

1. LETTER TO WANDA DYNOWSKA

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

MY DEAR UMA,

Your letter. You are suspicious. Sardar is not so bad as you imagine. He has no anti-European prejudice. Don't be sentimental but deal with cold facts and you will succeed.

My movement is uncertain. You will come when I am fixed up somewhere.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers, Courtesy: Pyarelal

2. LETTER TO DR. D. P. GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

DEAR DR. GUPTA,

Your letter.¹ Faith to be faith stands all trials and thanks God. Are not the prayers of your Muslim neighbours sufficient encouragement for you to persist in well-doings?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10570

¹ The addressee, whose son had suffered injuries at the hands of Muslim rioters, had written that he could no longer have any faith in the doctrine of winning one's enemy by love notwithstanding the sympathetic attitude of Muslim neighbours who prayed for his son's recovery.

3. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

[July 7, 1947]¹

DEAR BADSHAH,

No news from you. I hope you had my long letter and that you have acted up to it. Your and my honour is involved in strict adherence to non-violence on our part in thought, work and deed. No news up to now (9.30) in the papers.²

Love.

BAPU

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 279–80

4. MESSAGE TO KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL

July 7, 1947

Are all the Bal Mandirs which are coming up these days worthy of the name? This is a question to be considered by all who are interested in children's education. The country needs good facilities for children's education as much as it needs food, cloth and houses to meet its physical needs, for its future depends on the children.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 290

¹ According to the source this was written two days after "Letter to Abdul Ghaffar Khan", "Letter to Abdue Ghaffar Khan", 5-7-1947

² The addressee's reply dated July 12, *inter alia* read: "I and my workers have been going about from village to village asking the people to remain non-violent even under provocation on the part of the Muslim Leagues. . . . We have been working under very difficult and trying circumstances but have adhered to non-violence. . . . How long a state of affairs like this can last, it is not easy for me to say. . . . They Muslim Leaguers backed by officials are out to create disturbances.... Another thing causing concern is the presence in our province of a large number of Punjabis who openly incite people to violence.... suggesting...that top leaders of Red Shirts should be done away with."

5. LETTER TO MADALASA

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. MADU,

I have your letter. You must have got my telegram. I hope Bharat¹ has regained health. Do not let him wander around.

I wish you to get engrossed in the Mahila Ashram work. That is a major activity among the many activities of Jamnalal. One reason for keeping you near by is that you may get immersed in that work. Now stop having more children if both of you can exercise self-control so that you can look after the two you have and manage the Mahila Ashram work. The Ashram does need a worker like you. If you start doing that work, Shriman will take more interest in it.

Sushila has come from Wardha today.

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, pp. 333–4

6. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have your letter. I shall be content with whatever Narabhai² brings out. I do not also have the time. It may, perhaps, be necessary to show the matter to pyarelal. This may mean some more time, but Pyarelal has worked with him. I put no great value on August 15. You must have read my speech of yesterday, I see no joy on anybody's face here. Now do as Naraharibhai advises.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9980. Also C.W. 6954. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

¹ Addressee's son

² Narahari Parikh, who along with Kishorelal Mashruwala was editing *Harijan* during Gandhiji's Noakhali tour.

7. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

This time I am sending a Gujarati article¹ of mine together with its translation, one article by Maganbhai, one published article by Kakasaheb and reports of my speeches. I am alone just now. Rajkumari and Sushila have gone out of Delhi. They will return tomorrow. I don't think you will be short of English matter. I have with me Gujarati translations of my speeches made by Mridulabehn. I have not been able to revise them. Perhaps I may send them on Tuesday. But I don't think you will need them.

I have followed your other suggestions.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9981. Also C. W. 6955. Courtesy: Jivanji Desai

8. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter.

I don't at all remember having received the previous one regarding the Trust. Letters do get lost in this way these days.

I agree with you about Kamala....² arrived here yesterday. I shall show him the relevant portion of your letter. About the Trust, I shall think and then write.

Abha arrived here yesterday. I shall see now what can be done. I thought it right to let her come.

I was pleased to read about the work you are doing. Isn't the place where you are working as good as an ashram? Where else will

¹ "Who is a Socialist?", *vide* "Who is A Socialist", 6-7-1947.

² Omission as in the source

you build another?

Today is my silence day. It is nearing 2. I have heaps of work lying in front of me. I have just managed to write this.

I understand about Aunt. She will live on as long as she has debts to collect from you all. Is she calm in mind? Does she talk with anybody? What things is she able to eat.

Is Fuli strong enough to do the nursing?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 642. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

9. A LETTER

July 7, 1947

You ask for my help, but who am I to help you? God alone is the true helper and source of support. Seek help from that Almighty God.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 290

10. A LETTER

July 7, 1947

I sympathize with you in your misfortune. But it is ignorance to think that we suffer because of our misfortunes. Misfortune is really a test for us. And if we pass the test, all will be well with us. Only those who are blessed with grace can understand this. You should try to understand this truth and patiently strive to strengthen your power of endurance.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 291

11. A LETTER

July 7, 1947

I am able to say from my own experience that the mind also is an important factor in recovering from illness. Fear, anger, impatience and depression aggravate the illness. The more cheerful you are the sooner will you recover. You should therefore try to

create such an atmosphere around you. It is a sin against God to fall ill. I have repeatedly pointed this out to Chi. Manudi and made her cry for neglecting her health. But I have noticed during these past two days that she has become a little more sensible. I can only hope that this will not prove temporary.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 291

12. LETTER TO GOPALRAO KALE

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. GOPALRAO,

The Hasan chapter is not yet closed. I have a long letter from him. Let me know if he is clean enough.

