here is what Mr. Menon<sup>2</sup> writes from Trivandrum Jail:

The expected has happened. I am now within the walls of the Trivandrum Central Jail along with my friend Mr. Madhavan. We are treated as State prisoners. A separate block is set apart for our use. We are allowed our own clothes. A convict cooks for us. I am having the same food as I take at home. so is my friend Mr. Madhavan. Books and newspapers are also allowed. Of course, in writing letters we are not allowed to say anything about the Vykom affair. Friends can see us between 8 a. m. and 4 p.m. every day except Sunday.

<sup>1</sup> The remarks were scribbled by Gandhiji on a telegram dated April 23, 1924, received by Vallabhbhai Patel from Balwantraji Mehta, reading : "Devchandbhai wires postponement Committee. Wire final instructions."

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, K.P. Kesava Menon, Secretary of the Kerala Congress Committee

I am sure that you would be glad to hear that the Superintendent and other authorities of the Jail are doing everything to make us comfortable. we receive from them the same polite treatment as we received from the Police officers at Vykomb.

The Travancore Jail authorities deserve to be congratulated upon their considerate treatment of the satyagrahi prisoners. Let us hope on either side the present self-restraint and courteous conduct will be continued to the end.

#### WHY PETITION ?

Surprise has been expressed over the advice I have tendered to the satyagrahis that, whilst satyagraha continues, the organizers should leave no stone unturned by way of petitions, public meetings, deputations, etc., in order to engage the support of the State and public opinion on their side. The critics argue that I am partial to the State authorities because they represent Indian rule, whereas I am hostile to the British authorities because they represent an alien rule. For me every ruler is alien that defies public opinion. In South Africa, Indians continued to negotiate with the authorities up to the last moment even though satyagraha was going on. In British India, we are non-co-operating and we are doing so because we are bent on mending or ending the whole system of Government and, therefore, the method of petition is a hopeless effort.

In Travancore, the satyagrahis are not attacking a whole system. They are not attacking it at any point at all. They are fighting sacerdotal prejudice. The Travancore State comes in by a side door as it were. Satyagrahis would, therefore, be deviating from their path if they did not try to court junction with the authorities and cultivate public support by means of deputations, meetings, etc. Direct action does not always preclude other consistent methods. Nor is petitioning, etc., in every case a sign of weakness on the part of a satyagrahi. Indeed, he is no satyagrahi who is not humble.

#### SOME IMPLICATIONS

I have been also asked to develop the argument against sending aid apart from public sympathy from outside Travancore. I have already stated the utilitarian argument in an interview.<sup>1</sup> But there is a root objection too to getting, indeed even accepting, such support. Satyagraha is either offered by a few self-sacrificing persons in the

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Interview to *The Hindu*", 15-4-1924

name of the many weak, or by very few in the face of enormous odds. In the former case, which is the case in Vykom, many are willing but weak, and a few are willing and capable of sacrificing their all for the cause of the untouchables. In such a case, it is obvious they need no aid whatsoever. But suppose that they took outside aid, how would it serve the untouchable countrymen? The weak Hindus, in the absence of strong ones rising in their midst, will not prevail against the strong opponents. The sacrifice of helpers from other parts of India will not convert the opponents and it is highly likely that the last state of the untouchables will be worse than the first. Let it be remembered that satyagraha is a most powerful process of conversion. It is an appeal to the heart. Such an appeal cannot be successfully made by people from other parts of India flocking to Vykom.

Nor should a campaign conducted from within need outside monetary support. All the weak but sympathetic Hindus of Travancore may not court arrest and other suffering, but they can and should render such pecuniary assistance as may be needed. I could not understand their sympathy without such support.

In the case, too of a very few offering satyagraha against heavy odds, outside support is not permissible. Public satyagraha is an extension of private or domestic satyagraha. Every instance of public satyagraha should be tested by imagining a parallel domestic case. Thus, suppose in my family I wish to remove the curse of untouchability. Suppose further that my parents oppose the view, that I have the fire of the conviction of Prahlad, that my father threatens penalties, calls in even the assistance of the State to punish me. What should I do? May I invite my friends to suffer with me the penalties my father has devised for me? Or is it not up to me meekly to bear all the penalties my father inflicts on me and absolutely rely on the law of suffering and love to melt his heart and open his eyes to the evil of untouchability? It is open to me to bring in the assistance of learned men, the friends of the family, to explain to my father what he may not understand from me, his child. But I may allow no one to share with me the privilege and the duty of suffering. What is true of this supposed case of domestic satyagraha is equally true and no less of the case we have imagined of public satyagraha. Whether, therefore, the Vykom satyagrahis represent a hopeless minority or, as I have been informed, a majority of the Hindus concerned, it is clear that they should avoid aid from outside save that of public sympathy.

That, in every such case, we may not be able to conform to the law, that in the present case too, we may not be able to do so may be true. Let us not, however, forget the law and let us conform to it as far as ever we can.

#### CASE OF CHIRALA PERALA

Let me quote one case in which I had the honour of advising. I refer to the case of Chirala Perala.<sup>1</sup> The citizens' claim was that they were a united body and prepared to suffer. What I witnessed was a wonderful exhibition of cohesion, courage and extremely able and daring leadership. I said that I could not advise the Congress or the public to give pecuniary support. I could not advise the Congress even to encourage them by passing resolutions. If they won, the Congress would claim credit for the success of the means adopted by it. If they failed, the Congress will share no discredit. The people understood and accepted the advice. Even after three years' careful consideration, I have no reason to revise the advice then tendered. On the contrary, I feel sure that, if we are to grow to our full height, we shall do so only by punctiliously observing the laws of the game.

#### THE WORK

The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee has met and amicably settled its differences about the venue. The resolution admits defective election procedure and then confirms the former decision to hold the Congress at Belgaum. I tender my congratulations to the Committee on having performed a purificatory act. To err is human only when we are ready to admit errors. Persistence in error after discovery is very much less than human. Karnatak has a great task before her. Will she be able to show the highest record in the constructive programme? I have little doubt that she will. The question however should be, will she show the volume of constructive work such as to enable her to offer civil disobedience? She has the Brahmin and non-Brahmin problem. If Karnatak was India, can she shoulder the burden of full self-government with the Brahmins and non-Brahmin distrusting each other? I know that one party at least must surrender all to win all. If each wants to bargain with the other, it becomes a miniature edition of the Hindu-Muslim problem. The only way to solve these knotty problems is for each party to regard the interest of the other as its own. Then the knot is unloosed without effort. The unresisting will solve the knot even as in undoing a material knot we

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Chirala-Perala", 25-8-1921.

take the most unresisting thread first. If the volunteers and workers vie with one another in serving, if the Brahmin bends to the non-Brahmin and *vice versa*, they will clothe the whole of Karnatak in khadi, they will show national schools teaching under one roof Brahmin, non-Brahmin, untouchable, Mussalman and all other creeds, boys and girls. They will provide the way to Hindu-Muslim unity and thus show the real way to swaraj. Thus, for Karnatak sincerely and lastingly to solve the Brahmin-non-Brahmin problem is to solve all her other problems and thereby largely India's also.

#### A STUDY IN PHILANTHROPY

We have been accustomed so much to the charge against the Indian settlers in Kenya that, as they do not care for the native interest, their immigration should be restricted in the interest of the natives. Up to now I have not heard a single statement to the effect that the Indian settlers have done any harm to them. They do not pretend to go as philanthropists and, therefore, they do not establish schools for the natives nor do they do any missionary work among them. But, as the Indian trade is not imposed upon the natives, their very presence, I make bold to say, has a certain civilizing influence upon the natives.

But the question naturally arises: is the presence of the European detractors of Indians beneficial to the natives? Mr. Andrews in his terrible indictment of the British policy in Kenya gives a conclusive answer<sup>1</sup>. It is a study in modern philanthropy. Mr. Andrews' indictment shows the meaning of the 'White Man's Burden'. *The Times of India* has sever a strictures upon Mr. Andrews' article on the liquor question and has challenged the accuracy of his statements. His 'White Man's Trust' is more full of facts and figures than his previous article. Mr. Andrews knows what he writes. He is a student of history. He is the readiest man I know to admit mistakes if he finds he has made any. And I know from close experience how few have been his mistakes in spite of his voluminous writings. I am surprised that *The Times of India* writer has without sufficient knowledge challenged the accuracy of Mr. Andrews' figures. Anyway, I present another set of figures from Mr. Andrews' pen for challenge if that is possible, otherwise, for serious and humble reflection in the interest of humanity. The late Cecil Rhodes<sup>2</sup> years ago tore the mask of

<sup>1</sup> The article "The White Man's Burden", was published in *Young India*, 24-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> 1853-1902; Premier of the Cape Colony, 1890-96

hypocrisy when he described certain policies by the phrase, unctuous rectitude. But it is a vice that has persisted in spite of the great man. He sinned often enough, but he was great and good enough not to hide his sins. The British policy in Kenya is a continuous attempt to hide the sin of the fearful exploitation of the innocent Africans.

MR. PENNINGTON ON THE WAR-PATH

Mr. Pennington sent the following letter to my predecessor from France:

As a very old official of the Indian Government, I read *Young India* very carefully to see how you propose to govern the country when you have succeeded in making British Rule impossible. You will perhaps admit that we British think we have a duty to perform in India, by way of keeping the peace both internally and externally, and that we should not be justified in handing it over, except to something like a possible Government. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Gandhi and many other "Swarajists", but do you honestly think that any Government he could form could govern that enormous country without a backing of British bayonets?

If the Swarajists could have shown that they could manage affairs even tolerably under Mr. Montagu's scheme for the short period of 10 years, it might have been possible to frame some sort of Colonial scheme that would work; but, so far, they have only shown how to make anything like representative Government quite impossible, and so proved the greater fitness of the old system in the present state of the country. It may be necessary therefore to try some other plan perhaps by further Indianization of the old system, as suggested many years ago by Mr. Donald Smeaton. The King's Government must be carried on even if Diarchy has to be scrapped.

I am glad to be able to renew acquaintance with Mr. J. B. Pennington. The answer to his query is incredibly simple. If India succeeds in making British *Rule* impossible without matching the British bayonet with another bayonet, she will rule herself too with the same means. But if it is an unalterable law that the rule of one bayonet can only be displaced by another of equal or greater strength, then I see no present prospect of making British Rule impossible. I must admit, as my correspondent will have me to, that British people think that they have a duty to perform in India, but I may be permitted to add that we Indians think that their duty is not to *impose* peace upon us when we are longing to war against one another, but to lift their oppressive weight from over our heads. We think that we are sinking beneath that weight.

*Young India*, 24-4-1924



## 270. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

TO THE EDITOR, *Young India*

SIR,

While commenting on the Tibbya College incident in the *Young India* on the 10th April you write<sup>1</sup>: "The Muslim student who took exception to the comparison was after all justified in so doing." I do not know what exactly happened in the Tibbya College on the day of the celebration of Mr. Gandhi's birthday, but accepting what Dr. Ansari writes as the true version of the incident, I feel it is difficult to agree with you in your comment. No harm seems to have been meant or done to anyone when Mr. Gandhi was compared to Jesus Christ. It may not be necessary for the purpose of honouring a man, as you write, to compare him with revered prophets, but at times to bring home to the audience or the public the greatness of an individual, comparison with other honoured men or revered prophets is neither unnatural nor unbecoming. Mr. Andrews has on many occasions declared Mr. Gandhi to be a true picture of Jesus Christ. It is quite possible that the person compared may not be worthy of a place of equality with revered prophets. That is quite a different matter. But how can one justifiably take exception to the principle of comparison itself? The Muslim student in the Tibbya College might be considering Mr. Gandhi to be unworthy of comparison with Jesus Christ; if so, he was quiet welcome to hold his view and to declare it before the audience, as the Hindu student should have been welcome to hold his. We can understand such a difference of opinion. No one has a quarrel with it. But here the case was quite different. It was not that the Muslim student disagreed with the Hindu student in the latter's estimate of Mr. Gandhi's worth when he compared him with Jesus Christ, but that he objected to such a comparison itself, observing that no living person, *however eminent in all respects*, should be compared to prophets. One fails to understand how such an objection can be held to be justifiable. Previous prophets were human beings and the like of them may now be amongst us and are sure to come hereafter. What harm is there if comparisons are made of living saints or great men whom some may consider to be prophets with those that have gone before? Intellectually, ethically or spiritually, there is nothing wrong in doing so.

A person compared to previous prophets may out of modesty disclaim such a comparison, but that is beside the issue. I think, therefore, that to hold the Muslim student's objection as justifiable is to curtail the freedom of expression and to indirectly encourage the prevailing spirit of intolerance

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Campaign of Misrepresentation", 10-4-1924.

which, I am sure, is very far from what you desire.

*I am, etc.,*

GHANASHYAM JETHANAND

HIRABAD,

HYDERABAD (SIND)

I fear I must adhere to the opinion I have expressed to which Mr. Ghanashyam takes exception. It was not out of false modesty that I gave it. If I felt shy or awkward, I might not have noticed the incident, but I would not even out of modesty, false or otherwise, mislead the reader and thus deviate from the ethics of journalism which requires a fearless expression of true opinion. It will not be denied that to say what offends another is against ethics and certainly against spirituality if the saying is not required in the interest of truth. I hardly think it can be argued that it was in the interest of truth to make the comparison referred to. Whilst I think that such comparisons are undesirable, I admit that to object to them when they are actually made may be a mark of intolerance. But the Muslim student, knowing how it wounded many Mussalmans, rightly objected. He showed his good sense by apologizing when his objection offended the Hindu student. We would but feed the fire of intolerance if we insist, in the name of freedom of opinion, on expressing those opinions which are likely to wound some. I may inform Mr. Ghanashyam that, shortly before I was in prison, a devout Hindu wrote a letter strongly protesting against my being compared to Krishna and Rama. I certainly agreed with my correspondent that such comparisons should not be made. I can fully sympathize with orthodox Vaishnavas feeling offended at comparisons which outrage their religious sense. what I plead for is extreme and delicate consideration for the feelings and susceptibilities of others. If, in the name of tolerance, we began to swear at one another's deities, we would be copying the fabled economist who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

*Young India*, 24-4-1924

### 271. WHAT IS HINDUISM?

A dear friend send me a letter<sup>1</sup> (published elsewhere) gently criticizing the manner of my defence of Maulana Mahomed Ali's now famous speech regarding his comparison of creeds. The friend

<sup>1</sup> This was published under the title "The Ambiguous Middle".

says that I have not been fair to Hinduisim in that I have said a Hindu will fare no better than the Maulana. He quarrels with my illustration about marriage and then goes on it show the beauties of Hinduism. Another friend, too, has made a similar remonstrance and added that many others share his opinion.

These friends have, in my opinion, mixed up the question of propriety of comparing creeds with that of the allocation of their respective merits. Indeed, in arguing that Hinduism is not like Islam and that a Hindu could not think like the Maulana, the friends themselves have subscribed to the Maulana's argument that it is not only perfectly correct, but it is the logical outcome of one's preferring a particular belief to every other, that for oneself that particular belief, though held by a bad man, is superior to that of another howsoever saintly. I adhere to the marriage illustration chosen by me, though I now see that it would have been better for me to have avoided it. It is not a conclusive illustration. There are, I admit with my critics, many reasons for confining the choice of a husband to a particular class. But I do claim that the predominant reason for excluding the best man if he happens to belong, as he often does, to another class or caste is his creed. A Brahmin parent chooses a Brahmin as a husband for his daughter because he prefers the general body of opinion, which may be called creed, held by his clan. Underlying the preference is no doubt the belief that acceptance of a creed ultimately involves practice in accordance with it. A narrow creed, if it is honestly believed, has necessarily a limited field for practice. A creed, for instance, that makes it obligatory to offer human sacrifice will never free the believer from the taint of religious murder unless he gives up the creed. Thus it is that we find people otherwise most moral disappointing us when they fall short of the highest because of their narrow creed. Many sincere and otherwise noble-minded Hindus consider untouchability as a part of the Hindu creed and would, therefore, regard the reformers as outcastes. If untouchability was a part of the Hindu creed, I should decline to call myself a Hindu and most decidedly embrace some other faith if it satisfied my highest aspirations. Fortunately for me, I hold that untouchability is no part of Hinduism. On the contrary, it is a serious blot upon it, which every lover of it must sacrifice himself to remove. Suppose, however, I discover that untouchability was really an integral part of Hinduism, I should have to wander in the wilderness because the other creeds, as I know them through their accepted interpreters, would not

satisfy my highest aspirations.

My correspondent accuses me of the crime of using the ambiguous middle in that I have confused Truth and non-violence with the Hindu creed. The crime is deliberate. It is the good fortune or the misfortune of Hinduism that it has no official creed. In order, therefore, to protect myself against any misunderstanding, I have said Truth and non-violence is my creed. If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: search after Truth through non-violent means. A man may not believe even in God and still call himself a Hindu. Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth and, if today it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsible to growth, it is because we are fatigued, and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before. Of course, therefore, Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions. Its creed is all-embracing. But to claim that is to claim superiority for the Hindu creed over all the other creeds of the world.

As I write these lines, I feel a crowd of sectarians whispering to me. "That is no Hinduism you are defining come to us and we will show you the Truth." I am confounding all these whisperers by saying, 'नेति नेति,' 'not that, my friends, not that, and they make confusion worse confounded by retorting with redoubled fury, 'not that, not that.' But still another voice whispers to me, "Why all this duelling-this war of words? I can show you a way out of it. It lies through silent prayer." For the moment I propose to listen to that voice and observe silence and ask my friends to do likewise. Possibly I have failed to convince them and their co-sharers in their opinion. If I have failed to convince, it is because I have not seen the light. I can give my assurance that I have not indulged in special pleading in order to defend Maulana Mahomed Ali. If I discover my error, I hope I shall have the courage to own it. The Maulana needs no defence from me. And I should be a false friend if, in order to defend him, I sacrificed an iota of truth. It is the special privilege of a friend to own the other's faults and redeclare his affection in spite of faults.

*Young India*, 24-4-1924

## 272. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES-II

### SOME OFFICIALS

It was on Saturday the 18th March that the trial was finished. We were looking forward to a quiet time in the Sabarmati Jail at least for some weeks. We had expected that the Government would not let us remain in that jail for any length of time. We were, however, not prepared for the very sudden removal that actually did take place. For, the reader may recall that we were removed on Monday the 20th March to a special train which was to take us to the Yeravda Central Jail. We were made aware of the proposed removal only about an hour before departure. The officer-in-charge was all politeness and we were enabled to feel perfectly comfortable on the journey. But, immediately on alighting at Kirkee, we observed the difference and were made to feel that we were prisoners after all. The Collector and two others were awaiting the train. We were put in a motor prison-van which had perforations for ventilators. But for its hideous appearance, it could well be a *pardah* motor. Certainly, we could see nothing of the outside world. For the story of our reception at the Jail, the tearing away of Mr. Banker from me, his restoration, the first interview, and kindred interesting details, I must refer the reader to my letter<sup>1</sup> to

Hakimji Ajmal Khan Saheb, already published in these columns. After the first unpleasantness, the relations between the then Superintendent, col. Dalziel, and ourselves rapidly improved. He was most considerate regarding our creature comforts. But there was a certain something about him which always jarred. He would never forget that he was Superintendent and we were prisoners. He would not let it be granted that we were fully aware that we were prisoners and he was Superintendent. I made bold to say that we never once forgot that we were prisoners. We showed him all the deference due to his rank. The reminders were so unnecessary. But he had the needlessly haughty demeanour which one often regretfully notices about so many British officials. This weakness of his made him distrustful of the prisoners. Let me give a pleasant illustration of what I mean. He was most anxious that I should eat more than I was taking. He wanted me to take butter. I told him I could take only goat's milk butter. He gave special orders that it should be procured at once. Well, it came. The difficulty was what to mix it with. I suggested that some

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan", 14-4-1922.

flour might be issued to me. It was given. But it was too coarse for my very delicate digestive apparatus. Refined mill flour was ordered and 20 lbs. was issued to me. What was I to do with all this? I cooked or Mr. Banker cooked for me chapatis. After some trial, I felt I needed neither flour nor butter. I asked that the flour may be removed from me and the issue of butter stopped. Col. Dalziel would not listen. What was issued was issued. I might feel tempted later. I pleaded that it was all waste of public money. I gently suggested that, I was as solicitous about the use of public money as I would be about my own. there was an incredulous smile. I then I said, "Surely, it is my money." "How much have you contributed to the public treasury?" was the quick retort. I humbly replied, "You contribute only a percentage out of the salary you get from the State, whereas I give the whole of myself, labour, intelligence and all." There was a loud burst of suggestive laughter. But I did not collapse for I believed what I said. A labourer like me who labours for the State for mere maintenance contributes more to the State than a Viceroy who receives Rs. 20,000 together with royal residencies and contributes to the State, if his salary be not income-tax-free, a certain percentage of his salary. It becomes possible for him and those who belong to the system of which he is the chief to receive what he does out of the labour of millions. And yet many Englishmen and some Indians honestly believe that they serve the State (whatever the word may mean to them) more than the labourers and, in addition, contribute from their very salaries a percentage towards the upkeep of the State. There never was a grosser fallacy or a more absurd presumption than this modern belief in self-righteousness.

But I must return to the gallant Colonel. I have given the pleasantest sample of Col. Dalziel's haughty distrust. Will the reader believe that I had to carefully preserve the flour till the advent of Major Jones who took Col. Dalziel's place when the latter acted for the Inspector-General of Prison?

Major Jones was the very reverse of Col. Dalziel. From the very first day of his arrival, he became friends with the prisoners. I have a vivid recollection of our first meeting. Although he came with Co. Dalziel with becoming ceremonial, there was a refreshing absence of officialdom about him. He greeted me familiarly and talked about my fellow-prisoners in Sabarmati and conveyed their regards too, which he said they had sent. Though a strict disciplinarian, he never stood on his dignity. I have rarely met an official, whether European or Indian,

so free from humbug or false notions of prestige and dignity. He was ready to confess errors—a dangerous and rare practice with Government officials. He once awarded punishment not to a ‘political’ prisoner, but to a helpless *bona-fide* criminal. He subsequently came to learn that the punishment was not deserved. He straightway and without any pressure from outside cancelled it and made the following remarkable entry: ‘I repent for my decision’ in the prisoner’s history ticket. the accurate manner in which the prisoners sum up superintendents is truly amazing. Major Jones was *bahot bhala*<sup>1</sup>. They had nicknames for every one of the officials.

To finish, however, the story of my attempt to save the flour and other superfluous articles of diet. At Major Jones’s very first visit of inspection I requested that what I did not need should be cut off. He immediately gave orders that my request should be complied with. Col. Dalziel distrusted my motives; his successor took me at my word and he allowed me to make all the changes I wanted in the interest of economy, never once suspecting that I could be guilty of mental reservations. Another official with whom we early came in contact was, of course, the Inspector-General of Prisons. He was stiff, monosyllabic and gave one the impression that he was severe. His reserve was peculiarly his own and most uncomfortable for poor prisoners. Most officials being deficient in imagination often do unintentional injustices. They refuse to see the other side. They will not have patience to listen to prisoners and expecting from them prompt, coherent replies, and failing to get them, succeed in giving wrong decisions. Visits of inspection are often, therefore, a farce and almost invariably result in the wrong men-bullies or sycophants-being favored. The right man, the silent humble prisoner will not be heard. Indeed, most of the officials frankly admit that their duty is confined to keeping the prisoners sanitarily clean, preventing prisoners from fighting one another or from absconding and keeping them healthy.

I must consider in the next chapter one of the sad results of this mentality.

*Young India*, 24-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> Very good

### 273. *INTERESTING*

Mr. Hardikar<sup>1</sup> sends me the following interesting information :

Twelve-and-a-half pounds of yarn is being sent to you by Railway Parcel today. This yarn was spun during the last National Week extending from the 6th to the 13th April, by:

- 1 The boys of the National High School,
- 2 The girls of Tilak Kanya Shala,
- 3 The Gandhi Pathak of Karnatak Bala Sena (Karnatak Boy Scouts),
- 4 The members of Shevade's family.

Two charkhas were spinning day and night continuously and five were being worked for twelve hours every day for a week. Thus the seven wheels were busy for a total of seven hundred fifty-six hours.

The total production is about 500 tolas. That means 3/4ths of a tola (approximately) for an hour. The production is poor for the reasons enumerated below. The yarn also is no doubt inferior in quality owing to the same reasons.

1. Carding was defective.
2. Slivers were not prepared well.
3. Beginners too were at work on the charkhas.

The work of enrolment of members and collection of Tilak Swaraj Fund was also done during this week. The experience gained while working shows:

1. That unless men of influence take an active part and themselves labour for the betterment of the masses, no success can be achieved.
2. That organized efforts bring desired results.
3. That young folk do respond if properly approached, guided and helped by the leaders.
4. That unless the question of workers' maintenance is solved by the Congress no substantial amount of work can be accomplished, howsoever sincere the handful of workers may be.

But the dearth of the men of ability and organizing capacity has made the work suffer immensely. The indifference of the leaders towards the movement has disappointed the young workers who are one by one forsaking them.

The parcel containing yarn has also been received. It shows solid though uncouth work. True spinning like true everything involves labour, thought, method and concentration. An accomplished

<sup>1</sup> N.S. Hardikar, Congress leader from Karnatak: associated with the Hindustani Seva Dal, a volunteer crops; elected to Rajya Sabha in 1952 and re-elected in 1956



spinner must know carding, must be able to make his or her own slivers. The processes are not difficult, but they do require application, and unless the spinners take a lively interest in their work and refuse to call yarn that will not weave, just as we refuse to call a rupee a rupee if it does not fetch sixteen annas proper spinning is impossible. I hope that the boys and girls who did all that continuous spinning for a period will spin daily for a short period, even if it be half an hour. They will be amazed at the result of such methodical and sustained effort.

Mr. Hardikar's remarks on the drawbacks about general work do not require any comment. I can only say, no matter who deserts, no matter what discouragements face us, those of us who have faith in the programme must march forward without flinching and without stopping. The making of nations is no magic trick. It is hard toil and harder suffering. The Congress may or may not devise a scheme of payment of workers. Is it not open to provincial bodies to devise their own means? The most organized province can just as well set the tone to the Congress as the Congress can to the whole of India. Truthful suggestions always come from units that have achieved success.

*Young India*, 24-4-1924

## 274. INTERVIEW TO "THE DAILY EXPRESS"

BOMBAY,  
*April 24, 1924*

India must have the right to err, and err grievously. We must have the right as a nation to commit suicide if we want to. Only then can we appreciate what freedom and responsibility are.

Gandhi, the leader of the "Non-co-operation with England" movement, made this statement to me when I saw him at the seaside bungalow near Bombay where he has been staying since his release from prison six weeks ago.

I pointed out that even individuals have not the right, moral or legal, to commit suicide.

They have the power if not the right, and India cannot be wholly free until she possess that power also.

Asked about the position of the British in India under such a scheme of swaraj (Home Rule) as he desires, Gandhi replied:

Most emphatically, there will always be room in India for the right kind of Britons. I can conceive of no scheme of swaraj in which

driving the Britons from the country is one of the goals.

Personally, I have many, many warm English friends, whose friendship I value very highly indeed, but there certainly would be a clearing of the atmosphere if a real demonstration were given of the desire to abandon the British policy of exploitation.

Although Gandhi declines to give his personal views regarding the latest developments in Indian politics until the conclusion of negotiations now going on with the Swarajist leaders, the impression he gave me is that dose not wholly approve the obstructionist policy pursued in the Councils.

He is still the same vague idealist. He insists on India's right to achieve economic and moral independence but still seems to regard the use of the spinning-wheel—which would make India independence of British supplies of cotton goods—as the means of the salvation of the country.

*The Hindu*, 19-5-1924

## 275. TELEGRAM TO K. N. NAMBOODRIPAD<sup>1</sup>

ANDHERI,

[On or after April 24, 1924]

YOU SHOULD NOT FAST NOR BREAK NOR SCALE FENCE.  
QUESTION FOR SATYAGRAHIS IS NOT WHAT APPEARS EFFECTIVE  
BUT WHAT IS PROPER. AWAITING LETTER.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S. N. 10290

## 276. MESSAGE TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Horniman must be permitted to return if we will it. How is that will to be expressed? Certainly not by words. Bombay's more

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a telegram from Namboodripad received on April 24, 1924. This read: "Your telegram 19th today. Satyagraha steadily continues. Batch strength increased to six. Today Government fenced all roads. Yesterday Dewan conferred with us. Says intends proclaiming said roads temple property prohibiting Christians Mahommedans. Also occasional violence from opposition anticipate more. Committee discussed blocking roads scaling or removing fencing or begin fasting complete or partial being from experience more effective. Detailed letter follows advise immediate step."

<sup>2</sup> This was sent on the anniversary of the deportation of Benjamin Guy Horniman, Editor, *The Bombay Chronicles* ; vide "Mr. Horniman", 7-6-1919 & "Tribute to B. G. Horniman", 19-6-1919.

than India's honour depends upon a proper answer to the question.

M. K. GANDHI

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 26-4-1924

### 277. ACTIONS AS AGAINST BELIEFS

The discussion on Maulana Mahomed Ali's speech on Islam still goes on in the newspapers. I see that many persons who are otherwise intelligent and can understand things have also not understood the distinction drawn by him or, if they have, they lose sight of it while speaking and writing about the matter. This means that the distinction has not penetrated deep enough in their minds. It is, therefore, necessary to refresh, time and again, our understanding of the distinction drawn by the Maulana. He believes that—

1. There is a distinction between a man's actions and his ideas.

2. A man whose ideas are of the best may yet be unworthy in his conduct.

3. The ideas of a man excellent conduct may be inferior to the ideas of others.

Here ideas mean belief, religious creed, religion; for instance, the Christian belief in Jesus' unique divinity and the Islamic belief that there is only one God and that Mahomed is His Prophet. Hinduism, according to me, acknowledges the supremacy of truth and non-violence.

There is no dharma greater than truth. Ahimsa is the supreme dharma.

In conformity with these principles, the Maulana said:

"As a Muslim, I regard the beliefs of an adulterous Muslim as superior to the beliefs of Gandhi whose conduct is the noblest."

The reader will see that here the Maulana has not instituted a comparison between me and an adulterous Muslim; he has just compared my beliefs with those of an adulterous Muslim. Moreover, out of his liberality and his regard for me the Maulana says that, if one man may at all be compared with another, I would stand higher in point of virtue or conduct than even his revered mother or spiritual teacher.

This is an insult neither to me nor to the Hindu religion. The truth is that the whole world accepts the three principles mentioned

above. Suppose a European who is the greatest of saints believes that there is nothing wrong in experimenting on animals even by torturing them or by killing them for saving human life, nay, that it is wrong not to do so. Now, as against this, suppose that I am a person of wicked conduct and yet believe that it is degrading to man to kill any animal even to save human life. Then, without the slightest disrespect to that saint, can I not say that, notwithstanding my being a wicked man, in so far as our creed is concerned mine is far superior to his? If there is nothing wrong in my saying this, then there is nothing wrong either in what the Maulana said.

One thing shines out in the current discussion like a ray of hope in darkness. All seem to assert that belief unrelated to action is un-availing and that one can never attain heaven merely through right belief. In the views which the Maulana has expressed, he has nowhere contradicted this idea. I see rays of hope in this attitude, since those who act on their beliefs and those who are indifferent to the matter, both these classes of people admire virtuous conduct.

But, while extolling right conduct, one must not lose sight of the need for right belief. When one's beliefs are full of errors, one's conduct cannot be of the best. What was wanting in the penance practiced by Ravana<sup>1</sup> and Indrajit<sup>2</sup>? By showing that self-control such as Lakshmana's<sup>3</sup> was needed to match the self-control of Indrajit the *Adi-kavi*<sup>4</sup> proved the importance of conduct. In Indrajit's creed, the highest importance attached to material prosperity, while in Lakshmana's that honour belonged to spiritual good, and so the poet awarded victory to Lakshmana. "Where there is dharma, there is victory", means the same thing. Here dharma can only mean the noblest belief and equally noble conduct.

There is a third class of persons who have no place at all in this discussion. This is the class of hypocrites who merely profess faith in religion, but whose conduct is nothing but outward show; such persons have no real faith in religion. Just because a parrot repeats the name of Rama, will it be regarded as his devotee? Though, of course, comparing the sounds uttered by two parrots or those by a parrot and a martlet, we can judge the relative value of those sounds.

<sup>1</sup> Demon-King of Lanka, in the *Ramayana*

<sup>2</sup> son of Ravana

<sup>3</sup> Brother of Rama

<sup>4</sup> Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*; literally, "the first of poets"

But a friend writes to say :

It was all right for the Maulana to have shown fearlessness . . . What has our country gained by it ? The tension between the Hindus and the Muslims has increased. The Maulana's statement that a wicked Muslim was better than a self-controlled Gandhi pierced the Hindus' hearts like an arrow. The Maulana has thrown bomb over our country.

The person who wrote this is an admirer of the Maulana and not a fanatical Hindu. He can see the shortcomings of the Hindus objectively. Even so the current atmosphere of suspicion has prejudiced even him. I have already stated that the Maulana never said that wicked Muslim was superior to a self-controlled Gandhi. He had only said that the religious beliefs of such a Muslim were superior to those of a man of self-restraint like me. Between the Maulana's own view and the view attributed to him by the correspondent, there is as much difference as there is between an elephant and a horse. In the former, two individuals have been compared, while, in the latter, two sets of religious beliefs. The phrases "a man of self-restraint like Gandhi" and "a wicked Muslim" are not necessary to prove the point. The really important issue is that of religious belief. It is immaterial whether this is A's as compared with B's or C's as compared with D's. The comparison is not between persons: it is between their religious beliefs. It has no bearing at all on their conduct and nothing to do with their virtues or defects.

Now let us consider whether it was really necessary for the Maulana to have expressed his view about religious beliefs. There is a brotherly relation between him and me. Prompted by that, he praises me in season and out of season. At present the number of those who create discord between the Hindus and the Muslims has increased. Some of them have described him as a "worshipper of Gandhi". Their object in doing so was to lessen his influence among the Muslims. Hence the Maulana said that, though he admired me, he had not accepted me as his religious mentor, that his religion was different from mine, that his religious belief was the same as that of any adulterous Muslim and he placed it higher than my religious belief. This is the substance of the Maulana's speech. If he does not say something like this, how else can he defend his own position and mine, the relationship which exists between us and his religious orthodoxy at the same time ? How else could he have answered his critics ?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-4-1924

## 278. MY LANGUAGE

Prompted by his love for me as well as for the Gujarati language, a learned friend writes to me with utmost frankness, as follows:<sup>1</sup>

In this interesting letter, there are some English sentences and words in Gujarati script, and two English words are in Roman script. This will shock many Gujarati brothers and sisters who do not know English. I tender my apology to them. Had I made any alterations, the sweetness and the subtle humour in that letter would have disappeared. Even those not knowing English will not find it difficult to understand the substance of the letter.

The reader will readily understand that this letter was not meant for publication. I think the portion I have quoted above came to be written by chance as part of the letter dealing with some private matter. But since the comments therein are reasonable and since my associates as well as I have something to learn from them, I have published an extract.

About five years ago, a learned well-wisher had commented that my Gujarati was “weaker even than a raw matriculate’s”. A friend who had heard the comment did not like it. When he reported it to me, I said that the comment was correct and was prompted by no hatred towards me but by love of language. What I had said then about that criticism holds good even today.

I know that my knowledge of Gujarati is not profound. I have not been as mindful of grammar as I should like to be I have not become a writer to serve the cause of the language, but I have had to carry on my work as a journalist with the sort of language I know. I do not say this to have my errors of language condoned. To commit errors knowingly and to ask to be pardoned for them is not only inexcusable, but adding one fault to another. I wish to share with the world a very valuable thing which I have discovered. Maybe there is *moha*<sup>2</sup>, ignorance or vanity in my desire, but this is what it is. Language is a great instrument in my work. A skilful artisan makes do with whatever tool he has. I have had to do the same. We labour under a false notion. A person who is supreme in one respect is often considered to

<sup>1</sup> In this letter, not translated here, the correspondent refers to some words and phrases wrongly used by Gandhiji in the *History of Satyagraha in South Africa*, serially published in *Navajivan* during 1924-25.

<sup>2</sup> Infatuation

be the same in other respects also. To add to this, if the person is looked upon as a mahatma, is there anything which the people will not credit him with? He is accepted as the greatest of all. In order that no one may be deceived about my language on account of such a superstition, I admit my mistakes by publishing the criticism contained in the letter above. I certainly regard myself as competent in respect of satyagraha, the economic policies needed in India from the point of view of the poor and some other kindred matters. But I consider my language to be plainly rustic and one that violates the rules of spelling and grammar. Therefore, it is not my wish at all that others should imitate it.

The several mistakes pointed out by the friend sitting on the top of the Himalayas ought to have been corrected. The imperfections of my language pain me, but they do not put me to shame. There are some mistakes which could have been easily avoided. I feel ashamed of such mistakes. I consider it better to close down a newspaper than to continue to run it in spite of such mistakes. If a newspaper editor remains indifferent to language, he becomes an offender. The use of the words *murshid* and *amanush*<sup>1</sup> is inexcusable. I cannot guess how those words happened to creep in. I went on dictating, another person took it down and a third transcribed it. My poor knowledge of Urdu and Sanskrit or the copyist's may have been responsible for the mistakes. The real fault is mine first and, then, that of my colleague. Swami Anand cannot pay attention to *Navajivan*'s language, being busy with the work of promoting the circulation of the paper in Gujarat. Mahadev Desai can see no fault in me, just as a lover can see none in his beloved. If he has his way, he would have justified the use even of *murshid* and *amanush*. The learned one has taken his seat on the peak of the Himalayas. None among the three thinks of the injustice likely to be done to the readers. The poor language is an innocent cow and we four have become ready to put her to the knife. The remedy lies in the hands of readers who are lovers of the language. I advise them to serve notices on Swami Anand, Mahadev Desai and others to the effect that if Himalayan blunders of language appear in *Navajivan* hereafter, they will not only stop buying the paper without further intimation, but also set up, if necessary, a "*Navajivan* Boycott Association". If such an association starts a non-

<sup>1</sup> Incorrectly used for *murid*—meaning admirer, adorer or idolator—and *atimanush*—meaning superhuman

violent satyagraha, I shall certainly join it and have a dispute in my own house. I also suggest to the language lovers that they should write an open letter to “Summit-dweller” that he should take up every week the maximum of half a page in *Navajivan* to list the errors in the use of Gujarati found in the previous issue. Thus, if the readers of *Navajivan* would take effective steps, they would serve the cause of the language and prove that *Navajivan* enjoys their patronage.

Now, a few words by way of criticism of the critic himself. Since we have learnt English, we consciously or unconsciously reproduce in our Gujarati writing the style and idioms of English despite our efforts to avoid them. I have been regarded as an enemy of the English language. As a matter of fact, I have respect for that language and for the Englishmen who speak it. But I am not prepared to accept the domination of either. I am willing to do without both. I firmly believe that a Gujarati with command over all the resources of his mother-tongue can bring into his writing all the beauties of English, without knowing a single word of English. As I have no prejudice against the English language or Englishman, I can assimilate the best from both and this leads to some imitation without any conscious effort on my part. “The bowels of the earth”<sup>1</sup> is an expression used unwittingly. “The womb of the earth”<sup>2</sup> is a very sweet collocation of words. Had I remembered it at the time of dictating, I would have used it by preference. But I do not consider “bowels of the earth” to be an expression which should be avoided. We do have in Gujarati the expression “twisting the mouth”; then can we not allow the English usage of “twisting the nose”? I have doubts about it though; while trying to twist the nose, I could not do it, but my mouth got twisted in the process. The Gujarati in me felt happy at this. But can all usage be thus tested? I leave the doubts there for the moment. After we attain swaraj, I shall certainly invite Narasinharaobhai<sup>3</sup> as well as Khabardar<sup>4</sup>, who is quite a match for the former, to a duel before me and try to place some samples of their art before the readers of *Navajivan*. At present, we have no time even to enjoy that innocent fun. I do not believe that the indirect construction is banned in Gujarati. By saying this, I do not intend to belittle the comments of my critic. I have given

<sup>1</sup> *Prithvina antardan*

<sup>2</sup> *Prithvinu udar*

<sup>3</sup> Narasinharao B. Divetia (1859-1937) Gujarati poet and professor of Gujarati, Elphinstone College, Bombay

<sup>4</sup> Ardeshar Framji Khabardar (1881-1954); Parsi poet of Gujarat



the extract from the letter in order to ask my linguist friends to keep watch over my language and to oblige me, even as some other friends have been keeping watch over my moral conduct.

Whether the construction of the last sentence is permissible or not, I, on behalf of the readers, openly invite “Summit-dweller” to say.

[From Gujarati]  
*Navjivan*, 27-4-1

### 279. A CORRECTION

I had written a note<sup>1</sup> in the *Navajivan* of *Chaitra sud 2* on the basis of a letter signed, as I had taken it for granted, by the Secretary of the Dohad Taluka congress Committee. Now the real Secretary, Shri Sukhdev, writes to inform me that the said letter was written, as from the Secretary, in his absence and without his knowledge. Shri Sukhdev’s correction points out what had actually happened. A *Bhangi*<sup>2</sup> was permitted to draw water from *Dhed’s*<sup>3</sup> well. The sub-inspector of police not only drove away the *Antyajas* who had gone to draw water from the pucca well belonging to the Local Board, but also compelled them to throw away the water they had actually drawn. The same state of affairs obtains among the *Antyajas* even today. This incident occurred not in Dohad town but in a village called Garbala which is under Dohad’s jurisdiction.

That is to say, the condition of the *Antyajas* remains unchanged. Shri Shkhdev should institute an inquiry to find out why a letter giving incorrect information was written as from the secretary. The condition of the *Antyajas* will not improve, our sins will not be washed away and swaraj will not be attained by giving incorrect information. Sincere expiation will bear fruit even if news about it does not appear in newspapers. Crores of good deeds are done in this world without any publicity in newspapers; even then they continue to shed their influence for ever.

[From Gujarati]  
*Navajivan*, 27-4-1924

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Untouchability and Unapproachability”, 6-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Both *Bhangis* and *Dheds* are *Antyajas*, but *Dheds* considered *Bhangis* to be a lower sub-caste and did not allow the latter to draw water from the wells used by them.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

## 280. MY NOTES

### MILL SLIVERS

We still find mill slivers being used in many places. The use of such slivers did not matter when the spinning-wheel was just coming into use and no one knew how to make slivers. But today their use ought to be considered intolerable. Only a person who does not understand the real principle behind the spinning-wheel will use mill slivers. We desire to see the spinning-wheel installed in every home and in every village in the country. There are seven lakh villages in India. Many of them are very far from the railway line. It is impossible to supply mill-slivers to those villages. Cotton which grows in one village is ginned at another place and then it is sent to a mill for being carded and ultimately it goes back to the same village in the form of slivers for being spun into yarn! This is like getting flour kneaded in Bombay bread therefrom baked in Pethapur<sup>1</sup>. Cotton should be carded where it is spun and it should be ginned where it is grown. The present unnatural system should be totally abolished. The programme of the spinning-wheel basically includes all the processes preliminary to spinning.