Herewith I am enclosing a copy of my Gujarati article. When should the whole matter reach you?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

13. LETTER TO DR. HASAN

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

BHAI HASAN,

I have your letter Who wrote it? Neither the handwriting nor the language of the letter appears to be yours.

What do Bhai Gopalrao and Dada Dharmadhikari say?

I am having another complaint. I desire that at least a few Muslims should prove perfect in every way. I want to see you become such a one. The time is extremely delicate. I am sending a copy of your letter to Shuklaji.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

14. LETTER TO RAVI SHANKAR SHUKLA

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

BHAI SHUKLAJI,

I have a long letter from Dr. Hasan, a copy of which I am sending to you. Is this episode closed now? Has everything been cleared up? Is there no more complaint against the Doctor?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

15. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM

I have your letter. I know I have not been able to write to you often. How can it be anger? I am buried in work.

Pakistan has come into being. But our duty remains the same. Those who are there have to do or die.

I want to reach there early. When it will be only God knows.

Whatever rice we get we should accept. We should not carry on trade in it. I consider it immoral. I cannot go into greater details.

How are you?

Abha came here yesterday. She does not appear to be well. Today is my silence day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 586

16. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
July 7, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA.,

I have your letter. My anxiety is that Kishorelalbhai is unnecessarily worried and he is leaving the house that he had built for

himself. I do not mind that he distrusts me. Time will show whether I deserved to be trusted. But let us leave everything to time.

The Prabhakar episode I think is now closed. I presume that Shankaran's accusation against Prabhakar was wrong. Prabhakar flatly denies it. He will never do anything to discredit the Ashram. It is good that you had a talk with Aryanayakum about the dairy. He has not written anything to me. When he does I shall say if there is anything for me to say. I want you to do as much service as you can. What will he do by having only the building? But I cannot say anything. It is not very likely that Anna will continue to live in the Ashram now. Can she (Kamala) live in the Ashram without Anna and undertake to observe the rules of the Ashram? Anna says she can now take care of herself.

It is a different thing if Ramprasad and Kanta, observing the rules of the Ashram and eating in its mess, can live there. Otherwise I think they have to leave the Ashram.

My stay here is uncertain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1982

17. A LETTER

July 7, 1947

What has happened to us today that we are killing one another in the name of religion? Can anybody tell me which religious scripture teaches this ?

If you regard yourself as a true Muslim, you should issue a statement. You should do this, however, not because I am suggesting it. If you yourself feel in your heart that Muslims are committing an error in the name of religion, then you may issue whatever statement you deem fit. Don't think that you should issue such a statement merely because Gandhi says so. Such a statement will have no effect.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 291

18. A LETTER¹

July 7, 1947

I know that even today we are apathetic with regard to this problem, because we look upon the practice as a part of dharma. But you should strive harder still. I should like you to dedicate your whole life to this one mission. Those who serve only according to their capacity find their work quite easy. If one undertakes several tasks at once, one is unable to do justice to any of them.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 291-2

19. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 7, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Last evening I told you why it was that the prospect of freedom that is about to be ours did not fill me with joy. Today I wish to tell you how you can turn a bad thing into a good thing. What has happened has happened. Nothing is to be gained by brooding over it or blaming others. In legal terms it will be only a few days before freedom comes into effect. All the parties have arrived at an agreement and they cannot go back upon their word. Only God can undo what man has decided to do.

The easiest way would be for the Congress and the League to come to an understanding without the intervention or the help of the Viceroy. In this the League would have to take the first step. I do not in the least imply by this that the decision about Pakistan should be undone. It should be taken as final, no more open to discussion now. But if ten representatives of either party sit together in a mud hut and resolve that they will not leave the hut till they have arrived at an understanding, then I can say that the decision they arrive at will be a thousand times better than the present Bill which is before the British Parliament and which envisages the setting up of two Dominions. If all the Hindus and Muslims who come to see me or write to me do not

¹ This was addressed to a member of Bihar Harijan Uddharak Mandal who came to see Gandhiji.

deceive me, then it is clear that no one is happy with the division of India. They all accept it against their will.

There is also another method, perhaps as difficult. The army is going to be divided—the army which so far had one single purpose—whatever that purpose might have been. This division of the army certainly fills the heart of every patriot with fear and misgivings. Why are two armies being created? Are they to defend the country against foreign aggression or are they to fight against each other and prove to the world that we are good only for fighting and killing each other?

I have deliberately painted before you this frightful picture so that you may be warned. The way to escape this is, at any rate in my view, attractive. Will the Hindu masses and all those who have taken part in the struggle for freedom pass the test today? Will they rise up and say that they have no need for an army or at least take a pledge that this army will not be used against their Muslim brethren whether they be living in India or Pakistan. By saying this they will turn their thirty-year-old weakness into strength. Maybe the method I suggest will be considered foolish. However, I must say that God has the power to turn foolishness into wisdom as He has done so many times in history. Those who have set out on the dangerous course of dividing the army should pay heed to what I say.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 227–8

20. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

NEW DELHI,
July 7/8, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. Sushilabehn told me everything. No blemish can attach to the innocent. Those who accuse them become themselves soiled. You do not, therefore, have to undergo penance. Still we should be careful in everything.

Take care of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9039. Also C. W. 9163. Courtesy: Prabhakar

21. *DISCUSSION WITH DR. SUSHILA NAYAR
AND ARUNA ASAF ALI*

NEW DELHI,
July 8, 1947

God has chastised me severely. I have not known a test more severe than this. What a high standard of morality we had when we were slaves. We are about to suffer the greatest fall from that lofty height in the so-called "priceless freedom" which is approaching. What more is left to be witnessed now? How can I give you any idea of what is going on in my mind? At one time I feel that Bihar is calling me, at another time I hear the call from Noakhali where I succeed to some extent in establishing peace. When I came here from Patna a month ago, I imagined that I would be back at my work in a week. But in the course of this one month so many changes have taken place in the country that a family wouldn't have seen as many in a generation. I am rotting in Delhi. However, I have not at all given up Noakhali and Bihar work. I am very keen to go to the Punjab also. But I cannot decide where to go. Being in this state of mind, I am following a great thinker who said, "If you cannot see your way, it is better to stay where you are." So I am here. I cannot go to sevagram at present. I must either accomplish something or die in the attempt. I will think of something new only when I have reached one of these two places. There is no third way. At the moment I do not feel like giving any advice to the Ashram inmates. In all these years I have said much to them, made them do much work. Now every one of them should do what they think best. Ultimately all service is alike in value. The head is perched high in the body and it has great value but the soles, though at the very bottom and in contact with dirt, are not any lower in value. If the sole is pricked by a thorn and one is unable to walk, how much one feels it! Similarly those who have dedicated themselves to service may render it in any manner they like according to their ability and interest. To me every kind of service is valuable.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 294-5

22. INTERVIEW TO DEPUTATION FROM QUETTA¹

NEW DELHI,
July 8, 1947

Pandit Malaviyaji had told me specifically that I must visit Uttarkashi once. He himself was to take me along. But that was not to be. Now it occurred to me that I might visit the holy places which Malaviyaji described to me. For I do not at all hope to live for 125 years. Nor do I have that desire. I hope and trust that God will take me away while I am clinging to the aims and principles to which I have been devoted and before anything ugly happens to the country. Then Mirabehn is there. However, the weather there is not favourable at present and so I have postponed my going. Now I will come to the main thing.

When people learnt that I was going on a pilgrimage to Uttarkashi they imagined that I must be having differences with the leaders and that that was why I was retiring to the Himalayas. Yes, it is true I had difference of opinion with the leaders concerning the present situation because it seemed to me that the *Ramarajya* of my dreams was not materializing. But I do not worry because I have developed detachment and I am doing what I have been doing all along and what I feel is true. I do not worry if anyone is not convinced by what I say. I will tell the world from the house-tops what is true. Since the people have agreed to be governed by the leaders, the latter should fulfil their obligations towards the former. It is a rule of democracy that the leaders cannot impose on the people what they do not want I have forebodings that the future of India will be something different from the people's conception of it. I am therefore very much worried.

Sometimes I wonder whether during the last thirty years I have not taken the country in the wrong direction. However, as I have confessed time and again, our non-violence was not that of the brave. As there was no other alternative we adopted it. Had it not been so we would not have been indulging in perfidious mass murders to solve mutual quarrels among brothers. Our struggle was only 'passive

¹ A member of the deputation had asked Gandhiji if it was true, as the rumours suggested, that he was going away to Uttarkashi because of his differences with the leaders.

resistance.’ Our struggle was based on the non-violence of the weak. Even then a great power had to leave the country. If I alone can adopt non-violence of the brave I can show to the world splendid results it can bring about.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 296

23. DISCUSSION WITH V. K. KRISHNA MENON¹

NEW DELHI,
July 8, 1947

We must integrate the Princely States. Otherwise as there has been one Pakistan there will be a thousand Pakistans. We must put the talents of the Princes to good use.

The problem of Kathiawar is very difficult. When I suggested that Balwantrai² should be taken into the Working Committee I had done so after careful thought. He has been brought up in a cultured State like Bhavnagar. He renounced everything and worked there. Certainly Dhebar is also capable. But the two differ in talent and temperament.

Moreover, in the whole of Kathiawar the Bhavnagar State is politically the most advanced. I have been associated with it from the time of Sir Prabhaskar Pattani³ or even earlier, when I joined Shamaldas College.⁴ Whenever I think of Sir Prabhaskar Pattani, his image, white-bearded, floats before my eyes. He was also a poet. At that time he composed verses on the spinning-wheel, khadi and swaraj. I do not recall the words but they still ring in my ears. This biggest executive of a princely State began his spinning in a small village of Bhavnagar State. I will not take up your time in dwelling on the details. If I start telling stories about him, there will be no end of them. Let me therefore, come to the main point. His son Anantrai is also a very capable person.⁵ His services should be utilized. . . .

¹ Secretary, India League, London, 1929-47; Special Representative of the Government of India in London, 1946-47, and Indian High Commissioner, 1947-52; later served as Defence Minister, Government of India

² Balwantrai Mehta, Chief Minister of Gujarat, 1964-65

³ Who served as Dewan of Bhavnagar State

⁴ In January 1888

⁵ Omissions as in the source

There are numerous small States in Kathiawar. They have been exploiting the people. Balwantrai will be able to tell you their whole history. I should therefore like you to discuss this subject with him. There is no doubt that he is a capable person. Dhebar is a good man, while Balwantrai is "capable". That is the difference between the two. That is why I made the suggestion to Kripalani. If Kathiawar can be brought into line, it is bound to have an impact on other Indian States. Moreover Balwantrai has much knowledge of the Indian States. I may say you wouldn't be far wrong if you called him the Sardar of Kathiawar. He has so much talent that I should like you to utilize his service if you can.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 298–9

24. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 8, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I am late by ten minutes. I apologize to you for it. I had so much to do and so many people came to see me that I could not free myself earlier. Whatever I say these days, I say with great deliberation. I first prepare the notes of what I intend to say and only then speak. Today I kept writing for a long time and then went out to wash myself. The girls came to remind me that it was time but I did not hear them. The result has been this delay.