### SISTERS OF KARNATAK

Last week, about 50 Karnatak sisters living in Bombay came to see me. They had brought with them yarn spun by them. Along with it, they had brought Rs. 500. One of them had written a play called *Samaj Seva*. The others staged it. Admission was by tickets. The sum of Rs. 500 was saved out of the money received from the sale of tickets for the performance. They spent only Rs. 50 on staging the play.

Would not other sisters follow their example?

Not many sisters can write plays which are readable and fit for the stage and not many can stage plays either, but all can surely spin. One sister told me that Maharashtrian women were active and industrious, but Gujarati women were easy-going. How can Gujarati sisters tolerate such a charge? Of course, I must admit that I do not know of Gujarati sisters having spun as much yarn as Smt. Avantikabehn<sup>2</sup> succeeded getting Maharashtrian sisters in her circle to spin. We shall certainly find other proofs of the superiority of Maharashtrian sisters

<sup>1</sup> A village in North Gujarat

<sup>2</sup> Avantikabai Gokhale, a leading Congress worker of Maharashtra

if we look for them objectively. Yet, being myself a Gujarati, how can I, writing about Gujarati sisters, be objective? I accept the principle of being objective. Still I must be partial to Gujarati sisters and request them in this article to prove themselves as active and industrious as their sisters in Maharashtra. If they do not heed my humble entreaty, I shall have to believe that the change levelled by that Gujarati sister against them is true.

Both men and women may spin, but it is the special duty of the latter to do so. Wealthy sisters may spin either for their own clothes or to help others. Poor women may spin either for earning their livelihood or to supplement their income so as to earn the expenses on food. In cities, hand-spinning will be mainly of this type. Poor women living in cities can earn more by working as labourers than by spinning. It is useless to ask them take to spinning. It would be harmful to ask them to do more spinning than they actually need to do and, moreover, the purpose underlying the spinning programme will not be served by doing so.

#### SOCIETY FOR PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

I had received an open letter containing allegations against the work of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Bombay. I then felt that, if they were all true, the Society had done the work not of showing kindness to animals but of killing them. Before I decided to write about these allegations, I had been inquiring into them; in the meantime, Shri Chhaganlal Nanavati, along with other friends, happened to call on me. I had known him as Secretary of the SPCA and so, jocularly, according to my wont, I came out with those charges against him. He said, "I am no longer the Secretary; may I convey to the Society what you have said?" I told him that he should certainly do so and that I wished also to see the Secretary. I believe I had not permitted Shri Chhaganlal to pass on anything about the matter to the Press. Shri Chhaganlal either supplied to the newspaper a summary of the conversation between us as understood by him or related it at a place whence it could not but reach them. The members of the Society felt hurt at this. They were also surprised that I had formed an adverse opinion without giving a chance to the Society to present the facts on its side. It is certainly against my usual practice to form an opinion in this way. In fact, I had not formed any opinion. The criticism which I had made before Shri Chhaganlal was hypothetical. Its purport was that, if the Society had acted as alleged in that open

letter, then it had been guilty of killing animals. Shri Chhaganlal has seen me again and expressed his deep regret over the report which appeared in the papers. I believe there is no truth in the allegations against the SPCA made in the open letter. I have discussed the matter at great length with the Secretary, Shri Lallubhai, and other members.

#### MAJORITY OPINION

But there is in that open letter one point which merits consideration:

Can questions relating to religion be decided by majority opinion in a municipality of any other public body? Suppose Hindu, Muslim and Parsi members together pass a resolution by a majority vote that *Antyaja* children be admitted to Hindu schools. suppose, further, that the resolution would have been rejected if the votes of only the Hindu members had been taken. In such circumstances, can the resolution passed in the manner stated above be considered proper? I do not think so. Moreover, the passing of such a resolution would arrest the progress of the reform itself. Can social reform among the Hindus be brought about by the votes of men following other faiths? A large number among the Hindus should themselves realize that the practice of untouchability is a sin. The opinion of others does not count in this matter. This should be accepted as self-evident.

Likewise, a public body whose members follow different faiths cannot take a decision by a majority vote on the question whether or not the Muslims should spare the cow. Only the Muslims can decide the issue by a majority vote. As the hearts of Hindus and Muslims are embittered, even a question that has nothing to do with religion has come to be regarded as a religious issue. It should not require the authority of holy books to ensure that calves are not slaughtered. No religion can oppose or opposes, such an economic proposition. But sensitive and suspicious Muslim minds fear that, if they yield to the extent of a finger, they may have to yield up to the elbow.<sup>1</sup> Hence, if I were a member of a municipality' though I regard myself as a pure Hindu, look for the minutest injunctions of Hinduism and wish to follow them scrupulously, and though I worship the mother cow and stand ever ready to lay down my life in her service, I should not like to vote in favour of saving the calf in disregard of the views of our Muslim brethren until I got the support of a majority of them for the

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarti saying

proposition. I can succeed in my aim of saving the cow not by opposing the Muslims, but only by winning their hearts. In order to convince them that I do not wish to coerce them in this matter, I would certainly let go even the economic benefits of saving the calf, if I cannot carry them with me.

#### KHADI IN KATHIAWAR

A khadi-using couple from Kutch came to see me. They were dressed in clothes of khadi made from yarn spun by themselves. They were disappointed when they went from Kutch to Kathiawar. When they visited Rajkot and other cities, they hardly found any people wearing khadi clothes or khadi caps and they felt very sad. As far as their experience goes, khadi is used more in Kutch than in Kathiawar. I have received from another source a similar complaint about Kathiawar's indifference in this matter; it is to the effect that the Kathiawaris are very voluble and scheming that they are brave in speech, but slack in action. Hearing this I hung my head in shame. Now I hear people saying that Kathiawaris will defeat the Kathiawari Pattani Saheb, fulfil their pledge and positively hold the Conference<sup>1</sup>. Some say, "How can Pattani Saheb prevent us from holding the conference in a jail?" These brave friends of the brave *Kathis* of the past have thus been using brave words, but a Kathiawari like me, watching the scene from a distance, would like to ask the brave satyagrahis, if he can take the liberty of doing so: Do you know the conditions of satyagraha? Do you wear khadi and perform with faith the duty of spinning? Have you conquered your anger? Do you observe non-violence in thought, word and deed in so far as satyagraha requires you to do so? I have not yet completed the list of questions. I am not trying to decide whether or not they should start satyagraha. Vallabhbhai Patel is the man who will decide it. I am only trying to stress the importance of the spinning-wheel. In my view, the spinning-wheel is far more important than the Conference. Unable to find means of livelihood in Kathiawar, many Kathiawaris migrate to far-off places. For their belly's sake they forgo the life-giving air of Kathiawar and choose to live in the life-killing air of Bombay. How many Kathiawaris, in spite of realizing that the spinning-wheel can make this exodus for economic reasons unnecessary, pause to think way less khadi is being used in Kathiawar? If they do think about the

<sup>1</sup> The Kathiawar Political Conference; it was held at Bhavnagar in January 1925.

matter, to what extent do they act on their conclusions? It is very easy to popularize khadi in Kathiawar. And yet if the use of khadi is much less there, what does the fact indicate? I do not wish to say that the report given by the Kutchi couple is well-founded. It is possible that their power of observation is weak or that they visited places where they could find no people wearing khadi. I have quoted the Kutchi couple's criticism for the benefit of the public workers of Kathiawar to make them more vigilant. I have indicated the questions which arise if the criticism is well founded.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-4-1924

## 281. AN APPRECIATION

[End of April, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

Nearly three years ago Mr. Bharucha introduced Mr. Belgaumwala to me and said: "Here is a monied man who will be a tower of strength to the khaddar movement." Everybody by this time knows my unquenchable faith in Parsis. But in spite of that faith, as I looked at Mr. Belgaumwala I doubted the assurance given by Mr. Bharucha. But I had soon cause for repentance, for Mr. Belgaumwala has more than proved the truth of Mr. Bharucha's prophetic words. Has he not spent thousands in khaddar propaganda? Has he not become a staunch believer in the message of the spinning-wheel? Mr. Banker, when he dragged Mr. Belgaumwala to Karnatak, little knew what the Karnatak tour would make of the Parsi friend. Anyway he has returned with such zeal for the charkha that he tells me to my delight that early in the morning he sits at the spinning-wheel as a daily sacred duty. The spinning gives him joy, peace and consolation that at least for half an hour he identifies himself with the poorest in the land. May his example prove infectious for all monied men and women!

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8702

<sup>1</sup> The exact date of this item is not ascertainable. The source is located among April 1924 documents in the S. N. Photostats.

## 282. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

[End of April 1924]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI HARIBHAU<sup>2</sup>,

It was not your articles in the *Malava Mayur* which made me feel unhappy. I had only a cursory glance at them. I felt unhappy because of a difference of principle. I am of opinion that very little good is done by everyone who can write starting a paper. I could have appreciated your doing this if you had a special message to give to the people of Malwa. All these are rather subtle issues. You need not think about them. We will talk further about them when we meet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall certainly try to write for *Hindi Navajivan*. When must the articles for it reach you?

I think it necessary that the spirit of service should be accompanied by understanding of the problems. please do not be in a hurry to stop publication of the *Mayur*. I hope to be in the Ashram in about a month. The maxim enunciated in the verse, “Not to embark upon a venture [in the first instance, is a sign of wisdom]”, applies to this activity.

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6051. Courtesy: Martand Upadhyaya

## 283. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

[After April 30, 1924]<sup>3</sup>

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I have your letter. I felt unhappy when I saw *Malava Mayur*. Unless one has a special message to give, one ought not to start a new magazine. I think you will do well to free yourself from it if you can discontinue it. If, however, it has begun to pay its expenses, let it continue.

<sup>1</sup> In the postscript Gandhiji says, “I hope to be in the Ashram in about a month.” He was there on May 29, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Then Editor, *Hindi Navajivan*

<sup>3</sup> The letter appears to have been written after the preceding. one, in which Gandhiji had promised to try and send an article for publication.

I am sending with this letter an article for *Hindi Navajivan*. Please send *Hindi Navajivan* regularly to me.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6052. Courtesy: Martand Upadhyaya

## 284. LETTER TO OTANE JAKATA

[After April 30, 1924]

DEAR SIR,

Thank you for your letter<sup>1</sup> as well as the book.

I have absolutely no time to give you the details you need, even if I was minded to do so.<sup>2</sup> I do not keep any portraits of me nor do I give sittings. The recent photographs are all snapshots. The best books of reference are collections of my writings in *Y. I.* by Mr. Ganesan of Madras (give address)<sup>3</sup> and my speeches by Mr. G. A. Natesan also of Madras (address). The latter contains rules of the Satyagraha Ashram.<sup>4</sup>

*Yours truly,*

OTANE JAKATA

45, KODA MACHO, 4 CHOME

TAIHOKU, FORMUSA, JAPAN

From a photostat: S. N. 8759

<sup>1</sup> Dated April 30, the letter accompanied a copy of the writer's book *Saint-Hero Gandhi*, and sought information about papers or publications throwing light on Gandhiji's career, the stories of his childhood, the history of the Satyagraha Ashram, men and women around Gandhiji, the Indian nationalist movement, and Gandhiji's "reproaches against so-called factors of civilization". Jakata proposed to make use of the data for a revised edition of his book.

<sup>2</sup> It appears, however, that Mahadev Desai did, in fact, prepare a detailed statement furnishing replies point by point to the various questions put by Jakata in his letter. A Photostat of this (S. N. 8837) is available.

<sup>3</sup> Words in brackets were evidently instructions to the secretary.

<sup>4</sup> On the top of the letter Gandhiji had written: "Copy and get it signed by me."



## 285. *MY JAIL EXPERIENCES-III*

### SOME TERRIBLE RESULTS

In this chapter, I propose to discuss the results of the officials thinking that their duty ends with caring for the health of the prisoners, preventing fights among them or absconding. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that jails may be described as well- or ill-managed cattle-farms. A superintendent who ensures good food for the prisoners and does not punish without cause is considered both by the Government and the prisoners as a model superintendent. Neither party expects more. If a superintendent were to introduce the real human touch in his relations with the prisoners, he is highly likely to be misunderstood by the prisoners and will very probably be distrusted by the Government as being unpractical, if not worse.

The jails have, therefore, become hot beds of vice and degradation. The prisoners do not become better for their life in them. In most cases they become worse than before. Perhaps all the world over, the jails are an institution the most neglected by the public. The result is that there is little or no public check on their administration. It is only when a political prisoner of some fame finds himself within the walls of a prison that there is any public curiosity about the happenings therein.

What classification there is of prisoners is regulated more in the interest of the administration than those of the prisoners. Thus, for instance, one would find habitual criminals and persons who have committed not a moral but a merely statutory offence are put together in the same yard, in the same block and even in the same cell. Fancy forty or fifty persons of varying types being locked in the same cell for night after night! An educated man, who had been convicted under the Stamp Act for having used an officially-defaced stamp, was put in the same block as habitual offenders regarded as dangerous characters. It is no unusual thing to see murderers, abductors, thieves and mere statutory offenders huddled together. There are some tasks which can only be done jointly by several men, such as working the pump. Able-bodied men alone can be put onto such tasks. Some highly sensitive men were included in one such gang. Now the ordinary prisoners in such a gang will use language which no decent

man would care to hear. The men who use indecent language have no sense of indecency in the language they use. But a sensitive man will feel most uncomfortable when such language is used in his presence. Convict-warders are in immediate charge of such gangs. In the discharge of their duty, it is customary for them to swear at prisoners in the choicest billingsgate. And when they are sufficiently worked up, they do not spare the rod either. Needless to say, both the punishments are not only unauthorised, but they are unlawful. I could however, present quite a decent catalogue of things unlawful that happen in jails to the knowledge of, and sometimes even with the connivance of, officials. In the case mentioned by me, the sensitive prisoner could not put up with the foul language. He, therefore, refused to work in the gang unless it was stopped. It was due to the prompt intervention of Major Jones that a most awkward situation was averted. But the relief was momentary. He had no power to stop a recurrence of the trouble; for it must continue to recur so long as prisoners are not classified in accordance with a moral standard and with regard to their human requirements rather than administrative convenience.

One would have thought that, in a jail where every prisoner is under surveillance night and day and can never be out of the sight of a warder, crimes will not be possible. But, unfortunately, every conceivable crime against morality is not only possible, but is committed almost with impunity. I need not mention small pilferings, deceptions, petty and even serious assaults, but I wish to refer to unnatural crimes. I will not shock the reader with any details. In spite of my many jail experiences, I did not think that such crimes were possible in jails. But the Yeravda experience gave me more than one painful shock. The discovery of the existence of unnatural crimes produced one of the greatest of the shocks. All the officials who spoke to me about them said that, under the existing system, it was impossible to prevent them. Let the reader understand that, in a majority of cases, the consent of the victim is lacking. It is my deliberate opinion that it is possible to prevent such crimes if the administration of jails is humanized and can be made a matter of public concern. The number of prisoners in the jails of India must be several hundred thousand. It should be the concern of public workers to know what happens to them. After all, the motive behind punishment is reformation. The legislature, the judge and the jailor are believed to expect that the punishments would act as deterrents, not merely for the physical and mental hurt they cause, but for the

repentance that prolonged isolation must bring about. But the fact is that punishments only brutalize the prisoners. In the jails they are never given an opportunity for repentance and reform. The human touch is lacking. True, there is a weekly visit from religious preachers. I was not permitted to attend any of these meetings, but I know that they are mostly shams. I do not wish to suggest that the preachers are shams. But a religious service once a week for a few minutes can produce no impression on those who ordinarily see nothing wrong in crimes. It is necessary to provide a responsive atmosphere in which a prisoner unconsciously sheds bad and cultivates good habits.

But such atmosphere is impossible so long as the system of entrusting convicts with most responsible work is continued. By far the worst part of the system is the appointment of convict-officers. These men are necessarily long-term prisoners. They are, therefore, men who have committed the most serious crimes. Generally the bullies are chosen as warders. They are the most forward. They succeed in pushing themselves to the front. They are the instruments for the commission of almost all the crimes that take place in the jails. A free fight resulting in one death once took place because two such warders were concerned in the same prisoner who was a victim of their unnatural lust. Everyone knew what was happening in the jail. But the authorities intervened only to prevent further fighting and further bloodshed. These convict-officers recommend tasks for the other prisoners. They supervise the tasks. They are responsible for the good behaviour of the prisoners under their charge. In fact, the will of the permanent officers is expressed and carried out through these convicts who are dignified as "officers". The marvel to me was that under such a system, things were not much worse than they actually were. It once more demonstrated to me how superior men were to a wicked system as they were inferior to a good one. Human beings seem naturally to seek the middle path.

The whole of the cooking, too, is entrusted to prisoners. The result is indifferent cooking and organized favouritism. It is the prisoners who grind corn, shred vegetables, cook food and serve. When complaints as to short and badly cooked rations were recurrently made, the invariable answer was that the remedy was in their own hands as they cooked their own food, as if they were related to one another and understood mutual responsibility! Once when I pushed the argument to its logical extent, I was told that no administration could afford the cost. I differed from the view at the time of

argument. Further observation has confirmed me in my contention that, under a well-devised system, jail administration can be made self-supporting. I hope to devote a chapter to an examination of jail economics. For the present, I must satisfy myself with saying that no question of cost can possibly be admitted as relevant in a consideration of moral abuses.

*Young India*, 1-5-1924

## 286. NOTES

### A CATALOGUE OF CRIMES

1. Contributing to Tilak Swaraj Fund;
2. Association with Non-co-operators;
3. Subscribing to N.C.O. papers;
4. Standing for Non-co-operation;
5. Wearing khaddar.

These were actually regarded as crimes by the Post Master-General of Madras in April 1922 and were the only grounds for dismissal of Mr. Subba Rao, a servant in the Postal Department, after 17 years' service. Let not the reader imagine that now Mr. Subba Rao has been reinstated. Nothing of the kind has happened. The poor dismissed servant of the Government petitioned the Viceroy and on the 3rd October 1923 he received a reply saying that His Excellency had 'decided to reject your (his) memorial.' The order of dismissal contains the counts as I have given them. The recital of each count is followed by a description. The contribution to the Tilak Swaraj Fund, for instance, is stated to have been given in the name of the minor daughter and amounted to Rs. 5. Venom could not go any further. The logical result of such dismissals should be a regulation making it penal for a member of the legislature to wear khaddar. By a stroke of the pen we should then have domestic peace. The Government would be happy and so will the pro-Council men and the no-Council men. As it is, there can be no peace so long as men like Mr. Subba Rao have a real grievance against everybody—against the Government for manufacturing crimes, against the pro-Council men who, because of their eminence, wear khaddar with impunity and yet afford no relief to Mr. Subba Rao and such others, and against the no-Council men for failing to make khaddar universal and thus making the demand for swaraj irresistible.

## WHAT IS VIOLENCE ?

*Apropos* of my article in *Young India* (April 10, 1924) entitled, 'What It Is Not', a correspondent examining the ingredients of violence says:

The real issue is not about just or unjust grounds. Whether an act is an act of violence or not can be determined, not by reference to the grounds on which it is undertaken, but by reference to the manner in which it affects the party against whom it is directed and the effects which it produces generally. Both—acts of violence and acts that are not acts of violence—may have a just or an unjust cause. If a just cause can vindicate the adoption of a remedy, why should it justify a passive remedy only and not an active remedy? If it can vindicate N.C.O., it can equally justify the use of a sword. What moral delicacy should induce us to adopt N.C.O. and discard the sword? We are answered that the use of the sword is a way of violence. Way is that so? The reason is clear that it causes pain and suffering to our adversary. Does not N.C.O. do the same? Is there any difference between the two? The only difference is this. Whilst a thrust from the sword would cause a feeling of pain and suffering due to a disturbance caused thereby to the natural processes *inside the body*, which result in and preserve life, the practising of N.C.O. would cause pain and suffering by a disturbance to the processes working *outside the body* in the economic, social and political spheres—processes which are as much responsible for the preservation of life as those working inside the body.

The argument is clever, but it does not take us very far. The writer confuses two words, pain and violence, and regards them as synonymous. A physician who administers a bitter drug or cuts open an artery causes pain, but does no violence. The patient thanks him for it. If I do not serve my employer because he ill-treats me, my resignation, i.e., non-co-operation, may cause pain, but I have used no violence. But if I hammer him so as to make him do justice, I have extorted justice by violence.

## HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION IN SIND

Dr. Choithram has sent me newspaper cuttings which give a fair idea of the trouble that seems to be brewing in Sind. I have no desire to go into the facts of the case. There was an attempt to settle the Hindu-Muslim dispute by arbitration. Dr. Choithram and Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon have had their say in the Press. Seth Haji Abdulla Haroon says that there could be no arbitration before change of hearts. Whatever the cause, the failure of arbitration is unfortunate.

But the painful part of the whole affair is that the Hindus do not feel that they are safe and that the police guard the route in the affected area. If this is true, there is something radically wrong. Whoever is to blame, there should be an understanding between the parties that no one can take the law into his own hands. The parties may go to court if they cannot arbitrate, but overawing of one party by another can only end in bloodshed eventually. That is hardly the way of religion.

I assure my Hindu and Mussalman friends that I am feverishly anxious to disburden my soul of my views on Hindu-Muslim unity. I am simply waiting for friends who have asked me not to say anything till they and I have discussed the question. The accounts I receive daily of the tension show that the greatest question before the country is that of Hindu-Muslim unity and no other. I hope that a way will be found out of the present most unsatisfactory state of things.

*Young India*, 1-5-1924

### 287. *THE STARVING MOPLAH*

I gladly print the following from Mr. Yakub Hasan :

I enclose a copy of the statement I have lately issued to the Press about Moplah Relief. You will no doubt be grieved to learn that thousands of women and children belonging to the Moplahs, who were killed in the rebellion or were shot or hanged afterwards or are undergoing long imprisonment, are almost starving.

Moplahs as a class have always been poor. Most of them cultivating lands under the petty landlords called Jenmies, who are almost all Hindus. The oppression of the Jenmies is a matter of notoriety and a long-standing grievance of the Moplahs that has never been redressed though unsuccessful attempts were made several times to ease the situation by means of legislation. The rebellion has reduced the poverty-stricken Moplah community to still lower depth of destitution. The forcible conversions have placed the community in bad odour with the Hindus in general and the Jenmies in particular, and the Government has also no love for the people who have not long ago fought pitched battles with it. Hindus have had their vengeance through the military who burnt the Moplah houses and their mosques wholesale. Thousands of Moplahs have been killed, shot, hanged or imprisoned for life and thousands are now languishing in jail. Of those who are left behind, several thousand are paying fines in monthly instalments in lieu of imprisonment for two years. These people are always under the thumb

of the police. The few who have escaped death, jail or fine are not in any happier condition. They are frightened out of their wits and are constantly living in terror. Some of the people I talked to in the out-of-way places were trembling with fear in spite of the assurance given to them that I was their friend and the object of my visit was only to help them if I can.

This is the general condition of the Moplahs in South Malabar. The condition of the women who have lost husbands and fathers by death or imprisonment is still worse. Unlike their sisters in other parts of India, Moplah women do not observe *purdah*. They are intelligent and industrious and always work with their male relations in fields and elsewhere. They are now very much handicapped; for just when the burden of supporting the family is thrown on their shoulders and they are called upon by the untoward circumstances to be the sole bread-earners for their families, they find no work that would give them a living wage. Though Moplahs have always been poor, still there were no beggars among them. But now it is a common sight to see Moplah women and children in tatters begging in the streets. Among the poor Muslim women who beg in this alms-giving month of Ramzan, I find almost half are Moplah women in Madras, and I am told this is the case in all large cities in this Presidency.

As for children, their neglected condition can be more imagined than described.

Something has to be done and done immediately if the Moplah community is to be saved from moral, even physical, destruction. In spite of all his faults and shortcomings, the Moplah is a fine man. He has the bravery, the pluck and the grit of his Arab father, and the gentleness and the industry of his Nair mother. His religious zeal is more misunderstood than appreciated. He is as a rule peaceful, but he brooks no affront to his honour or religion.

Unfortunate circumstances, the causes of which I need not enter into on this occasion, forced him into the position of a rebel. He has done what anyone, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, under the same circumstances and in the same emergency, would have done in self-defence and self-interest. He has suffered the consequence of his deeds. Should the society also visit his sins on his wife and children?

I place this matter before you Mahatmaji, because you are the head of the Indian nation, and both Hindus and Mussalmans jointly and severally look upon you as their leader. It is not for me to say how this great problem should be tackled. In your wisdom and goodness of heart, you will, God willing, find ways and means to carry life giving succour to the suffering Moplah women and children. Your appeal will make the Hindus forgive and forget and show that magnanimity of the heart without which no nation can aspire to be great, and your appeal will make Mussalmans realize more fully their duty to themselves. I am sure all the leading men

irrespective of cast or creed or political thoughts, will join hands with you in bringing this humanitarian cause home to the people at large.

My appeal must necessarily be to the Hindus. I do not know how far it will be successful in the present tension between the two communities. But I must not think of the result. I should be guilty of cowardice if I did not publish Mr. Yakub Hasan's letter which commands my sympathy. I know that the Hindus feel sore over what the Moplahs in 1921 did to their Hindu neighbours in Malabar. I know that thousands of Hindus think that the Moplah atrocities were not as strongly condemned by the general body of the Mussalmans as they might have been. I know that many will (as I do ) take exception to

Mr. Yakub Hasan's sweeping assertion that 'he (Moplah) has done what anyone, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, under the same circumstances and in the same emergency would have done in self-defence or self-interest'. No circumstance and no provocation however grave could possibly justify forcible conversions. I should hope that Mr. Yakub Hasan has not meant to include these among the pardonable acts of the Moplahs.

But even assuming the truth of the worst that the Hindus may have to say against the Moplahs and the contemporaneous or subsequent conduct of the rest of the Indian Mussalmans, I have no doubt that, if the Hindus allowed their prejudices to interfere with their charity towards their countrymen and countrywomen, the starving Moplahs, it would be counted as a sin before the Judgment Seat. We may not remember against posterity the sins of its forefathers. The Moplahs sinned against God and have suffered grievously for it. Let the Hindus also remember that they have not allowed the opportunity of revenge to pass by. Many have done all they could to take reprisals when they got the opportunity.

My point is simple. In face of the awful fact of starvation and homelessness, all argument and all opposition must be hushed. Generations hence, when all our evil acts will have been forgotten, posterity will cherish the treasured memory of every simple act of love shown by the one to the other. I therefore ask every Hindu reader who will extend the hand of love and fellowship to his starving Moplah brother and sister and their children, to send his or her mite, and I shall endeavour to see that it is properly distributed among the most deserving among the Moplahs.

*Young India* 1-5-1924



## 288. *VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA*

Vaikom Satyagraha has attracted such wide public attention and, though restricted to a small area, presents so many problems for solution that I offer no apology to the reader for constantly engaging his attention for it.

I have received several important and well-thought-out letters protesting against my countenancing it in any way whatsoever. One such letter even urges me to use whatever influence I may have for stopping it altogether. I am sorry that I am unable to publish all these letters. But I hope to cover all the points raised in these letters or otherwise brought to my notice.

The first may be cleared at once. Exception has been taken to Mr. George Joseph—a Christian—having been allowed to replace Mr. Menon as leader and organiser. In my humble opinion the exception is perfectly valid. As soon as I heard that Mr. Joseph was ‘invited to take the lead’ and he contemplated taking it, I wrote to him as follows on 6th April:

As to Vaikom, I think that you shall let the Hindus do the work. It is they who have to purify themselves. You can help by your sympathy and by your pen, but not by organizing the movement and certainly not by offering satyagraha. If you refer to the Congress resolution of Nagpur, it calls upon the Hindu members to remove the curse of untouchability. I was surprised to learn from Mr. Andrews that the disease had infected even the Syrian Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, before the letter could reach him, Mr. Menon was arrested and Mr. George Joseph had taken his place. But he had nothing to expiate, as every Hindu has in the matter of untouchability as countenanced by the Hindus. His sacrifice cannot be appropriated by the Hindus in general as expiation made, say, by Malaviyaji would be. Untouchability is the sin of the Hindus. They must suffer for it, they must purify themselves, they must pay the debt they owe their suppressed brothers and sisters. Theirs is the shame and theirs must be the glory when they have purged themselves of the black sin. The silent, loving suffering of one single pure Hindu as such will be enough to melt the hearts of millions of Hindus; but the sufferings of thousands of non-Hindus in behalf of the untouchables will leave the Hindus unmoved. Their blind eyes will not be opened by outside

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to George Joseph”, 6-4-1924.

interference, however well-intentioned and generous it may be; for it will not bring home to them the sense of guilt. On the contrary, they would probably hug the sin all the more for such interference. All reform to be sincere and lasting must come from within.

But why may the Vaikom satyagrahis not receive monetary aid from outside, especially if it be from Hindus? So far as non-Hindu assistance is concerned, I am as clear about such pecuniary help as I am about such personal help. I may not build my Hindu temple with non-Hindu money. If I desire a place of worship I must pay for it. This removal of untouchability is much more than building a temple of brick and mortar. Hindus must bleed for it, must pay for it. *They* must be prepared to forsake wife, children and all for the sake of removing the curse. As for accepting assistance from Hindus from outside, such acceptance would betray unreadiness on the part of the local Hindus for the reform. If the satyagrahis have the sympathy of the local Hindus they must get locally all the money they may need. If they have not, the very few who may offer satyagraha must be content to starve. If they are not, it is clear that they will evoke no sympathy among the local Hindus whom they want to convert. Satyagraha is a process of conversion. The reformers, I am sure, do not seek to force their views upon the community; they strive to touch its heart. Outside pecuniary help must interfere with the love process if I may so describe the method of satyagraha. Thus viewed, the proposed Sikh free kitchen I can only regard as a menace to the frightened Hindus of Vaikom.

There is no doubt in my mind about it that the orthodox Hindus, who still think that worship of God is inconsistent with touching a portion of their own co-religionists and that a religious life is summed up in ablutions and avoidance of physical pollutions merely, are alarmed at the development of the movement at Vaikom. They believe that their religion is in danger. It behoves the organizers, therefore, to set even the most orthodox and the most bigoted at ease and to assure them that they do not seek to bring about the reform by compulsion. The Vaikom satyagrahis must stoop to conquer. They must submit to insults and worse at the hands of the bigoted and yet love them, if they will change their hearts.

But a telegram says in effect, 'the authorities are barricading the roads; may we not break or scale the fences? May we not fast? For we find that fasting is effective.'

My answer is, if we are satyagrahis we dare not scale or break fences. Breaking or scaling fences will certainly bring about the imprisonment, but the breaking will not be civil disobedience. It will be essentially incivil and criminal. Nor may we fast. I observe that my letter to Mr. Joseph with references of fasting has been misunderstood. For the sake of ready reference, I reproduce below the relevant part:

‘Omit fasting but stand or squat in relays with quiet submission till arrested.’

The above is the wire sent to you in reply to yours. Fasting in Satyagraha has well-defined limits. You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be a species of violence done to him. You invite penalty from him for disobedience of his orders, but you cannot inflict on yourselves penalties when he refuses to punish and renders it impossible for you to disobey his orders so as to compel infliction of penalty. Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a father who drinks. My fast at Bombay and then at Bardoli was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say General Dyer, who not only does not love me but who regards himself as my enemy. Am I quite clear?<sup>1</sup>

It need not be pointed out that the above remarks are of a general character. The words ‘tyrant’ and ‘lover’ have also a general application. The one who does an injustice is styled ‘tyrant’. The one who is in sympathy with you is the ‘lover’. In my opinion, in the Vaikom movement, opponents of the reform are the ‘tyrant’. The state may or may not be that. In this connection, I have considered the State as merely the police striving to keep the peace. In no case is the State or the opponents in the position of ‘lover’. The supporters of Vaikom satyagrahis enjoy that status. There are two conditions attached to a satyagrahi fast. It should be against the lover and for his reform, not for extorting rights from him. The only possible case in the Vaikom movement when a fast will be justified would be when the local supporters go back upon their promise to suffer. I can fast against my father to cure him of a vice, but I may not in order to get from him an inheritance. The beggars of India who sometimes fast against those who do not satisfy them are no more satyagrahis than children who fast against a parent for a fine dress. The former are impudent, the latter are childish. My Bardoli fast was against fellow

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to George Joseph”, 12-4-1924

workers who ignited the Chauri Chaura spark and for the sake of reforming them. If the Vaikom satyagrahis fast because the authorities will not arrest them, it will be, I must say in all humility, the beggar's fast described above. If it proves effective, it shows the goodness of the authorities, not that of the cause or of the actors. A satyagrahi's first concern is not the effect of his action. It must always be its propriety. He must have faith enough in his cause and his means, and know that success will be achieved in the end.

Some of my correspondents object altogether to satyagraha in an Indian State. In this matter, too, let me quote the remaining portion of my foregoing letter to Mr. Joseph:

You may be patient. You are in an Indian State. Therefore, you may wait in deputation on the Diwan and the Maharaja. Get up a monster petition by the orthodox Hindus who may be well-disposed towards the movement. See also those who are opposing. You can support the gentle direct action in a variety of ways. You have already drawn public attention to the matter by preliminary satyagraha. Above all, see to it that it neither dies nor by impatience becomes violent.

Satyagraha in an Indian State by the Congress for the attainment of its object is, I think, clearly forbidden. But satyagraha in an Indian State in connection with local abuses may be legitimately taken up at any time provided the other necessary conditions are fulfilled. As, in an Indian State, there can be no question of non-co-operation, the way of petitions and deputations is not only always open, but it is obligatory. But, say some of my correspondents, the conditions for lawful satyagraha do not exist in Vaikom. They ask:

1. Is unapproachability exclusively observed at Vaikom or is it general throughout Kerala ?
2. If it is general, then what is the special reason for selecting Vaikom in preference to places within the British territory in Kerala?
3. Did the satyagrahis petition the Maharaja, the local Assembly, etc.?
4. Did they consult the orthodox sections ?
5. Is not the use of the road the thin end of the wedge, is it not a step towards the abolition of caste altogether?
6. Is not the road a private road?

The first two questions are irrelevant. Unapproachability and untouchability have to be tackled wherever they exist. Wherever the workers consider a place or time suitable, it is their duty to start work,

whether by satyagraha or other legitimate means.

My information goes to show that the method of petition, etc. was tried not once but often.

They did consult the orthodox people and thought that they had the latter's support.

I am assured that the use of the road is the final goal of the satyagrahis. It is, however, not to be denied that the present movement throughout India is to throw open to the suppressed classes all the *public* roads, *public* schools, *public* wells and *public* temples which are accessible to non-Brahmins.

It is, in fact, a movement to purify caste by ridding it of its most pernicious result. I personally believe in *Varnashrama*, though it is true that I have my own meaning for it. Anyway, anti-untouchability movement does not aim at inter-dining or inter-marrying. Those who mix up the touch and the last two things together are doing harm to the cause of the suppressed classes as also to that of inter-dining and intermarriage.

I have letters which protest that the road in question is a public road. In fact, my informants tell me, it was some years ago even accessible to the unapproachables as to other non-Brahmins.

In my opinion, therefore, there is a just cause for the Vaikom satyagraha and so far as it is kept within proper limits and conducted with the strictest regard to non-violence and truth, it deserves full public sympathy.

*Young India*, 1-5-1924

### 289. CHARKHA IN SOUTH KANARA

Writing about the work of the volunteers in relieving distress caused by the floods in South Kanara, Mr. Sadashiv Rao<sup>1</sup> writes :

About Rs. 50,000 were collected by the Floods Relief Committee of which I happen to be the Joint-Secretary; and most of this money has been distributed among the poor, first for affording food and clothing and latterly by way of money doles for building huts or small dwelling places for the poor. In accordance with the undertaking given by the Committee to the public, the whole amount thus collected has practically been spent. But the amount of Rs. 5,000 timely sanctioned by the All-India Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and earmarked for advancing the constru-

<sup>1</sup> Karnad Sadashiv Rao, Karnatak Congress leader

ctive programme in the flood-stricken areas has proved, like the flood itself, to be a blessing in disguise. Under the auspices of the Rashtriya Jilla Khadi Board working under our District Congress Committee, we have opened twelve model depots in the affected parts wherein weaving and carpentry have been arranged to be taught according to the aptitudes of the people; and a great impetus has been given to the progress of spinning in the affected parts among all classes of people. A convenient central village has been singled out for working the depot; and every morning our workers go into the neighbouring villages with cotton and charkhas to teach carding and spinning to the people in their homes. Nurseries of cotton plants have also been made on the plots attached to these depots and arrangements have been made to distribute the plants gratis or at nominal prices among the people for being planted in their own places. Last year the Congress Committee made a humble attempt to popularize cotton-growing by a free distribution of seeds suited to the soil at this time of the year. But barring a handful of them, most of the people did not take kindly to it. It is for this reason that a departure has been made this year. Already more than five hundred families have taken enthusiastically to spinning and we expect a thousand pounds of yarn in this month. Last month we received through these twelve depots 735 lbs. of yarn of counts ranging from 8 to 20. We are obliged to give charkhas on the instalment system as the people are poor. It is a most encouraging feature that the majority of these families who have begun to spin are Mahomedans and Christians. The monsoon is almost upon us as it is expected to break out earlier this year, and already we have had showers with thunder and lightning. It is well-known that within a few weeks after the rains set in, most of the people in village parts are without occupation. The money in hand set apart for the constructive programme has been exhausted. And, if the charitable public do not come to our rescue at this juncture, the humble work begun by our struggling volunteers for relieving the distress of the poor by supplying supplementary occupations at their very doors will come to grief. Having regard to the fact that 90 p.c. of the people that have thus taken to spinning are women, I feel that I can confidently look up to all who love nation-building work to contribute their mite for helping us to continue this glorious work of serving the poor. There are thousands of women who are hankering to have the charkhas; but, for want of funds, the work cannot progress.

We have also made another departure in accordance with your advice. There are twenty national schools in our district with a thousand pupils. Two of these are high schools. Boys coming out of these schools are taken as apprentices in these depots; and they are asked to go back to their respective villages for starting national elementary schools or panchayat courts or any other handicrafts like weaving, carpentry, iron smithy, dyeing, printing, etc., arrangements for teaching all of which are being made in these depots.

Will the appeal of our self-sacrificing, struggling volunteers on behalf of our voiceless poor go in vain ?

This is solid work deserving support.

I had the honour of receiving about fifty Kanarese sisters a few days ago<sup>1</sup>. They had organized among themselves a dramatic performance. The play is written by one of them. The performance fetched Rs. 550. The expenses amounted to Rs. 50. These sisters brought me the Rs. 500 and yarn spun by them. I know that these sisters will appreciate the use I propose to make of their precious gift. I feel that I cannot do better than send the amount for distributing the charkha among their distressed Mussalman and Christian sisters. The amount will be sent forthwith to Mr. Sadashiv Rao.

*Young India*, 1-5-1924

## 290 “SHANTAM, SHIVAM, ADVAITAM”<sup>2</sup>

I have hitherto taken liberties with Mr. Andrews’ writings for *Young India*. But in spite of personal allusions, I have not the courage to remove a single word from the beautiful prose poem he has given us.

*Young India*, 1-5-1924

## 291. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI <sup>3</sup>

[BOMBAY,  
On or after May 1, 1924]

WIRE RECEIVED. ONLY COMFORT I CAN OFFER IS SEND DEVDAS.  
WIRE CONDITION AND REPLY<sup>4</sup>

GANDHI

From a photostat: S. N. 8777

<sup>1</sup> Vide “My Notes” 27-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> This was Gandhiji’s comment at the end of an article by C. F. Andrews under this title.

<sup>3</sup> This was in reply to Rajagopalachari’s telegram to Devdas Gandhi of May 1, 1924, stating: “Son-in-law’s pneumonia and mental derangement continuing distressing.”

<sup>4</sup> Rajagopalachari later wired: “Son-in-law moved to hospital yesterday. Myself strangely free asthma. Ask Bapu forgive.”

## 292. *LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

ANDHERI,

*Friday [On or before May 2, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAI JAMNALALJI,

Mahatma Bhagwandinji and Pandit Sunderlalji have come here. They wish to talk about the Asahayoga Ashram and other matters. But I told them that I could do nothing without meeting you. I advised them to meet you and they have decided to do so. If, after hearing them, you want to tell or ask me anything, please do so.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: G. N. 2846

## 293. *STATEMENT ON KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE*<sup>2</sup>

[BOMBAY

*Before May 4, 1924]*

I understand that the Reception Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference is prepared to give assurance to the State that all decency will be maintained by the Parishad, and that no personal remarks will be passed over the chiefs. I also understand that the Working Committee, which met at Porbandar, had got to consult Pattani Saheb before it made recommendation to the Reception Committee to hold the Conference in Bhavnagar, and in failing to do this it has acted indiscriminately.

Pattani Saheb desires that the Parishad should not be held in Bhavnagar this Year. I also understand that he will have many difficulties in allowing it to meet. He says he is prepared to give all help if the Parishad be held at Songad. He is prepared to encourage the people of Bhavnagar to attend it and, above all these, he is prepared to give all necessary help for making it possible for the

<sup>1</sup> According to a noting on this letter, the addressee replied to it on May 3. The preceding Friday fell on May 2.

<sup>2</sup> The statement was issued as a result of talks which the Conference workers had with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai Patel in Bombay. The text reproduced here is from a correspondent's despatch of May 4 entitled "Bhavnagar Notes".



Conference to meet in the boundary of any State next year. He only requires one condition, that all decency be observed in the lectures, etc., of this year. He does not desire to have any binding or condition for the next year. He believes the Parishad itself will observe its own decorum.

Looking to the situation on the whole, I believe the Reception Committee should not insist upon holding the Conference in Bhavnagar this year. They should agree with Pattani Saheb, and prove their full worth as satyagrahis by observing complete decency in the Parishad. There is not the least disgrace for the people in so doing. Satyagraha does not lose its lustre, and the path becomes clear for the future. But supposing everything goes against our expectations, Pattani Saheb breaks his promise or he be away from Kathiawar then, or he fails to get the Conference held in a State after all possible attempts, the satyagrahi has nothing to lose. A true satyagrahi is never weary of observing proper manners. He has never to repent of lost opportunities. When time comes, he is ever ready.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 8-5-1924

#### 294. RENUNCIATION PERSONIFIED<sup>1</sup>

God created nothing finer than the Hindu widow. Whenever I hear men recounting their misfortunes, the picture of the widow comes vividly before my eyes and I laugh at the man who bewails his misfortunes.