A friend has today written me a letter in English. He says, "I do not know the national language. My language is Tamil. If I write to you in Tamil, you will have difficulty in understanding it even if you knew a little Tamil. I therefore write in English."

As you know I want everyone to write to me in his own language. The best thing would be for everyone to learn the language of North India which is Hindustani—midway between Hindi and Urdu. The writer has quoted some lines from Bernard Shaw. Bernard Shaw has hit out at the English. He displays very pungent humour. He says that the English are never wrong. They do everything on principle. They fight on principle and plunder on principle. They enslave us only on principle. They killed their king to uphold democracy. Copying Shaw the correspondent makes use of me and

says that in the cause of freedom the British are dividing the country into two. But I know the English better than anyone else. They are leaving India because they know that they can derive no economic gain from continuing their rule in India and they have also realized that politically they can no longer keep us in subjection.

During the first world war Martial Law was introduced in one part of the country. During the second world war Lord Wavell brought the whole of India under Martial Law. But now the English have realized that that kind of thing cannot go on, that keeping India in continuous subjection might be a financial liability. They therefore want to quit. There are still two ways to save the country as I explained to you yesterday. The English still control power. They have a large army here and till that army has left we cannot really say that the British have left. They can still make their presence felt. The British want to dismember the country. Their going should not be a signal to Hyderabad, Travancore and others to declare themselves independent. Where then would be India's freedom? It has to be admitted that some of the recent events have created doubts in the people's minds about the intention of the British. But so long as their bad faith has not been proved I shall not judge them. It is of course true that the British have been shirking the right step that should be taken concerning the Indian States. But if they leave India in a situation where the various parts fall apart and start fighting against one another there can be no greater blot on their prestige.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I pp. 229–31

25. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

NEW DELHI,
July 9, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Your letter was read out to me this morning after the prayer at 4.45. After taking honey in warm water I am now writing this.

Your coming here will serve no purpose. Your striving is false. Your attachment to Kanchan will not go by your keeping her away from you. Nor even by your living with her. Such attachment disappears only when one has realized the Supreme. I doubt whether you will even be able to overcome it. But I will not dwell on this.

What you write about K.bhai¹ is correct. If my truth and ahimsa are genuine, all will be well. My speeches are being summarized with great care. Read the English reports only. This is enough for today. Take interest in the constructive work.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS]

What is wrong with the name Jivram? If you didn't like it, are you sure you will not dislike another name, too? I suggest that you yourself should give the name of your choice.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8409. Also C. W. 5623. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

26. *LETTER TO FRANCESCA STANDENATH*

NEW DELHI,

July 9, 1947

MY DEAR SAVITRI,

Your second letter just received. I was glad.

You may send your answer to Sevagram, Wardha, C.P., India.

We are born to endure hardships. I therefore do not send you a word of sympathy for all you have gone through. It is enough that you are cheerful in spite [of it all.] Keep the gold watch. An English firm has sent me one. Others have offered.

How do you pass your time? Do you earn something? What is your age?

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Kishorelal G. Mashruwala; vide also "Letter to Balavantsinha", 28-6-1947

27. A LETTER

July 9, 1947

I also am a worshipper of art. Isn't truth also an art? I would say that anybody who makes a distinction between truth and beauty knows neither.

He who has taken a vow of service, what need he think? He should reduce himself to a cipher, welcome whatever opportunity of service God Grants him from time to time and acquit himself in it to the best of his ability. It is not for us to think about the results. We should only take care that our motives are not selfish. We are merely instruments in God's hands. Truly has Narasinha Mehta said: "To say in pride, 'It is I who am doing this'—that is ignorance, like the dog's who believes that he is carrying the cart under which he walks." In that one line of verse the poet has explained man's dharma.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 302–3

28. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

July 9, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have thought about the Trust¹. It seems to me we should not trouble Mavalankar. Why don't you invite Saralabehn Ambalal? She is a wise lady. But it is for all of you to decide.

Devdas should not be included. He is already overburdened. I think nobody should be included merely because of his name.

The names of members of the Managing Committee seem all right.

If Girdharlal Kotak and Maganlal are already there on the Committee, they should be consulted before their names are dropped. It is all right if they are dropped as per rules.

If it is possible to devise some method of storing rain water, the experiment should certainly be made. If you can get water by sinking deep wells, that also is worth trying. It is very necessary to make some efforts in this direction.

¹ Presumably Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

If you decide to grow fruit trees, that also will ultimately be profitable. This whole subject is of importance for a region like Kathiawar.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 8643. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi. Also *Bapuna Patro-9: Shri Narandas Gandhine-II*, pp. 317-8

29. DISCUSSION WITH INDONESIAN VISITORS

July 9, 1947

Non-violence is the only thing which can counteract any kind of atom bomb. However, I feel that you have no knowledge of non-violence. Let me ask you: suppose Russia, America and England combined together and attacked you, what kind of violence would you use against them and how? I feel that you could withstand it only if the whole of Asia helped you against it. Even then the European arms would be superior to yours. But Indonesia alone will be able to counteract all the three powers if you show courage, are prepared to die a brave death and adopt non-violence. Yes, it is true that everyone will be sacrificed. But no one will be able to subjugate you. The non-violence which we practised was not that of the brave. It was passive resistance. If we could have practised non-violence of the brave there wouldn't have been this fratricidal carnage which is taking place now. Spiritual courage is more important than physical courage. If, therefore, not only India but the whole of Asia practised non-violence of the brave. Asia would have a different status. Unluckily the wave of violence has spread all over India. I must confess that all the hopes I have pinned on India will be belied if we are not able to practise non-violence of the brave. I hope at least that God will not make me a witness to it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 303

30. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

NEW DELHI,
July 9, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You will ask me why I went to see the Viceroy² today. Freedom is not yet ours. There is only hostility. They stop the trams as they like, they stab and loot. Freedom is like the sun but it does not seem to me that it is coming. The Viceroy calls me his friend. How can I be a friend of his? I am a friend of the sweepers, of the poor.