Self-control has been carried by Hinduism to the greatest height and, in a widow's life, it reaches perfection. Man can find a remedy for his misfortunes, which are usually the consequence of his own folly. Much of his misery is due merely to greed. But what of the widow? She, poor woman, is in no way responsible for her misfortune. Nor is the remedy for it open to her, for custom has barred that door. A great many widows do not even look on their suffering as suffering. Renunciation has become second nature to them, and to renounce it would be painful to them. They find happiness in their self-denial.

This is not an undesirable state. On the contrary, it is good. It is Hinduism at its best. I regard the widow's life as an ornament to Hinduism. When I see a widow, I instinctively bow my head in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Curse of Widowhood", 9-5-1920 & "More thoughts about Widows", 16-5-1920.

reverence. I never regard the sight of a widow as an ill omen. I feel blessed if I see the face of one in the morning. A widow's blessing is to me a gift which I prize. Seeing her, I forget all my sorrows. Man is but a clod before her. A widow's patient suffering is impossible to rival. Compared to her inheritance of ages, of what worth is a man's self-acquired wealth of brief renunciation ?

If a widow suffers, before whom can she pour out her grief? If there is anyone in this world before whom she can do so, it is her mother. But what is the use ? What help can the mother give ? All she can do is to ask her to be patient and go and attend to her work. For a widow, her mother's house is no longer her home. She must live with her father-in-law's family. Only a daughter-in-law knows what it is to be harassed by a mother-in-law. A widow's duty is to serve others. The brother-in-law, the mother-in-law, the father-in-law and every chance visitor—she must serve them all. She is never weary. She only prays for strength to enable her to serve better.

If this holy life lived by widows becomes a thing of the past, if this living image of service is destroyed through ignorance or pride, incalculable harm will be done to Hinduism.

How can this way of life for widows be kept alive? What share of the virtues of following it can be claimed by parents who marry off a daughter only ten years old? Can the girl who becomes a widow on the very day she is married be regarded as a widow? Are we not committing an unforgivable sin by regarding as dharma the extreme length to which the rules about a widow's life are carried? If this way of life is to be kept alive, is it not essential that the men give thought to their own duty? Can a woman, who is innocent of what widowhood means, possess a body that can follow the widow's life? Who can imagine how a girl married today feels? What is her father's duty towards her? Or, was it over when he put a knife to her throat?

It is my humble opinion that the following rules are necessary for preserving the sanctity of the widow's life, for preserving Hinduism and for order in Hindu society.

1. No father should get a daughter under the age of 15 married.
2. If a girl below this age has already been married and has become a widow, it is the father's duty to get her married again.
3. If a fifteen-year-old girl becomes a widow within a year of her marriage, her parents should encourage her to marry again.
4. Every member of the family should look upon the widow with

the utmost respect. Parents or parents-in-law must provide her with the means of improving her knowledge.

I have not suggested these rules to be generally followed. They are to serve only as a guide. I am convinced that our duty towards widows is along the lines indicated in them.

Who should ensure that these rules are followed? In Hindu society, castes are the natural agencies for this purpose. But till such time as they are reformed, what should those parents do who are ready to follow these rules? They should make efforts to persuade their community to introduce reforms and, if they do not succeed, free themselves from the shackles of the caste and search for a suitable bridegroom for the widow. Both the parties should be ready to live outside the cast and appeal to its members from outside. They should do nothing which would shock the leaders, nor should they think of resorting to satyagraha; if at all they want to offer satyagraha; they should understand that staying humbly outside the caste is in itself satyagraha. If the marriage had been thought of as the only possible course in the circumstances, if the motive behind it was to live a life of self-control and if the ostracized family's life is blameless in every way, then the elders will not only take them back into the caste, but will also accept this reform and other poor widows will be spared the torture which would have been theirs otherwise.

Such reforms cannot be brought about immediately, but it is enough if their seeds are sown. In time, the seeds will surely grow into trees.

I have suggested only a minor reform. I have done this because a really big reform may seem impossible. This reform would be that, man too, like woman, should not remarry after the death of his partner. If we understand the true meaning of Hinduism, we would not reduce the rigour of a restraint which is difficult to practise, but would on the contrary introduce in our lives other similar restraints and thus practise the former more rigidly. If widowers do not marry again, widows would not feel life to be a burden, and marriages of ill-matched pairs and of children which are so common today would stop.

There is in all this one danger which we should guard against. I have heard the following argument: "The widow's customary life is a great ideal in every way. Why, then, to get a few child-widows remarried? We want even widowers to refrain from marrying again.

Besides, we want the custom of child-marriage also to end. It is not necessary, therefore, to encourage widows to remarry under any circumstances.” This is a dangerous argument, for it is mere sophistry. It resembles an argument put forward by some British friends: “You believe in non-violence and want us also to practise non-violence. Hence, no matter what force we use, you ought not to ask your people to resist us with force.” This is what some of them tell me. The fallacy in this reasoning is plain enough. All of us commit similar fallacies knowingly or unknowingly. The British friends who argue in this way forget that I wish to teach non-violence to both parties. But how can I advocate non-violence to those who are incapable of the understanding it, who are, in other words, cowardly? I could not convince my son of the duty of remaining non-violent. Nor could I get it accepted by the poor and harassed villagers of Bettiah.<sup>1</sup> I had to tell them: “If your choice lies between running away and leaving a woman to her fate or defending her by force against a miscreant, if you cannot, resolutely, remain where you are and, looking upon him as your brother and using no force against him, oppose him with satyagraha unto death, then by all means attack him with force and defend the woman.” The path of satyagraha is not for cowards. It is only when a person has shed his cowardice and become a that he is fit for the method of non-violence.

If we now examine the sophistic argument in regard to widows, we shall see that only widowers who are ready to remain unmarried have a right to advance it. Others who do not appreciate the idea of a widower remaining unmarried or who, though they appreciate the idea itself, are not ready to act upon it, have no right to use that as an argument for defending the custom of compelling widows to remain unmarried. Imagine a sixty-year-old man, who had remarried, cheerfully contemplating the possibility of his nine-year-old wife, so-called, becoming a widow, writing admiringly in his will about her state, saluting his poor child-wife doomed to be a widow and saying: “If, through misfortune, I die before my most virtuous wife, my partner in dharma, I know that she will remain a widow and shed glory on me, on my and her parents’ families and on the Hindu way of life. Having married this girl, I have realized that a widower should remain unmarried. I would have done better if I had done so. I admit my weakness. But a man’s weakness adds to the lustre of a widow’s life.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Bettiah”, 8-12-1920.

Concerning my child-wife, therefore, I desire that, after my death, she should remain a widow and illustrate the glory of self-control." What effect will this argument have on that child-widow or on those who read the will?

It was necessary to examine this argument, since, under cover or in the name of loyalty to a noble ideal, many unholy practices which have the appearance of being holy are defended. The definition of a widow can have no reference to child marriages. A widow means a woman who, at the proper age, married a person of her choice or was married to him with her consent, who has had relations with her husband, and who has then lost her husband. A wife who has not known consummation of marriage or a girl of tender age sacrificed by her parents cannot and must not be included in this definition. It is, therefore, perversity to defend the custom forcing girls to submit to their so-called widowhood. But, when men advocate enforced widowhood for girls by admitting the necessity of widowers, too, remaining unmarried, they add either impudence or profound ignorance to their perversity.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-5-1924

## 295 WHO WILL SAVE ?

I got this letter<sup>1</sup> after I had written the article "Renunciation Personified". Such instances are of frequent occurrence in the country. It is difficult to make an elderly man, who is a slave to his passions and has come forward to destroy the life of a girl, to agree to abandon this idea. As for the girl's father, who probably expects to get some money, how can one bring him to see his daughter's good? Where lust and selfishness blind men's eyes, who can open them?

However, if the leaders of the caste wish, they can save this helpless girl. If they are not ready to do anything in the matter, someone inclined to do this act of charity should persuade them to intervene. If even this is not possible, then those who wish to prevent this horrible deed should courteously plead with the girl's father and also with the man who wishes to marry her. In any case, they must break off relations with them. They should refuse to join dinners and

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here; the correspondent had described in the letter his unsuccessful efforts to prevent the marriage of a young girl to a man of about 50.

other functions and thus save themselves from being partners in their sin. The whole society in which such crimes occur must share the blame for them, because no one would dare to do anything against which there is a strong public opinion. And when any person has the arrogance to disregard the limits laid down by society, the latter has the splendid weapon of satyagraha ready at hand. It can employ it and be free of its responsibility.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-5-1924

## 296. HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

I was not, and still am not, inclined to express my ideas about the bitterness between Hindus and Muslims. My views have of course been formed, but I have not stated them in public as yet out of consideration for friends. The delay on my part is due to the fact that they are still thinking over the matter. But now that this distressing incident has occurred in Visnagar, I cannot remain altogether silent. If I want to continue as the editor of a journal, I must, when the occasion demands, express my views.

Shri Mahadev Desai has given me a heart-rending account of how Abbas Saheb and he failed in their attempt to bring about a reconciliation. It seems that on *Ramnavami* day the Hindus took out a procession of Rama and, of course, there was music on the occasion. As the procession approached a mosque, they saw Muslims with drawn swords ready to meet them. The procession could pass the spot only under police protection twenty-four hours later.

I leave out other incidents. Hindus would not give up their right to play music and Muslims would not permit it. Somehow, a riot was prevented. But neither party deserves credit for this. It goes to the police.

And now we hear that someone has secretly inflicted wounds with a sword on some cattle. One animal was found to have died of the wounds. Hindus have broken off their relations with Muslims.

After the affair of the procession, Shri Mahasukhlal Chunilal, a well-known gentleman of Visnagar, delivered a speech in which he used strong language. In the course of it, he referred to white-capped men and said that, however much they might try, they would not succeed in bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity. Shri Mahasukhlal has

advised Hindus to resort to non-co-operation.

In Visnagar, Hindus are more numerous than Muslims, and yet they fear the latter very much. The Muslims, on their part, do not wish to sheathe their swords.

To my knowledge, there is no religious injunction that requires the continuous play of music in a procession. I also think that it is the duty of Hindus to cease playing at certain times in order to avoid hurting Muslims. But I am equally convinced that to stop playing music out of fear of Muslim swords is wrong. Just as the Hindus should not use force to stop the Muslims from killing cows, so the latter should not use it to stop the former from playing music. If both parties value unity, they will on their own stop killing cows or playing music. I am also of the view that, even if one party does not do its duty, the other party should not fail to do its own. Neither side, however, will submit, ought to submit to force, even if it is totally destroyed in consequence.

Everyone has a right, if the occasion demands, to resort to peaceful non-co-operation. There is no reason why this method should be used only against the Government and not among ourselves. Nor is there any reason why it may be employed by Hindus against Muslims or *vice versa*, but not by Hindus against Hindus and Muslims against Muslims. On a matter of principle, non-co-operation may become necessary even between father and son.

The question is whether such an occasion has in fact arisen for the Hindus of Visnagar. In my humble opinion, it has not. Hindus and Muslims cannot solve complicated problems in their towns by taking the law into their own hands. Even if the immediate result seems satisfactory to the winning side, the permanent consequences are bound to be disastrous. Moreover, if in a town one party happens to win, it does not mean that all members of the community will gain from this victory. Hindus, being in a majority in Visnagar, may succeed, with the help of the Government or through non-co-operation, in having the upper hand over Muslims, but what will be the gain? Will the Hindus of Visnagar like it if in other places Muslims take similar advantage of favourable circumstances to suppress the Hindus? If this will not be to their taste, is it likely that Muslims in other places will be pleased with the discomfiture of Muslims in Visnagar? Though the policy adopted by Hindus in Visnagar may be pleasant in the beginning, it is certain to be harmful in the long run

and, therefore, ought to be rejected as advised by the *Gita*.

I need not remind the Hindus of Visnagar that I am not asking them to submit to force and give up their right to play music. Nor am I telling them that they should never resort to non-co-operation. But I certainly state my view, in all humility, that, if the report I was given is correct, the Hindus' plan to start non-co-operation is much too hasty. They have not exhausted other means which they should have tried before deciding on this step. If they are wise, they will have as little recourse as possible to the authorities. I hear that the latter in Visnagar have handled the situation with patience and tact and without taking sides. I write this on the basis of what I have heard from an impartial Hindu. I do not know yet what the effect on the mind of an impartial Muslim is likely to have been.

In any case, we want to have as little recourse to authority as possible. We have cherished this principle for the last four years. We must, therefore, consider what step we can take other than inviting intervention by the authorities. The Hindus of Visnagar have no reason now to fear the swords of the Muslims. The authorities have protected them against that threat and continue to do so. They must now look for some means of reconciliation. Have they consulted Hindus and Muslims outside Visnagar? Have they written to the Ali Brothers? Have they written to Hakimji? Perhaps these two may not do anything, but it is the duty of Hindus to seek their help. Have the Hindus obtained the permission of Vallabhbhai, who is the leader of Gujarat? They refused to listen to Abbas Saheb and insulted him. Have they apologized to him and sought his advice?

But Shri Mahasukhlal says that Hindus and Muslims can never live in amity, that the Hindus must look after themselves. If they listen to the white-capped gentry, he says, they [the Hindus] will by and by become Muslims. I would humbly say to this gentleman that his ideas, if correctly reported, are mistaken. Among people wearing white caps are both Hindus and Muslims. I assure him that Hindus who wear white caps will not cease to be Hindus. But our dispute is not over white or black caps. Maybe people who wear white caps are a bad lot. Who am I to defend them? One's conduct alone can be one's defence. But the idea that there can never be unity between Hindus and Muslims seems to me a terrible one. It is wrong from the religious point of view. It is opposed to the Hindu cultural tradition; according to Hinduism, no one is destined to perish, which means that there is



the same *atman* in all beings. The Hindu does not insist that only those who believe in the same ideas as he does will go to heaven. I do not know if Muslims believe that. But even if Muslims believe that Hindus being Kaffirs, are not fit to go to heaven, the Hindu religion teaches them to bear love for Muslims and bind them to themselves with that chain. For Hinduism looks down upon no religion. On the contrary, it tells every man: "Your good lies in following your own religion."

From the practical point of view also, to believe that Hindu-Muslim unity is impossible is to accept slavery for all time. If any Hindu imagines that the seven crores of Muslims in India can be wiped out I have no hesitation in asserting that he slumbers in profound ignorance.

Moreover, merely because Hindus and Muslims of Visnagar are fighting, why should we believe that they are doing the same thing in all the seven hundred thousand villages of India in which the two communities live side by side? There are many villages in every part of the country in which Hindus and Muslims live like brothers and are even oblivious of the fact that, in certain towns and villages in their neighbourhood, the two communities are at loggerheads.

Examining in this way both the moral and the practical aspects, the wiser among the Hindus of Visnagar should see that unity between Hindus and Muslims is both possible and indispensable. I would also beg leave to inform the gentleman who is advising non-co-operation [with Muslims] that the ultimate aim of non-co-operation is co-operation. Non-co-operation is a process of self-purification. In this world, the creation of one God, permanent non-co-operation with any human being is unthinkable. The idea is not to be entertained, for it is opposed to the conception of God as the Lord of all. I, therefore, appeal to the Hindus of Visnagar to invite Vallabhbhai and Abbas Saheb and ask them to settle the dispute. If they have no confidence in these two non-co-operators, let them invite any persons belonging to the party of co-operators. There are many such persons among Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat who will help them. As long as the Hindus of Visnagar have not exhausted all other reasonable means of settling the dispute, they have no right to resort to non-co-operation.

So much for the Hindus.

The Muslims have committed a serious error; Muslim history tells us that Islam's glory has not been maintained by the sword. The

sword may have defended Islam, but Islam has never decided issues of justice and injustice by the sword. There has been no instance in the world till now of a religion which flourished merely on the strength of the sword. Though not a Muslim, I would certainly tell the Muslims of Visnagar that it is a bad habit to draw the sword on the slightest provocation and that it destroys religion. It is the fakirs, sufis and philosophers who won glory for Islam. It is proved by Muslim writing that they defended themselves or their religion not with the sword but by their soul-force.

The Muslims of Visnagar should sheathe their swords forthwith. They cannot prevent Hindus from playing music before mosques by the threat of the sword. Hindus have been playing music for the last 30 or 40 years and it will not be easy to stop them all at once. In any case, it is certain that they cannot be stopped by the sword. Others feel just as we feel—this is a universal law. If Hindus try to secure their rights from Muslims by force, the latter will not yield. Similarly, nothing can be forcibly wrested from the Hindus either. The Muslims of Visnagar should calmly think over this.

I would not say that, since Hindus have been playing music for 40 years, they should not now be prevented from doing so even if they have been in the wrong. A wrong does not become right because it has been going on for a long time. But matters can be set right not by means of the sword but by persuasion. If the Hindus of Visnagar are in the wrong, they must be shown their mistake. They should be won over by persuasion. If they do not understand and continue to play music, the Muslims' prayers will not go in vain for that reason. Whether prayers will have their fruit or go in vain depends on the worshipper's sincerity. I have read that the Prophet could pray undisturbed even in the midst of battle, in the din of clashing swords, the neighing of horses and the hiss of arrows. It was with love that he won the hearts of the idol-worshippers of Mecca.

Why do the Muslims of Visnagar forget this heritage, the illustrious example of the Prophet? I have read in the Koran that it is obligatory upon Muslims to say prayers, but I have neither read nor heard that it is their right or their duty to prevent others forcibly from playing music nearby. They can appeal to the Hindus with love. If the latter will not listen, they can ask Hindus and Muslims outside Visnagar to help. The Muslims have no other course, nor have the Hindus, but reconciliation.

Do not the Muslims of Visnagar desire the country's freedom? Do they prefer slavery? Have Indian Muslims completely discharged their duty in the matter of the Khilafat? Can Muslims living in slavery really serve the cause of the Khilafat? Can they bring lustre to the Khilafat unless they cultivate sincere friendship with Hindus? Granting that the Khilafat problem is no more with them, do they want to live in India, their homeland, always as enemies of their fellow-countrymen, the Hindus? We will discuss in *Navajivan* many other questions concerning Hindus and Muslims. But about one thing we must immediately make up our minds, that any dispute between the two must be resolved only with the help of a *panch* or in a court. Drawing of swords against each other in the name of religion or under any other pretext must be ruled out. Just as it does not become the Hindus to be always afraid of the Muslims, so also it does not become the Muslims, to try to intimidate the Hindus. Both those who intimidate others and those who are afraid do wrong. I cannot say which of the two is better, but, if obliged to choose, I would certainly join the side which is afraid and resort to total non-co-operation against the other side. God will look with mercy on a man who is afraid, but I am certain that He will show the door to the other for his pride.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-5-1924

## 297. MY NOTES

### THE MEANING OF "BHAIYA"

Like men, words too cannot but suffer from association. The word *Lala* in its original sense indicates respect. We use it to show respect to a Punjabi. If a Gujarati, however, is addressed as "Surati Lala", he will be offended. The term *Babu* also is used for respect, but because the British called their Bengali servants "Babus" (I do not know if they still do so), it came to imply contempt. The same thing is now happening to the beautiful word *Bhaiya*. *Bhaiya* means brother. Only one who has lived in the U. P. or Bihar can appreciate its sweetness. But we in Bombay started using it for servants hailing from Northern India and then came to address all Hindus coming from the North by that word. In consequence, as a friend from that side informs me, the word is disliked by Hindus and there have been some disagreeable results. They are even trying to prevent the use of the word *Bhaiya* in this context, and I think they are right. There is no

community named *Bhaiya* in North India or anywhere else. It is not known how the term came to be used in this sense. But we can realize that it is disliked by business people and others from the North who have settled in Bombay and elsewhere. We should, therefore, give up using the word. My correspondent also informs me that the word has been used in *Navajivan* too. The writer had referred to Jabar as a *Bhaiya* while praising his skill, singleness of mind and sincerity. In the Ashram, everyone holds Jabar in great respect. But I see now that the use of *Bhaiya*, even as a term of endearment, should henceforth be avoided.

#### MILL CLOTH

There is, in the national movement, an insidious attempt to give mill cloth the place of khadi. This shows that the significance and importance of khadi have not yet been sufficiently understood. The khadi movement did not spring from hostility to mills, it has been inspired by compassion for the poor. It has been conceived as a means of securing swaraj, and to me it is the very breath of swaraj. India cannot live without it. How can a dead country be free? Imagine India in the form of an enormous body. How will the brain in the head of this body know the growing heaviness of the feet? We, who are relatively healthy, do not realize the steady ruin of the villages. But economists and those who frequently go to the villages can see that the feet of this huge body of India are becoming enfeebled. This enfeeblement continues apace. And the means by which to check it is khadi, not mill cloth. Indian mills may make the boycott of foreign cloth possible, but they can never, never indeed, remove the hunger of crores of famished men and women. This only khadi can do. In India there is scarcity of money because there is lack of work. It is not enough that employment is available in cities. The seven lakh villages have to be freed. Villagers need employment in their own villages. This only the spinning-wheel can provide. That is why I describe it as *Annapurna*<sup>1</sup>. This spinning-wheel, then, is what we should popularize. By the spinning-wheel I mean all the processes connected with it, those which precede and those which follow spinning. We can succeed in popularizing it only if thousands take up the work. Our task is simply to organise the khadi movement properly.

Mills are already well organized. They do not need voluntary workers. The diamond merchant will find his way. There is no need to

<sup>1</sup> Goddess of plenty, a beneficent form of Durga

organize bands of volunteers to assist him. The same is true about mills. Indian mills can, if they choose, end the import of foreign cloth. If they would give less importance to enriching themselves and give the first place to the country's welfare, introduce honesty into their business, pay greater attention to improving their product than to their profits, there is no doubt that their sales would be far greater than at present. Khadi does not at this stage compete with them. It may have had some indirect effect but, so long as we have not produced khadi worth even a crore of rupees, where is the question of competition? Khadi has not yet won a stable position for itself. Unless Herculean efforts are made, it cannot recover its ancient dignity. In these circumstances, it passes my understanding how it can be so much as mentioned in the same breath with mill cloth.

The Congress is or, at any rate, should be, the voice of the inarticulate. Its proper sphere of work is among the poorest classes, but it does not and cannot reach them. Hence it tries to wake up those who without knowing it are riding on the back of these; it exerts itself to produce khadi for these [better-off] people to wear. I have, therefore, no doubt that, for the members of the Congress and for those whom the voice of the Congress can reach, the use of mill cloth is forbidden.

I have always sought the help of mill-owners in this task. They should sincerely accept khadi, encourage it and personally use it in place of mill cloth, thus identifying themselves with the poor. There is no contradiction in this. For the present at least, mill cloth has a place in the country. Even if, by the grace of God, the whole country becomes a land of khadi, what have the mill-owners to fear? They will have their export trade. Suppose foreign countries also become self-sufficient in cloth, what even then? The mill-owners' ability for earning wealth will not have been lost. There will always be need in the country for producing wealth, and the rich will certainly continue to have a place in it. It will be enough if there is a change of heart in them. Their love of money will then go with more of compassion than at present. Today, concern with morality is subordinate to wealth, instead of which wealth will become subordinate to such concern. This will be for the good of the rich too, as it assuredly will be for the good of the masses.

As long as khadi has not been adopted universally, this happy state of affairs will not be achieved and, if khadi is to be so adopted, it

should be recognized beyond dispute that those who are working in this movement can have no use for cloth other than khadi. It is because this is not plain to all that the spread of khadi is slow, people take up the spinning-wheel for a time and stop, start again and stop. This is also why people do not stock cotton, why carding has not become popular, why most people wear khadi merely for show and, in the home, use mill cloth or foreign cloth. As long as this uncertainty prevails, it will be necessary to insist that mill cloth should not be used.

#### THE LATE RAMABAI RANADE

The name of Ramabai Ranade is not as well known in Gujarat as it is in Maharashtra. This lady brought lustre to the name of the late Justice Ranade. Her death is a great loss to the country.

Few women have lived their lives as widows as worthily as Ramabai did. Search where we will in the country, we shall not find an institution the equal of the Seva Sadan of poona. Here a thousand women and girls receive education in various fields. The Seva Sadan could never have acquired such prestige but for the single-minded devotion of Ramabai. She gave her whole life to this one task.

A widow's life in itself means a life of single-minded devotion. The wife's constancy connotes the purest loyalty. Ordinary loyalty relates to the body and dies with it. The loyalty of the woman living as a widow is to the husband's spirit. By giving a religious significance to the state of widowhood, Hinduism has shown that marriage is not a physical but a spiritual union. Ramabai had married Ranade's soul and she kept this union of souls unbroken. For this reason she took up from among the causes which were dear to him (her husband) a task which was within her capacity. Dedicating herself wholly to it, she taught people the full meaning of widowhood. In this way, Ramabai, through her work, rendered priceless service to women. When I was in the Sassoon Hospital, Col. Maddock told me that good Indian nurses were trained in that hospital, that the trainees came from the Seva Sadan and were in great demand all over the country. If widows wish to take up work, there are many fields open to them. Spinning alone can fill the leisure of hundreds of rich widows. Is there any widow who does not know from experience that the spinning-wheel is the support of the poor? I have here suggested one beneficent activity which can be universally adopted. There are many others like it to which rich widows can give their time, with a view to helping to train

poor widows and other needy women.

CULTIVATORS OF SUPA<sup>1</sup>

A gentleman from Kaliawari<sup>2</sup> writes as follows.<sup>3</sup>

This letter is worth reading and pondering over. It shows that the country is a land of gold. That the agriculturists should not understand the value of an activity which is of profit to themselves is a painful, but not surprising, state of affairs. They have followed their methods for a long time and so cannot grasp elementary economic facts. The higher the price for cotton which they get, the more will they have to spend for their cloth. This is simple and straightforward arithmetic, but how can we expect them to understand it? If a child has been taught by some teacher a wrong method of doing a sum, he will always get wrong answer. If, now another teacher tries to correct the error, he will be laughed at. Such is our pitiful condition today. We have been taught a wrong method, with the result that to us the right method seems wrong and the wrong seems right. It was such phenomena that Shankaracharya described as *maya*.

In these circumstances, the only thing for voluntary workers is to have patience. They must never be angry with cultivators. What their condition is today, ours was yesterday. They will certainly understand their interest. Just as they keep back enough grain for their own use, why should they not store cotton too? If they are too well-off to spin or weave, they may get others to do the work for them. Even the wealthy do not follow such an absurd rule where grain is concerned. They get it cooked in their own homes and do not buy food from the bazaar. In fact, buying food from the bazaar is considered improper for a respectable man. This used to be the feeling in regard to cloth also. Why should it not be so again?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-5-1924

<sup>1</sup> Village in the Surat district of Gujarat

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The letter is not translated here, it describes the reluctance on the part of the farmers of Supa and other villages to spin yarn in their own village from the good cotton grown there.

## 298. NEGLECT OF THE CHARKHA

A gentleman writes from Kashi that our going into the local boards, etc., has done us no good whatever; in fact, it has put a stop to constructive work. He also says that these people are apathetic towards the charkha. Many people do not also have faith in the charkha. When one says anything to these people, they answer: "We have got on the board on Gandhiji's advice."

First I do not want that anyone should do anything on my advice. Whatever people do, they should do according to their own judgement. We wish to be free. We do not wish to be slaves of anyone, however influential he may be. My own opinion is that it is not so very necessary to go to the local boards, etc. If we do go there, we should do so solely with the intention of furthering constructive work. If, however, it is not possible to carry on constructive work properly there, we should keep away from these institutions.

I know that many non-co-operators have no faith in the power of the charkha. There is only one way of convincing them: that those who have faith in the charkha should ply it with the greatest zest and encourage others. It is my firm belief that without the charkha it is impossible to secure or retain swaraj. True, it may be that all of us do not mean the same thing by swaraj. To me it has but one meaning : *the eradication of the poverty of India and freedom for every man and woman*. Ask the starving men and women of India. They say that their swaraj is their bread. Agriculture alone cannot feed the tens of millions of Indian peasants. They need additional help from some industry or other. The charkha alone can provide such a universal industry. "A starving man cannot think of God."

Another gentleman writes to say that something should be done to provide livelihood to those who have given up their trades on account of the non-co-operation movement. It is and it is not a difficult question to solve at once. If everyone comes to understand the secret of constructive work, the question of starving does not arise at all. But if faith in constructive work is lacking, starvation will remain a perpetual problem. It is my firm belief that he who has faith in the charkha and the handloom can easily find a livelihood. The difficulties of the middle classes in the country can only be solved through industry. We have a number of bad customs. We shall have to



give them up. If only one man labours and there are ten who do nothing, we cannot get a living out of weaving. Also, we should not keep looking up to the Congress all the time. Swaraj should mean this, too, that we become self-supporting. This is what one may call faith in oneself. Lord Krishna, the lover of his devotees, has laid down in the *Bhagavad Gita* one condition for the livelihood of every man. He who wants to appease his hunger should fulfil this condition. *Yajna* means a number of things. One important thing it means is labour. He who eats but performs no labour is a thief, in the words of the Lord.

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 4-5-1924

### 299. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Sunday night, Vaisakha Sud 1 [May 4, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

You need not stop writing to me. On the contrary, if there is no letter from you, I would feel perplexed. It will be enough if I have the freedom to reply at my convenience. I am getting better.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the original Gujarati: C.W. 614. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

### 300. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

PALMBUN, JUHU,

P.O. ANDHERI,

*Sunday [On or after May 4, 1924]*<sup>2</sup>

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Your being unhappy has made me also unhappy. I avoided the use of *Chi*. in the letter<sup>3</sup> to you, because I sent it unsealed, and because I could not decide just then as to the propriety or otherwise of the prefix *Chi*. as applied to you being read by all those who happened to see the letter. I therefore used *Bhai*. How are we to decide whether

<sup>1</sup> *Vaisakha Sud 1* in 1924 fell on May 4.

<sup>2</sup> The letter under reply was dated May 3; the Sunday following it fell on May 4, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", on or before 2-5-1924

you are fit to be a *Chi*. or whether I deserve to take the place of father to you? As you have doubts about yourself, so do I have about myself. If you are imperfect, so am I. I had to take thought about my own fitness before agreeing to be a father to you. In agreeing to be that, I yielded to your love. May God make me worthy of that position. If any deficiencies remain in you, they will be evidence of the failure of my touch. I am confident that, if we try, both of us will succeed. Even if we fail, God who is hungry only for our devotion and can look into the innermost recesses of our heart, will deal with us according to our deserts. I will, therefore, continue to look upon you as *Chi*. as long as I do not consciously harbour impurity in myself.

I shall observe silence today till one o'clock. I have asked Pandit Sunderlal to come at six in the evening. I shall wire to you if, after seeing him, it seems necessary to call you here.

The climate there, I hope, is agreeable. Manibehn has gone to Hajira. Radha, it can be said, is much better. Kikibehn too is all right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G.N. 2847

### 301. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Sunday [On or after May 4, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANI

I have your letter. This is my fourth letter to You. Before this, I have written one letter and two postcards. But you have acknowledged only one card.

Self-confidence remains unshaken even when things look hopeless. If I have faith in truth and non-violence, I would stick to them even in the hour of crisis. Even if you get fever, you must not give up hope. We may not ignore it, but we must not worry either. I am eager to see your comments on 'Tyagamurti'. Don't forget to write to me regularly.

Can you accommodate any person there? If you can, I would like to send Vasumatibehn.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, p.16*

<sup>1</sup> "Tyagamurti", that is "Renunciation Personified", referred to in the letter, was published in *Navajivan*, 4-5-1924.

302. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Monday, May 5, 1924

CHI. MANI,

I eagerly waited yesterday for a letter from you, as the *chataka* bird waits for rain, and the first letter I read after the morning prayer today was yours. Devdas told me that your letter had been received last evening.

Bhai . . . writes to say that, though you feel tired, your health is better there than it used to be here. If this improvement continues, we shall all leave this place and seek resort there. How I wish, that Durgabehn too should regain her health there! Ask her to write to me. Mahadev's visit to Madras has been cancelled. He has already returned to Sabarmati.

Write to me if you want anything from here. Even a mother will not serve [food to her child] unless asked for. As a matter of fact, it is the mother who will not serve. Others must observe ceremony. A mother has no time for doing this. She is, actually, a living embodiment of ceremony. As you know, I am trying to be such a mother [to you].

Radha and Kikibehn are pretty well. Their temperature does not go above 99°.

Shaukat Ali was here for a couple of days.

Blessings from  
BAPU

MANIBEHN VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
KHIMJI ASAR VIRJI SANATORIUM  
HAJIRA, *via* SURAT

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*, p. 14

303. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

[After May 5, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANI,

It is a great relief to me that your letters now come regularly. Have patience and self-confidence. Self-confidence will do more good than medicines. Prabhudas has dropped the idea of going to Panchgani. Chi. Radha is all right. She attends the evening prayer. Kikibehn does not show any improvement. Chi. Girdhari left for Ahmedabad yesterday.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
HAJIRA, *Via* SURAT

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*, p. 15

304. *LETTER TO M.R. JAYAKAR*

ANDHERI,  
*Tuesday, May 6, 1924*

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

Mr. Bhonsle of the Depressed Classes Mission writes to me saying that you would tell me all about their proposed temple and boarding house. If you are interested in the matter, I would be thankful to be guided by you. They want me to finance the project partly or wholly. I do not know what to do. I hope Mrs. Jayakar is improving.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*The Story of My Life*, Vol. II, p. 269

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Radha's health, this letter appears to have been written after the letter to Manibehn Patel dated May 5; *vide* the preceding item.

305. LETTER TO QUMAR AHMED

POST ANDHERI,  
May 6, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter undated, but I know it was received some time ago. I am sorry I have not been able to read it earlier.

I am not indifferent towards lawyers and schoolmasters. It is because my whole heart is with them that I find it difficult to advise them. No disgrace can possibly be attached to a man who changes his attitude regarding a particular thing from conviction. A lawyer or a schoolmaster who gave [up] his calling at my bidding would be still less blameworthy if, finding me a broken reed, [he] has gone back to his profession. I should be extremely sorry to discover, however, that lawyers and schoolmasters, instead of thinking for themselves, simply did what I said, although I vehemently argued that no one should non-co-operate unless he was convinced of the necessity and the propriety of it. How shall I say to a man, who conscientiously feels that it is wrong to practise before the British Law Courts or serve in British schools, that he should rejoin his profession; and how and why should I prevent those who have no conscientious scruple from rejoining it ? I am quite aware that many pleaders were doing useful public work whilst they were practising. The work that we are now called upon to do is, in my opinion, far superior to what we were doing before, and requires much greater sacrifice. A mofussil pleader, who was just earning his maintenance whilst in practice, can do so now if he will qualify himself as a good weaver, and he can at the same time do public work. I wonder if I have now made myself clear.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

Q. AHMED, ESQ.  
"THE KHILAFAT DAILY"  
JACOB CIRCLE  
BOMBAY, POST NO. 11

From a photostat: S.N. 8786; also G.N. 5110

### 306. LETTER TO K. MADHAVAN NAIR

POST ANDHERI,  
May 6, 1924

MY DEAR MADHAVAN NAIR,

I have your letter<sup>1</sup> enclosing your thoughts on the Vaikom struggle. There cannot be any question for displeasure over an honest difference of opinion. In the midst of blind assent, which is being given to all, I say your difference of opinion comes to me as a ray of sunshine. I congratulate you upon it, and I would ask you to adhere to your view until you are convinced to the contrary.

Now for your manuscript. You will be surprised to learn that I have not yet read the *Social Reformer*<sup>2</sup> to which you have referred. I always love to read Mr. Natarajan's writings. I have kept even a copy of that number in my file, but I have not been able to read it. It is my misfortune that I read newspapers the least when I am editing the most. Now let us consider the merits. Do you know that, when Kesav Menon started the movement, he told me that the general body of the Hindus was with the movement? Letters received by me after, from other workers, gave me the same impression. Satyagraha is taken up by one who feels that truth is being trampled under foot. He fights against error with only God as his support. He is never in search for any other support. It comes in time, and if it is legitimate, he accepts it. A satyagrahi is pledged to fight single-handed in the face of starvation and worse. Pray read my article again, and you will probably understand my meaning more clearly than you have done. There is no such thing as a settled fact in satyagraha. If you find that you have erred at any stage, it is never too late to retrace your step. If, in Travancore, public opinion is not in favour, you may not overawe the public by a demonstration from outside. You must patiently wait and suffer. Reduce yourselves to the position of the suppressed classes. Live with them and suffer their humiliation. You are the first

<sup>1</sup> Nair had sent Gandhiji on May 2 a long note on his views on Gandhiji's article in *Young India*, 1-5-1924, on the Vaikom Satyagraha. He had written in the letter forwarding it: "I hope, in the generosity of your heart, you will pardon me for this difference of opinion. I earnestly entreat you to bestow your consideration on the Vaikom question and advise us as to how the fight is to be proceeded with." He had sent copies of his note to *The Hindu* and *Swarajya*, Madras.

<sup>2</sup> *The Indian Social Reformer*, then edited by S. Natarajan

person to tell me that the public in Travancore are not with you.

If you are fighting as an enlightened Hindu against the bigoted Hindu, it is your bounded duty not only not to seek but respectfully to reject all support from non-Hindus. Surely, I do not need to prove the truth of such a simple proposition. I think I have traversed all the points raised by you in your manuscript. I have placed before you, in all humility, the view of satyagraha as I know it, and since I am the author of the word, you must let me give its meaning, and if you do not accept the meaning, the proper thing is to find another word that will bear your own meaning. But, of course, this is a technical point. Even the author cannot claim any exclusive control over words he may coin or the meanings he may give to them. Once they escape his lips or pen, they are no longer his property.

Do please ask me any questions that may arise out of my letter. I purposely refrain from discussing the future programme in view of the barricading of the roads and the Government's refusal to make any arrest. The preliminary thing now is to understand the meaning of satyagraha and its implications. When that is done, and not before, it is easy to settle the future course of action in the light of the interpretation that may be accepted.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. K. MADHAVAN NAIR  
VAKIL  
CALICUT

From a photostat: S. N. 10304; also G. N. 5674

### 307. *LETTER TO V. G. DESAI*

ANDHERI,

*Tuesday [May 6, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have your letter. I am writing<sup>2</sup>, asking them to send you the proofs. I am also asking them to retain your spelling. I do not have a blue pencil at all. What should the uneducated do if every man of letters insists on following his own spelling? Please let me know the reasons why you think your spellings to be the right ones.

<sup>1</sup> The postmark carries the date "7 May '24".

<sup>2</sup> For the letter to the Navajivan Press, *vide* the following item.

Kindly let me have your brother's name and address. I wish to write to him.

I hope you are not under a vow not to purchase new clothes if you do not have enough there. I have seen people sitting in the sun and suffering even when there is the shade of a tree nearby. Are you also like them?

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

PS.

I do not wish that you should undertake any work beyond your strength. When anybody consults me, I just give him names of competent persons. My responsibility ends there.

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 6001. courtesy: V. G. Desai

### 308. *LETTER TO SWAMI ANANDANAND*

*Tuesday [May 6, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI ANANDANAND,

Here is Valji's salute. He wants to see the proofs. He insists on his spelling being retained. According to the saying, "even a kick from a milch cow is welcome", we have to accept all his conditions. His pamphlet can be published only next week. I am sending it to you

immediately on receiving it, so that you may be able to send the proofs to him.

What is the name of Valji's brother ? And his address?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand : G. N. 7754

<sup>1</sup> This letter was evidently written the same day as the preceding one.



### 309. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

*Tuesday [After May 6, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I had your letter. You must have noticed that one half of it has been dealt with in *Navajivan*. Your suggestion therein to reserve one Column of *Navajivan* deserves serious consideration. You may take it this time. It will give you an opportunity to read all the issues of *Navajivan*.

Let me know your brother's qualifications and what pay he expects.

Herewith a typed copy of your article with sufficient space for corrections and additions so that you may not have to call for the proofs. Go through it and return it immediately so that it may be included in next week's issue.

I do hope you will improve there.

I hope to reach the Ashram towards the end of May.<sup>2</sup>

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand : C. W. 6203.  
Courtesy : V. G. Desai

### 310. LETTER TO GANGABEHN MEGHJI

ANDHERI,

*Wednesday [ May 7, 1924]<sup>3</sup>*

PU.<sup>4</sup> GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. I was glad to know that you would be going to the Ashram shortly.

Kaka should certainly visit your place when he goes to Bombay next time. Tell him this when you go to the Ashram.

<sup>1</sup> In the letter dated 6-5-1924, Gandhiji had inquired about the name and address of the addressee's brother who wanted some employment.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji arrived at the Ashram on May 29, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> The Postmark carries this date.

<sup>4</sup> Abbreviation for *pujya*, revered

I hope you have reduced your self-imposed burden of dispensing medicines.

I am writing to Ba about your intending to go to the Ashram. I, too, will go there at the end of this month.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Gangaswarup Gangabehnne, p. 4*

### 311. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Wednesday [May 7, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MANI,

I got two of your letters at the same time yesterday. It is not clear whether you get my letters. Instead of writing once a week, I have written a letter to you almost every alternate day. Your fever is bound to go. I think there is nothing to worry about, since you are able to eat and your bowels move. The complaint is old and, therefore, will take time to be cured.

I am waiting for your comments on “Tyagamurti”.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro— Manibehn Patelne, p. 17*

<sup>1</sup> From the reference in the letter to the article “Tyagamurti”, the letter appears to have been written subsequent to “Letter to Manibehn Patel”, on or after 4-5-1924.

### 312. MESSAGE TO THE COUNTRY

[March 18, 1922]

There is no need now for me to give a message. People know what my message is. Tell them that each and every Indian must remain peaceful and make every possible effort to maintain the peace. They must wear only khadi and spin. If they want to secure my release, they should do so only through peace and non-violence. Please remember that if you resort to violence, I would much rather stay in the prison.

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 19-3-1922

### 313. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES - IV<sup>2</sup>

#### 'POLITICAL' PRISONERS

"We do not make any distinction between political and other prisoners. Surely you do not want any such distinction to be made in your favour?" Thus said Sir George Lloyd<sup>3</sup> when he visited the Yeravda Jail about the end of the last year. He said that in reply to an inadvertent use made by me of the adjective 'political'. I ought to have known better. For I was fully aware of the Governor's distaste for that word. And yet, strange to say, the history tickets of most of us were marked 'political'. When I remarked upon the anomaly, I was told by the then Superintendent that the distinction was private and was intended only for the guidance of the authorities. We, the prisoners, were to ignore it, for we could not base any claim upon it.