The writer of the letter I spoke³ of yesterday reminds me that in 1940 I had said that I found violence in the air. He asks if I found violence in the air then, what do I find now? He has the right to ask. It cannot be said that things are going well in India. People are stopping trains, indulging in arson and plunder and stabbings. This is anarchy. People embezzle funds and adopt improper methods to make money. Others quietly part with money. There is untruth, violence, hatred and distrust in the air.

Against this background comes the declaration of June 3. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs have agreed to see India dismembered. Then came reports in newspapers of thefts, looting, arson and murders. The correspondent sarcastically asks me if this is my idea of love. He says I have been a votary of truth and asks where that truth is now. Now the only question is, who is higher and who is lower? Where is the tolerance I have been talking about? If it is not there, who is responsible for it? Is it the Viceroy or is it someone else?

My answer is that it is true that there is a stench every- where. I say I am responsible for it. For thirty years I have been telling the country to follow truth and non-violence. If my advice had been heeded, the result would have been different. You judge the tree by

¹ *The Hindustan Times*, 10-7-1945, reported that Gandhiji began by referring to the *bhajan* which described love as the highest thing in the world—the best unifying force. Yudhishtira performed the *yajna* because he wished to become the servant of his people through love—in other words ahimsa. He preferred service to kingship and thereby was a true king.

² For the Viceroy's note on the interview, vide Appendix "Lord Mountbatten's Note on Interview with Gandhiji", 9-7-1947.

³ Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 8-7-1947.

the fruit. If the English go, does it mean that law and order should also go with them? Even people who talked that language of satyagraha had harboured thoughts of violence and intended at the very first opportunity to take to arms. The swaraj I had dreamed of is still a long way away. I do not wish to be a witness to this internecine strife. I do not wish to shed tears over what has happened in Multan, Rawalpindi, Garhmukteshwar, Bihar and Bengal, for I am a soldier. Nor do I wish to die. Neither the Hindus, nor the Muslim, nor the Sikhs can ensure their survival through the madness that has overtaken them. Money can be earned by the sword but no merit. The only way is for us even now to take to the path of non-violence. Therein alone lies our good and that of the world. Humanity demands that the British should bring about reconciliation between the two parties, between the two armies. I hope that the days that are left will be enough to achieve this. Then there is the question of the States. Fifteenth of August is the last day. There is still time. If reconciliation cannot be effected before that date, then I fear it will be too late. The British are stronger than we. They have immense military strength. Those who imagine that the British are finished as a military power are mistaken.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 231–3

31. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI¹

[July 10, 1947]²

Though I am here, my heart is in Noakhali. See that none of you leaves his or her post of duty. If any of you dies, I will dance with joy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 312

¹ From Sushila Nayyar's "Notes", sub-title, "Noakhali", in *Harijan*, 20-7-1947. Writing under the dateline New Delhi, July 10, 1947, Sushila Nayyar explains: "Some of Gandhiji's party have left the place (Noakhali) mostly on account of illness. . . . Among those who are still there, are Shri Pyarelalji and Shri Kanu Gandhi."

² *ibid*

32. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

July 10, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

The happy event¹ you told me of is out in the papers today. My congratulations and blessings to the pair. Let us hope they will prove true servants of humanity.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 10830

33. LETTER TO SUDHIR GHOSH

NEW DELHI,

July 10, 1947

DEAR SUDHIR,

I often think of both² of you. Hope you are doing well. Do write occasionally.

Love to you two.

BAPU

Sudhir Ghosh Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 218

34. LETTER TO LILAVATI P. ASAR

NEW DELHI,

July 10, 1947

CHI. LILA,

I have read your letter to Manu. You are not stopping your foolishness. Why should you feel remorse about knowing? Why should one remember words of flattery? How many are there as fortunate as you? You must complete your studies properly. We can analyse later whether or not there has been any benefit.

I am doing well.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ Engagement of Princess Elizabeth and Lieut. Philip Mountbatten

² The addressee and his wife Shanti Ghosh

35. A LETTER

July 10, 1947

The controls must go now. I can understand that it will take some time to remove them, but I cannot understand the argument that they must be retained.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 308

36. A LETTER

July 10, 1947

If I had my way, I would have a law passed which would require everybody, from the highest official to the lowliest peon, to spin for half an hour daily. It is inconceivable that one cannot spare half an hour out of twenty-four hours for spinning. But mine is a lone voice today. When I speak of spinning, please understand the word in its broadest sense. It means constructive work. . . .¹ Without such work, the country will not be able to solve the problems which it faces.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 308

37. A LETTER

July 10, 1947

These days cotton is being exported to other countries and in exchange we import food. If that is so, you are right in holding that the cultivators will take greater interest in growing cotton than in growing foodgrains. That will harm us in the end. If a country cannot grow the food it needs, its freedom cannot but be in danger.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 308

¹ Omission as in the source

38. *LETTER TO RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ*

NEW DELHI,
July 10, 1947

CHI. RADHAKRISHNA,

When everything is so clear cut, it would be quite right to follow Kamalnayan's suggestion.

You must understand that I really have no time.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

39. *LETTER TO RAMASWAMI*

NEW DELHI,
July 10, 1947

CHI. RAMASWAMI,

I have your letter. I have sent the following telegram:¹

“Ramaswami, brilliant Harijan, wants to serve your editorial department. My opinion he is worth keeping.”

I was under the impression that you were in England or America and that I had lost you. Now I understand. I also recollect everything. I am sending you a telegram as well. Write to me what you are going to do. Why don't you return to the Ashram?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Presumably to Ramachandran; *vide* “Letter to Ramaswami”, 2-7-1947.

40. INTERVIEW TO ARTHUR MOORE ¹

July 10, 1947

It does not look like success so far.² But there must be some result.

GANDHIJI: I have no doubt about it.

It depends upon you, Gandhiji. You are the biggest force.

I am a spent bullet.

Oh, no; you are not. Whatever progress India has made is because of you.³ Now is the time. What can be done?

That is the grace of God. I am only an instrument. Without His will not even a leaf will move. Then who am I? An insignificant being. Pray that Indians may become wise.⁴

Your word counts. Just now Hindus are worked up . . . It is that feeling that one wants to allay.

I am doing my utmost. Personally I do not think this mood will stay.

Mr. Moore thought Sardar Patel's attitude to be bellicose. Gandhiji corrected him:

You do not know the Sardar. He is not vindictive or communal. But he does not share my belief that non-violence can conquer everything. He used to be a whole-hogger once. He is so no more.

The Sardar is the most popular leader. Perhaps that explains it.

No, the Sardar is the strong man. He will not let any difficulty baffle him. That is the explanation.

There is a growing feeling of retaliation in the people's minds. It is bad.

I do not think this feeling will stay. If it does, it will mean good-bye to freedom. India will commit suicide.

The Sardar and some Congressmen feel that the area ceded to Pakistan has to be taken back. It irritates the Muslims.

There you are greatly mistaken. Personally I feel Pakistan has come to stay. They realize it.

¹ A former editor of *The Statesman*

² Moore was referring to Gandhiji's Delhi fast for Hindu-Muslim unity in 1924.

³ This sentence is from *Bihar Dilhi*.

⁴ This paragraph is from *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*.

On that basis friendship is possible?
Pakistan has come but how friendship can be achieved I do not know.

I feel heart unity is more important than political boundaries.
I grant that any day. I am working at it against heavy odds.

But you are not a spent force Gandhiji. Things have to get worse before they get better. It is darkest before dawn.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 309-10; and *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*, pp. 307-8

41. INTERVIEW TO WINKLEMAN¹

NEW DELHI,
[July 10, 1947]²

He said that he was a philosopher rather than a diplomat. He was soon to leave for Singapore and another would take his place. He was sorry to leave India when India was passing through eventful times. He wished Gandhiji a long life. There was a lot to be done yet. He asked Gandhiji :

Do you expect a lot of trouble still ?

GANDHIJI: If I can forecast the future, I feel there is some more trouble in store for us before we settle down.

WINKLEMAN: You are a believer in God. Your mind must be at rest if you feel that India is going in the right direction. Europe is not. The troubles of Europe are due to the fact that Europe has left Christianity.

G. Yes, I have believed that for a long time.

W. What do you think of the situation in Europe?

G. I think nothing. It is beyond me. It is a complicated affair.

W. Yes, it is complicated. He had met Dr. Malan in 1939 in Europe. He was asked several questions about Europe. He said that there was no hope for Europe. Asked why, he had replied: "Europe has lost its religion. The philosophy of materialism has come to stay. They think they can do everything without God. They will be making so many mistakes that another upheaval will come before long." "And it did", added the visitor. "People think that they can separate religion from business and lead two lives. It cannot be done."

I have held that opinion for a long time.

Harijan, 20-7-1947

¹ Dutch ambassador; the interview is extracted from Sushila Nayyar's "Notes", sub-title, 'The Problem of Europe'.

² From *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*

42. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am often asked, now that Pakistan has been conceded, what is the duty of those of us who are in the Indian Union? I have spoken on this question many times but it comes up again and again. One possibility is that India and Pakistan will be enemies. The Muslim League often says that Hindus and especially the caste Hindus are its enemies. Must then the Hindus also consider the Muslims their enemies? At least that is not my way. And in my old age I cannot give up my way. My humanity tells me that the whole world is my friend. Cutting each other's throats will not bring good to anyone. Friendship does not mean appeasement. A friend does not seek to appease another friend. If harsh words have to be said, they must be said. I have been asked, if I am against appeasement, what else have I been doing? When in 1944 I trudged my way in the sun on eighteen successive days to the Qaid-e-Azam's house I was doing my duty. I did not seek to appease the Qaid-e-Azam. Had he accepted what I went to offer him all this blood that has now been shed would never have been shed. And all this poison would not have been spread. Also there would have been no third power in India and even after the formation of Pakistan, India would have been one. My talks with Mr. Jinnah were friendly. Appeasement today has a bad connotation. When Germany and England were hostile to each other, Chamberlain, who was the Prime Minister at the time, had sought to appease Hitler. It is not my view but that of many Englishmen that, had Chamberlain not chosen the path of appeasement, history would have been different. But since I do not consider anyone my adversary why should I go out to appease anyone?