I have reproduced Sir George Lloyd's language word for word so far as I can remember. There is a sting about what Sir George

<sup>1</sup> The message, given by Gandhiji before leaving the Sessions Court, Ahmedabad, on being sentenced, should be read with "Message to the Country"; *vide* 18-3-1922.

<sup>2</sup> For the first three articles of this series.

<sup>3</sup> Governor of Bombay; for Gandhiji's letter to him regarding prisoner classification, *vide* "Letter to Governor of Bombay", 15-8-1923.

Lloyd said. And it was so gratuitous. For he knew that I was asking for no favours and no distinction. Circumstances had<sup>1</sup> brought about a general discussion. But the idea was to tell me, “You are no better than the rest in the eye of the law and the administration.” And yet the painful inconsistency was that the very time that the distinction was, without any occasion for it, combated in theory, it was made in practice. Only, in the majority of Gases, it was made against the political prisoners.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible to avoid making distinctions. If the human factor were not ignored, it would be necessary to understand a prisoner’s habits of life, and model his life accordingly in the prisons. It is not a question of distinguishing between rich men and poor men or educated and uneducated, but between modes of life these antecedents have developed in them. As against the inevitable recognition of the existing fact, it has been urged that the men who commit crimes should know that the law is no respecter of persons, and that it is the same to the law whether a rich man or a graduate or a labourer commits theft. This is a perversion of a sound law. If it is really the same to the law as it should be, each will get the treatment according to his capacity for suffering. To give thirty stripes to a delicately-built thief and as many to an able-bodied one would be not impartiality but vindictiveness towards the delicate one and probably indulgence to the able-bodied. Similarly to expect, say, Pandit Motilalji<sup>2</sup> to sleep on a rough coirmat spread on hard floor is additional punishment, not equality of treatment.

If the human factor was introduced into the administration of the jails, the ceremony on admission would be different from what it is today. Finger-impressions would undoubtedly be taken, a record of past offences would find its place in the register. But there will be, in addition, particulars about the prisoner’s habits and mode of life. Not distinction but classification is perhaps the word that better describes the necessary method which the authorities, if they would treat prisoners as human beings, must recognize. Some kind of classification there already is. For instance, there are circles wherein prisoners are

<sup>1</sup> The source has “has”.

<sup>2</sup> Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), prominent lawyer and Swarajist leader; President, Indian National Congress, 1919 and 1928

housed in batches in long cells. Then there are the separate single cells intended for dangerous criminals. There are solitary cells where prisoners undergoing solitary confinement are locked. There are, again, the condemned cells in which are locked prisoners awaiting the gallows. Lastly, there are cells for under-trial prisoners. The reader will be surprised to find that political prisoners were mostly confined in the separate division or the solitary. In some cases, they were confined in condemned cells. Let me not do an injustice to the authorities. Those who do not know these divisions and cells may form the impression that the condemned cells, for instance, must be specially bad. Such, however, is not the case. The cells are all well-constructed and airy so far as Yeravda Jail is concerned. What is, however, open to strong objection is the association about these cells.

The classification being, as I have shown, inevitable and in existence, there is no reason why it should not be scientific and human. I know that revision of classification according to my suggestion means a revolution in the whole system. It undoubtedly means more expense and a different type of men to work the new system. But additional expense will mean economy in the long run. The greatest advantage of the proposed revolution would no doubt be a reduction in the crimes and reformation of the prisoners. The jails would then be reformatories representing to society sinners as its reformed and respectable members. This may be a far-off event. If we were not under the spell of a long-lived custom, we should not find it a difficult task to turn our prisons into reformatories.

Let me quote here a pregnant remark made by one of the jailors. He once said:

When I admit search or report prisoners, I often ask myself whether I am a better man than most of them. God knows I have been guilty of worse crimes than what some have come here for. The difference is that these poor men have been detected whereas I am not.

Is not what the good jailor confessed true of many of us? Is it not true that there are more undetected than detected crimes? Society does not point the finger of scorn at them. But habit has made us look askance at those who are not smart enough to escape detection. Imprisonment often makes them hardened criminals.

The animal treatment commences on arrest. The accused are in theory assumed to be innocent unless they are found guilty. In practice the demeanour of those in charge of them is one of haughtiness and contempt. A convicted man is lost to society. The atmosphere in the prison inures him to the position of inferiority.

The political prisoners do not as a rule succumb to this debilitating atmosphere, because they, instead of responding to the depressing atmosphere, act against it and, therefore, even refine it to a certain extent. Society, too, refuses to regard them as criminals. On the contrary, they become heroes and martyrs. Their sufferings in the jail are exaggerated by the public. And such indulgence in many cases even demoralizes the political prisoners. But unfortunately, exactly in proportion to the indulgence of the public, is the strictness, mostly unwarranted, of the officials. The Government regard the political prisoners as more dangerous to society than the ordinary prisoner. An official seriously contended that a political prisoner's crime placed the whole society in danger whereas an ordinary crime harmed only the criminal.

Another official told me that the reason why the political prisoners were isolated and denied newspapers, magazines, etc., was to bring the guilt home to them. Political prisoners, he said, seemed to glory in 'imprisonment'. The deprivation of the liberty, while it afflicted the ordinary criminal, left the political prisoner unmoved. It was, therefore, he added, but natural that the Government should devise some other method of punishment. Hence, he said, the denial of facilities which otherwise such prisoners should undoubtedly have.

The remarks were made in connectiuo with my request for *The Times of India* weekly, or the *Indian Social Reformer*, or the *Servant India* or *Modern Review* or *Indian Review*. Let the reader not regard this deprivation as a light penalty for those who regard the newspaper as a necessity in no way inferior to breakfast. I dare say that Mr. Majli would not have suffered mental derangement If he had been allowed the use of newspapers<sup>1</sup> It is equally depressing for one who is not, like me, a reformer for all occasions, to be put up together with dangerous criminals as almost all the political prisoners were put in Yeravda. It is

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Notes", 3-4-1924.

no light thing to be in the company of those who never speak but to utter foul language or whose conversation is as a rule indecent. I could understand political prisoners being put in such surroundings, if the Government sanely took them in their confidence and used them to exercise a wholesome influence on the ordinary criminal. This however is, I admit, not a practical proposition. My contention is that placing of political prisoners in unwholesome surroundings is an additional and an unwarranted punishment. They ought to be put in a separate division and given a treatment in keeping with their antecedents.

I hope civil resisters will not misunderstand this or any other chapter in which I have advocated reforms of prisons. it would ill become a civil resister to resent whatever inconvenience he may be subjected to. He is out to put up with the roughest treatment. If the treatment is humane, it is well; but it is also well if it be otherwise.

*Young India*, 8-5-1924

### 314. NOTES

#### THE LATE MRS. RAMABAI RANADE

The death of Ramabai Ranade<sup>1</sup> is a great national loss. She was the embodiment of all that a Hindu widow could be. She was a true friend and helpmate to her illustrious husband in his lifetime. After his death she chose as her life-work one of her husband's activities. Mr. Ranade<sup>2</sup> was a reformer and deeply interested in the uplift of Indian womanhood. Ramabai therefore threw herself heart and soul into the Sevasadan. She concentrated her whole energy upon it. The result is that the Sevasadan has become an institution without a second of its kind throughout all India. It educates nearly one thousand girls and women. Col. Maddock<sup>3</sup> told me that it was his hospital that turned out the best and the largest number of Indian nurses. All these sisters

<sup>1</sup> 1862-1924; wife of Mahadev Govind Ranade

<sup>2</sup> 1842-1901; eminent judge, and a founder of Indian National Congress

<sup>3</sup> Surgeon-General at Sassoon Hospital, Poona, who operated upon Gandhiji for appendicitis in January 1924

belong to the Sevasadan. No doubt, Ramabai had in Mr. Devdhar<sup>1</sup> a worker of tireless energy and great capacity for detail. But it only enhances Ramabai's merit that she had capable and devoted co-workers. The Sevasadan will always remain a living monument to her sacred memory. I tender my humble sympathy to the deceased sister's family and her many children of the Sevasadan.

PRINCIPAL GIDWANI<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Gidwani in the course of a letter in reply to my inquiry, writes:

When I went to see him some time ago, I noticed that the authorities were behaving roughly towards my husband. He was locked. His clothes were dirty. He looked much reduced, as he had fasted for seven days. Formerly, when at the time of Chauri Chaura he fasted, he was not so much reduced. He receives the same food as the other prisoners. All kinds of difficulties are placed in the way of visitors. His brother has written twice about visiting, but has had no satisfaction. But I do not worry. Man climbs only through difficulties.

This is a pathetic letter from a woman passionately devoted to her husband. Mrs. Gidwani's letter is not intended for publication. The letter is a domestic letter written to a common friend whom I had asked to inquire of Mrs. Gidwani as to the condition of her husband. If the facts are as stated by Mrs. Gidwani, they do no credit to the present administration in Nabha. Principal Gidwani is evidently being treated as a common felon although he has not been tried. He entered the State boundary, as Mr. Zimand has stated, purely in the cause of humanity. I invite the Nabha administration to deny or explain the foregoing statement and I promise to give the same publicity to their explanation as I have given to Mrs. Gidwani's statement.

JOURNALISTIC LANGUAGE

A friend writes:

Have you read the *Chronicle* leader "Address to Mahatma"? The writer says therein: "The opposition, if we may take the report or the speeches made by two or three opposers as an indication, was for opposition's sake and was

<sup>1</sup> G. K. Devdhar; member, later president, of the Servants of India Society

<sup>2</sup> A. T. Gidwani; Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.



confined to the professionally cantankerous and those whose blood has turned to venom in their veins through jealousy of the success of the Mahatma's movement." When the *Times* writes about Mr. Mohamed Ali, you lecture to it. Have you nothing to say to the *Chronicle* which claims to be your follower and which uses unrestrained and untruthful language towards political opponents?

I am unaware of having 'lectured' to the *Times*. I would not have the courage, even if I was so minded. The writer evidently refers to my remarks about the campaign of calumny that is at present going on in certain vernacular journals. As it so happened, I read the translated extracts in *The Times of India* columns and was obliged to refer to it. But advice I tendered was, as the writer may verify for himself, not to *The Times of India* but to the vernacular journals in question. But though I disclaim the charge of having 'lectured' to the *Times*, I am prepared to say that the writer in the *Chronicle* should have, consistently with his profession of non-violent non-co-operation, avoided the imputations against the opposers of the address. I must confess to my correspondent that I have not read the article he refers to. As a rule, I do not read writings in the Indian Press about me, whether they are laudatory or condemnatory. Praise I do not need, as I am sufficiently proud of myself without outside help. Condemnation I refrain from reading, lest the Hyde in me get the better of the Jekyll and do violence to my non-violence. My remarks about the *Chronicle* writing are subject to such correction as may be provided by a reading of the whole article. I presume, however, that the remarks refer to Messrs J. B. Petit<sup>1</sup> and Kanji Dwarkadas<sup>2</sup>. I have the honour to know both of them well. The relations between us are as friendly as they were before the birth of non-co-operation. I cannot conceive it possible for either of them to have venom against me. They frankly dislike my ways. They at least will not oppose for opposition's sake. What I have heard from those who voted for the address is that Mr. Petit spoke with, for him, amazing restraint. I know he can let himself go when he wishes to. But he realized that he had a painful duty to perform as it was in connection with a friend. As an old member of

<sup>1</sup> Parsi philanthropist of Bombay

<sup>2</sup> Leading member of the Home Rule League and Gandhiji's friend

the Corporation, he felt that the Corporation was departing from its traditions in voting an address to a person whose amiable virtues could not be isolated from his (to Mr. Petit) abominable politics. In my humble opinion Messrs Petit and Kanji were justified in registering their opposition against what they honestly held was a wrong step being taken by the Bombay Municipal Corporation. There is undoubtedly too much imputing of motives in our public life at the present moment. No Swarajist (let alone the co-operators) is safe from imputations by No-changers. The latter are equally roughly handled by the Swarajists. And the Liberals by both. Why should men who were supposed to be honest before suddenly become dishonest on changing their political colour? Non-co-operators have special reason for caution because they have changed, not their opponents. It cannot be the latter's fault if they do not see eye to eye with us. I would therefore transfer all my wrath against the views rather than against their holders.

#### VAIKOM SATYAGRAHA

The Vaikom satyagraha is, I fear crossing the limits. I do hope that the Sikh free kitchen will be withdrawn and that the movement will be confined to Hindus only. Its inclusion in the Congress programme no more makes it a movement of Hindus and non-Hindus than the Khilafat became a Muslim and non-Muslim movement by reason of its inclusion in the Congress programme. Moreover, the opponents of the Khilafat movement were non-Muslims represented by the British Government. It would be an intrusion, which Mussalmans would rightly regard as impertinent, if Hindus or other non-Muslims interfered in an intra-communal<sup>1</sup> religious dispute among themselves. Similarly would orthodox Hindus resent interference by others in what is purely Hindu reform. The Hindu reformers of Malabar will estrange the entire Hindu sympathy if they accept or encourage non-Hindu interference or assistance beyond sympathy. I am sure that the Hindu reformers who are leading the movement in Vaikom do not want to convert their orthodox brethren by compulsion. In any case, let them recognize the boundary line which a satyagrahi must not cross. I respectfully urge the reformers not to overawe

<sup>1</sup> The source has "inter-communal."

the orthodox. I dissent from the view that once the disputed road to Vaikom is free, the problem of untouchability is solved even in Malabar. Victory in Vaikom, if non violent, will no doubt shake the citadel of sacerdotal superstition in general, but the problem will have to be everywhere locally tackled wherever it arises. Because a well in one place in Gujarat is thrown open for the use of the untouchables, it does not follow that all the wells in Gujarat will be opened for their use. And how would it fare with Hinduism if the Christian, the Muslim, the Akali, and other non-Hindu friends of the Hindu reformers made a demonstration against the orthodox Hindus, financed the reformers and finally overawed the orthodox into subjection? Will that be satyagraha, will submission then be voluntary, will it be reform in Hinduism?

*Young India*, 8-5-1924

### 315. TO CORRESPONDENTS<sup>1</sup>

My correspondents are daily increasing in number. I mean both those who write to me as editor and those who write and seek advice on public matters. I assure them that I read the correspondence as much as I can, and deal with it in these columns to the extent of my ability. But I confess my inability to deal exhaustively with all the important matters discussed by my correspondents. Nor is it possible for me to answer them all separately. *Young India* they will kindly regard as a personal letter to them. Correspondence, if it is to command attention, must be brief, legible and impersonal.

*Young India*, 8-5-1924

<sup>1</sup> This notice, set up in italics, was repeated in the subsequent issues of *Young India*.

### 316. A HEART SEARCHER

It is with pleasure mingled with pain that I give the following letter from an esteemed correspondent:

The recent article in *Young India* has removed most of my doubts, but there are still a few questions which I would like to be further cleared up. I would also like that these should be published in *Young India* at an early date. Your views on Council-entry are now quite clear and they do not now trouble me. But I would like that you should express your views as to the capturing of seats in the Municipalities and the District Boards. In 1921 I sent you one telegram inviting your opinion on these points. It received the following reply:

“May capture Municipalities, doubtful about District Boards.”<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of 1923, new elections have taken place in all the Municipalities and the N.C.O.’s have captured most of them. We have contested the District Board elections as well. Our experiences of these elections are very sad and instead of strengthening the Congress cause, they have materially weakened it. They gave rise to bitter controversies, mutual jealousies and hatred amongst our N.C.O. co-workers.

On the other hand, we have practically alienated the sympathies of our Moderate supporters, land-holders, and other interested persons. They have now assumed threatening attitude and are trying their best to obstruct and discredit us. What is more serious is that we have to keep up connection with the Government. We receive grants from the Government, and have to communicate everything to the Government officials. It is undoubtedly true that we get opportunities of serving the people, but the labour, time and energy we bestow do not produce adequate result, nor do they materially advance our cause of early attainment of swaraj. In the District Board, Primary, Secondary and Middle Vernacular Schools are under our control, but we have to run these on Government prescribed lines. I, therefore, request you to let me have your views. The election of Chairman and Vice-chairman is shortly to take place in our district and we want a clear reply whether we should contest for these seats. One thing appears to be clear and this is that it is useless to enter these bodies unless we get our own men as Chairman and Vice-chairman.

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

My last query is what we should do with our Congress organizations. Under the rules we have to elect members from villages to Circles, from Circles to Thanas, from Thanas to Sub-divisions or District, from District to the Province and from the Province to the A.I.C.C. It is a huge unwieldy affair. We have got neither workers nor funds and so we are unable to carry on this huge organization. Some of us suggest that we should concentrate all our activities on the District Boards and Municipalities, and leave the Congress organizations to its fate. The running of Congress organizations is very expensive and practically all have died out.

As regards constructive work, it appeals neither to our workers nor to the villagers nor the public. It takes a very long time and it passes my comprehension to understand how it can lead us to speedy attainment of swaraj. I do admit that constructive work is quite necessary, but the question is how to accomplish it speedily.

All our workers have lost faith and have become quite disheartened for want of adequate public response and want of wherewithal to support themselves and their families. Almost all have practically deserted the Congress organizations, as they cannot be supported. Unless our workers be provided with at least subsistence allowance and they are infused with new life and fresh faith, no work is possible. By this time you must have come to know everything and it is needless to add anything. People have lost all faith in our Congress organizations and are quite unwilling to give us anything or to support us. It is quite true that we have not acted up to the high ideal of non-violence in thought, word and deed. We have practically non-co-operated amongst ourselves and one N.C.O. feels or takes another N.C.O. to be his antagonist. Mutual jealousies, rivalries, want of brotherliness and truthfulness have brought discredit to the whole Congress organization; so we get no response. It is water is a few truthful, honest and non-violent workers rather than a large army of workers fighting amongst themselves. A thorough cleansing of hearts and a complete overhauling of the entire Congress organization is necessary before we can achieve anything substantial. We have been caught up with a vain desire for name fame and leadership. This has given rise to want of discipline in our ranks and stirred up feelings of jealousy and rivalries.

We must purify ourselves— this is the first requisite. The second requisite is that our workers should be free from the mental worry of earning

something for themselves and their families. Well-to-do men neither give us financial support nor do they themselves take to national service. Therefore, the entire burden falls on the poorer classes.

PS.

1. Arrangement of financial support to our workers should be done at once, otherwise even the few who are with us will leave the work that they are doing.

2. Should you decide that we should stick to the District Board and Municipalities, you should give us a clear-cut programme for our work in these bodies. Should you decide otherwise, we should vacate all the seats in a body. It appears that the people are not ready for non-payment of cess or rents should that eventually arise. There is great confusion as to our ideals in these bodies. Some say that we should make the bodies as battle-grounds for our fight with the Government, others urge obstruction and yet others advise us to work out these bodies and use them for public good. Capturing of these bodies has a weakening effect on our Congress organizations.

The writer has wide experience of public life and is a staunch worker. His letter, therefore, deserves careful perusal. For me it is a heart searcher.

I do not like, have never liked, this reliance on me for every thing. It is the very worst way of managing national affairs. The Congress must not become, as it has threatened to become, one man's show, no matter how good or great that one man be. I often think that it would have been better for the country and for me if I had served the full term of my imprisonment. The country would by that time have settled down to a programme which could be called its own. Today it is difficult to say whose the Congress programme is. It cannot be the country's if workers have every time to refer to me for guidance. It cannot be mine, for alone I can work no programme. The writer's reliance is not peculiar but typical. Another friend, after objecting to almost everything in the programme, says: "But in spite of all this, my reverence and affection for you are sufficiently deep to make me do anything you may want me to do. whether I agree with you or not." This friend goes further than the first. The latter at least agrees with the programme and wants advice. The former opposes and still wants to submit. All such devotion may flatter my vanity, but most

certainly retards our progress towards our goal. We must dare to act according to our honest conviction even though there may be danger of our making terrible mistakes. Swaraj is a way of government by tests, trials and mistakes. It is a thousand times better that we are undone through our mistakes than that we avoid them through the perpetual guidance of a man be he ever so wise. It has become a serious question with me whether it would not be in the best interests of the country for me to retire altogether from all public activity and simply devote myself to my own chosen profession of spinning and weaving and playing with the children at the Satyagraha Ashram so long as personal friends care to support the Ashram. Anyway, my strong advice to friends and fellow-workers is never to accept my word as law. My advice is always at their disposal. But even that should be most sparingly sought.

A careful perusal of the foregoing letter shows that the writer has himself suggested the best remedy for the ills he so graphically describes. If insincerity, hypocrisy and jealousy have crept into our ranks, one must weed the vices out and we can do so only by withdrawing within ourselves. Five good, honest, self-sacrificing workers with faith are any day better than fifty thousand insincere, indolent workers without faith. They but hinder work even of the five.

Now for the concrete cases.

As for the district boards and even municipalities, entry into them by non-co-operators can only be justified if they further the Congress aims and help its organization. If one cannot work the khaddar programme or Hindu-Muslim unity or help untouchables or national schools through these institutions, we must certainly vacate and shun them; much more so if the entry gives rise to wranglings between non-co-operators and raises bad blood generally.

As to workers' maintenance, I have no doubt that it must come from provincial organizations. The central organizations will never be able to control, regulate and pay provincial services. When a provincial organization fails to find local support, it deserves to die; for want of support shows that it never was popular in the province in question. And what is a local Congress organization if it is not popular? The fee of four annas per head by itself should make a

Congress organization self-supporting if it has a large membership. If it has not, it shows again that it is not *popular*. It is my certain conviction that, wherever good khaddar work is done by the Congress, its organization is popular and is on a fair way to becoming self-supporting, if it has not done that already. But “my faith in the charkha,” says the second writer already quoted by me:

Is at its low water-mark today. It is impossible for a whole middle-class family to subsist on the charkha only, especially when it is more than obvious that any such concentration would mean the elimination of all other activity. And it seems terrible waste and perverse economy to ‘put racehorses to the plough’ as the phrase has it.

This statement betrays ignorance of the fact that the claims of the charkha are much humbler than the writer attributes to it. No one has ever even suggested that the charkha, i.e., hand-spinning, can support a whole middle-class family. It is not claimed that it alone can support even the poorest family. But it is claimed that it can and is today entirely supporting many starving men and women who have been hitherto satisfied even with two pice per day. It is claimed for it that it can materially supplement the earning of millions of peasants. To the middle class it is recommended as a daily practice for the sake of training, for the sake of producing a charkha atmosphere and for the sake of making it possible to give higher wages to those who spin for hire. Lastly, the middle class people *can* live on weaving as thousands of weavers are today doing. Surely it is not a small thing if a middle-class family can earn from two to three rupees per day. What is meant by ‘all other activity’, I do not know. If it means all other public activity, I wish it could be eliminated for the time being. It is just the thing wanted to bring into being an organization that would be irresistible in its demand for swaraj. It will not then be ‘putting racehorses to the plough’ but it will be bringing up the other horses to the level of the race-horses. When a ship is on fire, the captain is the first one to stand at the pump and he brings up the rest to the same life-saving apparatus. Imagine the fate of a ship in which, when it is burning, the captain is playing fiddle and expects the sailors and the rest to take up buckets and put out the fire in the best way they can.

*Young India*, 8-5-1924



### *317. IS IT NON-CO-OPERATION?*

The argument has been advanced that with the failure (in my opinion wrongly assumed) of the boycott of titles, schools, law-courts, and Councils, Non-co-operation is dead. The critics see nothing of Non-co-operation in the slow and unexciting khaddar programme. They forget that the fourfold boycott is like a scaffolding which is absolutely necessary till the whole structure is ready. It does not matter that the institutions, which are the symbols of the authority we seek to destroy, continue to exist so long as we do not make use of them. The fact is that we cannot erect our structure without the scaffolding of the fourfold boycott. And we must succeed if we can work the Congress organization without the aid of these institutions and even in spite of them. Moreover, let us not forget that our boycott is not fourfold, but fivefold. The fifth is by far the most important, i.e., boycott of foreign (not merely British) cloth.

The boycott is the negative, though on that account none the less useful, part of our programme. Khaddar, national schools, panchayats, Hindu-Muslim unity, and uplift of the untouchable, the drunkard and the opium-eater, are the positive part of our programme. The greater our progress in it, the greater will be the progress towards the boycott and, therefore, towards swaraj. Nature abhors a vacuum. Therefore, construction must keep pace with destruction. Even if all the titled friends gave up their titles, and if schools, courts and Councils were entirely deserted, and being thus embarrassed the Government abdicated in our favour, and if we had no constructive work to our credit, we could not conduct swaraj. We should be entirely helpless. I often wonder whether it is sufficiently realized that our movement is not one for mere change of personnel but for change of the system and the methods. Full khaddar programme is, therefore, to me full swaraj. The English interest in India is selfish and in conflict with the national interest. It is anti-national, because of the illegitimate cotton interest. To boycott, therefore, foreign cloth is to sterilize the English and all other foreign interests. Boycott merely of British cloth may harm the British, but can lead to no construction in India. Boycott of British cloth will be a

jump out of frying pan into fire. Not before the foreign piece-goods trade is entirely replaced by homespun will the bleeding process cease. Boycott of foreign cloth, therefore, is the centre of our boycott programme. The central boycott cannot succeed until we universalize khaddar. In order to achieve the desirable end, we will need to employ all our resources to the fullest extent. We shall need men, money and machinery, i.e., organization. We cannot universalize khaddar without Hindu-Muslim unity, without removing untouchability. To make khaddar successful is to *demonstrate* our capacity for self-government. Khaddar is a people's programme, for success in which all, high and low, rich and poor, Hindu and non-Hindu must take part.

But say the sceptics, 'How can khaddar bring swaraj? Will Englishmen then retire in our favour?' My answer is—yes and no. Yes, because Englishmen will then find that their interest must be coincident with that of India. They will then be content to remain in India as her servants, for they will have then found that they cannot *impose* their custom upon us. When, therefore, khaddar becomes successful, Englishmen's hearts will have been changed. They will regard it, then, as an honour to be our allies instead of regarding it, as they do now, their right to be our masters. My answer is no, if we intend to drive out Englishmen and ruin *every* English interest, legitimate or otherwise. Such is not the goal of the non-violent movement. Non-violence has its limits. It refuses to hate or generate hatred. Indeed, by its very nature, it is incapable of so doing. 'But' the sceptics further argue, 'suppose the English refuse to revise their system and insist upon holding India by the sword, what can universal use of khaddar do?' In thus doubting the efficacy of khaddar, they forget that khaddar is an indispensable preparation for civil disobedience. And this, everyone admits, is an irresistible force. Without the universal adoption of khaddar, I see no chance whatsoever of universal civil, i.e., non-violent, disobedience. Any single district that can be fully organized for khaddar is, if it is also trained for suffering, ready for civil disobedience. And I have not a shadow of doubt that even one district thus organized can make itself irresistible even though the whole might of the Government may be matched against it.

'Who shall bell the cat?' is the last question. That question is, however, irrelevant to the present inquiry. The question I set out to

answer was whether constructive programme, i.e., khaddar, could be considered part of Non-co-operation. I have attempted to prove that it is an integral part of Non-co-operation in its positive aspect.

*Young India*, 8-5-1924

### 318. NOTE ON BHAGWANDAS'S LETTER

I gladly publish Babu Bhagwandas's<sup>1</sup> letter<sup>2</sup>. The Congress scheme of swaraj can only be formulated when the Congress is ready to take swaraj. What it will do *then*, one can say *now*. But I have promised Babu Bhagwandas that I would certainly publish my own scheme. I am aware that all sorts of ideas are entertained about my conception of swaraj. I simply ask for breathing time. Meanwhile, I assure our respected countrymen that I have absolutely no design on capitalists. I can have none as I don't believe in violence. But I do want cleanliness in capitalism as well as in labour. And I would certainly resist capitalism being used to exploit the resources of the country for the use of the few, be they foreigners or home-born. But let me not anticipate my scheme.

*Young India*, 8-5-1924

### 319. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

POST ANDHERI,  
May 8, 1924

DEAR MR. NATESAN<sup>3</sup>,

Refreshing to see your writing again. Do please come either on your way or return. Somebody has evidently played a hoax. I am not coming to Madras for months to come. If and when I come, I would

<sup>1</sup> Scholar and public worker of Banaras; took leading part in establishing Kashi Vidyapith, a national university, at Banaras.

<sup>2</sup> This was an elaborate appeal to Gandhiji to indicate in the columns of *Young India* 'the kind of swaraj that India needs'; for the text of the letter, *vide* Appendix "Letter from Bhagwan Das", 8-5-1924.

<sup>3</sup> G. A. Natesan; author, journalist and publisher; for some time member of the Council of State and Tariff Board; editor, *The Indian Review*

love to stay with you, if it is at all possible, I am sorry I did not read your speech nor did I know of your resolution.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

G. A. NATESAN, ESQ.

“INDIAN REVIEW”

MADRAS

From a photostat: C.N. 2234

*320. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL*

*Thursday [May 8, 1924]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,

I have your letter. In spite of your bitter experiences, the only course is for you to go on doing your work. There is an error in your views about *goshalas*. Who can keep cows in cities, and who will maintain infirm cattle? People in the villages may certainly keep cows and buffaloes. The *goshala* activity does not come in the way of their keeping these.

Here is the message for the Conference<sup>2</sup>.

“The aim of the Conference ought to be to take stock of the work done so far and to lay down the programme of work for the future.

Much remains to be done for promoting carding, spinning, weaving, etc. If the Conference does it, it will, I believe, have brought credit to the fair name of Dholka and India.

I take it that there is none in Dholka who is regarded as an untouchable and that Hindus and Muslims there live like brothers.”

I am not going even to Borsad; how, then, could I go there?

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

DAHYABHAI PATEL

TALUKA SAMITI

DHOLKA

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's band: C.W. 2688. Courtesy: D. M. Patel

<sup>1</sup> The postmark carries this date.

<sup>2</sup> Dholka Taluka Conference

### 321. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

ANDHERI,  
Thursday [May 8, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I emphatically told you *not to attach any weight to my opinion*. Only a resolution which suits all should be passed. I have sent an article to *Navajivan*, which will perhaps throw more light on the matter. I can think further about this only after I have met all the workers and understood their points of view. It is not at all proper to be guided solely by what I think in the matter. Why don't you yourself think over every aspect and advise the people to do what you consider proper?

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH  
VARTEJ

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 5690

### 322. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

ANDHERI,  
Thursday [May 8, 1924]<sup>3</sup>

BHAISHRI VALJI<sup>4</sup>,

I have received the other material sent by you. The proofs will certainly be sent to you. We, not you, are at the feet of the Himalayas. You could describe only yourself as being "half way to the Himalayas". You should know better than I about the article you wrote at that time of my trial. Was I permitted to carry anything with me to the prison?

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6002. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

<sup>1</sup> A public worker of Kathiawar, then associated with Kathiawar Political Conference

<sup>2</sup> The postmark bears this date.

<sup>3</sup> The postmark carries this date.

<sup>4</sup> Valji Govindji Desai; inmate of Satyagraha Ashram; worked on the editorial staff of *Young India*

### 323. DRAFT OF CABLE TO LAJPAT RAI

[BOMBAY,

On or after *May 8, 1924*]

NEVER      DREAMT      SUCH      THING.      SEE      NO      CHANGE      HEART  
WARRANTING      CO-OPERATION.

GANDHI

The cable of proposed reply to be shown to Motilalji. If he approves its reply, it should be sent.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat: S.N. 8790A

### 324. LETTER TO NARASINHRAO BHOLANATH DIVETIA<sup>3</sup>

ANDHERI,

*Vaisakha Sud 6 [May 10, 1924]*<sup>4</sup>

DEAR FRIEND,

I have the letter which you sent for publication in *Navajivan*. It seems from it that you did not like the way I used your name in my

<sup>1</sup> 1865-1928; nationalist leader; was deported by the British Government in 1907 and lived for some years in the U.S.A.; President of the Indian National Congress, 1920, Calcutta session

This was in reply to Lajpat Rai's cable from Hampstead, England dated May 7, 1924, received by Gandhiji on May 8. It read: "Great stir caused by telegrams reporting you propose co-operation with Government through Councils next Congress please wire if untrue read *Chronicle* wire today." A report had also appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, London, in a despatch from its Calcutta correspondent which said: "Mahatma Gandhi has decided to take the lead at the next Congress on a platform for securing a majority in the Assembly and Provincial Councils replacing the futile rejection of budget by a programme combining co-operation in carrying on the essential services with persistent demands backed up by consistent and substantial majorities for the speedy extension and recasting of the Reforms and speeding up Indianization including the Army."

<sup>2</sup> The draft carried this note by Gandhiji.

<sup>3</sup> 1859-1937; man of letters and educationist

<sup>4</sup> The addressee's letter referred to was published in *Navajivan*, 18-5-1924 *Vaisakha Sud 6* fell on May 10.

article<sup>1</sup> I wrote that sentence merely out of love. I have great regard for Bhai Khabardar's<sup>2</sup> learning and services to literature and for yours. Will you, however, forgive me if you still think that I have given any cause for offence? I will certainly publish your letter.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

*Narasinhraoni Rojnishi*

### 325. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI<sup>3</sup>

[Before May 11, 1924]<sup>4</sup>

“Adhiru Kathiawar”

“Agami Parishad”

“Antyaja Parishad”

“Satyagraha Chhavanima Mel”

“Namra Sevakne”

“Vorano Dar”

“Id Mubarak”

“Jnati Sudhar”

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I send the items listed above. I do not propose to send any more tomorrow. The note “Satyagraha Chhavanima Mel”<sup>5</sup> should be shown to Vallabhbbhai<sup>6</sup> and, if he disapproves of it or if you yourself consider it improper, you may not print it. Even if you decide not to print it, do make an inquiry about the matter. The charge is very serious.

Please tell Swami that I read nine galleys of proofs of the

<sup>1</sup> Vide “My Language”, 27-4-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Ardeshar Faramji Khabardar, Parsi poet

<sup>3</sup> Mahadev Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's secretary for 25 years

<sup>4</sup> Seven of the items sent along with this letter were published in *Navajivan*, 11-5-1924.

<sup>5</sup> Corruption in Satyagraha camp

<sup>6</sup> Vallabhbbhai Patel (1875-1950); President, Indian National Congress, 1931; Deputy Prime Minister of India, 1947-50.

History of Satyagraha and despatched them by post on Sunday noon, and these ought to have reached there on Monday. Whether the person who posted them failed to do so in time I cannot say. If you have not received them, please wire. If, however, you have, and if the envelope is preserved, please find out the date in the postmark.

Was that Anavil cow saved given over to the butcher?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS]

Please tell Swami that he should not worry on my account as I do not on his. I shall ask for any help or facility I need. I shall grumble a little though. Grumbling is bound to increase as one grows older.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8797

### 326. *IMPATIENT KATHIAWAR*

Friends tell me that the views which I expressed about the Kathiawar Political Conference<sup>1</sup> have caused some resentment. Since I took up the editorship of the three journals<sup>2</sup>, I have almost stopped reading newspapers. But friends look after me and keep me informed about what I ought to know.

I have also heard it said: "That self-exiled Gandhi succumbed to the wiles of Pattani Saheb<sup>3</sup> and brought to nothing the awakening in Kathiawar. It is not surprising that Pattani Saheb who has risen through scheming and diplomacy, should have tricked a half-naked tramp mixing with *Bhangis* and weavers." As I have given elsewhere in this issue the substance of a letter from Abbas Saheb<sup>4</sup>, so this also is the substance of what people say. No one has reported these actual words to me. But readers may trust that I have given correctly the substance of what has come to my ears. Kathiawaris living in Bombay say,

<sup>1</sup> This was to be held at Bhavnagar in January 1925.

<sup>2</sup> *Navajivan* in Gujarati and Hindi, and *Young India*

<sup>3</sup> Prabhashankar Pattani (1862-1935); member, Imperial Legislative Council and India Council, 1917-19; later, Dewan of the former Bhavnagar State in Saurashtra

<sup>4</sup> Abbas Tyabji



“Gandhi has brought us ruin.”

The truth is this: Pattani Saheb is not so full of knavery as is imagined. To defeat a satyagrahi by trickery, even a shrewd Kathiawari like Pattani Saheb will have to wait till he is born again as a satyagrahi. There is no word like “defeat” in the vocabulary of a satyagrahi. One satyagrahi, it can be stated, may defeat another, but this is doing violence to the meaning of the word “defeat”. A satyagrahi gives in when he sees his mistake and rises higher as a result. This cannot be called defeat.

I am convinced that the part played by Pattani Saheb in my presence regarding the decision about the Conference was such as enhances his own and Kathiawar’s prestige. There was no need for him to employ diplomacy. I stated the reasons which weighed with me and I am aware of no other reason besides these.

I know that I would be of no further service when, yielding to somebody’s influence or my love for him, I deviate from the path of truth. I dislike suicide and am not likely, therefore, to commit the folly of deviating from that path.

A satyagrahi’s objective must be absolutely pure. There was certainly some impropriety in recommending that the Bhavnagar Conference should be held in Porbandar. I am using the mildest term to describe what happened. It is an unalterable rule for a satyagrahi that his case must be unsullied—like milk in its whiteness. Just as even a speck of dirt renders milk unfit for use, so even a slight flaw in a case makes it unworthy of a satyagrahi. I, therefore, do not need to use a stronger term than “impropriety”.

The second reason is equally sound. I did not know that the organizers had decided to hold the Conference even subject to conditions. I have often made it clear that I am against agreeing to conditions. That in certain circumstances it may be necessary to accept conditions is beside the point. Once the principle of conditions has been accepted, the matter no longer remains within the scope of satyagraha. If the Conference is to be held on certain conditions, then why not agree as well to hold it in Songadh? The reason for accepting conditions was that in the present circumstances there was no other way of creating an awakening among the people. This

motive is not irrelevant or unworthy. The purpose would have been the same even if it had been decided to hold the Conference at some other place. It is by no means as certain that, if we resorted to satyagraha, we would be able to hold the Conference. A satyagrahi fights unto death. If he dies fighting, then, according to the philosophy of satyagraha, he will have won. The satyagrahis did their duty when they went to jail. But the Conference has not yet been held. The aim just now is to hold the Conference somehow. "We wish to hold the Conference if we can do so on our terms, not otherwise"—this is the satyagrahi's attitude. "We wish to hold the Conference somehow"—this cannot be the satyagrahi's way. The people are not preparing themselves for satyagraha to accept whatever kind of swaraj the Government may offer. They are cultivating this irresistible strength in order to win the kind of swaraj they want. It is only when Kathiawar decides to hold the Conference without agreeing to any conditions that it will be faced with the duty of offering satyagraha. It is not the duty of a satyagrahi to insist on holding a Conference which is subject to conditions. To do so would be to exchange a copper-piece for a cownie.

This does not mean that, if there are no conditions, the satyagrahi is free to indulge in abuse. How can anyone who forsakes humility and civility be called a satyagrahi? It is because he can restrain himself that he declines to let another restrain him. But his self-imposed limits are the strictest possible.

If the Conference does its work this year with perfect civility and compels admiration even from its opponents, but is even then required next year to submit to conditions or has to face similar obstacles, then the satyagrahis' case will be clear and strong and no one will have any ground to criticize them. If any satyagrahis come forward then, they will find a ready field for battle.

One comes across some good and simple Kathiawaris, however, who say: "Once the present enthusiasm has subsided, from where shall we get the satyagrahis?" These persons ought to know that satyagraha is not intoxication produced by *bhang*. It is not a passing fancy. Satyagraha is an urge from within. As time passes, it does not slow down but grows more compelling. If it can be suppressed, then it

was not an urge from within but only an illusion worth no more than a mirage. Only those who will be found ready next year will deserve to be called satyagrahis. Kathiawar is a land where Rajputs and Kathis have fought all their lives for their lands. Two Vaghers of Barda, Mulu Manek and Jodha Manek, shook the entire Agency<sup>1</sup>. Their zeal did not rise one moment and subside the next. More<sup>2</sup>, an outlaw, fought single-handed for years. All these men fought for trivial and selfish ends. What strength of determination in the pursuit of their aim, in a peaceful and straightforward manner, should be displayed by satyagrahis who would take upon themselves the burden of the grievances of all the people of Kathiawar, let them estimate for themselves and then answer the critics.

“But look at Pattani Saheb’s order. With a stroke of the pen, he has added another ten or twenty crimes to his autocratic code of law and, for these invented crimes, the punishment is six months’ imprisonment! Even the British Government in India cannot in this way act like the magic mango tree and produce laws as its fancy takes it. That, despite such naked tyranny, we should refrain from satyagraha and hold the Conference in Songadh, what logic is this?” This argument too is being put forward. The fallacy in it is obvious. If our aim had been to offer satyagraha against the law the latter is certainly a worthy target. But our plan is to start satyagraha about the Conference. Even if a sentence of hanging was laid down for holding the Conference, a satyagrahi would not turn a hair. The person who issued such an order would of course invite disgrace upon himself. If, because of the order mentioned above, an association for denouncing Pattani Saheb was started, with rules permitting only satyagrahi terms of criticism, I would myself join it. I certainly think that this order is absurd. If holding a conference is not a crime according to the criminal law of Bhavnagar, then he should have allowed it to be held even at the sacrifice of his job. Promulgating arbitrary laws is not Pattani Saheb’s speciality. It is part of the Kathiawar atmosphere. We would be happy if Pattani Saheb rose above it. But we have not yet

<sup>1</sup> The Western India State Agency with headquarters at Rajkot headed by the Political Agent

<sup>2</sup> Mowar; *vide* “Letter to Mahadev Desai”, 12-5-1924.

become watchdogs of Pattani Saheb's policy. When Kathiawar has a crop of true satyagrahis, then Pattani Saheb will no longer have an atmosphere of tyranny around him. And I shall not be surprised if he himself becomes a satyagrahi then.

If Pattani Saheb and the Princes had not been living in this degenerate atmosphere, they would not have been capable of passing such an order. Holding conferences should be one of the rights of the subjects. Without them the rulers would not know the mind of the people. It is the subjects, right to criticize and denounce their ruler. The latter has the right to punish anyone who maligns him. A King like Rama would not even punish a man who had abused him. He did not punish a lowly washerman. On the contrary, he felt no shame in deciding in an instant to abandon the jewel-like Sita<sup>1</sup> and today countless Hindus like myself worship this shameless Rama. The flattery of subjects has brought about the downfall of their rulers. If the latter can bear the abuses of subjects, they will certainly prosper.

Refraining from denunciation, even after securing the right to denounce, is the way of the satyagrahi. I should like to see this rule faithfully observed at the Songadh Conference.

Next week we shall consider what steps the Kathiawaris can decide on at the Conference.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 11-5-1924

<sup>1</sup> In the *Uttarakanda* of the *Ramayana*, Rama sends his innocent wife, Sita, into the forest, because a washerman, one of his subjects, made some insinuations concerning her long stay in Lanka in the custody of Ravana.