Will the temples and the Gurudwaras in Pakistan be destroyed? My feeling is that they will not be. Will they stop the Hindus from going to the temples? I do not think that this is the meaning of Pakistan. Has not Daulatana Saheb said only today that none but enemies of Islam would say that Hindus and Sikhs could not follow their faith in Pakistan. If the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan really get the same justice as the Muslims then I have not the least doubt that Islamic democracy is a lofty thing. If they consider all mankind as

having descended from Adam, how can they stop the followers of other religions from worshipping God in their own different ways. I think that Daulatana Saheb means what he says. I shall ask the Hindus of the Punjab and N. W. F. P. not to flee from their homes in fright. The Golden Temple is in Amritsar but what will happen to Nankana Saheb¹ for which the Sikhs have made such sacrifices? It has to remain in Pakistan. There are so many Hindu temples in Hyderabad. I do not say that Hyderabad will become a part of Pakistan. Ninety-five per cent of the population there is Hindu. If all those Hindus are included in Pakistan, what will be the meaning of Pakistan? The great Jama Masjid will be in the Union. Shall we forbid the Muslims to say *namaaz* there? Then there is the Taj Mahal in Agra. And a Muslim University in Aligarh. Will Muslim students be stopped from studying there? Is there a place that does not have both mosques and temples? I find both wherever I go. Why then do the Hindus from the Punjab, Sind and N. W. F. P. want to flee to India? They should be brave. We have no use for the bravery that consists in burning down houses and killing innocent children. It is not bravery. It is devilry.

But if people do leave their houses in Sind and other places and come to India, must we drive them out? If we do that, how can we call ourselves Indians? With what face can we shout *Jai Hind*? For what had Netaji fought? We are all Indians whether living in Delhi or Gujarat. They will be our guests. We shall welcome them saying that India is their country as much as Pakistan. If Nationalist Muslims also have to leave Pakistan we shall welcome them here. As Indians we all have the same status.

There are still thirty-five days to August 15. Let us cease to be beasts and become men. We have all been put to the test and that includes the British. I have just received a telegram from Noakhali saying that now that Pakistan has come into being the Hindus who had suffered there are not likely to get any compensation. Why should they not get compensation? With Pakistan established it is all the more the duty of the Government there to protect the Hindus. The telegram also says that those who have committed murders and who are at present in prison are likely to be freed. I hope this will not be. The Pakistanis must demonstrate that the Hindus living in Pakistan will not be harmed in any way. Then we shall have reason to celebrate 15th of

¹ Where on February 20, 1921, a number of Sikhs were killed; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 22-2-1921.

August as Independence Day. But if this does not happen, this independence is not for me nor, I am sure will it be for you. A lot can happen in these thirty-five days.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 234-7

43. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
July 11, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I am still without any news from Kashmir. I wonder if you can remind the Maharaja. If I was not bound by any promise made to you, of course I would not want any permission to go to Kashmir. I would simply go as any private person.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI,

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 270-1

44. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 11, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have your letter. I am glad you got my wire and letter in time. I was relieved to learn that Sita had arrived there safely.

Since I had written, there was no need for you to write anything. I hope it will not be misunderstood. It is we who have to yield, they

¹ The addressee, who replied the following day, enclosed a copy of the letter from the Maharaja, who had again advised Gandhiji to postpone his visit in any case till the end of autumn. Also he had said that it would not be possible for Gandhiji to see Sheikh Abdulla. Lord Mountbatten further wanted to know whether Gandhiji would visit Kashmir after his Noakhali visit or before; for Gandhiji's reply, *vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 16-7-1947.

who have the power. If they are annoyed, it is our child that will be harmed. That is why I gave in on many points and the matter was settled. But all that is over now.

How long do you expect to have to look after the things there? Go on doing what you can and give Vijayabehn such satisfaction as you can.

You must not expect Tari¹ to help you in household chores. The public service she is doing is a sufficiently big contribution on her part.

It remains to be seen how Vasant turns out.

I am well.

Manu is still not fully restored. Abha is here now. Her health also is no better, nor is Sushila's. The weather is partly to blame of course. It is extremely hot. Hot winds blow. It is so even at night. There was some relief for two or three days.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5007

45. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

July 11, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

I certainly wanted you to have Narandas's entire letter.² But this is an apt instance of how even one's simple wishes are not fulfilled. As is my wont, when this morning I enquired whether the whole letter was sent to you [I learnt that] Bisen³ had not sent the part pertaining to the Trust. He acted in good faith but if he had clearly understood his dharma he would not have erred. If he had asked me at the time he was attending to it so much time would have been saved.

Have you grown weak? Even if you have not, if you are tired of

¹ Tara Mashruwala, addressee's sister who was working in Kasturba National Trust in Madhan

² *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 9-7-1947.

³ Shiv Balak Bisen, Gandhiji's secretary

the place¹ you can quit. If I can get away from here or am able to do something for Bihar take it that I shall soon be there. If I have written the same thing to you yesterday, let this be for a second time. There have been no such fixed stages in my life. I spent 20 years instead of one in South Africa. In Bihar I spent the whole year instead of four days. And how long I had to stay in Rajkot.

Abha is all right.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

46. LETTER TO GOVINDDAS

NEW DELHI,

July 11, 1947

CHI. GOVINDDAS,

I have your letter and your long statement.² Where is the time to read the statement? And what is the need of it? Of what importance is one such temple being opened? You should understand the situation there and do independently what you think proper.

Blessing from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10423. Courtesy: Seth Govinddas

47. NOTE TO SUNDERLAL

July 11, 1947

I have read this. See what I have deleted.³ Nobody has forced the division on us. When was the country a “paradise”?