### 327. THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

The Conference<sup>1</sup> to be held in Borsad is extremely important. In 1920, the Gujarat Provincial Conference had made the task of the Congress easy<sup>2</sup> A similar opportunity for Gujarat has now arisen.

I am very unhappy that I shall not be able to be physically present on this auspicious occasion. I had hoped to offer in person my congratulations to the people of Borsad on their great victory<sup>3</sup> But, knowing my physical condition, I hope that my brothers and sisters will forgive me. I plan to go to the Ashram at the end of this month.<sup>4</sup> But I realize that it will be some time before I have enough strength to move about. My body cannot as yet stand the strain of journeys, gatherings and shouts. I feel it is necessary that I should go to the Ashram. But let no one think that I have returned to Gujarat. I shall not be able to attend any function at present even in Ahmedabad. Just as I am resting in Juhu for change of air and go nowhere, so I wish to rest for three months in the Ashram, that is, till the end of August.

Abbas Saheb is becoming younger every day and his enthusiasm rises. He cannot tolerate humiliation for Vallabhbhai or for Gujarat. He is very proud of his able and devoted workers and simply orders me: "you must not go to Gujarat just now. Your purse is huge and we have got to fill it: If it is your pride that you alone can collect money, we are going to humble it. Let others think that you are indispensable, that only you can conduct satyagraha and that you must be consulted in every matter, great or small. We Gujaratis think nothing of that sort. You yourself admit that without you we have been able to conduct a satyagraha campaign better than any of yours.

<sup>1</sup> The seventh Gujarat Political Conference which was to be held on May 13, under the presidency of Kaka Kalelkar

<sup>2</sup> The fourth Gujarat Political Conference, held at Ahmedabad in August 1920, passed the non-co-operation resolution, even though it was contended by the opposition that a provincial conference was not competent to adopt the resolution in advance of the Congress, the parent institution. The non-co-operation resolution was adopted by the Congress at its special session held at Calcutta in September 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Gujarat's Efforts", 6-4-1924.

<sup>4</sup> Gandhiji returned to Sabarmati Ashram on May 29, 1924.

And now you will be compelled to admit that we can also collect money and popularize the spinning-wheel without your help.” And so on. I do not mean to tell my readers that these are the actual words in his letter. That is in English. He calls himself a Gujarati but even I can say that his Gujarati is worse than mine. However, Abbas Saheb is a milch cow; so who would criticize his Gujarati? Besides, why criticize the Gujarati of one who writes ill English? I have given my readers the gist of what he has written in English. If my version is incorrect, he may let me have the correct one and I shall be ready to publish it in *Navajivan* together with an apology.

In any case, out of my respect for Abbas Saheb, if not for the sake of my health, I should confine myself to the Ashram till my purse is full and every Gujarati must imagine that I am not in Gujarat. Borsad should not need my presence. If I manage to go at all, it will be for selfish reasons. Henceforth, our conferences must be entirely business-like. There is no room for public shows and the like in business. The days are past when it was the practice to collect big people at every conference. Their time is wasted, money is spent needlessly on railway fares and the local workers have to neglect their work and see to their reception, to say nothing about large crowds of idle spectators collecting. There was some justification at one time for all this in the belief that the presence of big people would attract the attention and interest of those portions of the public which would not otherwise attend; there is no such justification today. We should now try to draw that section of the public by our service to them in respect of their individual problems. If all the leaders of India had been present at a meeting, they could not have attracted as many people as did the satyagraha in Borsad.

To tell the truth, we have not so far been able to serve fully even those whom we have drawn into our fold. Such people have not started working on their own. When they have wholeheartedly adopted the Congress path of non-violence and truth and thoroughly understood the idea of non-co-operation, then they themselves will spread the message to others.

We needed strength of numbers and have got it. Now we require improvement in quality. We have to watch and see how many out of

this vast number turn out to be sincere workers. This can be discovered only by ourselves working and getting others to work.

There was no discomfiture for us in Bardoli. When we discovered weakness at one spot<sup>1</sup>, like true soldiers we prudently stopped our march in order to remove it. But the task we had set ourselves in Bardoli still remains to be accomplished. Moreover, now we need to secure more marks to pass the test than we did at that time, because we have had longer time in which to prepare. The work is more difficult than we thought, and we face obstacles of a kind we had never imagined. There is now a split in our party. The bond between Hindus and Muslims has weakened. Hence, we need much greater strength now.

At Borsad, we have to find answers to these problems. Whether or not a resolution should be moved about them Vallabhbhai knows best. He is the director of the show. I only watch from a distance and criticize. I know that this task has to be done sooner or later and, therefore, draw people's attention to it.

Yes, if one condition is fulfilled, civil disobedience may not become necessary for winning swaraj. It may not, if a large part of the country takes up the constructive programme of the Congress and successfully implements all the items. Satyagraha is a sort of tonic. It arouses those who slumber and gives strength to the feeble. If only a few among the people are ready for sacrifices, while some others understand and approve of the national objectives. But are not ready for sacrifices, the satyagrahi starts a *yajna* on behalf of the whole country and offers himself as an oblation. I even consider that, should only the whole of Gujarat become perfect in every respect, civil disobedience may not be necessary. Being perfect in every respect means making itself fit for civil disobedience. No one would choose to measure his strength against such people. This too Borsad has demonstrated. It had made itself so completely fit for the task it had set before itself that the Government did not think it necessary to oppose it. Moreover, satyagraha aims at change of heart. Once our opponent has realized that our means are worthy, he will have no desire to use his strength against us. At present, the Government not

<sup>1</sup> Here Gandhiji presumably refers to the Chauri Chaura tragedy.

only doubts our professions of truth and non-violence, it positively disbelieves them. Should the British disarm today, would they be safe from us? The first test which a person must pass to become a satyagrahi is assuring personal safety to the opponent. How many of us would pass this test? We cannot, therefore, go beyond the position we had taken up two years ago and should concentrate on preparing only one taluka or district of Gujarat. I believe even Borsad is not such a taluka as yet. Bardoli should have been, but is it? The modest degree of preparedness which sufficed Borsad for satyagraha in regard to its local grievances will not enable us to undertake the task of winning swaraj.

I state one by one the conditions for being so prepared:

1. In such a taluka, every man and woman should be wearing khadi woven in the taluka itself from yarn spun locally.

2. People should have given up liquor and opium so completely that there is not a single booth for them.

3. There should be sincere love between Hindus and Muslims.

4. Not only should the *Antyajas*<sup>1</sup> not be regarded as untouchables, but their children should be free to attend national schools and they themselves to draw water from public wells and enter public temples for *darshan*<sup>2</sup>.

5. There should be a national school in every village and town.

6. Very few cases should be taken to courts and all disputes among the people should be settled with the help of the *panchas*<sup>3</sup>.

The Anand taluka had resolved at the same time. as Bardoli, that is, in 1921, to prepare itself in this manner and had asked for permission to join Bardoli. This same Anand may not actually be ready now, but is it even willing to prepare itself? I hope that not a shred of foreign or mill cloth will meet our eyes in Borsad, or, if one sees any such cloth, it will be only on the persons of Government servants and others like them. I had heard that there was some difficulty about the *pandal*. There was some talk, I heard, that mill

<sup>1</sup> Lowest caste among Hindus traditionally charged with sanitary duties

<sup>2</sup> Sight of person, place or thing considered holy

<sup>3</sup> Literally "the five", here a board of arbitrators



cloth should be used for the *pandal* as khadi would be too expensive. Until we realize that khadi, even if expensive, is in reality cheap and other cloth, even if offered free, is expensive, we shall never become completely khadi-minded. If we wish to identify ourselves with the poorest in the country, we must never consider whether khadi is coarse or fine, costly or cheap. If we cannot afford it, we should be ready to go naked rather than let any other cloth touch our limbs. Similarly, if we cannot find the money, we should do without a *pandal*. Our *pandal* is the star-studded sky. In a country in which the rains come in the proper season, there is no great need for a *pandal*. We can have a fencing of bamboo poles and carry on our work. Those who are artistically inclined can show their art even in this. Meetings should take place in the mornings and evenings so that other necessary work can also be attended to during the day. We simply cannot afford to have *pandals* which will accommodate thousands.

It is expected that our distinguished leaders like Pandit Motilal Nehru will attend the Conference in Borsad. There are likely to be differences of opinion between them and us. Probably a majority of us are not in favour of entering the Councils. In these circumstances, we should show all the greater respect for those who advocate it. A satyagrahi never shows contempt for those who hold opinions different from his. He may win them over with arguments and love. His reason will teach him to have patience and his love will teach him to show respect. If difference of opinion always leads to personal estrangement, the movement for swaraj simply cannot go on. As with a guest like Motilal, so with the Swarajists of Gujarat also, our behaviour must be such as will not hurt anyone in the slightest measure. Vithalbhai<sup>1</sup> has entered the Assembly, and so have some other Gujaratis. We must not on that account show them less respect. We may follow our own counsel, but should show respect to everyone. How can a satyagrahi have an enemy? My information is that, even in Gujarat, the issue of Council-entry has embittered people against one another. Some blame the Swarajists for this and others blame the

<sup>1</sup> Vithalbhai Patel (1873-1933); member of the Bombay Legislative Council and later of the Imperial Legislative Council; first elected President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, Delhi

non-co-operators. If there is truth in the general belief that there can be no bitterness unless both the parties are at fault, then both Swarajists and non-co-operators must share the blame more or less. Non-co-operators are of the view that Swarajists have weakened their movement. Those of them who assert this are under special obligation to maintain sweetness or civility in their relations with the Swarajists. Moreover, it is plain that the non-co-operators are in a majority. The duty of maintaining civility lies primarily with the stronger party. I hope that the Borsad Conference will provide an object-lesson in civility.

However, maintaining civility does not mean that in its name or in the name of unity one has to give up one's views. At present, the most important issue before the country is that of Council-entry. In whatever way it is decided, the workers' duty is to go on with their tasks with singleness of purpose and unshakable faith. There is a rich crop waiting for harvesters to gather.

1. We need men and women workers of integrity and character who should be proficient in weaving.

2. We need energetic teachers who should be men of spotless character and possess intellectual curiosity.

3. We need workers who will devote themselves to the service of *Antyajias*.

There is a dearth of such men in Gujarat as in the rest of the country. What is the way to meet this need? There is only one. We should have complete faith in the cause for which we work and be willing to carry out orders. Freedom does not mean everyone behaving as an officer. In a free system, the employees work not for gain but because it is their duty to work. When they are not free, they serve for their livelihood for want of other employment. When we are free, there is virtue in serving tile system; there is honour in it. Service in conditions of subjection is morally degrading, it is humiliating. If everyone wants to be an officer and no one is willing to obey, the whole system will become autocratic and will be life-destroying rather than life-giving. If the Conference to be held in Borsad provides a band of sincere workers for Gujarat, it will have done much.

Kaka Kalelkar<sup>1</sup> is the President of the Conference and Mama Phadke<sup>2</sup> is the President of the *Antyaja* Conference. Both are Maharashtrians by birth but have become Gujaratis by choice. They are, according to me, the better Maharashtrians and Gujaratis for this. They have been giving to Gujarat what is good in Maharashtra and are assimilating what is good in Gujarat. Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc., are but limbs of India which support one another. Only if they do so can they function as organs of the same body. I hope, therefore, that Gujarat will fully recognize the work of Kaka Saheb and Mama and accept them as their very own. Gujaratis must not feel that those who are not ours by a natural bond can never be ours. This idea has its source in hatred. We should rather wish that Maharashtra may send more workers to us, if it can spare them. For a worker, there is place everywhere. Considerations of designation weigh only with leaders. By conferring a unique honour on Kaka and Mama, Gujarat has publicly recognized that they live here as dedicated servants, and by honouring them it has honoured itself.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 11-5-1924

### 328. MY NOTES

#### BOHRAS' FEAR

A Bohra gentleman writes:<sup>3</sup>

I have omitted from this letter certain details which he has cited to prove the fact of oppression. It will profit no one to revive memories of past conflicts. The problem raised by this Bohra friend is a complicated one, which cannot be solved by giving publicity to it in *Navajivan* or by my commenting upon it. Nor will the mention of the Bohra community along with Hindus, Muslims and Christians do

<sup>1</sup> Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885), teacher and author, a co-worker of Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> Vithal Laxman Phadke, a teacher of Ganganath Vidyalaya of Baroda, who became Gandhiji's follower and devoted himself to the uplift of traditionally untouchable communities in Gujarat

<sup>3</sup> The letter is not translated here.

much good. People have been shouting about Hindu-Muslim unity for many years, yet where is it? This unity will not be brought about through speeches. Nor will my feeble pen or tongue be able to do anything. Each community should realize that in unity lie the interests of all and the safety of the religion of each, and should bear sincere love towards others. Fanaticism should give place to tolerance and, most important of all, we should learn the truth that no party can use force against another for the sake, or in the name, of religion. If Hindus and Muslims observe this in their relations with each other, that will be enough to make the other communities feel secure. It should be quite unnecessary to mention the Bohras specifically. They, too, are Muslims. If the latter give up fighting with the Hindus, they will stop fighting among themselves also. In other words, if there is a genuine understanding, that is, understanding of the heart, between Hindus and Muslims, there will be such understanding between the different sects of the same religion. If we fail in this and the various parties take every occasion to fight against one another and amongst themselves, we shall have to resign ourselves to permanent slavery. “Long live the Government and may it prevent us from flying at each other’s throat”—this will be the new prayer and the new religion for all of us. Let us see whether Hindus and Muslims or either of them show any sense. There is one advantage in the present situation, viz., that it cannot last long. From what the two communities decide within the next four or six months, we shall know whether India is destined to remain in slavery for another 50 years or will have swaraj in a short time.

#### “ANTYAJA” CONFERENCE

After the *Antyaja* Conference at Godhra,<sup>1</sup> we have been holding such conferences every year. This year’s Conference is of special importance. One reason is that Mama Phadke is the President and another that I am free. I had appealed to Bardoli and Gujarat that at any rate the problem of untouchability should be solved immediately. That this has not been possible yet, we may only blame our fate. The evil of untouchability seems to be in the blood of Hindus and, therefore, we look upon what is sin as virtue. We cannot see the

<sup>1</sup> Held for the first time in 1918

blemish in us which the whole world regards as sin and for which the Hindus stand condemned before all the nations. A painful incident took place near Petlad<sup>1</sup>, about which a friend writes as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Such a thing can happen even today, and that too near the Petlad station! This is not an isolated incident; we hear of such cruelty everywhere. To rescue the *Antyajias* from this pitiable for, Congress Hindus should constitute themselves their protectors and, whenever they see an *Antyaja* in a train, they should be ready to go to his help. The easiest way is to take upon oneself the blows aimed at the *Antyajias*. This, however, is no remedy for the disease itself. For that, we should see that the movement against untouchability becomes widespread. This can happen only if Congress members are sincere. At present, they themselves suffer from this disease. Some of them even refuse to have *Antyaja* pupils in the national schools. Their attitude is lukewarm. The *Antyaja* Conference should request such half-hearted members to leave the Congress and should intensify its work among the *Antyajias*. It should inquire into their hardships regarding travelling and then try to find a remedy. It should tell them how to defend themselves.

Apart from this, it has before it the other tasks of starting more schools in their localities, promoting spinning and weaving among them and persuading them to give up drinking soon. There are, of course, difficulties in regard to every one of these items, but much more can be accomplished than has been done so far if we get devoted volunteers for this work. If the *Antyaja* Conference can do something to increase the number of sincere workers, that itself will be a valuable contribution.

#### TO "AN HUMBLE SERVANT"

Some gentleman has written to me a letter signing himself as above. He has not given his name. A similar letter was received some time ago and I tore it up. This second letter is by way of reminder. The correspondent does not repeat the question he had asked in the first letter. The rule is that anonymous letters should be ignored. It is,

<sup>1</sup> A station on Anand-Cambay railway, in Gujarat

<sup>2</sup> Not translated here. The letter described how an *Antyaja* passenger was mercilessly belaboured by some Bania passengers in a railway carriage.

therefore, my humble request to this “humble servant”, if his question is important, that he should repeat it and sign his name.

#### “ID” GREETINGS

I have received a number of letters from Muslim friends sending me good wishes for *Id*. thank them for their love for me. I am sure they do not wish me to write to them individually to convey my thanks. I also wish them all a happy *Id*. At a time like this, when there is widespread distrust between the two communities, even a little evidence of sincere love is as pleasant as a small patch of greenery in an otherwise barren scene. The only way to prove that the letters of greetings are prompted by genuine love is to take up activities which strengthen the bond between Hindus and Muslims. I hope that the friends who have sent me the messages will take every opportunity to plant seeds of amity in the country.

#### CASTE REFORM

I have already written in *Navajivan* concerning the use of satyagraha for caste reform<sup>1</sup>. This has prompted some lovers of *Navajivan* to express the desire that I should now use *Navajivan* to promote this cause. Some others fear that the political in my life is over or that I wish to convert politics into social reform. I cannot agree to give the first place to caste reform. *Navajivan* is run to help the cause of swaraj. It exists entirely for this purpose. The cause of social reform is dear to me, but it has no connection whatever with my present activities in the field of journalism. Much can be accomplished in the field of caste reform by individuals through their conduct and example. However, I do not regard social reform as distinct from politics. Just as the latter should conform to moral principles and dharma, so should social reform. Swaraj is not possible for a society with a corrupt order. Hence, questions of social reform can also be occasionally discussed in *Navajivan*. Really speaking, eradication of untouchability is a task of social reform, but we have realized now that this evil is so widespread and its eradication so urgent a task that, unless we succeed in it, swaraj will be impossible.

But those reformers who are concerned only with the issue of

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Satyagraha and Caste Reform”, 13-4-1924.

caste reform should understand the limitations of *Navajivan*, and the others who fear that *Navajivan* will give up its interest in the swaraj movement should reassure themselves, having regard to my views expressed here.

#### COMMUNITY DINNERS

This is a month of marriages. Much money is spent on community dinners and similar functions connected with marriages. It may be too much to request the well-to-do to refrain from spending money for such purposes. But such dinners have become obligatory and they impose an intolerable burden on many families. Not only should such feasts be optional but rich families should set an example by exercising some restraint in this matter. If the money thus saved is spent on education or on other activities of social welfare, the community itself and through it the whole society would be benefited. Abandoning the custom of community dinners at the time of marriages is a desirable reform indeed, but giving up the practice of such dinners after death is an absolutely essential reform. In my view, giving community dinners after death is a sin. I see no meaning in them. A feast is regarded as an occasion for rejoicing. Death, on the contrary, is a time of grief. It is difficult to understand how dinners can be arranged at such a time. Because of my respect for Sir Chinubhai<sup>1</sup>, I attended the dinner given after his death. The scene on that occasion, the squabbles among the various communities invited to the dinner and the irresponsible behaviour of the guests are still fresh in my memory. I saw there no reverence for the dead man. What place, then, can mourning have on such an occasion? That reform even in such a matter will require time is proof of the strength of custom and of our indifference. Even if the *mahajans* do not effect this reform, individuals can certainly act. The present condition of *mahajans* is pathetic. They often wish to introduce reforms, but are afraid to do so. If some bold persons take the lead in this matter, they will give courage to the *mahajans* who wish to introduce this reform and pave the way for it.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, Baronet, a civic leader of Ahmedabad

#### INTERDINING AND INTERMARRIAGES

Perhaps, even more important than stopping community dinners is the problem of encouraging intercaste marriages. *Varnashrama*<sup>1</sup> is useful, but a plethora of sub-castes can only do harm. It can safely be said that intermarriage should be permitted in all cases in which interdining is permitted. In fact, we find that many such marriages have taken place. This is a reform which cannot now be held up. Wise elders, therefore, would do well to encourage it. If they try to impose more restraint than is acceptable to people in this age, they will run the risk of being ignored. If it becomes necessary to start a reform in such matters against the wishes of the *mahajan*, it will be proper for the reformers to do so with civility. I have even known reformers who held the *mahajans* in contempt and invited them to do their worst. Such aggressiveness comes in the way of the reform and, where the *mahajan* is too weak to take punitive action, the reformers cease to be reformers and follow the way of licence. Licence is not reform; it does not raise society but brings about its downfall.

#### NATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH LOTTERIES

A friend has sent me copy of a notice announcing a lottery for raising money for national education, and asks my opinion about it. I am certainly against lotteries. They are a form of gambling. Where money required for education cannot be collected in a straightforward manner, there must be some weakness in the workers, be it no more than inefficiency. Such persons are not qualified to undertake educational work. I would advise those who intend to subscribe to the lottery to save their money. They will deserve compliments if they hand over the amount to some trustworthy person, to be used for education or a similar purpose. Speculation in shares is also a kind of lottery. I hear that hundreds in Bombay have lost money through it. Is not this enough?

I have before me this distressing letter<sup>2</sup>. I compliment this friend

<sup>1</sup> The division of society into four *varnas* or castes and of the individual life into four *ashramas* or stages

<sup>2</sup> Not translated here. It stated that a caste Hindu working among the *Antyajas* was, on pain of excommunication, told to undergo ceremonial purification whenever he touched an *Antyajja*.



for refusing to submit to sprinkling. Those of us who believe that untouchability is a sin, how can they betray their principle by agreeing to ceremonial purification? The Rajput friend should plead with the other members of his Community and, in case they remain obdurate, my considered opinion is that he should humbly accept the punishment of being put out of the community, but on no account agree to sprinkling

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 11-5-1924

### 329. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*Monday [May 12, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

A Full Stop  
Learning Urdu and Spinning  
A Plea for Punctuality  
Living on Spinning and Weaving  
Letter from Lalaji  
From Sarojini, and a Tribute  
Not Inconsistent  
Treatment of Mr. Majli  
*Young India and Navajivan*  
Andrews' Notes (sent last week)  
Jail Experiences  
Empire Goods  
Moplah Relief

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

Please correct the errors when reading.

I have your two letters. I am sending today material as listed above. You have already received Andrews' Notes. I do not propose to send anything more.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the items mentioned in the list appeared in *Young India*, 15-5-1924, and the preceding Monday fell on May 12.

I do not know how the Note entitled *Gay Bachi* [The Cow Saved] got lost. If it cannot be traced, I will write another. We are very careful in this matter here, but we shall be more careful henceforward.

Give the reports of Borsad Parishad and other conferences in *Navajivan* and *Young India* yourself. Some local news of our activities should also appear.

The translation of the article on Visnagar appearing in *Swaraj* is very faulty. Your translation of it also did not appeal to me. There are even some misinterpretations. I have revised half of it. I did not have time to revise the rest. Now, perhaps, we may not print it at all. Sending it to other papers is out of the question. Even if we print it, we can do so only in *Young India*. If I get time to revise the remaining portion, we shall consider printing it next week. I used the word *siskarvu* for “challenge”. If you find a better word, let me have it. *Ritusam* means *rituvar* [seasonal] and *murchhai* means *badai* [vanity, boasting]. In an article about Kathiawar, Kathiawari words came readily to the pen.

The name of the outlaw is not More, but Mowar. I even met him once.

I had a telegram from Mrs. Joseph<sup>1</sup> too. I wired back to her saying that it was not necessary to send you, as the deputation from that place was coming here. Besides, I only wished to explain general principles. There is no scope whatever for any misunderstanding. I still think that they are spoiling their case in Vaikom.<sup>2</sup> We shall discuss this when they come.

Surely, you do know Valji's nature. If, by placating him, we can get him to do some work in which he takes pleasure, that will be all to the good. My effort is to erase his idiosyncrasies by giving him scope for expression. Certainly, we are not going to do this for others. Despite his many angularities, Valji has a straightforwardness which I myself, certainly, value and put to good use, and I want you also to do likewise.

Radha's<sup>3</sup> health is quite good, but she is not regaining her

<sup>1</sup> Wife of George Joseph, barrister of Madurai who edited *Young India* and *The Independent* for a while.

<sup>2</sup> Vide “Interview to *The Hindu*”, 15-4-1924.

<sup>3</sup> Daughter of Maganlal Gandhi

strength as speedily as I would wish. She is cheerful now. Kikibehn<sup>1</sup> is brave, but, poor girl, she is suffering very much. The fever does not leave her. She eats regularly. The air, it must be said, is very fresh and pure. Doctors Dalal and Jivraj have examined her thoroughly, but we do not know what to do.

I have been feeling that Kanti<sup>2</sup>, Rasik<sup>3</sup>, and Manu<sup>4</sup> Daughter of Harilal Gandhi Daughter of Harilal Gandhi Daughter of Harilal Gandhi Daughter of Harilal Gandhi Daughter of Harilal Gandhi Daughter of Harilal Gandhi should not be brought here. If Ba<sup>5</sup> suffers on this account, let her “*Bhakti*, or devotion to God, has to be paid for with the head; difficult indeed is the way in front.”—this is knowledge born of experience. I have always thought that pure devotion is impossible unless one hardens the heart.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 8785

### *330. MESSAGE TO GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BORSAD*

*May 13, 1924*

Borsad has won glory for Gujarat. By offering satyagraha and making sacrifices, it has served both itself and the country. It has cleared the ground; the job of construction remains and this is difficult work. I know that it is in progress. It will have been completed when the Borsad taluka does not use or buy any cloth other than hand-spun khadi, when there is not a single shop within its limits selling foreign or mill-made cloth, when no one in the taluka drinks liquor or consumes hemp or opium and no one is guilty of theft or immorality, when children, girls as well as boys—whether of

<sup>1</sup> Sister of J. B. Kripalani

<sup>2</sup> Grand-children of Gandhiji; sons of Harilal Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Daughter of harilal Gandhi

<sup>5</sup> Kasturba Gandhi

*Antyaja* or other families—attend national schools, when there are no disputes or quarrels among the people and, even if there be any, these are settled by a *pancha*, when Hindus and Muslims live amicably like blood-brothers and no one looks down upon *Antyajas*. If we make up our minds, all this is quite easy. I am sure that, if Borsad succeeds in bringing it about, it will secure swaraj for India. Let the people pledge themselves that they will work to this end; I pray that they will have the strength to take such a pledge. They should, however, take it only if they are determined to fulfil it. Unless they are as determined as Harishchandra<sup>1</sup> was to keep his word, it will be wiser for them not to take any pledge.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 331. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

May 13, 1924

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR<sup>2</sup>,

Our friends of the Depressed Classes Mission had been to me. You probably know that Mr. Birla<sup>3</sup> denies having made any promise to build them a temple. I have told them that, if they raise a decent sum among themselves, I shall endeavour to beg some subscriptions for them. They wish me to tell you the purport of my conversation with them. Hence this letter.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*The Story of My Life*, Vol. II. P. 297

<sup>1</sup> Legendary king of Ayodhya who gave up his wealth, kingdom, wife and son, for the sake of truth

<sup>2</sup> M. R. Jayakar (1873-1959); lawyer, author and Liberal leader; noted for his role as mediator and negotiator

<sup>3</sup> Ghanshyamdas Birla; industrialist and philanthropist who gave financial assistance to Gandhiji's schemes of social welfare; member. Second Round Table Conference, 1931

### 332. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

JUHU,

*Vaisakha Sud 9 [May 13, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter.

I am quite sure an attitude of tolerance towards opposition by members of your community will bear fruit in the end. All of us have both divine and dark forces working within us. Some amount of agitation is, therefore, bound to persist. But we need not be afraid of it. The dark forces can be overcome by sustained effort to control them, but we must be fully convinced in our heart that it is our duty to help the forces of light. I am anxious about your father and brother. If they are thinking of organizing those in your favour and fighting it out and if you cannot persuade them to keep to the path of peace, there will be the danger of people in your own family adopting two opposite courses. At such a time, one is in a fix what to do. I would beg your father and brother, too, not to be responsible for creating two hostile camps in your community.

I would certainly not consider it proper for you to apologize for what you did because you thought it right to do and about the worthiness of which even today you have no doubt.

I have received Rs. 5,000 sent on your behalf. You can send whatever amount you consider proper for *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

About fifty copies are to be given free.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

14-5-1924

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6004. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> *Vaisakha Sud 9* fell on this date. The date below Gandhiji's signature in the source suggests that he signed the letter the next day.

### 333. TELEGRAM TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN<sup>1</sup>

[On or after May 13, 1924]

HAKIM AJMAL KHAN SAHIB<sup>2</sup>

WEAKER      OWING      STRAIN      OTHERWISE      EXCELLENT      HOPE  
DAUGHTER      PROFITING      BY      CHANGE

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8801

### 334. MESSAGE TO “ANTYAJA” CONFERENCE, BORSAD<sup>3</sup>

May 14, 1924

The problem of untouchability is becoming more and more important day by day, and this is but right. You and I both know that we have not taken up work among *Antyajias* in order to make political capital out of it. The eradication of untouchability is primarily a religious problem, though it is also true that it holds the key to swaraj. I am getting more and more convinced every day that Hinduism cannot survive if it clings to the practice of untouchability. By trying to abolish it, we purify ourselves and not the untouchables. In doing our duty in this matter, I would leave out the consideration of self-interest, namely, its importance for swaraj. True, I have had a hand in getting it included in the Congress programme; I did so, however, with no political motive but from a purely religious point of view. It was included in the Congress programme in order to impress on the minds of the people the simple truth that, without its abolition, swaraj cannot be won. Even if, however, we could get swaraj today, we would still have this problem with us. If anyone promised to give us swaraj on condition that I gave up working for the abolition of untouchability, I would reply without a moment's hesitation that I did not want such swaraj. To let the people cling to this practice means, for me, renouncing my Hinduism. Though physically I shall be at Juhu at the time of the Conference, you may rest assured that in spirit

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to Hakim Ajmal Khan's telegram of May 13, 1924, which read: "Please wire your health progress after my visit."

<sup>2</sup> 1865-1927; Muslim physician and politician; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

<sup>3</sup> This was sent to Vithal Laxman Phadke, who presided over the Conference.

I shall be with you.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 335. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

Wednesday [May 14, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. DEVDAS<sup>2</sup>,

There is a heart-rending letter from Ba. I do not know what my duty is. If the children are there and if you think that they ought to be brought here, do bring them. I hope you have completely recovered.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8814

### 336. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

ANDHERI POST

*Vaisakha Sud 10* [May 14, 1924]<sup>3</sup>

SUJNA<sup>4</sup> BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I cannot act in regard to the Akalis in the way you think. The rule that even a mother does not serve food to her child unless it asks for it applies to all my activities. If it is the will of God, He will use me as an instrument. He holds the threads in His hands. I am but one of the threads.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3178. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

<sup>1</sup> The letter was presumably written from Juhu. The exact date is not ascertainable. May 14 was a Wednesday.

<sup>2</sup> Devdas Gandhi (1900-57); Gandhiji's youngest son, was associated with Gandhiji in most of his public activities and suffered imprisonment; editor, *The Hindustan Times*, 1940-57

<sup>3</sup> *Vaisakha Sud 10* fell on this date.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, learned

### 337. LETTER TO V. G. DESAI

*Vaisakha Sud 10 [May 14, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I got your article. I shall see that your suggestions are carried out. In one place I have added the word “Indian”. I am omitting the paragraph on vegetarian food. It is futile to think that under the swaraj of the immediate future everyone will become a vegetarian. Since you have given an English rendering of Tagore’s poem, I shall not give in *Y.I.* the meaning of its Gujarati rendering. If I get your article translated into Gujarati, I shall include it there. I am not at all surprised by the wonderful things which take place between you two, since both of you are wonderful. I could go as far as Delhi, but how could I go further?<sup>2</sup> I have written to Abhechandbhai.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

[PS]

I destroyed the letter about Anandshankar immediately after reading it.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6005. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

### 338. NOTES

#### FREE TRADE V. PROTECTION

Apropos of the contemplated protection for Tata Steel Works, I have been asked to state my own views on protection. Of what use they can possibly be, at the present moment, I do not know; nor do I know the merits of the proposal regarding the Steel Works. But I take the opportunity of dispelling the illusion that I am inimical to capital and that I would destroy machinery and its products if I had the power. The fact is that I am a confirmed protectionist. Free trade may be good for England which dumps down her manufactures among

<sup>1</sup> The postmark carries this date.

<sup>2</sup> In a figurative sense



helpless people and wishes her wants to be supplied from outside at the cheapest rate. But free trade has ruined India's peasantry in that it has all but destroyed her cottage industry. Moreover, no new trade can compete with foreign trade without protection. Natal nursed her sugar industry by both bounty and import duty. Germany developed beet sugar by a system of bounties. I would any day welcome protection for mill industry, although I give and would always give preference to hand-spun khaddar. Indeed, I would give protection to all useful industries. Much of my opposition to the Government would abate if I found that it was truly solicitous for India's economic and moral welfare. Let the Government protect the cloth industry to the point of prohibition of all foreign cloth, let it popularize the charkha by making all its purchases of cloth in khaddar, let it abolish without regard to revenue the drink and the drug traffic, and cut down the army expenditure to the extent of the loss of that revenue. When such a happy event takes place, my opposition will lose its point. It will pave the way for a real discussion of Reforms. To me the two steps will be a striking sign of change of heart which must precede any honourable settlement.

#### A FULL STOP

I have received several ably-argued letters on Maulana Mohamed Ali's<sup>1</sup> comparison between the creed of a Mussalman and that of a Hindu. For<sup>2</sup>, in spite of my correspondents, I must adhere to the proposition that the Maulana has done nothing more than comparing the two creeds and preferring his own to mine. Able, instructive and interesting though some of the letters before me are, I must resist the temptation of publishing them. The country has much more important work before it than following a clever theological or even philosophical discussion. The only reason for my devoting the space of *Young India* to a defence of the Maulana Sahib's position was, if possible, to avoid an unnecessary increase in the prevailing bitterness between Hindus and Mussalman.<sup>3</sup> I would not have cared,

<sup>1</sup> 1871-1931; journalist and politician; led the Khilafat delegation to England in 1920; President, Indian National Congress, at Cocanada, 1923

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, a slip for 'But'.

<sup>3</sup> Vide "What is Hinduism?", 24-4-1924.

merely out of regard for a friend, to devote the space of a public journal to a defence of the Maulana. After having gone through the letters before me, I see no cause to revise my opinion. And I do not share the opinion expressed by one of the correspondents that the Maulana has betrayed ill will against Hindus and that there is no chance now of Hindu-Muslim union. That union is coming in spite of the present ferment and in spite of us all. Even if the Maulana was not a lover of the union but its enemy in disguise, the position will not be altered. We are but straws in the hands of God. He can blow us where He pleases. We cannot oppose His will. He has made us all to unite, not to remain apart for ever. I wish I could infect my correspondents with my hope and faith. Then they will find no cause for distrusting the Maulana. Anyway, my correspondents will forgive me for not publishing or [having] any further dealing with correspondence on the Maulana Sahib's theological views.

#### LEARNING URDU AND SPINNING

Mr. George Joseph writes from Trivandrum Central Jail:

We are a pretty happy family and are getting on cordially enough with the authorities. Generally speaking, the conditions are nearly the same as those for "politicals" in the United Provinces jails in the early part of 1922.

I have got the spinning-wheel in, and am doing three hours at it every day. The cotton now in my possession came from a friend in Madura, all carded and done in slivers. When the stock is exhausted, I intend getting in a Travancore variety of cotton in the crude state and getting it into shape myself. That should make me fairly competent in the auxiliary processes. As for Hindi, the position is this: When I was imprisoned in 1922, I did a good deal of work in Urdu, and I flatter myself that I know as much of the language as is likely to be useful. I can read and understand Urdu up to a reasonable standard (newspapers, current prose literature, easy poetry, etc.). Hindi I don't propose doing separately. I have sent for my Urdu books and shall devote a certain amount of time increasing my knowledge of the tongue.

#### A PLEA FOR PUNCTUALITY

A correspondent, writing on beautiful swadeshi paper manufactured in the Nizam Dominions, writes:

May I bring to your notice that some of the leaders are not punctual at the notified time of their lecture. This gives a bad lesson to the public who is

already suffering from unpunctuality. Besides, it creates an unpleasantness among the audience towards the lecturer and consequently the lecturer does not command respect in the meeting as he would otherwise. It also gives a bad impression to those who do not believe in our being fit for swaraj. This is my repeated experience of certain meetings in Bombay and what I have said above is what I felt myself and heard others talking.

Organizers of public meetings please take note.

#### LIVING ON SPINNING AND WEAVING

In sending an account of his tour in Chittagong Acharya Roy says:

I am enclosing an account of a tour in Chittagong where I went recently. You will be glad to learn that the field is very good there in the interior and it only requires an organization to develop it.

While on tour I met with a gentleman who, I was given to understand, was an engineer. He has become a cultivator now ploughing his own field, sowing and reaping. His household needs are met by the manual labour of the members of his family who spin and weave for themselves.

You need not reply to this letter. I know you are busy with important correspondence. I only let you know something about Chittagong which will please you. You are having plenty of worry—a little good news may act as a dose of medicine during your convalescence.

What the engineer family is reported to be doing can be done by every Congress worker, whether lawyer, school-master or other. He need not then worry about other Congress work. The engineer is, I am sure, doing far more successful propaganda than many an orator without a living faith in khaddar, thundering to the people on its virtue.

The report sent by Dr. Roy is equally instructive. It shows that hundreds of Mussalman women have been doing spinning for generations. They gin and card their own cotton. They weave their own yarn. The cotton is all brought from the neighbouring hills. The report states that the cotton is all bought up by merchants for export. Is it not tragic to think that, whilst there are thousands of spinners who can make use of cotton, they should be left idle and cotton should be sent abroad to be spun and woven there and then brought back to us as cloth? Fortunately, Dr. Roy and his workers are making strenuous

effort to have sufficient cotton stored for the requirements of local spinners.

The report also describes the carding bow used in those parts and says that it came out victorious in a competition with the Bardoli bow. The gut of the Suchia bow (the local bow is named after a Chittagong village named Suchia) is made of fibres of pineapple leaves and is supposed to last a week. It is surprising with what simple and cheap materials the finest processes can be gone through

TREATMENT OF MR. MAJLI

THE EDITOR, *Young India*,

DEAR SIR,

In your issue of the 3rd April, you published a letter from Mr. Majli of Belgaum which states that while he was in prison he was not given spinning as stated on behalf of the Government but twisting yarn (I 1b. a day),” that he was “kept in utter seclusion under lock for all the 24 hours of the day except for 15 minutes walking;” and that although he was ill he was given food which he could not digest.<sup>1</sup>

You will no doubt be glad to learn, and I hope you will see your way to publish, the real facts of the case.

The real facts are that Mr. Majli was employed in twisting and spinning, i.e., spinning thread or yarn by means of a wheel; that he was confined in a large room adjoining his cell along with two associates, one of whom was an ex-Congressman; and that he was given an hour’s exercise daily—half an hour in the morning and half an hour in the evening, and that he was given food as below:

(a) Admitted into jail on 23-10-23 and was given ordinary diet from that date onwards up to 2-12-23.

(b) In-patient for malaria from 3-12-23 to 13-12-23. During this period he was given milk diet.

(c) Convalescent from 14-12-23 to 28-12-23. Ordinary diet and one pound milk in lieu of dhal.

(d) From 28-12-23 to 4-1-24 ordinary diet.

(e) From 5-1-24 to 17-1-24 rice diet in lieu of ordinary diet, on account

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Notes”, 3-4-1924.

of some dyspepsia.

(f) From 18-1-24 to 29-1-24 ordinary diet.

(g) From 30-1-24 to 17-2-24, on which date he was released, he was on milk diet plus a loaf of bread and one ounce butter.

*Yours faithfully,*

(SD) ILLEGIBLE

AG. DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION

7th May 1924

BOMBAY

I gladly publish the foregoing. I do not propose to worry Mr. Majli in his present state of health. Nor, as I said in my note, did I wish to make the treatment a matter of complaint. But I must say that on two points at least Mr. Majli is substantially correct. Mr. Majli does not deny that he was given 'twist-spinning'. But 'twist-spinning' means 'twisting yarn'. Perhaps the acting Director of Information does not know that there is no process known as 'twist-spinning'. You spin or twist yarn on the wheel. Mr. Majli wanted spinning which was a matter of duty and pleasure with him. But he was given twisting which was no matter of pleasure and which was much harder than spinning. That he was locked up is also evidently true. That there were two companions with him does not alter the fact of the lock-up. Only a prisoner knows what lock-up, especially in the day time, means, whether with or without company.

FROM SAROJINI DEVI

The reader will be glad to share with me the following from Mrs. Sarojini Naidu<sup>1</sup>:

The Indian Ocean is chanting immemorial hymns to the morning sun and the mountains bear witness to the covenant that great dreamers have made from their sunlit peaks with God to make the land of South Africa a goodly heritage of noble ideals and high traditions for unborn generations. But today the facts are otherwise. In the shadow of these very mountains and within

<sup>1</sup> 1879-1949; poetess, orator and social reformer; President, Indian National Congress, 1925

sound of this very sea, the men who have in their keeping the destiny of South Africa are betraying their trust and making of their House of Assembly, that should be a temple of justice and freedom, a market-place to barter away the birthright of posterity for a brief period of power built on prejudice and authority based on oppression. Still my heart is not dismayed and my faith in the balance of ultimate issues remains unshaken. And I have not been afraid to proclaim that faith or that vision. It has made the protagonists of an impossible white South Africa angry and alarmed. But to the coloured people of South Africa it has brought an awakening and a new hope.

You have been kept in touch, I know, with the course of my mission here in laconic Press cables. I have according to my capacity and opportunity done my best and in spite of a prejudiced Press and ignorant legislators, I have been able to win not hundreds but thousands of friends for the Indian cause from all sections and ranks of South African communities. The African races and even the difficult 'Colonial' people have been moved to enthusiasm and indignation, and a sense of kinship and community of suffering and destiny. How the white races have resented my expression "a University of oppression" as applied to South Africa. Yet it is a "University of oppression" to discipline and perfect the spirit of the non-European people.

My interview with the Strong Man<sup>1</sup> of the Empire was very interesting. He was full of his famous charm and magnetism and withal apparently simple and sweet; but what depth of subtlety and diplomacy are hidden behind that suavity and simplicity! My impression of him is that he was designed by nature to be among the world's greatest, but he has dwarfed himself to be a small man in robe of authority in South Africa; it is the tragedy of a man who does not or cannot rise to the full height of his pre-destined spiritual stature. Before I leave South Africa on the 27th of this month, we are holding an emergency conference to consolidate the political work and outline a scheme of action—may be of sacrifice. I shall spend a fortnight in East Africa *en route* for India to finish my work there before I return home.

#### A TRIBUTE FROM AN ENGLISHMAN

Rev. Charles Phillips<sup>2</sup> is one of the most respected among Christian missionaries in South Africa. The following is his tribute to

<sup>1</sup> The reference evidently is to General Smuts.

<sup>2</sup> Congregational minister in the Transvaal.

her work which I take from his letter recently received:

It is a very long time since any communication has passed between you and me. I have felt every moment of your time was too sacred to be spent on replying to any letter such as I could write. But Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has been here and I have seen much of her and she has laid upon me the solemn charge that I should write to you at once. She left yesterday and today is at Maritzburg. After "circuiting" to Cape Town she is coming back here and then I shall see her again. I could not however see her again with a clear conscience unless I could tell her that I had fulfilled her request. This is my apology for troubling you with a letter from me. I could write all day and still leave much unsaid. Therefore I must try to write *multum in parvo* as far as I can. I need not say very much about the wonderful success which has attended her mission to Johannesburg. Others will write to you full and detailed accounts but they will give you no adequate account. She has been your alter ego, *Gandhi Redivivus*,<sup>1</sup> bringing back to us something of the idealism and lofty spiritual purpose which we perceived so long ago. We thank God for her visit, for her burning words, for the divine truths and the Christ-like thoughts she has impressed upon us. The whole of the Indian community has risen to her call and a large part of the white community as well.

#### NOT INCONSISTENT

A correspondent draws my attention to what he regards is an inconsistency between my statement to the Press issued after my release regarding the Gurdwara movement and the advice given by me just after Nankana Sahib tragedy. This is the statement<sup>1</sup> I made after my release:

My friends (Akalis) informed me to my surprise that there was a general misapprehension in the Punjab that after the Nankana tragedy, I had expressed an opinion that the Gurdwara movement should have been postponed till after the attainment of swaraj. I never expressed the opinion attributed to me as can be amply verified from my writings and speeches at the time.

The correspondent quotes the following statement<sup>2</sup> from my letter to the Sikhs after the tragedy and regards it as inconsistent with the first:

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Interview to Associated Press", 9-3-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Message to Lahore Sikhs on Lahore Tragedy", 4-3-1921.

No one can be more eager for real reform in our temples and removal of all abuse than I. But let us not be party to measures that may be worse than the reform sought to be brought about. There are two ways open to you (Khalsa): either to establish arbitration boards for settlement of possession of all Gurdwaras or *postponement of the question till the attainment of swaraj*.

The italics are the correspondent's. I can see nothing inconsistent between the two statements. The first refers to the general movement and says that I never advised postponement till after the attainment of swaraj. The second advised postponement of the question of *possession* of Gurdwaras till the attainment of swaraj, if it could not be settled by arbitration. In this letter I have discussed the propriety of taking possession by show of force. And my advice was that if arbitration did not succeed, and the choice lay between possession by show of force or postponement, my advice was for postponement. The curious may refer to the letter itself which he will see in his file of *Young India* for 1921, and he will find that I have discussed in it the question of show of force. Nothing that has happened since has altered the view taken by me in that letter. I am convinced that no reform can be achieved by show of force. I know that there must be two parties to arbitration. If the other party does not agree, a non-co-operator will not seek the protection of a British court of law. But if he must choose between show of force and resort to court of law, i.e., if he is not prepared to sacrifice for the time being what he considers his right, I have no hesitation in saying that he must go to law even though it be British rather than seek to gain his purpose by show of force

#### RELIGIOUSLY SPINNING

Mr. P. W. Sebastian, a Vaikom satyagrahi prisoner, writes from Trivandrum Central Jail:

It is now some months since I heard from you. I had hardly time to write to you about my jail experience in Cochin before I was clapped in Travancore Jail. You know I was imprisoned for six months by the Cochin Government on a security proceeding. It was hardly two months: since I came out when I was arrested along with Sjt. George Joseph and others in connection with Vaikom Satyagraha and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. Some of my friends and myself are treated as political prisoners and the authorities



see to all our wants and comforts. We are accommodated in spacious rooms and provided with cots, bedding, tables, chairs, writing materials, books and newspapers. We are allowed to use our own clothes and we are using khaddar. We have our spinning-wheels inside the Jail and some of us spin with a religious zeal. The authorities are very obliging and solicitous about our comforts.

I tender my congratulations to the Travancore State for their handsome treatment of the prisoners who have gone to jail for conscience' sake. Let me hope that not some but all the satyagrahis will religiously use the spinning-wheel. I would advise them, too, to learn carding and, if permitted, weaving also. They can learn all these things, if they will give every spare moment of the precious time they have to carding, spinning and weaving.

#### THE MOPLAH RELIEF

I am glad to be able to inform the reader that the first response to my appeal was from a Bohra gentleman who sent me a cheque for Rs. 500. I have already sent the amount to Mr. Yakoob Hasan. The next amount is from a widow friend. It is Rs. 10. Her friend has given RS. 2. Another Hindu has forwarded Rs. 10 from Madras. The, *Young India* office has received another RS. 5 from a Hindu gentleman of Bareilly.

#### LETTER FROM LALAJI

Lala Lajpat Rai says in the course of a letter written during the voyage:

The symbol of non-violence that I was wearing at the time of embarkation met with violence the very first day of my voyage. There are about a score of Indians on board this ship. Only two of us had the Gandhi caps on at the time of going aboard. All eyes were on us and one could see signs of anger on some faces. At dinner time I left my cap on the hat-rack outside. After dinner I searched for it in vain. It had disappeared. It was not worth stealing. So the only conclusion one could come to was that it was stored<sup>1</sup> into the sea. I am not sorry for it as the act must have given satisfaction to the doer. But I was determined to keep on. Yesterday again I left my cap (another) outside the dining-saloon at the same place. This time it was not touched and so the

<sup>1</sup> Presumably a slip for 'shoved'

episode is over.

I am already feeling better. The sea breeze and the rest are doing me good. I wish you also could tear yourself from your responsibilities and take a complete rest outside India.

It is evident the khaddar cap has still many a stiff battle in front of it.

#### “YOUNG INDIA” AND “NAVAJIVAN”

A correspondent writes to me about the donation for khaddar production of the profits of Rs. 50,000 of the Navajivan Press, and says that the profits show that the prices of the weeklies could have been considerably reduced so as to make them available to a larger public. I give below extracts from the letter.

Recently an announcement was made in the Press that the Navajivan Press had made a profit of about Rs. 50,000 and as that sum was to be spent on some charitable purposes. This shows that by the grace of God the Press is not in loss and the management is to be congratulated on that account.

But I and many others in this line fail to understand why the price of the paper of 8 pages with such rough paper is so very exorbitant in spite of the low cost of paper prevalent at present. Two annas for a copy of Young India is too much for the general reading public of India, and Navajivan for as. 1\_ is also too much. India is a very poor country and that is an acknowledged fact. If they are making profits, is it not fair that prices should be decreased and thus make them available for the big masses?

In this connection I may say that the noteworthy English weeklies such as Saturday Review, The Nation and Athenaeum, The American Nation, The Spectator, etc., are far cheaper even at the rate of 6d., since they contain more than three times the number of pages. If it is not possible to decrease the prices of the weeklies under your control, can you not conveniently manage to increase the number of pages?

Some of us would believe that, even if Young India and Navajivan are sold at 2 to 3 pice, they will not be under loss so long as they are edited by your good self. If you think that you owe an explanation to the public in this connection, you may explain this through your paper.

Now suppose that the papers are not making profits nor are likely to make any even at the prevailing prices of as. 2/- and as 1\_, can you not

manage to put some amount of the profit of the Press in these papers and thus make them cheap?

I have consulted the manager about the subject matter of the letter and both he and I have come to the conclusion that the prices could not be safely reduced for the following reasons:

1. Profits are a precarious item.
2. Reduction of the prices will make no difference in the number of subscribers.
3. The masses do not count as readers because they cannot read.
4. My editing, though it has somewhat increased the number of subscribers, has not made any material increase. The papers are by no means as popular as they were before, because, perhaps, of the subsidence of excitement. *Young India* and *Hindi Navajivan* have not yet begun to pay their way, and unless English readers of *Young India* and Hindi readers of *Hindi Navajivan* interest themselves in the upkeep of these weeklies and secure more subscribers, the question of stopping them may soon arise.
5. It is a bad policy to print a cheap newspaper by making profits from other work. I want the readers to be just as much interested in the upkeep of the papers as the manager and the editor are.
6. It is better that the readers become direct participators in the donation of profits than that they get their paper cheap.
7. If there is a public that does not buy the papers by reason of the prices, it is open to well-to-do subscribers, interested in the circulation of the views and policies advocated in the papers, to order as many copies as they choose and, if there is a large demand lower prices will certainly be quoted for them.
8. In view of the suggestion in clause 7, the question of the high prices is not a matter of moment since the public benefit by every single pie of the profits.
9. The size of the papers cannot very well be increased, if only because I have but limited capacity and the papers have only a limited ambition. The public do not want from me a larger weekly letter than they are getting at present.

*Young India*, 15-5-1924

### 339. EMPIRE GOODS BOYCOTT

It is curious how the question of the Empire goods boycott continues to challenge public attention from time to time. From the standpoint of non-violent non-co-operation, it seems to me to be wholly indefensible. It is retaliation pure and simple and, as such, punitive. So long, therefore, as the Congress holds to *non-violent* non-co-operation, so long must boycott of British, as distinguished from other foreign goods, be ruled out. And if I am the only Congressman holding the view, I must move a resolution at the next Congress repealing the resolution in the matter carried at the last Special Session.

But, for the moment, I propose to discuss not the ethics but the utility of the retaliatory boycott. The knowledge that even the Liberals joined the Boycott campaign cannot make one shrink from the inquiry. On the contrary, if they come to believe with me that the retaliatory boycott that they and the Congress took up was not only ineffective, but was one more demonstration of our impotent rage and waste of precious energy, I would appeal to them to take up with zeal and determination the boycott of all foreign cloth and replacing same not with Indian mill-cloth but with hand spun khaddar.

I have had the pleasure of reading the report of the Boycott Committee. It must be, has remained, the last word on the utmost that can be done in the shape of boycott of British or Empire goods. The Report, in my opinion, presents a formidable case, not for but against such boycott. It frankly states that the bulk of the Empire goods, such, for instance, as railway material, is imported by the Government or English firms; that the trifles such as scents, soaps, boots imported are mostly consumed by those easy-going, luxury loving Indians who are never likely to take to the boycott. It will be found on a calm consideration of the figures that even if the boycott of the trifles was scrupulously carried out by every Congress man and every Liberal, the amount would not be, at the outside, more than one crore of rupees per year. He must be a brave optimist who could believe that the Kenya Englishman or English men in general, would be made to change their policy by reason of such boycott.

‘But,’ says the critic, ‘see what a flutter was created in Cheap side when the Empire goods boycott resolution of the Bombay Municipal Corporation was cabled free of charge by Reuter.’ Surely we know enough of the British trade methods not to be unduly elated by such flutters. They are often put on in order to inflame the gullible public against ‘the unscrupulous Indian agitators who are bent upon injuring England’. When the excitement is not put on, it is a symptom of the British mercantile sensitiveness to every commercial fluctuation or movement. It is by such sensitiveness that it ever remains prepared for emergencies of every conceivable type. I would ask the public, therefore, never to rely upon the excitements or approbations from England, or, for that matter, from any foreign State. Their fear or praise of our action can never secure us in our position if our action which is either feared or praised is not, in itself, substantially effective.

If our rage did not blind us, we should be ashamed of the boycott resolution when we realized that we depended upon British goods for some of our national requirements. When we may not do without English books and English medicines, should we boycott English watches because we can procure Geneva watches? And if we will not do without English books because we need them, how shall we expect the importer of British watches or perfumes to sacrifice his trade? My very efficient English nurse, whom I loved to call ‘tyrant’ because she insisted in all loving ways on my taking more food and more sleep than I did, with a smile curling round her lips and insidious twinkle in her eyes, gently remarked after I was safely removed to a private ward, escorted by the house-surgeon and herself: “As I was shading you with my umbrella I could not help smiling that you, a fierce boycotter of everything British, probably owed your life to the skill of a British surgeon, handling British surgical instruments, administering British drugs, and to the ministrations of a British nurse. Do you know that as we brought you here, the umbrella that shaded you was of British make?” The gentle nurse, as she finished the last triumphant sentence, evidently expected my complete collapse under her loving sermon. But, happily, I was able to confound her self-assurance by saying: “When will you people begin to know things as they are? Do you know that I do not boycott anything merely because it is British? I simply boycott all foreign cloth because

the dumping down of foreign cloth in India has reduced millions of mypeople to pauperism.” I was even able to interest her in the khaddar movement. Probably she became a convert to it. Anyway, she understood the propriety, the necessity and the utility of khaddar, but she could only laugh (and rightly) against the wholly ineffective and meaningless boycott of British goods.

If the champions of this retaliatory boycott will look at their homes and their own belongings, they will, I have no doubt, discover the ludicrousness of their position even as my nurse friend did, under the supposition that I belonged to that boycott school.

I yield to no one in my desire to see justice done to our countrymen in Kenya or to win swaraj at the earliest possible moment. But I know that angry impatience can only frustrate the very end we have in view. What is it then in which all parties—Liberals, pro-Councilwallas, No-changers and others—can successfully combine to enable us to achieve our end? I have already given the answer. But I must examine it fully in the next issue and show why it furnishes the only feasible solution.

*Young India*, 15-5-1924

### 340. MY JAIL EXPERIENCES- V

#### POSSIBILITIES OF REFORM

It has been my invariable experience that good evokes good, evil—evil; and that therefore, if the evil does not receive the corresponding response, it ceases to act, dies of want of nutrition. Evil can only live upon itself. Sages of old, knowing this law, instead of returning evil for evil, deliberately returned good for evil and killed it. Evil lives nevertheless, because many have not taken advantage of the discovery, though the law underlying it acts with scientific precision. We are too lazy to work out in terms of the law the problems that face us and, therefore, fancy that we are too weak to act up to it. The fact is, that the moment the truth of the law is realized, nothing is so easy as to return good for evil. It is the one quality that distinguishes man from the brute. It is man’s natural law not to retaliate. Though we have the human form, we are not truly human till we have fully

realized the truth of the law and acted up to it. The law admits of no escape.

I cannot recall a single instance in which it has not answered. Utter strangers have within my experience irresistibly responded to it. In all the South African jails through which I passed, the officials who were at first most unfriendly to me became uniformly friendly because I did not retaliate. I answered their bitterness with sweetness. This does not mean that I did not fight injustice. On the contrary, my South African jail experiences were a continuous fight against it, and in most cases it was successful. The longer Indian experience has but emphasized the truth and the beauty of non-violent conduct. It was the easiest thing for me to acerbate the authorities at Yeravda. For instance, I could have answered the Superintendent in his own coin when he made the insulting remarks described in my letter to Hakim Saheb.<sup>1</sup> I would have in that case lowered myself in my own estimation and confirmed the Superintendent in his suspicion that I was a cantankerous and mischievous politician. But the experiences related in that letter were trivialities compared to what was to follow. Let me recall a few of them.

A European warder I knew suspected me. He thought it was his business to suspect every prisoner. As I did not want to do any the slightest thing without the knowledge of the Superintendent, I had told him that, if a prisoner passing by salaamed, I would return the salaam and that I was giving to the convict-warder in charge of me all the food that I could not eat. The European warder knew nothing of the conversation with the Superintendent. He once saw a prisoner salaam me. I returned the salaam. He saw us both in the act, but only took from the prisoner his ticket. It meant that the poor man would be reported. I at once told the warder to report me too, as I was equally guilty with the poor man. He simply told me he had to do his duty. Instead of reporting the warder for his officiousness, but in order to protect a fellow-prisoner, I merely mentioned to the Superintendent the incident of salaaming without the conversation I had with the warder. The latter recognized that I meant no ill whatsoever to him, and from that time forward ceased to suspect me. On the contrary, he

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan", 14-4-1922.

became very friendly.

I was subject to search like the other prisoners. I never objected. And so, daily before the lock-up, a regular search took place for many months. Occasionally, a jailor used to come who was exceptionally rude. I had nothing but my loin-cloth on. There was, therefore, no occasion for him to touch my person. But he did touch the groins. Then he began overhauling the blankets and other things. He touched my pot with his boots. All this was proving too much for me and my anger was about to get the better of me. Fortunately, I regained self-possession and said nothing to the young jailor. The question, however, still remained whether I should or should not report him. This happened a fairly long time after my admission to Yeravda. The Superintendent was, therefore, likely to take severe notice of the jailor's conduct if I reported him. I decided to the contrary. I felt that I must pocket these personal rudenesses. If I reported him, the jailor was likely to lose his job. Instead, therefore, of reporting him, I had a talk with him. I told him how I had felt his rudeness, how I had at first thought of reporting him and how in the end I decided merely to talk to him. He took my conversation in good part and felt grateful. He admitted, too, that his conduct was wrong, though he said he did not act with the intention of wounding my susceptibilities. He certainly never molested me again. Whether he improved his general conduct in regard to other prisoners I do not know.

But what was most striking was perhaps the result of my intervention in connection with the floggings and the hunger-strikes. The first hunger-strike was that of the Sikh life-sentence prisoners.. They would not eat food without the restoration of their sacred loin-cloth and without the permission to them to cook their own food. As soon as I came to know of these strikes, I asked to be allowed to meet them. But the permission could not be granted. It was a question of prestige and jail discipline. As a matter of fact, there was no question of either, if the prisoners could be regarded as human beings Just as susceptible to finer forces as their species outside. My seeing them, I feel sure, would have saved the authorities a great deal of trouble worry and public expense, and would also have saved the Sikh



prisoners the painful, prolonged fast But, I was told, if I could not see them, I could send them ‘wireless messages’! I must explain this special expression. Wireless messages in prison parlance means unauthorized messages sent by one prisoner to another with or without the knowledge of the officials. Every official knows and must connive at such interchange of messages. Experience has shown them that it is impossible to guard against or to detect such breaches of prison regulations. I may say that I was scrupulously exact about such messages. I cannot recall a single occasion when I sent a ‘wireless’ for my own purpose. In every case it was in the interest of prison discipline. The result was, I think, that the officials had ceased to distrust me and, if they had it in their power, they would have availed themselves of my offer of intervention in such cases. But the superior authority, so jealous of its prestige, would not hear of it.

In the above instance, I did set in motion the wireless apparatus, but it was hardly effective. The fast was broken after many days, but I am unable to say whether it was at all due to my messages.

This was the first occasion when I felt that I should intervene in the interest of humanity.

The next occasion was when certain Mulshi Peta prisoners were flogged for short task.<sup>1</sup> I need not go into the painful story at length. Some of these prisoners were youngsters. It is likely that they had wilfully done much less task than they could have. They were put on grinding. Somehow or other these prisoners were not classed political as the swaraj prisoners were. Whatever the cause, they were mostly given grinding as their task. Grinding has an unnecessary bad odour about it. I am aware that all labour is irksome when it has to be done as a task and under supervision not always gentle. But a prisoner who courts imprisonment for conscience sake should look upon his task as a matter of pride and pleasure. He should put his whole soul into the labour that may be allotted to him. The Mulshi Peta prisoners, or for that matter the others, as a body were certainly not of this type. It was a new experience for them all and they did not know what was their duty as Satyagrahis—whether to do the most or the least or not at all.

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Letter to Major W. Jones”, 10-2-1923.

The majority of the Mulshi Peta prisoners were perhaps indifferent. They had perhaps not given a thought to the thing. But they were mostly high-spirited men and youths. They would brook no *jo hukum* and, therefore, there was constant friction between them and the officials.

The crisis came at last. Major Jones became angry. He thought they were wilfully not doing their task. He wanted to make an example of them and ordered six of them to receive stripes. The flogging created a sensation in the prison. Everybody knew what was happening and why. I noticed the prisoners as they were passing by. I was deeply touched. One of them recognized me and bowed. In the 'separate', the 'political' prisoners intended to strike as a protest. I have paid my tribute to Major Jones. Here it is my painful duty to criticize his action. In spite of his sterling good nature, love of justice and even partiality for prisoners as against officials, he was hasty in action. His decisions were sometimes, therefore, erroneous. It would not matter, as he is equally ready to repent, if it was not for sentences like flogging which once administered are beyond recall. I discussed the matter gently with him, but I know that I could not persuade him that he was wrong in punishing prisoners for short task. I could not persuade him to think that every short task was not proof of wilfulness. He did indeed admit that there always was a margin for error, but his experience was that it was negligible. Unfortunately, like so many officers, he believed in the efficacy of flogging.

The political prisoners, having taken a serious view of the case, were on the point of hunger-striking. I came to know of it. I felt that it was wrong to hunger-strike without an overwhelming case being made out. The prisoners could not take the law into their own hands and claim to judge every case for themselves. I asked Major Jones again for permission to see them. But that was not to be allowed. I have already published the correspondence<sup>1</sup> on the subject which I invite the studious reader to consult at the time of reading these notes. I had, therefore, again to fall back upon the 'wireless'. The hunger

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the letters addressed by Gandhiji to the Superintendent, Yeravda Jail, and the Governor Of Bombay. For these letters along with Gandhiji's notes thereon, published in *Young India*, 6-3-1924.

strike and a crisis were averted as a direct result of the 'wireless'. But there was an unpleasant incident arising from the matter. Mr. Jeramdas<sup>1</sup> had delivered my message contrary to the regulations. Mr. Jeramdas saw, as he had to see, the political prisoners concerned. They were purposely kept in separate blocks. He therefore 'wandered' from his own to the other blocks with the knowledge of the convict officers and one of the European jailors. He told them that he knew that he was breaking the regulations and that they were free to report him. He was reported in due course. Major Jones thought that he could not but take notice of the breach although he knew that it was for a good cause, and although he even appreciated Mr. Jeramdas's work. The punishment awarded was seven days' solitary confinement. On my coming to know of this, I invited Major Jones to award at least the same penalty to me as to Mr. Jeramdas. For he (Mr. Jeramdas) had broken the regulations at my instance. Major Jones said that in the interest of discipline he was bound to take notice of an open defiance brought officially to his notice. But he was not only not displeased with what Mr. Jeramdas had done, but he was glad that, even at the risk of being punished, he saw the prisoners who were about to hunger-strike and thus saved an ugly situation. There was no occasion, he saw, to punish me as I had not left my boundary and as my instigation of Mr. Jeramdas was not officially brought to his notice. I recognized the force of Major Jones's argument and attitude and did not further press for punishment.

I must consider in the next chapter another incident still more telling and important from the satyagrahi standpoint and then consider the moral results of non-violent action and the ethics of fasting.

*Young India*, 15-5-1924

<sup>1</sup> Jairamdas Doulatram (b. 1892); Secretary, Sind Provincial Congress Committee; later became Minister of Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Governor of Bihar and Assam

### 341. MESSAGE TO RAVISHANKAR VYAS<sup>1</sup>

May 15, 1924

I have still not forgotten what you told me about your first fruitful meeting with the robbers. Today, you have advanced far beyond that. You have bound the Dharala brothers and sisters to you with bonds of love. I pray that your bond with them may become stronger and that you may be the instrument of all-round improvement in the conditions of these brothers and sisters of ours.

I am certain that a community which throws up robbers and wicked men has only itself to blame. It is not as if robbers like being what they are. They take to robbing under pressure of circumstances. A robber becomes confirmed in his ways when the community punishes him and in this way the disease spreads. If we cultivate friendly relations with robbers and others like them, they realize their error and reform themselves.

You are engaged in this invaluable work. I know that all Dharalas are not robbers. Many of them are upright men, but, in our ignorance, we have kept them away from us. I regard your work as of supreme importance. One may say that it holds the key to India's regeneration.

Let your love not become blind. Persuade the Dharala brothers and sisters to take up some [honest] work. I am sure you are exerting yourself to see that they wear khadi woven by themselves from yarn which they themselves have spun, that they give up drinking and addiction to opium and other vices, that their children get education and the grown-ups learn *bhajans*<sup>2</sup> and *kirtans*<sup>3</sup>; even so, you should work harder still. May God, I pray, make the Conference a success and may He give you more strength for service.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

<sup>1</sup> Popularly known as Ravishankar Maharaj, and devoted to social reform among the Dharalas, a backward community in Gujarat, he presided over their meeting at Borsad.

<sup>2</sup> Devotional songs

<sup>3</sup> Devotional songs sung by a group to the accompaniment of music

### 342. A WEDDING INVITATION

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

May 15, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

The marriage of Amina Bibi—daughter of my friend and brother Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, for many years my companion in South Africa and at present residing with me at the Ashram with Rasoolmian Qureshi of Dhanduka, will take place on May 31, 1924, corresponding to *H. 26 Shaaban*, 1342, Saturday, at 7.30 p.m.

I shall be obliged if you will grace the occasion by your presence and bless the couple.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

### 343. LETTER TO EMIL RONIGER<sup>1</sup>

POST ANDHERI,

May 15, 1924

DEAR SIR,

I have your letter. I have no copyright in connection with any of the works you mention. They are not even published by me. Strictly speaking, you should ask the various publishers for permission. I do

<sup>1</sup> Writing from Germany on April 2, Roniger had introduced himself as the author of a book on India in which he had written on Gandhiji. With the purpose of cultivating “the spirit of brotherhood, of self-restraint and of service” in Europe, he had established a ‘Home of Friendship’. Roniger’s proposal to Gandhiji was to publish in German language volumes containing a selection of *Young India* articles, *A Guide to Health, Ethical Religion*, J. J. Doke’s *M. K. Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa*, and Gandhiji’s speeches during the South African and Indian periods. In these Roniger sought exclusive German rights. He also wanted to publish a *Review of Ahimsa* which would carry translations of articles from *Young India*. S.N. 8644

not think there will be any objection to the proposed publication by you.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

EMIL RONIGER, ESQ.  
RHEIN FELDEN  
(SWITZERLAND)

From a photostat: S.N. 880

### 344. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

POST ANDHERI,  
May 15, 1924

DEAR MR. KELKAR<sup>1</sup>,

Here is the reminiscence for Mr. Bapat. I wish I could give more because there are many. I ask you and Mr. Bapat, however, to have pity on me. I have really not a moment to spare. I must choose some other occasion and another medium when I have opportunity for reducing all the reminiscences that I have of the Lokamanya<sup>2</sup>.

I am not writing separately to Mr. Bapat, as yours was the last letter in this matter.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. N. C. KELKAR  
POONA

[ENCLOSURE]

#### REMINISCENCES OF LOKAMANYA TILAK

I have the most vivid recollection of my very first meeting with the Lokamanya. This was in 1896<sup>3</sup> when I was almost totally unknown

<sup>1</sup> Narasinh Chintaman Kelkar (1872-1947); journalist, politician and a close associate of Tilak; sometime Secretary of the Indian National Congress; helped Gandhiji in revising the constitution of the Congress in 1920; a leader of the Swarajist Party

<sup>2</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); political leader, scholar and writer, popularly known as 'Lokamanya'; one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society, Poona, and of the newspapers the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta*

<sup>3</sup> The source has 1894, but the correct date is 1896.

in India. It was in connection with the cause of Indians in South Africa that I went to Poona to organize a public meeting. I was an utter stranger in Poona. I knew the public men only by names. Mr. Sohoni whom I knew as my brother's friend and who had given me shelter took me to the Lokamanya. After putting me at ease, he asked me the cause of my visit. I at once told him what my mission was. The Lokamanya said: "I see, you are a stranger in Poona. You do not know the public men. Nor do you know anything of local differences. I must, however, tell you that there are two political bodies here. One is the Deccan Sabha, and the other is the Sarvajanic Sabha. Unfortunately, the two bodies do not meet on a common platform. If the meeting is organized by any one body, everybody must sympathize with your cause. Therefore, it must not be identified with any one political body. It is well that you have seen me. You must also see Mr. Gokhale<sup>1</sup> who belongs to the Deccan Sabha. I am sure he will give you the same advice that I am giving you. You must have a public meeting which is attended by all sections. You may tell Mr. Gokhale that no difficulty will be raised from my side. For such a meeting we must have a neutral chairman, who is also well known and carries weight. Dr. Bhandarkar is such a man in Poona. If you, therefore, see him too, and invite him to become president, telling him what I have told you and what Mr. Gokhale tells you. He has almost retired from public life. You must press him even if he hesitates. Your cause is very just. It is sure to commend itself to him. If you secure him as chairman, the rest will be easy. Do tell me in good time what happens. You may rely upon full assistance from me. I wish you every success."

I could not conceive any greater encouragement from men occupying the position that the Lokamanya did to a young man he had never met. It was a memorable meeting in my life, and the first impression that the Lokamanya gave me of himself persisted throughout the many meetings which I was privileged to have with him.

From a photostat: S.N. 8803

<sup>1</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915); statesman and educationist; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and presided over its Banaras session in 1905; founded the Servants of India Society at Poona; visited South Africa in 1912 at Gandhiji's invitation.

345. *LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH*

*Thursday [May 15, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter.

I have done my duty. Now let things take their own course.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH

TAKHTESHWAR PLOT

BHAVNAGAR

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 6006. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

346. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

*Vaisakha Sud 12 [May 16, 1924]*<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MANI<sup>3</sup>,

I have your letter. It would not at all be advisable for you to leave the sanatorium<sup>4</sup> by the 20th. You ought to stay there till at least the end of the month. How can I manage to go there? I must reach Sabarmati on the 29th.

If Vasumatibehn intends to go there, I shall let you know. There is very little chance, however.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*

<sup>1</sup> The postmark carries this date.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji returned to the Ashram on May 29, 1924, as indicated in the letter. *Vaisakha Sud 12* fell on May 16.

<sup>3</sup> Daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel

<sup>4</sup> At Hajira in the Surat district of Gujarat



347. LETTER TO VITHALBHAI J. PATEL<sup>1</sup>

JUHU,  
May 17, 1924

DEAR SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of [May 15]. In reply, I beg to state that the present state of my health will not permit me to bear the strain of a public appearance and ceremony at an early date. I hope, however, to be able to receive the address of the Corporation at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall some time in August. If you do not mind, I would fix the date later in consultation with you.<sup>2</sup>

*I remain,  
Yours truly,*

THE HON'BLE VITHALBHAI J. PATEL  
PRESIDENT  
MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 8811

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to V. J. Patel's letter of May 15, informing Gandhiji of the Bombay Municipal Corporation's resolution to present him an address of welcome.

<sup>2</sup> In his reply of July 19, Patel requested Gandhiji to fix a date prior to August 15. Gandhiji suggested August 9.

348. LETTER TO NARASINHRAO BHOLANATH DIVETIA

Vaisakha Sud 13 [May 17, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I am relieved to hear that you are not offended. But I have already offered an apology in *Navajivan*; it must have been printed by now.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

*Narasinhraoni Rojnishi*, p. 43

349. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

[May 17, 1924]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MANI,

After we meet in Ahmedabad, we shall see whether or not it is necessary for you to take any medicine. You should not leave the place until you are quite fit. Vasumatibehn may leave the place on Monday and go there. Bhai . . . knows her house at Surat. He may go there and see if she has arrived. If she has, he may take her to Hajira. Are there any private houses available there on rent? I shall most probably have a wire sent to you. Vasumatibehn is at present taking injections. How is Durgabehn<sup>3</sup> doing? Won't she write to me? Yes, my hand does shake a little.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ASAR SHETH'S SANATORIUM

HAJIRA, VIA SURAT

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*

<sup>1</sup> The apology mentioned in the letter was published in *Navajivan*, 18-5-1924, along with the addressee's letter dated May 7, 1924. In 1924, *Vaisakha Sud 13* fell on May 17.

<sup>2</sup> As in the printed source

<sup>3</sup> Wife of Mahadev Desai

### 350. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

BOMBAY,  
*Saturday, May 17, 1924*

Our representative asked: Are you in a position to make any statement about your discussions with the deputation that has come to you from Vykom?

Mahatmajji replied in slow accents:

I think that our discussions are now practically closed and I am satisfied that the movement has been carried on by the organizers in an orderly and non-violent manner. The steadiness with which they have conducted it has drawn the attention of the whole of the Indian public. All this is certainly to the good, but after having fully discussed with the friends from Vykom the position, I still entertain the opinion that Satyagraha should be confined to the Hindus only and that, too, as far as possible to the volunteers drawn from Kerala, and, at the most, from the Madras Presidency. Satyagraha in its intensest form goes deeper and therefore necessarily covers a very small surface. Let me make my meaning clear. The purer the organizers, the stronger and more effective is their Satyagraha and, therefore, when the organizers of Satyagraha extend the boundary line, it is really an admission of one's weakness, not of the cause, but of the persons organized. I think I have said sufficiently in the pages of *Young India* to show why non-Hindus cannot possibly offer Satyagraha in respect of a religious question which is exclusively Hindu. I believe that my friends have seen the force of my argument. If I could possibly persuade the Christian and Mohammedan sympathizers who had gone to jail as Satyagrahis, I will ask them to tell the authorities that they offered Satyagraha in error and that, therefore, if the authorities intended to discharge them they might do so because they would not court arrest in the cause of the untouchable Hindus. I am deliberately using the term untouchable Hindus, because I understand that among the Syrian Christians of Malabar there are untouchable Christians also. But as the present satyagraha is not being offered on behalf of the untouchable Christians, the sacrifice of Messrs Joseph, Sebastian and Abdul Rahim carries no merit with it.

So far as the Sikh kitchen is concerned, it is not only out of place but it is harmful to the cause and to the self-respect of the

people of Kerala. Harmful to the cause because it weakens the strength of the sacrifice of the volunteers and it must unnecessarily irritate that portion of the orthodox Hindus who are hostile to the reform. It is harmful to the self-respect of the Kerala people because unthinkingly they partake of the food distributed by the Sikh friends. It can only be regarded as charity. I cannot but regard it as charity that a large number of people, who are well able to feed themselves, should feed themselves at the kitchen and unwillingly be partakers of charity of which they do not stand in needs and this I say irrespective of the fact whether Sikhs be regarded as a part of the Hindu society or not. I would expect the Kerala friends to have self-respect and courage enough courteously to decline such assistance even if *Sanatani* Hindus offered to establish a kitchen. I can conceive the possibility and necessity of such a kitchen in a famine-stricken area where people are starving.

As to the pecuniary help from outside, I do retain the opinion that the Kerala friends should neither seek nor receive, even if it is offered unsought, pecuniary assistance from Hindus or others outside the Madras Presidency. They may, if they so need it, seek the pecuniary assistance only of the Hindus of the Madras Presidency. Of course, the Kerala people distributed all over India are bound, if they approve of the struggle, to send all the financial assistance that they can to the organizers of the movement.

My friends asked me whether I had expressed an opinion to the effect that the Kerala Congress Committee should not have taken up the question. My answer to them was that, if the question should have been taken up at all, the Congress Committee should have been the first body to take it up because it is pledged to bring about the removal of untouchability by all peaceful and legitimate means. But the Congress taking it up cannot and does not mean that non-Hindus can or ought to participate in satyagraha. They can only give their moral support.

I have no doubt whatsoever that, if the organizers continue the struggle in the same peaceful manner as they have done, accept the restrictions which I have suggested, and if they are thinking of sustaining the struggle for an indefinite period, their efforts must be

crowned with success. I cannot, however, lay too much stress upon the fact that satyagraha is a process of conversion and, therefore, the organizers must ever aim at changing the heart of their opponents.

Q. Have you seen a cable sent by the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in India to the effect that you have decided to take the lead at the next Congress, on the platform for securing a majority in the Assembly and Councils, replacing futile rejection of the budget by a programme combining co-operation in carrying on essential services with persistent demands backed by consistent and substantial majorities for speedy extension and recasting of reforms and speeding up of Indianization including the Army? In view of such deliberate misrepresentation, prompted by a desire to discredit the Swarajists in particular and the Indian National movement in general and in view of the thick ignorance which prevails in England regarding the real aims of the movement, don't you think that an Indian Bureau should be established in England for the dissemination of the truth regarding India? Have you revised your views since Nagpur? If the expense of maintaining such a bureau will be too heavy, should not a small subsidy be paid from Congress funds to some individual who is willing to undertake the work?

A. I did see the cablegram, but I thought that nobody would attach the slightest importance to it or credit me with the views about co-operation such as are imputed to me in the cable. As I have said so often, I am personally eager and anxious to offer co-operation, but I am more eager and more anxious to strengthen the forces of non-co-operation till there is the slightest possible indication of a change of heart, of which hitherto I have seen no sign whatsoever. I retain the same views about a publicity bureau to be maintained or subsidized in London for the purpose of contradicting mis-statements that may appear in the British Press. I am still of opinion that no misrepresentation or mis-statement can possibly do us any harm if we are ourselves strong and sound. Conversely no patronizing or favourable notice of our demands in the British or the foreign Press can be of any avail to us if we are ourselves weak, disorganized and not prepared to give battle to the Government. Therefore, every rupee that we can spare I would utilize for the khaddar propaganda, for national schools and for other parts of the constructive programme.

Q. You must have seen that resort to so-called Satyagraha is becoming frequent in the country not only in connection with political grievances but purely

religious or social. Don't you think that there is danger of the abuse of this weapon and *duragaha* instead of Satyagraha being practised for illegitimate ends? Can you lay down any rules for Satyagrahis—at least those who follow the Congress lead?

Yes, I agree that there is some danger of Satyagraha degenerating into an evil force and therefore becoming harmful. Abuse of a good thing is always possible, especially of a force so powerful and subtle as Satyagraha. I think, in my discussion of Satyagraha at Vykom, I have discussed in a cursory manner its fundamentals, but I accept your suggestion and, as soon as I have a little leisure, I hope to draw the rules which in my opinion are binding upon every satyagrahi.

In the course of a conversation with Messrs K. Madhavan Nair and Kurur Neelakantan Nambudripad, who constitute the Vykom Deputation, they gave me to understand that they had three to four long interviews with Mahatmaji and had discussed the question threadbare. They represented the whole case as well as they could, which Mahatmaji listened to with his characteristic patience and politeness. They said to me that they were satisfied with Mahatmaji's statement and were confident that it would satisfy workers and sympathizers in Kerala and the Madras Presidency. Mahatmaji emphasized self-reliance and self-sufficiency involved in a movement. They were afraid, they said, that Mahatmaji might find objection to the Congress Committee undertaking the [anti-]untouchability movement as it was represented in some quarters. They were, however, satisfied that there was nothing of the kind. Mahatmaji's very emphatic assertion raises no apprehensions in that direction. The Deputation is returning to Vykom in a day or two.

With regard to the Council question, Mahatmaji gave our representative to understand that a full statement would be issued to the Press in the course of this week. Our representative understands that Mahatmaji and Swarajist leaders had had long and repeated conferences and the decision is practically arrived at.

*The Hindu*, 19-5-1924

### 351. MY NOTES

#### SHASTRAS ON CHILD-MARRIAGE

A friend, commenting on the article on “Renunciation Personified”<sup>1</sup>, has written to me to the following effect: “You are against the marriage of girls under fifteen, but the Shastras enjoin us to get girls married before they attain puberty. Even those who are against child-marriage follow this injunction of the Shastras. How does one solve this dilemma?” I see no dilemma here. Anyone who claims or believes that whatever is found in the books known as the Shastras is true and that no departure from it is permissible will find himself in such dilemmas at every step. A given verse may be interpreted in many ways, and these meanings may even be mutually contradictory. Moreover, the Shastras lay down some principles which are immutable, while some others related to conditions at a particular time and place and applied only to those circumstances. If anyone could live in the Arctic region where the sun does not set for six months, at what time should he perform *sandhya*<sup>2</sup>? What would he do about bathing, etc.? The *Manusmriti*<sup>3</sup> lays down many rules about what should and what should not be eaten, not one of which is observed today. Nor were all the verses written by the same person or at the same time. Hence, anyone who lives in fear of God and does not wish to violate moral laws has no choice but to reject everything which seems to be immoral. Self-indulgence cannot possibly be dharma. Hinduism places no restrictions on a life of self-control. What about the girl who has come to feel aversion to worldly pleasures? What does attaining puberty signify? Why should we insist that a girl should necessarily be married immediately after or before she arrives at a state which is normal for women. One can well understand a restriction to the effect that a girl can marry only after she has arrived at this state. Quarrelling over the meaning of the Shastras, we should never perpetrate cruelties. A Shastra is what leads us towards *moksha*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Renunciation Personified”, 4-5-1924.

<sup>2</sup> Worship, especially morning and evening

<sup>3</sup> Manu’s code of laws

<sup>4</sup> Deliverance from phenomenal existence as the supreme end of life

and dharma what teaches us self-restraint. Anyone who jumps into a well and drowns himself merely because it is his ancestral well is a misguided fool. Akha Bhagat<sup>1</sup> described the Shastras as a dark well. Jhaneshwar<sup>2</sup> regarded even the Vedas as much too narrow in scope. Narasinh Mehta<sup>3</sup> regarded experience alone as true knowledge. If we turn our eyes to the world, we can see that what this gentleman regards as dharma is in truth *adharma*<sup>4</sup> and should be completely rejected. It is because of this *adharma* that today we sacrifice innumerable young girls. History will condemn Hindu men for this custom. We need not, however, worry over what history will say. We ourselves are tasting the bitter fruit of the custom of child-marriage. It cannot be denied that this custom is one main reason why many Hindu young men have no spirit in them, behave like cripples and are all fear. It should not be forgotten that children of parents who are not fully grown men and women cannot develop a strong physique, do what you will. Fortunately, all Hindus do not follow the rule mentioned by the gentleman and the race has not totally lost its physical vitality. If, however, it were literally followed in practice, Hindu society would have no men at all.

#### A LEGITIMATE COMPLAINT

Perhaps most readers of *Navajivan* have not heard of Shri Harihar Sharma. He may be described as a relative of Kaka's. Let me introduce the reader to that family. When Barrister Shri Keshavrao Deshpande founded the Ganganath Vidyalaya in Baroda, he gathered round him a group of teachers and, with the idea of creating a family-feeling among them, gave them titles indicative of family relationships. The school as an institution housed in a particular building has ceased to exist, but as a sentiment it survives even today. This family circle still maintains its old ties. Like blood relationship, spiritual relationship too cannot cease. Inspired by this idea, those who were given these titles of family relationships regard them as sacred and have retained them. Keshavrao Deshpande's followers still know

<sup>1</sup> Gujarati saint-poet of the 17th century

<sup>2</sup> Maharashtrian saint of the 13th century

<sup>3</sup> 1414-1479; saint-poet of Gujarat

<sup>4</sup> The opposite of dharma



and respect him by the name of “Saheb”. Our Kalelkar likes always to be addressed as “Kaka”. Very few Gujaratis know Phadke by that name. We know him as “Mama”. Similarly, Harihar Sharma is “Anna”. This is one of the titles in use in Maharashtrian families. In Tamil, too, it is used in much the same sense. “Anna” means brother. Another person is known as “Bhai”. Though he is still alive, he is as good as lost. I do not know the names of all the members of this well-known family. I have given these few facts while introducing Shri Harihar Sharma, hoping that Kaka himself will tell us in detail about the family when he has an occasion to do so.

Through this preface, I have also removed one misconception. Some persons, or rather quite a few, believe that Kaka and other workers like him are my gift to Gujarat; in fact, they are gifts by Saheb. He has given them on loan to me and, thereby, has put a responsibility on me as well. My only duty towards the members of this family is to help them in the work and increase their devotion to Saheb as much as possible. Other birds, too, have come for shelter into the nest which I have built. If we examine the reasons for this, we shall see that they have all come because people find comfort for their spirit in this nest. The birds feel their wings strengthened here, not clipped, so that they can fly as they wish. I am their debtor so long as they stay. As I am not responsible for collecting them, I cannot keep them either. Everyone is free to follow his own way. Since, however, they believe in self-restraint, I cannot describe them as men who accept no law.

This Anna has taken up the work of propagating Hindi in the Dravida region and, for that purpose, he and his wife studied Hindi in Prayag. Both of them passed the Hindi examination there and they started the work of spreading Hindi in Madras. Anyone who wants to get more information about this can do so by writing to him.

Shri Anna also brings out a fortnightly magazine called *Hindi Prachar*. The chairman of the Reception Committee of the Provincial Conference<sup>1</sup> at Borsad sent him an invitation which was wholly in English ! How could Anna tolerate this? He has written me a strongly-

<sup>1</sup> The Seventh Gujarat Political Conference held on May 1.3, 1924

worded letter. It should have been addressed to Mohanlal Pandya<sup>1</sup>. He is the guilty party, and I get the slap. Anna knows Pandya. But, perhaps, he was afraid of writing to him. I being the meek cow, all ticks come and settle on me. That is what Anna has done. He says:<sup>2</sup>

It is not necessary for me to comment on this. There is only one way of satisfying Anna and it is that those Gujaratis who have not so far learnt Hindi-Urdu, that is Hindustani, should do so and, in future, use their mother tongue among themselves and with others generally, the national language.

#### LETTER FROM NARASINHRAO

I have reproduced the letter<sup>3</sup> as I have received it, in obedience to Shri Narasinhrao's wishes. I see that he has been pained by the manner in which I referred<sup>4</sup> to his name. I feel unhappy and beg his forgiveness for having given him offence, even unintentionally. I do not play with anyone's name; how, then, can I take such liberty with the names of such literary figures as Shri Narasinhraobhai and Shri Khabardar? What I wrote was inspired by my regard for both of them. If I could not express this regard, I wish to assure them that it was not because I did not feel it, but because I lacked power of expression.

#### KALYANJI'S CONDITION

Having heard that Shri Kalyanji Vithalji<sup>5</sup> is not well and that he experiences some difficulty about diet, etc., I wrote and inquired of the Inspector-General of Prisons before writing any thing on this subject in *Navajivan*. I give below a translation of his reply to me :<sup>6</sup>

Shri Kalyanji's weight cannot be regarded as satisfactory. If he weighed only 92 Ib. before his imprisonment, this was much below normal. While in prison, he should put on weight so that it may be in proportion to his height.

<sup>1</sup> Mohanlal Kameshwar Pandya, a Congress worker of Kheda district in Gujarat who participated in several Satyagraha campaigns since the Kheda Satyagraha of 1918

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not translated here.

<sup>3</sup> The letter is not translated here.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "My Language", 27-4-1924.

<sup>5</sup> Congress leader and educationist of Gujarat

<sup>6</sup> Not reproduced here

A volunteer writes to say that there are *kirtans* on the subject of swadeshi, i.e., khadi, propaganda against drinks and so on, and that they have proved very useful for propaganda in the villages. There are no such *kirtans* about *Antyajas*. There are many poets in Gujarat—both among the non-co-operators and those who co-operate with the Government. Untouchability is a subject on which there is not much difference of opinion between the former and the latter. The difference between the two becomes relevant only when there is a question of asking for Government help for starting schools and providing other facilities for *Antyajas*. Will not, therefore, our Gujarati poets compose poems on the idea that untouchability is a sin and that it is the duty of every Hindu to help the *Antyajas* and thereby serve Gujarat?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 352. FAMILY QUARREL

An *Anavil*<sup>1</sup> gentleman, who has supplied his name and address, has this complaint to make:<sup>2</sup>

I can understand that the condition of many men must be as pitiable as this gentleman's. The relation between a man and his wife is so delicate that a stranger's intervention can do little good. Satyagraha signifies pure love. When love between husband and wife becomes wholly pure, it reaches its perfection. There is no place in it then for sensual pleasures nor for any touch of selfishness. That is why the poets have conceived and expressed the longing of the individual self for the Supreme Self in terms of conjugal love. Such pure love is rarely to be found anywhere. Desire for marriage springs from attachment, from intense attachment. When that attachment has

<sup>1</sup> A community in Gujarat

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had asked whether he should not start Satyagraha against his wife, who would not give up wearing foreign clothes while attending marriages, cinemas, etc., though she had stopped buying foreign cloth.

developed into an unselfish bond and one has no desire for physical contact—does not even think of it—when one *atman*<sup>1</sup> completely merges itself in another, we then see that one gets a glimpse of the love of the Supreme Atman. This is a rather crude way of expressing the idea. The love I want the reader to conceive is completely free from desire. I have not become so free myself as to be able to describe it aright and I know, therefore, that I cannot command the language which can describe it. But a pure reader will be able to imagine for himself what that language ought to be. Since I believe in the possibility of such love between husband and wife, what can Satyagraha not do? The Satyagraha I mean is not what is nowadays known by that name. Parvati<sup>2</sup> resorted to Satyagraha against Shankar by doing penance for thousands of years. Rama did not do what Bharata<sup>3</sup> wished and so the latter retired to Nandigram. Rama was in the right and so was Bharata. Either kept his pledge. Bharata took away Rama's wooden sandals and, worshipping them, attained to the perfection of yoga. Rama's *tapascharya*<sup>4</sup> did not exclude external happiness; Bharata's was unparalleled. For Rama it was possible to forget Bharata, but Bharata had Rama's name on his lips continually. God, therefore, made himself the servant of his servant.

This is an example of purest satyagraha. Truly speaking, neither won, or, if anyone can at all be said to have won, it was Bharata. Tulsidas said that, if Bharata had not been born, Rama's name would not have been invested with the holiness it possesses, and in that way presented to us the supreme truth of love.

If my correspondent would forget for a while the physical aspect of love and cultivate the spiritual feeling which lies behind the love of husband and wife—I know that it cannot be cultivated by conscious effort, that it reveals itself, if at all, spontaneously—I can say with confidence that his wife will burn her foreign clothes that very day. Let no one ask why I advise such a big effort for a trivial thing or say that I have no sense of proportion. Small events bring about

<sup>1</sup> Self

<sup>2</sup> Consort of Shiva

<sup>3</sup> Step-brother of Rama; during the period of Rama's exile, Bharata did not enjoy kingly privileges, but ruled the kingdom in Rama's name.

<sup>4</sup> Self-suffering as moral discipline

changes in our life which deliberately planned occasions or so-called important events do not.

I can quote from my experience no end of examples of satyagraha between husband and wife, but they, too, I know, may be misused. I think the present atmosphere is poisonous. In view of this, I would not commit the sin of confusing the judgment of this correspondent, who has put to me a frank question, by citing my experiences. I have, therefore, merely explained the highest state. I leave it to him to choose a suitable remedy conforming to it for meeting his difficulty.

The position of women is delicate. Whatever one does about them smacks of the use of force. Life in Hindu society is hard, and that is why it has remained comparatively pure. I think a husband has the right to exercise only such influence as he can through pure love. If one of them at any rate overcomes carnal desire altogether, the task will become easy. It is my firm opinion that mainly, if not wholly, the man himself is responsible for the defects which he sees in woman. It is he who teaches her love of finery, who decks her out in what is regarded as attractive apparel. Then the woman gets used to these things and, later, if she is not able to follow her husband the moment he chances to change his way of life, the fault lies with him, not with her. Hence the man will have to have patience.

If India is to win swaraj by peaceful means, women will have to contribute their full share in the effort. Swaraj will certainly stay far off as long as women hanker after foreign cloth or mill made cloth or silk.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 353. WHAT SHOULD KATHIAWAR DO?

Last week, I stated in detail my views about holding a political conference. I do not know whether the conference will take place and, if so, where. But this I know, that even some of the friends who came to see me were disappointed. They claim to be staunch satyagrahis. I

should like to tell them that, in the dictionary of satyagrahis, there is no word or synonym for disappointment. I do not even understand why they were disappointed. In fact, they were of the same opinion as I. But we may grant that they were hypnotized by my presence. If so, when they were out of that presence, they could have pulled themselves up and thought again. If they felt then that the workers had committed no error and that, in case the Durbar<sup>1</sup> refused permission for tasks and work on them will yield quick results. Both the rulers and the subjects should feel ashamed if even a single person is forced by hunger to leave Kathiawar. What does Kathiawar lack? The land is fertile, the men and women are intelligent and able-bodied. It grows sufficient cotton. Weavers themselves have told me that many of them have to leave Kathiawar for want of employment. Two years ago they got work; one would expect them to get more now. Why do they get less, instead? Are not the workers in Kathiawar responsible for this falling off? If they stop making too many speeches and learn all the stages in the processing of cotton, they could improve the economic condition of Kathiawar in one year. They should see that foreign cloth and mill-made cloth are boycotted throughout Kathiawar. Mill-cloth transfers the wealth of the many into the hands of the few. When a person's blood accumulates in his brain, he is said to have an attack of tetanus. The victim has very little chance of surviving; if at all, an opening in the vein may help him. When the wealth of many is concentrated in the hands of one person, we can describe him as suffering from economic tetanus. Just as, in a healthy person, the blood circulates continuously through the arteries holding the conference despite their agreeing to the conditions, it became a duty to offer Satyagraha; all of them, or any one of them could offer it. It is the beauty of Satyagraha that it can be offered even by a lone individual. I can well understand that because of my opinion against the holding of the conference the public may feel confused. But anyone who is convinced that my view is right can remove this confusion by employing the tremendous power of satyagraha. A

<sup>1</sup> The ruler of Bhavnagar which was then a princely State in Kathiawar

satyagrahi need not be discouraged even by opposition from me. I may be vain enough to believe that I alone know the science of Satyagraha, but I certainly have no monopoly in understanding it. A friend has published a book on this subject, in which he has tried to prove that my Satyagraha is relatively imperfect, while his is of the most perfect kind. I hope to acquaint the reader with this book some time or other. New discoveries will continue to be made about the uses of Satyagraha and the methods of organizing it. Anyone who has confidence in himself ought to take the plunge and proceed with his plan. There is only one rule that cannot be violated, for it is part of the very definition of satyagraha. It is that a satyagrahi demonstrates his faith in what he regards as truth not by making others suffer, but by suffering himself. This being so, the satyagrahis alone will have to pay for his errors.

After these introductory remarks by way of encouragement to those who are real satyagrahis, I come to the last week's pledge.

The time has now come for the whole of the country and, especially for Kathiawar, to keep silent. The latter has always been accused of being brave in words and timid in deeds.<sup>1</sup> So far as the gift of the gab is concerned, the choice of the Goddess of Speech would certainly light on Kathiawaris. I often had this experience in South Africa also. The Kathiawaris there will testify to this. It need not be supposed that there were no exceptions to this, and that not even a few came forward to work, as I did. But God has especially blessed Kathiawar with public speakers.

It is, therefore, necessary that Kathiawaris keep mum now. Let them not lift their pens from the inkstands. If a conference is held, let it be not for the purpose of drawing up a schedule of speeches next year, but for chalking out a programme of work. We have discovered through experience that there is a great awakening among the people and that, when the occasion requires, we can get together thousands of people. This knowledge needed to be acquired. But it is no longer necessary to collect such vast numbers. To do so would only result in waste of time and money.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Injustice to Kathiawaris", 1-6-1924.

It is easy to work in Kathiawar with its population of twenty six lakhs. Spreading the use of khadi, running schools and carrying on propaganda against liquor and opium—these are all urgent and veins and does not accumulate in any part of the body, each part receiving the amount it needs, similarly, in a healthy economy, wealth should circulate regularly through every part in amounts proportionate to the needs of each. The spinning-wheel is one powerful means by which such a healthy economic condition can be brought about. Owing to its disappearance, the wealth of the entire world is being drained away to Lancashire. This circumstance is the symptom of a deadly disease, which can be cured only by reinstating the spinning-wheel.

If the workers in Kathiawar have understood this simple yet wonder-working idea, they will learn every step in the processing of cotton and introduce this skill among the entire population. This is the first political task.

How many national schools are there in Kathiawar? How many illiterate girls and boys are there? Are there enough schools to meet their needs? If not, schools should be started for them and in these schools, along with instruction in letters, training in the use of the spinning-wheel can also be given. This is the second political task.

The third political task is cleansing ourselves of the filth of untouchability. Propaganda for the spinning-wheel can be easily carried on along with this work. I cannot say from this distance what need there is in Kathiawar for propaganda against liquor and opium. Contact with the outside world cannot but have its effect. This is the fourth political task.

I have mentioned these tasks merely as illustrations. Local workers familiar with the conditions there can think of many other similar activities.

Some critics will cry out impatiently that this is social reform, not political work. But that is a misconception. By 'political' is meant that which deals with the ruler, with the State. A ruler means one who administers the affairs of society. Any person who does this must pay attention to all the matters I have mentioned. If he fails to do so, he is no administrator, no ruler; an organization in which these are ignored or given a subordinate place is not a political organization. The aim of



a body like a political conference should be to help the ruler or, if he has strayed from the right path, to act as a check on him. Such assistance can be given or such control can be exercised only by those who have the same influence over the people as the ruler has. He alone from among the subjects can wield such influence on the people who serves them selflessly, and it is only through the activities outlined above that he can render such service. If, therefore, political conferences wish to do sound political work, engaging themselves in this service is the first step in their training and, as such, absolutely necessary.

This service, therefore, is the best training, and an essential one, for satyagraha. One who has not done such work has no right to offer satyagraha on behalf of the people. And the people, too, will not appreciate his effort. Without such service to our credit, we would be regarded as mere adventurers in the guise of workers or satyagrahis.

“But how long will it be before we can complete the work which remains to be done and when will the rulers mend their ways? Look at your Jam Saheb<sup>1</sup>. You used to say with pride that you came to know Jam Saheb when he was known as Ranjitsinhji, that you two were fellow-students and had occasionally met, and also that he had very simple ways at that time and bore great love for the people of the State. All this is gone now. Perhaps, the subjects of no other ruler are as oppressed as the Jam Saheb’s. What relation is there between trying to bring about a change in his policy and inducing the people to take up spinning? We feel, rather, that you are tired of jail, do not wish to be imprisoned again, and so, to shield your weakness, you want to lead us on to a wrong path and make us weak besides.” This is not said by just one person. A friend spoke jokingly of my ‘weakness’. I have made up this charge-sheet by putting together remarks by several persons.

I have heard much against the Jam Saheb. Two years ago, some friends had sent me documentary proof. However, as I was busy with some other work and reforming the administrations in Kathiawar was outside my sphere, I did nothing in the matter and wrote nothing on

<sup>1</sup> Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji (1872-1933), the ruler of Nawanagar, then a princely State in Kathiawar; educated in England where he won renown as a cricketer

the subject. I do not wish even now to take up this problem. I believe that, if people succeed in the peaceful activities of the swaraj programme, the shortcomings, wherever they exist, in the administrations of the Indian States will come to be automatically remedied. If, however, I decide to interfere in any way in the affairs of Kathiawar States, I will not form my opinions on the basis of the story of only one side. Besides, my acquaintance with the Jam Saheb, such as it is, would make it obligatory for me to meet him first and put all the complaints before him. Only if, after this, I felt that injustice was being done and that the Jam Saheb was not inclined to stop it, would I raise the matter in public. I followed this method when dealing with the indigo planters in Champaran,<sup>1</sup> and I cannot possibly do less when dealing with rulers in Kathiawar. I would, therefore, request the Jam Saheb, if he happens to see this article, not to conclude from this discussion that I am making any allegations against the administration in his State. I have mentioned the matter merely by way of illustration. There is no doubt, of course, that his subjects have complained in the manner I have described.

Let us return to the subject. In my opinion, the service of the people which I have mentioned above has a close bearing on the problem of the alleged misrule by the Jam Saheb. Both the ruler and his subjects will listen to those who have rendered such service. A satyagrahi ought to be a strong person; he should not have a trace of cowardice in him. He should have, however, all the greater humility for his fearlessness. Without courtesy, fearlessness makes one proud and arrogant. A whole world separates satyagraha from pride. Even a very arrogant ruler will be obliged to give a patient hearing to one who is humble. Humility and courtesy cannot be cultivated except through service. A satyagrahi, again, should have experience of local conditions, and this, too, cannot be gained except through service. Criticizing the rulers is not experience. Many of the workers in Kathiawar are what are known as shrewd politicians. Political shrewdness has little connection with service. Politicians constitute the ruling class. I observed, when I was a child, that the people did not even provide a living for this class. If workers in Kathiawar wish to

<sup>1</sup> In 1917.

serve people, they should no longer regard themselves as politicians, but should become sweepers, farmers, weavers, potters, carpenters, and so on. To gain proficiency in such work, they may add their education and political experience. If truth and non-violence also added, no government can match the strength arising from the combination of these three factors.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 354. HOW MUCH A WEAVER CAN EARN

A friend writes in his misery:<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to reassure this correspondent and others who share his doubts. What I wrote was meant for intellectuals like lawyers. I do not wish to alter my statement despite this criticism. I know that many weavers in the Punjab earn more than two rupees a day. The highly skilled weavers of Madanpura in Bombay easily earn three rupees a day. It is true, of course, that they use foreign yarn or mill-made yarn. If, shaking off their laziness, they were to agree to use hand-spun yarn as woof, their income would surely not grow less. Why cannot others earn as much as these weavers do? One explanation which may be offered is that these weavers have plenty of experience. That is indeed a fact, but it is not necessary to have years of experience for a family to earn two rupees a day. I believe that anyone who works on the loom eight hours a day for one year, excepting Sundays, will gain the necessary experience; in any case, it is certain that, if one acquires skill in weaving, it requires little time to work designs and the earnings rise by half as much again or even more. Weaving coloured borders by itself fetches more money. Many weavers get higher wages only by virtue of their skill. Moreover, the income which I have visualized is not for one person, but for a family.

Ordinarily, much more work is done when other members of the family also help. Let us suppose that a skilled weaver, his wife and his ten-year-old son are engaged in weaving. The weaver has a stock of

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had questioned the accuracy of Gandhiji's statement that one could earn two to three rupees a day through weaving. He had asked Gandhiji to correct his statement, if it was not correct.

cotton stored. He makes slivers and gives them for spinning to women in the neighbourhood. He weaves that same yarn and himself sells the cloth to consumers. Both man and wife are engaged in weaving and, between the two, they work twelve hours a day. The child spools the yarn and helps in other ways. A family working in this manner will, in most cases, easily earn two rupees a day. Where it does not, it will be found that the cost of living too is relatively low. My correspondent is afraid that some inexperienced person may be misled by my article and take up weaving. I hope that some skilled weaver will choose a place and make the experiment I have suggested. It is possible that his experience may not bear me out. In any case he will lose nothing. I do not invite persons who earn one or two hundred rupees a month to make this experiment, but I certainly wish to tempt those who are unemployed or those who are working as clerks in an uncongenial atmosphere and on a salary of thirty rupees. The only condition is that the worker should have a fairly strong physique. He should not be averse to work and should be always ready to work for eight hours. If he has a family, so much the better. If however, he is single, but is a good weaver, he will certainly earn thirty rupees a month. Suppose, however, that it takes him some time to reach that figure; even then, what does it matter? He may be sure that he will not feel as if caught in a hole.

I shall be obliged if those who have had some experience in this matter write to me, even though it goes against my estimate. I may even use it in *Navajivan* when occasion arises.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 355. SOME DIFFICULTIES

A volunteer has written a most serious letter in which he has discussed many issues. I quote from it those paragraphs on which I think I can express my views now.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately for me, I do not regard anyone as my follower and so I shall not share in anyone's sins. But this is not enough to allay

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

the fears of the correspondent or to absolve me from responsibility. I have been receiving complaints from all quarters against my so called followers. I am looking for a way out of this situation. With my faith in God as the Friend of those who suffer, I trust that He will show me the way to put an end to the activities of these so-called followers. Fraud cannot prosper for ever. Some men may be deceived for some time, but history has no example of all men having been deceived for all time.

It is also true that the working of the Congress constitution has become loose. There is much truth in the view that even a perfect constitution falls into discredit when worked by the wrong type of people and that the right type can make good use of even an imperfect constitution. It is obvious that volunteers should not receive four annas<sup>1</sup> from anyone without first explaining to him what it is for. It is also obvious that, having obtained the amount, they should not forget the persons who paid. The very idea behind establishing village [Congress] committees was to maintain constant contact between the villagers and the Congress.

No one who, like this correspondent, has seen the poverty of the villages will think of anything except the spinning-wheel as the means of ending it, for there is no such means. That is why the progress we make in popularizing the spinning-wheel will be our progress towards swaraj. The idea that one should not accept remuneration from the Congress is a kind of pride. It is not possible to get a large number of honorary workers and, therefore, swaraj work cannot go on if no one offers to join as a paid worker. It is a false notion that people do not look with respect upon those who accept a salary. Of course they will have no respect for people who do not work tirelessly in their service, regardless of whether or not the persons concerned receive a salary. I have sufficient experience to know that the people will not mind paying anyone who does indeed work thus tirelessly. It is true that the Congress cannot give large salaries, but I have no doubt that it can afford some small payment to workers. We should look upon it as an honour to accept remuneration from the Congress and serve the nation rather than accept a paid job elsewhere. What fascination do

<sup>1</sup> This was the fee for ordinary membership of the Congress.

people find in the Civil Service! Why is this so? One should feel even greater attraction for service in the Congress. If a person who enters the Civil Service may rise to a high post, one who serves the Congress may become its President. But anyone who is tempted simply by this prospect to take up service in it will also sink to a low level. Gokhale served the Fergusson College for twenty years. Although he had some income from the Royal Commission and such other sources, he continued to accept a salary from the College and regarded it as an honour to do so. Readers will remember that the salary started at Rs. 40 and did not exceed Rs. 75. Congress will not have its work done well so long as it does not get paid workers who will be indefatigable in its service. We shall not get many workers till people feel that it is an honour to work and receive payment. The best way to raise paid work in people's esteem is for Vallabhbhai himself to accept a salary. When I start serving, I will certainly enrol myself as a paid worker..

What the salary should be and how it should be fixed, whether everyone should be paid the same salary and whether the candidates would have to sit for a test are problems that do arise, but solving them is the test of our capacity to run an organization.

I shall not comment on the criticism against the Press, since I have little knowledge about Gujarati papers. This great activity started while I was in jail.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt, however, that it is the duty of newspapers to educate the people to turn their attention to action; it is no longer necessary to rouse them. The people know now that the present system of government needs to be changed, that swaraj has to be secured, and they also know the means to be employed for the purpose. Only, we have not yet gathered speed in our progress in this direction. Newspapers should concentrate on imparting that. There can be no two opinions on this matter.

Of course, it is our duty to teach our *Antyaja* brethren to keep themselves clean. If we mix with them, we shall, in our own interest, teach them to be clean. We should be patient, knowing that their uncleanness is the result of our sin. Till now, we have not treated *Antyajas* as our brothers, not even as human beings. We should not be surprised if we have to suffer the consequences of our own misdeeds.

<sup>1</sup> At Yeravda in 1922-24

Even so, we should certainly help them to rid themselves of their vices. They are by nature straightforward people. They know that they have to bring about these reforms. If they get the help they need, I believe they will surpass us.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-5-1924

### 356. LETTER TO ABDUL KADIR BAWAZEER

*May 18, 1924*

BHAI IMAM SAHEB,

I have sent invitation cards<sup>1</sup> according to the enclosed list. You may send cards anywhere else you wish. Send one to the Persian professor of the college. As I write this Kaka<sup>2</sup> is not present here and I do not remember the name. I do not think anybody else is left out. I personally wish to send as few invitations as possible. I do not like pomp and show any more. I am now above such things. Therefore you may treat my ideas as of no value. The Ashram belongs as much to you as to me. So, exercise your full right. About the wedding consider your wish as mine.

*Blessings and salaam from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10787. Courtesy: Ghulam Rasool Qureshi

### 357. SPEECH AT BUDDHA JAYANTI MEETING, BOMBAY<sup>3</sup>

BOMBAY,

*May 18, 1924*

The only reason for inviting me to preside at this meeting is, I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item

<sup>2</sup> D. B. Kalelkar

<sup>3</sup> Presiding over the Buddha Jayanti celebrations under the auspices of the Buddha Society of Bombay, Gandhiji spoke on the "Ideals and Teachings of Buddha". This was his first public appearance after release. Gandhiji spoke from a prepared text, the draft of which is available. Newspapers carried a report with slight verbal variations.

presume, that I am more than most people endeavouring to popularize the truth for which Gautama Buddha lived and died. For, my book-knowledge of Buddhism, I am sorry to have to confess, is of the poorest type. It is confined to the fascinating book of Sir Edwin Arnold, which I read for the first time now nearly thirty-five years ago, and one or two books during my brief incarceration in the Yeravda Jail. But that great Buddhist scholar, Professor Kausambi, tells me that *The Light of Asia* gives but a faint idea of Buddha's life, and that at least one incident in the beautiful poem is not to be found in any authoritative original Buddhist work. Perhaps some day the learned Professor will give us the results of his ripe scholarship in the shape of a reliable story of Buddha's life for the ordinary Indian reader.

For the moment, however, I would like to tell the meeting what I believe about Buddhism. To me it is a part of Hinduism. Buddha did not give the world a new religion; he gave it a new interpretation. He taught Hinduism not to take but to give life. True sacrifice was not of others but of self. Hinduism resents any attack upon the Vedas. It regarded the new interpretation as such attack. Whilst, therefore, it accepted the central truth of Buddha's teachings, it fought against Buddhism regarded as a new and anti-Vedic cult.

It has become the fashion nowadays in some quarters to say that India's downfall dates from her acceptance of Buddha's teachings. It is tantamount to saying that love and piety, if sufficiently practised, will degrade the world. In other words, according to the critics, evil should triumph in the end. It is my unalterable belief that India has fallen not because it accepted Gautama's teaching, but because it failed to live up to it. The priest has ever sacrificed the prophet. Vedas to be divine must be a living word, ever growing, ever expanding and ever responding to new forces. The priest clung to the letter and missed the spirit.

But we need not despair. The reformation that Buddha attempted has not yet had a fair trial. Twenty-five hundred years are nothing in the life of the world. If the evolution of form takes aeons, why should we expect wonders in the evolution of thought and conduct? And yet the age of miracles is not gone. As with individuals,



so with nations. I hold it to be perfectly possible for masses to be suddenly converted and uplifted. Suddenness is only seeming. No one can say how far the leaven has been working. The most potent forces are unseen, even unfelt, for long. But they are working none the less surely. Religion to me is a living faith in the Supreme Unseen Force. That Force has confounded mankind before, and it is bound to confound us again. Buddha taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love. This was his matchless gift to Hinduism and to the world.

He taught us also how to do it, because he lived what he taught. The best propaganda is not pamphleteering, but for each one of us to try to live the life we would have the world to live.

From a photostat of the draft: S.N. 8813; also C.W. 5176

### 358. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[May 19, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

You have not written the letter as a Mr. Hyde, but as Shekhchalli.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jekyll too has the right to build castles in the air; particularly when he happens to live in the Ashram castle. What is wrong is the desire to live away from me. Whatever that may be, I am not a stupid bania to sell my precious wares cheap by getting you a lucrative post and taking money from you for the Ashram. That much money you can get for the Ashram even by begging. I want to conduct the Ashram either by begging or by doing manual labour. There are many more things I would like to say, but you may spellthem out from what I have said already. The body of a self-controlled man must be healthy. There is a contradiction between physical education and spiritual education. There is a direct relation between health and spiritual strength.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. MAHADEV DESAI  
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM  
SABARMATI<sup>3</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 8785

<sup>1</sup> The postmark bears this date.

<sup>2</sup> A day-dreamer

<sup>3</sup> The letter was redirected c/o Dr. Champaklal Ghiya, Haripura, Surat.

*359. TELEGRAM TO BACKERGUNGE DISTRICT  
CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>*

[May 20, 1924]

SORRY      TOO      LATE.      YOUR      MESSAGE      RECEIVED      ONLY  
TODAY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 8816

*360. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

*Vaisakha Krishna 2 [May 20, 1924]<sup>2</sup>*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have been getting your letters. Do keep writing to me. If I do not reply every time, you may take it that I haven't the time to do so.

Arrogance and firmness are generally found together. The former will gradually take a secondary place, if we go on promoting the *sattvik*<sup>3</sup> tendencies in us. The best way of overcoming arrogance is to try and refrain from reacting to opposition.

Mr. Das<sup>4</sup> is already here and having talks with me. He is emphatically denying that he has acted improperly.

For the attacks that are taking place on Hindu women, I think we alone are to blame. The Hindus have become so cowardly that they

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to a telegram from the Secretary, Backergunge District Conference, received on May 20, 1924, Stating: "Backergunge district conference Pirojpor 24th May. Deshbandhu Maulana Azad attendance widely announced with their consent pray send both immediately failing false position."

On the top of the telegram Gandhiji had scribbled: "Inquire when was it received?"

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the apology, the letter appears to have been written after the previous one to the addressee dated May 13. In 1924, *Vaisakha Krishna 2* fell on May 20.

<sup>3</sup> Virtuous

<sup>4</sup> Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925); eminent lawyer, Congress leader, orator and author; President of the Indian National Congress in 1922, at Gaya; leader of the Swarajist Party

cannot even protect their sisters. I am going to write a good deal on this subject. I do not see any easy remedy for this. There may be some exaggeration in the reports you have heard. After making allowance for that, what remains is enough to put us to shame.

I asked the manager to send you Y.I. and *Hindi N.J.* I hope you have got them by now.

You must have got the letter I wrote to you last week.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Even if your brother tenders an apology, you would better not apologize, if you can remain firm. We may not find fault with one who apologizes. One's morality is limited to one's strength.

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C W. 6007. Courtesy: G D. Birla

### *361. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH*

*Vaisakha Vad 2 [May 20, 1924]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. If any persons come for the Parishad<sup>2</sup>, they will certainly stay with you. But isn't it quite far off yet?

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original C W 6008 Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> The postmark bears this date

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, the Kathiawar Political Conference which was to be held in January 1925

362. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL AND DURGA DESAI

[May 20, 1924]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANI,

I got your letter and postcard. I was very pleased to read what you say about “Tyagamurti”<sup>2</sup>. Purity and restraint are virtues to be treasured. We shall discuss them when we meet. You should now by God’s grace get rid of the vestiges of the fever still troubling you. Vasumatibehn is going to Deolali and not to Hajira. You must give up all idea of leaving Hajira soon.

Blessing from  
BAPU

CHI. DURGA.

After all you have not written to me. How do you do there?

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*

363. LETTER TO ADA WEST

May 20, 1924

MY DEAR DEVI<sup>3</sup>,

I have just got your welcome letter. I am slowly gaining strength. I am at a sea-side place. hope to go to the Ashram next week. How long are you staying there? How are you keeping? I must not write more. But I am asking Ramdas to give you all the news.

My love to you all.

Your brother,  
M. K. GANDHI

MISS ADA WEST  
23, GEORGE STREET  
SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

From a photostat: G.N. 7618; also C.W. 4433. Courtesy: A.H. West

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Renunciation Personified”, 4-5-1924.

<sup>3</sup> Sister of A.H. West, an associate of Gandhiji in South Africa. She has assumed the Indian name ‘Devi’.

### 364. INTERVIEW TO VAIKOM DEPUTATION<sup>1</sup>

[May 20, 1924]

Q. Mahatmaji, you have stated that fasting as a weapon cannot be resorted to by a satyagrahi except against friends. The Travancore Government is either a friend or a foe that opposes the wishes of its subjects. If it is a friend, the sufferings undergone by the Satyagrahis evidencing the intensity of their feelings in this matter are sure ultimately to melt the heart of the Government and induce it to grant the demands of the satyagrahis. The Maharaja of Travancore, though orthodox to the core, is a kind ruler and loves his subjects and he will not be able to look with equanimity on the sufferings undergone by the Satyagrahis. He is not a tyrant who does not feel for his people. Under these circumstances, why cannot the satyagrahis adopt fasting to melt the Maharaja's heart and to conquer him through their sufferings?

A. Satyagraha implies absolute love and non-violence. Fasting as a weapon can only be used against a lover, a friend, a follower or co-worker who, on account of his love for you and the sufferings you undergo actually, realizes his mistake and corrects himself. He purifies himself of an evil which he knows and acknowledges to be an evil. You recall him from his evil ways to the correct path. A son can fast against a father addicted to drink to cure him of his evil. The father knows it to be an evil and realizes the enormity of it by the sufferings of the son and he corrects himself. My followers and co-workers who resorted to violence in Bombay knew that violence was against the principle of non-co-operation. Only they deviated from that fundamental principle. My fasting brought home to them their mistake and they corrected it.

But you cannot fast even against a friend when other considerations than actual realization of his evil ways are likely to make him yield. For example, when I proposed to introduce an untouchable as a member of my household, my wife objected. My fasting against her under such circumstances might have obliged her to give in, but it would be the fear that my fasting would lead to my death and the loss of her husband that would influence her to surrender her opinion and

<sup>1</sup> This consisted of K. Madhavan Nair and Kurur Nilakantan Nambudripad.

not the consciousness that she was committing a wrong in regarding a human being as untouchable. I succeeded in the case not by converting her to my opinion but by tyrannizing over her and doing violence to her feelings. In the same way, the Maharaja of Travancore may be a kind man who may not bear to witness with equanimity the death of a satyagrahi. Your fasting may compel him to yield, but he yields not because he sees the error of his ways and believes untouchability to be evil, but because he cannot bear to see the death of a person who, in his opinion, perversely chooses to die: This is the worst form of compulsion which militates against the fundamental principles of satyagraha.

Q. Supposing the Maharaja is not a friend, but a foe and a tyrant, it is impossible to win him over by the sufferings of the Satyagrahis. In such a case, will it not be right to force the hands of the Government by the creation of a strong public opinion and by putting the Government in a false position? This implies the use of pressure. To quote an example in Kaira,<sup>1</sup> the Government that opposed the people was not conquered by love but by pressure. A sustained fight is necessary to bring about this pressure to bear fruit and a weak people cannot hope to put up such a sustained fight against an organized Government with immense resources without outside help. If satyagraha excludes even this pressure, you may call the fight at Vaikom by any other name—say, passive resistance, civil disobedience or non-violent assertion. In such a case, what objection is there in receiving outside help? By preventing us from adopting fasting or accepting outside help, don't you deprive us of the method available to us in a fight both against friend and against foe?

A. I do not admit that in Kaira or Borsad it was the pressure of public opinion that made the Government yield. Moreover, no outward pressure was brought to bear on the Government. I refused all outside help (in the case of Kaira), though many offered to pay me money. The intensity of the feeling manifested by the preparedness of the people to undergo any amount of suffering opened the eyes of the Government and they yielded. It was conviction that made the Government concede the demands of the people of Kaira. Such conviction can come only by the purity and strength of your sacrifice. Outside help weakens the strength of your sacrifice. The opponent sees no sacrifice in you and his heart is not touched and as a result his

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Kheda Satyagraha.

eyes are not opened. The volunteers, fed and financed with outside help, appear to the opponent more as mercenaries than like satyagrahis who are prepared to sacrifice their all for their principles. Such a fight is the trial of material and not spiritual strength. It is not true satyagraha. Almost the same question was raised at Chirala-Perala. I strongly advised Mr. Gopalakrishnayya to continue the fight unaided and the fight was carried on successfully. Non-violent assertion of your rights with outside help may be passive resistance but no satyagraha.

There is a world of difference between passive resistance and satyagraha. The passive resister does not and need not love his opponent, while a satyagrahi ought to. Passive resistance is a weak weapon adopted by a weak people, while satyagraha is a strong weapon wielded by a weak people. Passive resistance can be resorted to by the suppressed classes of Kerala, but I will not advise anyone to resort to it, nor do I wish that any Congress worker should countenance it. The ideal satyagraha is the satyagraha offered by the individual or individuals who suffer wrong without any help from outside. In the case of Vaikom, the ideal satyagraha is the satyagraha offered by the non-caste Hindus of Vaikom and their caste-Hindu sympathizers alone. If that is impossible they may descend from the ideal a little and receive help from people of such area that can visualize the situation and feel with them.

Q. Is not the removal of untouchability and unapproachability an all-India question, and Vaikom being the first pitched battle in the war against these two evils, will not a defeat there speak a disaster to the movement in general, and if it will, is it not the duty of all Indians to help in the fight? What is the significance of the word, 'local' as applied to Vaikom? If help from outside is pressure and overawing repugnant to the principles of satyagraha, can Vaikom non-caste Hindus seek aid in the form of money or volunteers from any place outside Vaikom? Can even Travancorians belonging to places other than Vaikom participate in the struggle? If they can seek and receive such help from people of Travancore and even from the people of the Madras Presidency, why can't they receive help from Hindus throughout India? Why should satyagrahis refuse help from the Hindu Sabha and similar bodies?

A. The question is partially answered in the answer given before. In the sense that the prohibition of the use of every well, tank, roads,

etc., in every part of the country is the result of a common evil affecting the Hindus, the Vaikom struggle may also be regarded as an all-India question, but every such matter arising locally must be fought out locally and it is neither desirable nor practicable that the whole[of] India or the central organization should fight out such questions. It will lead to chaos and confusion. The consequence can better be understood if there are a number of such fights going on at the same time. The central organization will be considerably weakened by the frittering of its energies in such a way. The local area will not develop the necessary strength to tackle such questions unaided. Self-reliance and self-sufficiency of each local area will make the whole of India strong and enable i. to undertake the great fight that is in store. The solution of the problems at Vaikom will not solve the question of untouchability for the whole of India. India may share the victory it gains, but will not be responsible for the defeat it sustains.

Q. We do not understand your injunction against the participation of non-Hindus in the Vaikom struggle. You called upon the Hindus to help the Muslims in the matter of the Khilafat, a purely religious question. Hindus and Muslims, forming component parts of the Indian nation, it was then considered the duty of the Hindus to help the Muslims and thereby facilitate the early attainment of swaraj. The removal of untouchability being necessary for solidifying Indians into a nation, is it not the duty of every Indian, Hindu or non-Hindu, to have the evil removed?

A. In the case of the Khilafat, the fight was between the Muslim community and a non-Muslim power. If, on the other hand, it was a fight between two sections of the Moslem community, I would not have asked the Hindus to participate in the fight. It is the duty of the Hindus to free the society of the evil rampant in it. They cannot and ought not to call in the aid of outsiders in the reform work it carries on. It demoralizes you and unnecessarily offends the orthodox section whom you have to convert and conquer through your love and who will surely and legitimately feel insulted by such non-Hindu interference.

Q. In view of the fact that the struggle at Vaikom is directed to the establishment of a civic right, that is, the right of way along public roads, is it not the duty of every citizen irrespective of religion to assist in the struggle?

A. The Congress Committee has no business to interfere in the



inter-nal administration of a Native State. The Kerala Congress Committee has launched the campaign only because the Congress has called upon the Hindus to remove untouchability rampant in the Hindu society. The fight at Vaikom hinges on the disability of a certain class of people to use a road because they are unapproachable. This is a purely Hindu question and, therefore, the non-Hindus have no place in the struggle.

Q. Why is it, Mahatmaji, you are so strongly against the free kitchen opened by the Akalis? The Akalis are prepared to feed and are actually feeding all classes of people to whatever community or faction they may belong. They do not take sides in the fight.

A. No man of self-respect will partake of food from such a kitchen. You are not starving for want of food and you have not been reduced to the stage of depending on charity for your livelihood. The arguments already advanced against outside help apply equally to this free kitchen at Vaikom.

Q. What is the advice that you have to give us, Mahatmaji, with regard to the method of the fight in future?

A. You may continue in the same way you are doing. You may increase the number of volunteers that offer satyagraha. If you are strong enough, you can choose<sup>1</sup> other places where the suppressed classes labour under the same disability and offer satyagraha in those places. But, as a demonstration of the feelings of caste Hindus in the matter, you will do well to arrange an absolutely peaceful and non-violent procession from Vaikom to Trivandrum and back consisting of caste Hindus alone to meet the Maharaja and represent to him the necessity for the removal of the disability of the non-caste Hindus. The caste Hindus comprising the procession must be prepared to suffer the inconveniences incidental to a slow march on foot. They must camp in places away from villages and towns and make their own arrangements for food. The procession can be arranged only if the organizers are thoroughly satisfied of a non-violent atmosphere. The satyagraha at Vaikom may be suspended during the time that this procession is on the march. This is all the suggestion that I have to

<sup>1</sup> The source has 'offer'.

make at present.

The above is only a meagre summary of our discussions with Mahatmaji. Mahatmaji had a convincing answer ready to every question we put to him. The above summary may be treated as supplementing the statement Mahatmaji issued to the Press. He is very positive that the Kerala Congress Committee should continue the fight. Though he is, on principle, not in favour of outside help in a satyagraha campaign, he is clearly of opinion that Kerala is entitled to claim help even from outside Madras Presidency for general propaganda in connection with the untouchability campaign. Mahatmaji has further expressed the opinion that orders under Section 144 need not be disobeyed now because the number of workers is limited and the resources of the Committee have to be conserved as much as possible.

*The Hindu*, 26-5-1924

### 365. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

*Early Morning, Wednesday, May 21, 1924*

MY DEAREST CHARLIE<sup>1</sup>,

Why do you say the Bhil boys should not wear the khaddar caps and shirts? What should they wear? Is not your analogy false? The missionary dressing like the collector and sitting with him identified himself with the authority that is evil. If the khaddar cap may be regarded as an emblem of purity, why may it not be worn by all? Such identification will be good surely. But I want the wicked as well as the good to wear khaddar as all must clothe themselves. Therefore I am trying to prevent khaddar from being associated with anything either good or evil. The shape in which it is worn is of no moment.

You expect not a line in reply to your letters. But when you put posers that need action, what is one to do?

With deepest love,

MOHAN

6, DWARKA NATH TAGORE LANE

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 2611.

<sup>1</sup> Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); English missionary, author, educationist and a close associate of Gandhiji

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX I

#### *ANDREW'S STATEMENT ON GANDHIJI'S RELEASE*

Mr. C. F. Andrews has communicated the following statement to the Associated Press concerning Mr. Gandhi :

I was present at the Sassoon Hospital this morning at about 7.30 a.m. and found Mahatma Gandhi very bright and cheerful after a good night's rest. While we were talking, Col. Maddock who has been in charge of the patient in hospital came in and announced to Mahatmaji news of his unconditional release and congratulated him upon it most heartily. He then read out to him words of the official message and said that it had come on Monday night by a special messenger. Therefore he had taken earliest opportunity of coming to him as he wished [him] to be the first man to hear news that he was now free. Mahatma Gandhi remained quiet for a few moments and then said to Col. Maddock with a smile, "I hope you will allow me to remain your patient and also your guest a little longer." Doctor laughed and told him that he trusted that his patient would go on obeying his orders as a doctor and that he himself might have very great pleasure and satisfaction of seeing him thoroughly restored to health. Later on in the morning, after dressing the wound, Col. Maddock gave warning that recovery of the patient which was going on so well might be seriously thrown back if any unnecessary excitement or tiredness was caused in the next few days by visits of those who wished to see him. Kindest thing in the world would be for everyone, except those who were nursing him, to give him all the rest possible at this critical time in his recovery. It had to be remembered that the wound which had to be made while performing the operation was not fully healed and a little over-taxing of strength of the patient might throw recovery back. Next fortnight would be the time when every reserve of strength would be needed in order that the wound might be fully healed. Everything had gone well up to the present, but it was imperative that no unnecessary risks shall be incurred.

Mahatma Gandhi was removed by doctor's orders into another room with an outside verandah where he would be able to get the full benefit of the sunshine and open air. Telegrams began to pour in upon him from an early hour. The first telegram reached hospital very soon after Col. Maddock had left.

I would wish, if I may be permitted to do so, after all I have seen in the hospital concerning Mahatma Gandhi's health, to add my own urgent request to the warning given by the doctor, for while undoubtedly Mahatma Gandhi has recovered wonderfully hitherto, he is still in a very weak condition and it must be remembered that healing of the wound has still to go on and anything that in the slightest degree might bring about a relapse must be avoided. Every day of complete rest which he can

now obtain, especially during the next fortnight, will mean an immense difference for the future. It would be the greatest kindness possible if those to whom his health is most precious would strictly observe doctor's instructions until the recovery has been fulfilled. It will also be quite impossible for Mahatmaji to grant interviews to Press correspondents. After writing out this statement, I read it over to Mahatma Gandhi himself at his own request, and he has passed it for the Press.

*Young India*, 7-2-1924

## APPENDIX II

### LETTER FROM DR. SATYAPAL

BHARAT BUILDINGS,  
LAHORE,  
February 23, 1924

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI

*Bande Mataram.*

I beg to offer my sincere congratulations to you on your recovery. It is a matter of genuine delight for all of us that you have been restored to us for our guidance. May you enjoy a long lease of life is our fervent prayer.

You would have learned by this time that the Sikh Jatha which had gone to Jaiton for *Akhand Path* has been fired upon. There have been some casualties (the exact number of the killed and wounded is not yet known). The Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. has arrived at the following decisions in this connection:

- a. It has organized an Ambulance Corps and placed it at the disposal of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee.
- b. It has written to the President, S.G.P. Committee, inquiring from him as to in what ways can our Committee help them. It has assured them that anything that we can do for them will be readily done.

May I request you to kindly favour me with your detailed views as to what we should do in this connection.

I trust that this letter finds you in good health.

*Yours sincerely,*

SATYAPAL  
GENERAL SECRETARY

PS.

I have just now sent a telegram which I hope will have reached you before this.  
From a photostat: S.N. 9915

### APPENDIX III

#### *EXTRACT FROM K. P. KESAVA MENON'S LETTER*

Kerala Provincial Congress Committee at its last meeting chalked out a definite programme of work with regard to untouchability this year. As you know, the conditions in Kerala are peculiar. Here the question is not only untouchability but unapproachability. We are now taking steps to see that public roads are also open to the unapproachables. There are ever so many roads in Kerala now used by Mahomedans, Christians and high-caste Hindus but are not allowed to be used by the unapproachables such as *Ezuvas*, *Thiyyas* and *Pulayas*. Two weeks ago when I went to Vykomb, a place of some importance in north Travancore, I appealed to the caste Hindus to allow members of the *Ezuva* and *Pulaya* communities to use the public road round the temple. I may mention that this road is maintained by public funds and is now being freely used by Christians, Mahomedans and caste Hindus. Though we arranged a procession consisting of *Pulayas* to pass this road on the morning of the 1st instant, we had to postpone it at the request of several local friends who wanted some time more to educate public opinion on the question. You may remember Mr. T. K. Madhavan, a leading member of *Thiyya* community who interviewed you some three years ago while you were at Tinnevely.<sup>1</sup> He has now joined the Congress and is whole-heartedly working with us for the removal of untouchability. We have fixed the 30th instant to take the procession along these roads. I need not assure you that it would be our endeavour to conduct it in the most orderly way possible. In the meanwhile, attempts are being made by lectures, distribution of leaflets, and personal interviews to bring the orthodox people to our side. A message from you would instil fresh courage in us.

*The Hindu*, 25-3-1924

### APPENDIX IV

#### *LETTER FROM C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR*

THE "ARAMA",  
SALEM,  
(SOUTHERN INDIA),  
*March 23, 1924*

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I am so glad to receive your letter<sup>2</sup> today and I tender you my special thanks for reading the long statement during your present state of health. I fear that I have not

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Interview to *Deshabhimani*", 23-9-1921.

<sup>2</sup> This was dated March 19, 1924.

expressed myself crisply and clearly in my statement. With your refreshing frankness, you must permit me to say that you have misunderstood it in vital parts. To show this clearly to you would require more space and time than I can well command now—I am not quite well and mostly in bed and on fluid diet under medical advice—or desirable to trouble you with, during your rest so necessary; but I shall take one or two instances.

You say, “It will also follow from your reasoning that swaraj will only have to be a grant from the British Parliament.” This sentence has taken me by surprise. The whole tone and drift of my argument in this statement, as it had been previously throughout my life, is quit the contrary. I never was a party and could never be a party to the debasing view that we could secure our freedom only as a gift from any nation. In this very statement, I have clearly emphasized my strong difference from this view. I am sorry I did not number the paragraphs; but you can easily locate in it what I have said on this subject. You will note that I distinguish both our Moderates and Nationalists from those who have adopted your gospel of swaraj. I say there that the former have no ‘sanction’ for winning our freedom. You know what this word means in legal and political language. I also allude to the only two methods proclaimed authoritatively as means to gain our freedom, namely, a gift from England or by the employment of the sword and I afterwards said that we have invented a third method in the place of these two and that I call a sanction; namely moral coercion of such a kind that England will not and dare not resist. Surely, in the face of this, it pains me to see you attribute to me the idea of a spontaneous grant of swaraj from England. I can expand this argument, but I think it unnecessary. I shall console myself with an earnest appeal to you to read my statement again and also the cuttings which have been sent to Rev. Mr. C. F. Andrews a few days ago. You must ever remember that I am not a scholar and you must kindly gather my full meaning from scattered ideas not very logically arranged. As regards your statement that my swaraj is not consistent with our freedom to quit the British Empire when we choose, I can only refer you to the general tone and drift of these arguments as well as to my address at Nagpore, from all of which you can easily gather that my idea of swaraj implies freedom and ability to say England “Get thee gone”. You know well that the late French Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, the leader of the Canadian Liberals, said that if Canada declared herself independent, England dared not fire a single gun. This view that the dominions of the British Empire are free to detach themselves at any time they liked is no longer a controversial policy but an accepted one.

On the subject of untouchability, you don’t thoroughly understand me either. I merely wish to correct the erroneous and mischievous impression generally prevailing, especially abroad, that the doctrine of untouchability of Hindu outcastes and low castes was invented by the higher castes. I should like to know authority to the contrary if you disagree with me. On the other hand, this doctrine of untouchability,

applied again to those unfortunate classes, is clearly and logically an expansion and even an exaggeration in a most uncharitable form of the doctrine of untouchability within caste and within family. In either case, the doctrine is based upon the idea that touch meant pollution and impurity. That's all I meant. I meant that both the ideas are the same in kind but different in degree. You perhaps are not aware that, in Southern India, we cannot go near a woman when she is unwell (periodically) be that woman our mother, sister, or daughter and, if inadvertently we did, we have to bathe and even change the sacred thread, exactly as the most orthodox do when they touch or go too near a Pariah. This aspect was not thoroughly endorsed by Sri Shankaracharya. He said that bathing and changing thread would do if there was actual touch of the woman in such condition, but there was no pollution if one goes near her. You will thus see from all these that I never meant more than that a grievance, which really exists and which it is our sacred duty to, remove should not be exaggerated in nature or needlessly even in scope so that unnecessary bitterness of feeling is caused to the sufferers from a delusion that the doctrine was specially invented by the higher order of the Hindu society to degrade them on purpose. I hope you will agree with me that reform in this vital particular in our national corporate life is the more easy if there are no misconceptions on the part of either side and no exhibition of unseemly gesture on the part of the sufferers due to bitterness of feeling rising from erroneous diagnosis of the cause and exaggerated view of the grievance. When we meet again and when I shall have the good fortune to make you the more clearly and exactly see me as I am and as I have been, I hope to convince you that my views touching our duties no less than of our rights in order that we might take our proper place among the great families in this world are saner and sounder and more charitable than you appear to think, judging from your present letter.

My respects to Mrs. Gandhi, as well as my regards to Rev. Mr. C. F. Andrews and my kind remembrances to your children. Trusting that you are every day making good progress towards complete recovery of your health and with very kind regards,

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

PS.

As regards the melancholy meanness of the business of the Congress at Cocanada in treating the so-called Compromise Resolution as a Non-co-operation Resolution, I would call your attention to the attitude of "Janmabhumi" of Masulipatam edited by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. This paper attacks it more than I do, and Sitaramayya is a genuine Congressman. You have not a purer and more loyal follower than he.

From a photostat: S.N. 8570

## APPENDIX V

### (A) LETTER FROM RAMANAND SANYASI

BALDEV ASHRAM,  
KHURJA (U. P.),  
*April 1, 1924*

SHRIMAN MAHATMAJI,

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 28th instant. I regret I did not give you any particulars in my first letter.

(1) After 1921 episode the recruiting absolutely stopped. The trade was dull and there were huge stocks of Indian tea, both in England and in India. With the present rise in the market and clearance of stocks, the planters began to feel need of more labour to recultivate the plantations which had been abandoned since 1921. The present recruiting started in last November. The information which I received was from a friend who is the District Engineer of Gurgaon District (Punjab). Then later on I received information from nearly six districts in U. P. and two districts of Punjab. It was in January that I issued a statement to the Press warning the people against consequences. The Anglo-Indian agents who were in charge carefully avoided the districts from which they used to draw their labour before 1921 episode.

(2) The above covers your questions No. 2 and 3 also.

(3) The enquiry I want to make in the plantations is what are actual conditions prevailing there at present. Has their moral or otherwise their economic position increased than hitherto, and whether it will not be in the general interest of the country to check the flow of the labour to those districts if no improvement in any direction has taken place so that the morals and characters of further number may not become lax.

(4) No written conditions were offered to the would-be recruit as far as I have ascertained, but mainly they were as follows:

(i) Rs. thirty per mensem as wages both to the husband and wife, (ii) free quarters, wood for fuel and medical attendance. (iii) Free railway passage in case the recruit does not like the place. But you can yourself guess how difficult it is to return from tea garden districts if you are once there as a labourer. I quite accept your suggestion that enquiries should be made first through Assam Congress Committee before proceeding there. Accordingly I am writing a letter to the Committee the copy of which I am enclosing herewith. I am also enclosing herewith a letter in original which I only few days ago received from the Congress committee, Biswan.

*Sincerely yours,*  
RAMANAND SANYASI

From a photostat : S. N. 8643



*(B) RAMANAND SANYASI'S LETTER TO CONGRESS COMMITTEE*

BALDEV ASHRAM,  
KHURJA (U. P.),  
*April 1, 1924*

To  
THE SECRETARY  
ASSAM PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE  
GAUHATI  
DEAR SIR,

In last November I received news from the Gurgaon District of Punjab that a certain Anglo-Indian gentleman was employing retired militarymen for recruiting labour for tea gardens, and that he was offering (i) Free railway passage to the gardens (ii) Rs. thirty monthly as wages both for husband and wife, (iii) together with free quarters and fuel wood. He was also willing to provide passage back and journey expenses should the recruit when at reaching there does not like to stay. Immediately after that I received news to the same effect from Karnal, Ambala, Rohtak and Hissar districts of Punjab and from nearly every district of U. P. except Fezabad, Bellia, Gorakhpore and some other two or three districts which they perhaps avoided because these contained their ex-labourers. As I am quit familiar with the conditions prevailing in tea gardens and episode of 1921 came vividly before my eyes, I issued a statement to the Bengal, Punjab and U.P. Press in January last which you must have noticed and also I wrote to Bengal, U.P. and Punjab committees to take such action as conditions permit. At that time I did not write to you not because it was not necessary but because Assam had slipped from my memory. Now I wrote to Mahatma Gandhiji telling him of the thing and consulting him regarding the advisability or otherwise of proceeding to the tea gardens and looking at the thing. He has written to me to first make enquiries through you and then to consider what action should be taken in light of the same. Therefore I shall be obliged if you will kindly supply me the following information: (1) What are the actual conditions prevailing in plantations at present and has any improvement taken place regarding wages or morals since 1921 happenings. (2) Is fresh labour coming there, if so, from which districts mainly, and how they are being treated. (3) Do you think in the light of enquiries which you will make it is advisable to take measures against recruiting or should any body be deputed there to look after them.

Kindly forward a copy of reply to my this letter to Mahatmaji at Andheri, Bombay.

*Sincerely yours,*  
RAMANAND SANYASI

(Note) I am forwarding a copy of this letter to Mahatmaji as per his orders.

RS

From a photostat: S. N. 8643

## APPENDIX VI

### *C. F. ANDREWS' INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS*

Mr. C. F. Andrews interviewed on the same subject stated that he had been present with Mr. Gandhi through the preliminary negotiations with General Smuts, which had led up to the Smuts-Gandhi Settlement of July 1914. He had himself actually witnessed the signing of the original draft agreement. Every word had been carefully discussed and fully explained on both sides. General Smuts had said, "This time let there be no misunderstanding or mental reservation. Let all the cards be laid on the table." Mr. Gandhi had acted exactly in accordance with that spirit. He had made three points as plain as possible :

- (1) That the Settlement should contain no racial taint.
- (2) That all existing rights vested in the community, small as they were, should be secured.
- (3) That any remaining disabilities might be brought forward for settlement in the future.

This third point was established in a letter to the Secretary of the Minister of the Interior, dated June 16, 1914. The first point was emphasized again and again in Mr. Gandhi's farewell speeches which were cabled all over the world. He said, for instance, at Johannesburg: "The Settlement reached establishes the principle that the legislation can never contain a racial taint. It is a vindication of this principle of the British constitution. I do not think there is any room left for misunderstanding. While the Settlement is final in the sense that it close the great struggle, it is not final in the sense that it gives the Indians all they are entitled to. These further restrictions will have to be removed."<sup>1</sup>

The most important statement which may be regarded the final word on the subject from Mr. Gandhi was his message to Reuter on the eve of his departure from South Africa. It contained the following significant passage: "The promise made by General Smuts to administer the existing law justly with due regard to vested rights gives the Indian community breathing time. But these laws are in themselves defective, and can be, as they have been, turned into engines of oppression and instruments by indirect means to drive the Indian population out of South Africa. The concession to popular prejudice, by which we have reconciled ourselves to the almost

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Farewell Banquet", 14-7-1914.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

total prohibition of fresh Indian Immigration and the deprivation of all political power, is the utmost that could be expected from us. These two things being assured, I submit we are entitled to full rights of trade, inter-provincial migration and ownership of landed property being restored to us in the not distant future.”<sup>2</sup>

These passages, Mr. Andrews stated, made perfectly evident that Mr. Gandhi went away from South Africa with a Settlement that was precisely defined. On the understanding that immigration would be prohibited, General Smuts had agreed that no racial bar should be raised and that all existing vested rights should be secured. He also agreed that the Indian community would be free in the future to seek to remove further disabilities such as the restriction of inter-provincial migration.

Mr. Andrews concluded by stating that he could not at all understand Mr. Duncan’s interpretation, and that Mr. Gandhi’s prophetic words appeared to be coming true; for the Union Government appeared to be now engaged in turning its laws into “engines of oppression and instruments by indirect means to drive the Indian population out of South Africa.”

*The Hindu*, 7-4-1924

## APPENDIX VII

### (A) MAHOMED ALI’S LETTER TO SWAMI SHRADDHANAND

RESPECTED SWAMI MAHARAJ,

I am sorry I could not write to you yesterday regarding the matter referred to by you, as per promise, as I had gone out to pay a visit to H.H. the Nawab Sahib of Rampur and had to remain there from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. I have just now seen in the *Tej* a requisition by four of your Arya friends that I should resign from the Congress. I could not help feeling amused at it, although I confess it grieved me also. I am aware that some persons of this type have been engaged in this sort of activity for some time past, but I was led to think that, after the reply that I had given to a question addressed to me at a public meeting in Lucknow, which appealed so much to a Hindu gentleman present that he shouted out in his enthusiasm that 22 crores of Hindus were ready to stand or fall by me, these gentlemen would not venture to pursue their line of activity any further. I now realize how vain this expectation was. Although the manner in which the controversy is conducted at present is such as to render it absolutely unnecessary on my part to give a single word in reply, still as I have already promised to explain the matter fully, I beg to make the following statement as desired by you:

The fact is as I had stated verbally to you. Even then, some Mussalman friends have been constantly flinging at me the charge of being a worshipper of Hindus and a Gandhi-worshipper. The real object of these gentlemen was to alienate from me the Mussalman community, the Khilafat Committee and the Congress, by representing

that I had become a follower of Mahatma Gandhi in my religious principles. I had, therefore, on several occasions plainly declared that in the matter of religion, I professed the same belief as any other true Mussalman, and as such I claimed to be a follower of the Prophet Mahomed (on him be peace) and not of Gandhiji. And further that since I hold Islam to be the highest gift of God, therefore, I was impelled by the love I bear towards Mahatmaji to pray to God that He might illumine his soul with the true light of Islam. I wish, however, to emphatically declare that I hold that today neither the representatives of Islam nor of the Hindu, Jewish, Nazarene or Parsi faith can present another instance of such high character and moral worth as Gandhiji and that is the reason why I hold him in such high reverence and affection. I deeply revere my own mother, and if contentment and gratefulness under all circumstances be the true meaning of Islam, I claim there is no person, howsoever well-versed in religion, who has understood it better than she. Similarly, I regard Maulana Abdul Bari as my religious guide. His loving kindness holds me in bondage. I deeply admire his sincerity of heart. But in spite of all this I make bold to say that I have not yet found any person who in actual character is entitled to a higher place than Mahatma Gandhi.

But between belief and actual character there is a wide difference. As a follower of Islam I am bound to regard the creed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non-Islamic religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded Mussalman is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim irrespective of his high character, even though the person in question be Mahatma Gandhi himself.

At Lucknow, when just before the commencement of my speech, some one placed a printed copy of the question in reference in my hand for reply (copies of which had also been freely distributed among the audience) I had stated that I did not want to answer any such questions, as I did not consider that anyone, unless he could prove that he bore a greater affection towards Mahatmaji than I did, was entitled to charge me with having reviled him. It was only when I was told that the point at issue was not that I had reviled Mahatmaji, but that I had reviled the Hindu religion, that I gave the above stated reply. A report of my speech had appeared in the *Hamdam* at that time, i.e., about one month back. I had said further therein that every Christian believed that a Christian, however degraded or fallen, was entitled to a higher place in regard to the matter of belief as contra-distinguished from actual character than any Mussalman or Jew, irrespective of his high character and the same was the case with Hindus or followers of any other religion. My reply proved so satisfactory that, as I have already mentioned, a Hindu friend shouted out that 22 crores of Hindus were prepared to stand by me and several Hindu members of the audience acclaimed it with cries of *Bande Mataram*, *Allah-o-Akbar*, while the persons who had brought the printed copies of the question were completely silenced. The beauty is that one of the friends who have now come forward with a requisition demanding my resignation had

quite recently sent a warm invitation to attend a public meeting at Dehra Dun.

I cannot under these circumstances possibly retire from any of my activities as a result of what these gentlemen might say or think. Besides, the matter is well within the jurisdiction of the Congress. I wish, however, to state here, and I hope you will bear me out in my statement, that if I, although I am the meanest and the most insignificant among the followers of Islam, am to be regarded by these gentlemen as an enemy of Hindu-Muslim unity and a reviler of Mahatmaji and the religious principles which he professes, then I am afraid they will not find a single Mussalman who will completely satisfy them.

I beg to state once more that were I not bound by my promise to you, this letter might not have been written at all as I am most unwilling to add one more to the numberless controversies that are raging in the country at present. As for the friends who have thought fit to raise such an unpleasant controversy at a time when the death of my daughter and the dangerous illness of a brother and mother have rendered me physically unfit to engage in any such controversy, I think it best to leave them to be judged by their own conscience. I again beg to record my thanks to you for your condolence and with these words take my leave. If you write anything to the Press in this connection, you may publish this letter as it is.

*Yours, etc.,*

MAHOMED ALI

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

*(B) MAHOMED ALI'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR, "TEJ"*

DEAR SIR,

There was one sentence in Swamiji Maharaj's letter which is liable to give the impression that I do not consider right action as essential for salvation. That is not at all my belief nor that of any other Mussalman. The essential conditions for salvation are faith, purity of action, persuading others to do good and to warn them against evil and to submit to all consequences of your actions with patience. I hold that a non-Moslem is perfectly entitled to reward for his good actions even as a Mussalman is liable to be punished for his evil deeds. The point at issue was not at all as to the essential conditions for salvation, but only regarding the distinction between Belief and Conduct. That is the reason why I gave to Mahatmaji the highest place among all the Mussalmans that I know of so far as actual character was concerned. But to consider one's creed as superior to that of every non-Muslim is the duty of a Mussalman. By stating this I refuted the charge of Gandhi-worship levelled against me and that was precisely my object and not to hurt the feelings of my Hindu brethren or to revile Mahatma Gandhi. If any one can have reason to complain, it is my own co-religionists, none of whom I considered to be worthy of being ranked with Mahatma Gandhi in excellence of character.

MAHOMED ALI

*Young India*, 10-4-1924

## APPENDIX VIII

### (A) *MOTILAL NEHRU'S NOTE ON COUNCIL-ENTRY*

I have read and re-read Mahatmaji's draft with all the attention I am capable of and have allowed a whole week to elapse since it was handed to me. I have also had the advantage in this interval of discussing the draft with Mahatmaji for which he was good enough to give me a long sitting of over three hours. I have considered the observations made by Mahatmaji in the course of that discussion with anxious care. This long deliberation has, I am sorry to say, resulted only in confirming the opinion I formed 18 months ago.

I agree that the difference between Mahatmaji and me is in some respects one of principle and not of mere detail. Indeed, on closer examination, I have come to think that it goes deeper and lies more in the theory on which the principle is based than in the principle itself. But with all that I am persuaded to believe that it does not and ought not to be allowed to affect the application of the principle in practice. Let us take "non-violence" and "non-co-operation" separately.

(1) "Non-violence" —Mahatmaji's "non-violence" is conceived on a very much higher plane than what I have agreed to adopt owing to the compelling necessity of the case. The doctrine of ahimsa with all its implications and logical deductions has not been and cannot be adopted by the Congress which professes to include men of all religions and creeds in the world within its fold. Islam does not recognize it as an invariable and inflexible rule of life and there are many Hindu castes and sects with which the judicious use of violence is an accepted article of faith. Whilst Mahatmaji would not resort to violence under any circumstances whatever in thought, word or deed, many true Congressmen would, under certain conditions, consider it their highest duty to resort to actual physical violence. In fact, I hold that it would be doing violence to the highest and noblest feelings implanted in man if we ruled out violence in any shape or form under all conceivable circumstances. If I see a bully ill-treating or assaulting a person weaker than himself, I would not merely interpose my body between the assailant and the victim and thus enable him to have two victims instead of one, but try to knock him down and thus save both his victim and myself. Again if I were assaulted, I would defend myself, if necessary, by inflicting violence on my assailant and that violence may under certain circumstances extend even to the causing of the assailants's death. I need not give other illustrations of a similar nature which can easily be conceived. As for non-violence in thought, it is obvious that one who is prepared to resort to actual violence on certain occasions cannot be entirely free from the thought of it. By joining the movement of non-violent non-co-operation all I have undertaken to do is, to refrain from inflicting or even contemplating violence of any kind in carrying out the programme of non-

co-operation against the Government. This is what I take Mahatmaji to mean, when he speaks of “non-violence in its full sense, but restricted as the cause for which it was taken”. If a government official chooses to behave to me like the bully of my illustration in matters wholly unconnected with the Congress programme, he shall receive exactly the same treatment as I would give to the bully. The doctrine of non-violence has, so far as I am concerned, a limited application for the very special purpose for which I have adopted it.

Mahatmaji says entry into the Councils is “tantamount to participation in violence”. I understand this to refer to the fact that the Councils are established by a Government which is based on violence. I maintain that no one living under such a Government can help participating in violence in that sense. The very act of living and adopting the most essential means of sustaining life under such a government would be “tantamount to participation in violence”. Whether or not going into the Councils is a more direct participation in violence than merely living under a Government based on violence is only a question of degree and depends on the object with which one goes into the Councils.

Mahatmaji has been pleased to doubt the accuracy of the statement that “nobody takes the extreme view of non-violence that I do and that most Congressmen confine the definition of non-violence to mere abstention from causing physical hurt to the opponent”. There may be some who take the extreme view in theory, but I do not know a single follower of Mahatmaji who acts upon it. It is true that non-violence even in the limited sense that I give to it must relate both to word and deed and cannot be confined to abstention from causing physical hurt only. But non-violence in thought must be ruled out entirely as impracticable. Otherwise, we shall be weaving a cobweb of casuistry around us from which it would be impossible to extricate ourselves.

(2) Non-co-operation —I confess my inability to see any trace of non-co-operation in the present-day activities of the Congress. They may possibly lead to non-co-operation at some future date, but can by no stretch of imagination be taken to constitute non-co-operation. We have only the Bardoli programme before us, but there is nothing in it which can in any sense amount to actual non-co-operation with the Government. Mahatmaji says that the triple boycott has not failed because the lawyers have lost their prestige, the parents have lost faith in Government school education, and the Councils have lost their glamour. I admit all that and more for, in my opinion, the number of things lost can easily be multiplied. But the question is whether this has been due to the practice of the boycott or is the result of Mahatmaji’s teachings. And does it not show a far sadder state of things than that which existed before these boycotts were conceived? The number of lawyers and of the school-going population has considerably increased and that of the Councillors remains the

same. The only difference is that, while before 1920 people took to the profession of law, sent their children to Government schools and entered the Councils honestly believing that they were doing the right thing, they did the same in 1921-23 with the knowledge and belief that they were doing a great wrong not only to themselves but to the whole nation. Has this improved the standard of public morality? The triple boycott has in my humble judgment only shown that the preaching of high ideals which the people are not ready to follow can only result in positive harm. The honest thing to do is to admit failure and frankly give up the triple boycott. The Swarajists would have done it had it not been for their belief that they had no chance of success with the masses against Mahatmaji's teachings. The next best thing they could do was to introduce a real element of non-co-operation in the Councils. In this there can be no question that they have eminently succeeded.

I shall now take the liberty to examine the case made out by Mahatmaji against Council-entry. He makes a grave and serious charge against Swarajists by saying that "the entry into the Legislative bodies has retarded the progress towards swaraj". I respectfully but emphatically join issue and maintain that exactly the contrary has been the case. What has actually happened is that the Assembly has laid a foundation for the people's swaraj broad-based on their free will and choice. Whether the demand made by the Assembly will be conceded or not is immaterial. Whether any actual progress towards swaraj through the Councils is possible or not is equally beside the point. But how any action taken in the Assembly or the Provincial Councils has actually "retarded the progress towards swaraj" simply beats my comprehension. I should have thought that the Swarajists have at least shown to a doubting world that they are a determined set of men who will have nothing short of swaraj. The positive value of this demonstration may perhaps be doubted, but it is hardly fair to attribute a negative value to it.

I will now deal with the reasons given by Mahatmaji categorically.

(a) Council-entry is "*tantamount to taking part directly or indirectly in the present system of Government*". There are innumerable things we do every day of our lives by which we take part directly or indirectly in the present system of Government. The objection, however, seems to be based on the assumption that the Legislative bodies are "*a chief part of the machinery designed to sustain that system.*" It would be more accurate to say that the Legislative bodies are merely an *ornamental* part of the machinery designed *to justify* the existing system. The truth is that the Government is absolutely independent of the Legislative bodies, which do not really sustain the system but are designed to conceal the fraud which the Government is practising on the world. The Swarajists have entered the Councils to expose this fraud not by taking part in it, but by refusing to take such part. I am at a



loss to reconcile this dictum of Mahatmaji with his acquiescence in Congressmen taking part in the Municipal Councils. A cursory perusal of the various Municipal Acts in force in this country will show that these bodies are a most essential part of the administration and can only be carried on by complete co-operation with the Government in all important matters. They nullify the boycott of schools, for almost every Municipality applies for and obtains handsome grants from the public revenues to run the schools. They bring about the anomaly of Congressmen having to carry out policy of the Ministry appointed under the Government of India Act and submitting the former to the control the latter. There are many other things which do not merely smell of co-operation but amount to direct participation in the system of Government.

(b) "Obstruction" This is a very much misused and misapplied word, but I admit that our Swarajist nostrils are not trained enough to smell violence in it, and fail to see how the Swarajist programme can possibly have a stronger smell of violence than the breaking of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the various forms of picketing and hartals authorized by the Congress. I take Civil Disobedience itself to be the highest form of obstruction. But let us not lay undue stress on words and consider what the Swarajists have actually done. They have carried out the programme to the full in C.P. Let us see what has been done there. The first step taken was to pass a vote of "No confidence" in the Ministers. That really meant no confidence in the system which brought Ministers into existence and that was made perfectly clear in the speeches made in support of the motion. The Government did not dismiss the Ministers as it should have done after this vote. The next step taken was to refuse the salaries of the Ministers, but they continued to stick to their offices and introduce measures relating to their departments. These measures were all rejected, because the Council refused to recognize the Ministers after the vote of "No Confidence" and the refusal of their salaries. Then came the budget on which the Council had no effective control. It was thrown out on the express ground that the Council would be no party to the expenditure of public revenues in the raising of which it had no voice and in the spending of which it had no control. Some other Bills were thrown out on similar grounds. This is all that has happened. I invite an examination of each of these acts of the Swarajists on its own merit and ask if any objection can be taken to any one of them on the highest moral and ethical grounds. The same acts can be and have been described as acts of obstruction, acts of destruction, and acts of wrecking from various points of view. But nothing turns upon mere phrases. What you have to look to is the substance and I claim that what was done in the C.P. in substance was non-co-operation with a Government which paid no heed to the popular will. The same applies to the acts of the Swarajists in the Assembly and the Bengal Council.

(c) "Constructive Programme." I could not understand what this objection

meant; but Mahatmaji has since explained to me that all that it meant was that the time and energy given to the question of Council-entry was so much time and energy taken away from the constructive programme. So far as that goes it applies only to the No-changers, for the Swarajists were practically expelled from the Congress Executive and had no control on the organizations of the various department of the constructive programme. The only alternatives to Council-entry open to them were either to go into retirement or start independent organizations to carry on the constructive programme, neither of which would have helped the cause.

(d) "Entry is premature" I am afraid I do not quite grasp this objection. If it means that we should have waited till we got swaraj it begs the whole question. As for a "constant, almost irresistible temptation to depart from truthfulness and non-violence in the atmosphere of the Councils", all I can say is that I have perceived no difference in the Council atmosphere from that outside the Councils. The "strain" on discipline will certainly not be more prolonged in the Councils than it is sure to be in the long expectation of Civil Disobedience.

(e) "Khilafat and Punjab causes" Apart from the fact that these causes are practically dead, I do not see what special connection there is between them and the question of entry into the Councils.

The above are the principal reasons given by Mahatmaji against the entry of Congressmen into the Councils. A few other points are mentioned in the passing in the course of the general remarks that follow the main reasons. After acknowledging the "brilliant victories of the Swarajists", Mahatmaji proceeds to point out that all that the Swarajists have done could be achieved "before non-co-operation", that we could, "not merely get a Gandhi released, but many Hasrat Mohanis and all Punjab prisoners" by "fairly directed agitation" and that there is not "much in the khaddar demonstration, or in keeping so many Moderates out". "The machinery of the Government goes on unchecked with or without the Moderates and in spite of obstruction." In adopting this line of argument, Mahatmaji has done less than justice to himself. The Swarajists have never taken any credit for the release of Mahatmaji or the demonstration of khaddar, but they have certainly succeeded in keeping the Moderates out which the boycott of Councils under Mahatmaji's programme could not achieve. I agree that the real machinery of the Government goes on unchecked, but we claim that we have taken out the false and ornamental parts of the machinery and exposed its true character to the world. If it was right to send thirty thousand of our workers to gaol simply to establish the fact that the visit of the Prince of Wales was forced upon a discontented people, it was certainly worth something to expose the continuing fraud practised day to day in the name of the representatives of the people.

The unkindest cut of all is contained in the sentence: "It was not to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by any argument." All I can say is that the

Swarajists in all humility claim to exercise their own judgment and have not yet heard anything that could carry conviction to them.

After this Mahatmaji makes one or two more observations which must be noticed. He says, "I would enter the Councils only if I could believe that I could make use of them for the advancement of the country. I must therefore have faith in the machinery and those in charge of it. I cannot be part of the machinery and still want to destroy it." I venture to submit that this argument suffers from the weakness of all arguments based on analogies and metaphors. I do not see why one must have faith in those whom one finds in charge of machinery, if it can be worked better by others. I should have thought that the most perfect machinery could be so hopelessly mismanaged by those in charge as to require their immediate removal. There can be no harm in taking over a rickety old machine from the hands of mechanics bent on evil, and try to run it after proper repairs for the benefit of those in whose interest it ought to be worked. We have not become parts of the machinery in order to destroy it. There are certain imported parts of the machine which destroy the goods in the process of manufacture. We are for the present taking out those parts and substituting ourselves for them, hoping eventually to have an entirely new machine of pure swadeshi make to be run by the people for the people.

I now come to that part of the draft note where Mahatmaji, looking upon Council-entry as a settled fact, answers the question: "What is to be done now ?" As was to be expected, he has given the only answer which the resolutions of the Delhi and Cocanda Congress could admit of. But I venture to think that something more than a mere interpretation of those resolution is necessary. The most important point to be considered is what is to be the position of the Swarajists in the general Congress movement. Is it to be somewhat similar to that assigned by Mahatmaji to practising lawyers who were compared to cobblers and declared debarred from taking an active part in the Counsels of the Congress and from being appointed on its Executive? If that is the idea, Swarajists must deprive themselves of the honour of remaining under the distinguished leadership of Mahatmaji and, either retire from public life or look for "fresh fields and pastures new". But if that is not the idea, I believe it is yet possible to work together for the common cause. Certain proposals have occurred to me in this connection and I put them in the order in which they appeal to me.

1. A new programme of work in the Councils may be framed by the Congress with the object of helping the outside activities of the Congress in the direction of "construction" and "non-co-operation". The programme so framed will then stand in place of a mandate from the country which every Swarajist would be bound to carry out and all Congressmen bound to support. In this case, all distinction between Swarajists and Non-Swarajists or Pro-changers and No-changers will disappear, but while all will act together, generally such Congressmen will only go into the Councils as have no objection to do so. Funds required for Council propaganda will be granted by the vote of the Working Committee subject to the control of the All-India

Committee exactly in the same manner as for other Congress purposes, and with due regard to the relative importance of the various heads of Congress expenditure. It will be permissible to donors to the Tilak Swaraj Fund to earmark their contribution for Councils if they choose.

2. A separate section or department of the Congress called the Councils Section or department may be opened and placed in sole charge and direction of the Swarajists. The latter will take part in the general activities of the Congress outside the Councils and help those activities in the Councils as desired by the Congress. In this case also, there will be some Swarajists on the General Executive but no financial help will be given from Tilak Swaraj Fund *not* earmarked for the Councils. The difference between the first proposal and this is that, while in the former case the Congress will lay down the whole programme for the Councils in the latter case it will only call upon the Swarajists to take particular steps such as those referred to by Mahatmaji at the end of his draft, viz., the propagation of khaddar and the abolition of drink revenue.

3. To carry on as now under the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions without any disqualification attaching to Swarajists as such. In this case Swarajists will frame and carry out their own policy without reference to the Congress and will collect their own funds and the Congress will not in any way interfere with them. The Swarajya Party will do all it can to carry out the constructive programme of the Congress and the Congress will help and support that action.

From a typed photostat: S.N. 8716

*(B) EXTRACT FROM C. R. DAS'S LETTER*

CALCUTTA,  
*April 18, 1924*

Motilal has sent me a draft containing your views in the Council-entry question. I am very anxious to discuss one or two points raised in it by you. You may be right in your view on the question of non-co-operation if non-co-operation is construed very strictly. But as it is I do not see eye to eye with you on the question of non-violence. I believe in non-violence as a principle and it is very unfortunate that doctors will not allow me to go and discuss the whole matter with you. I am dictating this letter under very great difficulty. Will it be very inconvenient if you postpone the publication of your views till I am well enough to see you? It may sound presumptuous but I feel that, if the Delhi compromise is suddenly upset, the whole country will be engaged again in philosophical discussions which will materially interfere with the larger work. I have to be here till the 23rd for medical treatment and after that the proposal is that I should go to Darjeeling and remain there at least a month.

From a photostat: S.N. 8740

## APPENDIX IX

### LETTER FROM BHAGWAN DAS

TO,  
THE EDITOR,  
YOUNG INDIA  
SIR,

In *Young India* for 17-4-1924, in the course of your article headed "Schoolmasters and Lawyers", the following sentences occur at p. 130:

"But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly, even heroically, if our desire is to establish swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another, which may be even worse." And again: "If under swaraj we shall have to make the town life correspond to the village life, we shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life."

I most earnestly invite your attention and the attention of all readers of *Young India* to the implication of these two ifs, and to their vitally important bearing on the whole N.C.O. movement and the struggles for swaraj, along various tines, by various methods of the various parties which accept the new creed of the Congress wherein 'swaraj' is used without any definition or specification of any kind.

Some of us are convinced that it is just these unsolved and unsettled *ifs* which are the root cause of all the many defects which are hampering and marring the N.C.O. movement. So long as these *ifs* remain unsettled, there will never be mutual trust between any two classes, any two creeds, any two castes, it might almost be said, any two workers, oat of all those who all want swaraj and who all disagree as to what it should be.

Because the unity secured by a mere word, an understood, ill-understood, mis-understood word, is a very false unity, therefore is it breaking down perpetually—into violence of thought and language in political controversies and of deed also in Hindu-Muslim riots; therefore is the movement failing in so many respects—in respect of even-minded perseverance, Of discipline, of organization, of systematic work, whether destructive or constructive.

Shortly after the first sentence quoted above, you say, "Hitherto the villagers have died in their thousands so that we might live, now we might have to die so that they may live." But "we" (i.e., townfolk) are also included in "the people" for whom swaraj is to be established; are "we" not? and a large proportion of the townfolk are as ill-off as the country-folk, are they not?

Because townsmen have been vaguely feeling that the swaraj of the N.C.O. movement, unknown as it is, is yet likely to destroy towns (witness the cries of

“Bolshevism” raised against it), therefore, they are naturally not enthusiastic about it in their hearts. For, the larger bulk of Tilak Swaraj Fund has come from towns; Bombay first and foremost. It has come from the people whose trade and means of livelihood the constructive and destructive programme of the N.C.O. movement tends to undermine, directly or indirectly. That it has so come is due partly to the affectionate respect in which your personality is held by Indians of all classes, and partly to the hope that, after all, the wished-for swaraj will not run utterly amuck against the towns, but will only try to mend the evils in them.

The disappearance of towns will mean the disappearance of Lakshmi and of Saraswati. And Gauri Annapurna, disporting by herself in the corn-fields, however ‘full of grain’, will fail to make human life richly artistic, scientifically intelligent, and, therefore interesting. What is needed is a *balancing* of the three great goddesses, universally worshipped by human beings of all creeds, all times, all climes; and not a sacrificing of any one of them. Ayodhya flourished in *Ramarajya*, though Lanka was partly destroyed.

You, fortunately for our peace of mind, yourself say in a later para, “We shall be bound to simplify the town mode of life.” This is likely to relieve somewhat the terrors caused by the earlier sentences, though it may not bring complete reassurance.

“Moderation”, “the golden mean”, “the middle course”, temperance”—this is what the bulk of humanity instinctively craves for and strives after. Unless you, as the leader of our leaders, place before India, some outline scheme of swaraj which will bring to all sections of the people the hope that none of them will be destroyed entirely, though the excesses of all or any will be duly curtailed—unless and until this is done, no section of the people will be able to give its whole heart to the struggle, and true unity in the striving for swaraj will never be achieved and therefore swaraj, true swaraj will never be achieved.

The space in *Young India* is limited and precious, and I must not ask for too much of it—though I sincerely believe that no topic that has ever yet been written about in its columns is of deeper importance or farther-reaching consequences than this, viz., of the kind of swaraj that India needs.

I have been pressing the matter on the attention of the general public, on that of the Congress Committees of all grades (from the Banaras local to the all-India) and on that of the individual leaders, for the last three years, in season and out of season. I have been pursuing you with letters and printed papers on the subject practically up to the moment of your arrest, and, again since you came out. I must not repeat here what I have said over and over again elsewhere. My hopes were greatly aroused, for a brief while, in the beginning of 1923, that the subject would meet with the consideration it deserved, when a leader of

such note as Deshbandhu Das interested himself in it, for some time. But that 'brief while' was over, very soon. And I have been gradually settling down to the belief that "the time is not ripe" for the discussion of the subject.

But my eyes happened to light upon the two very significant *ifs* in your article, and I was galvanized into this present further effort.

Some of us will feel profoundly grateful if you will very kindly say something, in *Young India*, on this subject—so near to the heart of these "some of us"—something which may shoot a gleam of light through the gloom of our despair.

*I am, etc.,*

BHAGWAN DAS

*Young India*, 8-5-1924