From the Hindi: C. W. 10268. Courtesy: Purushottam Prasad

¹ Ramdevpur where he was supervising a relief camp

² Criticizing the Trustees of a temple at Jabalpur on their decision not to open the temple to Harijans and offering his resignation from trusteeship of the temple

³ From the addressee's letter to the editor, *Bharat*, a Hindi journal of Allahabad, Gandhiji had deleted the bracketed words from the following sentence: “If we want to we can even make use of the division (imposed on us by aliens) to make the country a paradise (once again).”

48. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A co-worker writes from Noakhali: "When you came to Noakhali you talked so much about doing or dying. Now if you do not come here before the 15th of August, you will repent."

I admit that if I do not go to Noakhali before August 15, I shall repent. Why am I in Delhi? I ought to be either in Bihar or in Noakhali. I am restless here. I was not so in Noakhali. I walked long distances every day, visited ever new villages and met an immense number of people both Hindus and Muslims. I did some work in Noakhali, also in Bihar. There is a fire raging inside me. That fire will not rage after I go to Noakhali. I ask you to pray that God may quickly send me to Noakhali.

I have not forgotten my pledge to do or die. From Noakhali I went to Bihar, for whereas in Noakhali only a few hundred people had died, in Bihar thousands were killed. So for me Noakhali and Bihar were alike. From there Jawaharlal summoned me here. Kripalani also sent me a wire calling me here, but what have I achieved here? Of course many people retort, "What could I achieve in Noakhali? If there is a settlement concerning the whole of India, there will automatically be a settlement concerning Noakhali." But I proceed the other way. I had learnt when still a child the formula, "As in the microcosm so in the macrocosm." My untutored and rustic mother also taught me to begin with myself and not to bother about the world. There is God to look after the world. I must therefore keep the pledge I made in Noakhali.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 237-8

49. STATEMENT ON RENTIA JAYANTI¹

NEW DELHI,
July 12, 1947

Lovers of the charkha should show a hundred times more zeal for the coming *Rentia Baras*. That does not mean that they should send a hundred times more yarn. They may well send that much yarn. But those who do not observe truth and non-violence and those who do not pray should not send the yarn. That is to say, those who spin for the sake of the *yajna* should adhere to truth and non-violence, believe that God is their sole help and that real swaraj will come only with the help of yarn. Those who do not believe in these should not participate in the yarn *yajna*.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 20-7-1947

50. LETTER TO S. K. PATIL²

July 12, 1947

You are enunciating the doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Only you will wait till the 15th August. Both these statements ill conform with the Congress policy. Has the Congress policy changed? Congressmen have changed I know but I am not aware of any change in the Congress constitution.

Secondly, if Congress policy or practice changed who compels you to wait till 15th August? Who will be responsible for the incalculable harm that will have overtaken the people of India as well as Pakistan in the meantime? Who can control the people if they go mad and launch on a course of retaliation?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 308

¹ This was appended to Narandas Gandhi's appeal published under the title "Gandhiji's Seventy-ninth Birthday Celebration by National School, Rajkot", not translated here. Narandas Gandhi, who organized mass spinning for 78 days from July 26 to October 11, had also invited people to participate in the celebration by contributing 78 coins of any denomination. *Vide* also "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 2-7-1947.

² Bombay Congress Leader; member of Union Cabinet 1957-63. He was reported to have said in a public speech that if any harm befell the Hindus in Pakistan, the Congress would after the 15th August take reprisals in India.

51. A LETTER

July 12, 1947

He who is filled with a desire to serve does not have to go looking for an opportunity for it. There is no rigid boundary to the field of service and no limit to the strength one can acquire for it. For one who has the doors of his heart opened, no job is too difficult. Let this suffice for today. I have spared a few minutes for you from great pressure of work and am writing these few lines. You are, moreover, wise and will understand the agony of my heart.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 317

52. A LETTER

July 12, 1947

He who has conquered anger has achieved a great victory in life. I myself am not free from it. But I am ceaselessly striving and have made progress. The final result can be judged only after my death. Chi. Manudi's health is deteriorating from day to day. Though I sometimes feel irritated by her carelessness in regard to it, I must admit that none from among the countless girls who came and worked with me acquitted herself as well as this girl of sixteen or seventeen did both physically and mentally in doing whatever work I assigned to her in Noakhali and Bihar. And even at the age of thirteen, she had rendered similar service to Ba. I have admired her ever since then. All this has a bearing on my reply to the question whether I have conquered anger. She has ruined her health in serving me, but if only she would give me co-operation, take proper rest, be careful about her diet and remain cheerful, I could help her to regain her health in a month and she would feel better than she ever did. But I have to remind her again and again. Though running a temperature, she was rolling *khakharas* for me yesterday. This made me angry. If I had scolded her, she would have started crying and the temperature would have risen still higher, instead of coming down. This anger bespeaks weakness both of body and mind. When the mind is full of agony, what can we expect but physical weakness? But I am confident that in the end I shall overcome this anger too.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 317-8

53. *LETTER TO MOHAMMAD HUSAIN KHAN*

NEW DELHI,
July 12, 1947

I have your letter. It is not good. Let us go by convention. The reply I sent is from minister Ansari Saheb of the Bihar Government. If there is any error in it, it should be pointed out. In any case how can I compel him ?

I do not think it would be appropriate to write to Pandit Jawaharlal.

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

54. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
July 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I have received a letter from a friend which says: "What is happening in the country today is very bad. People who went to jail during the satyagraha movement think they have done something very big which should entitle them to be Prime Minister or Minister or Parliamentary Secretary or Governor of some province. They think they should have a motorcar. I have also been to prison twice and once I was with you in Yeravda. But I have remained a beggar and no one has ever bothered about me!"

If someone has been to jail, has he done a favour to India? If this sort of mentality persists, I fear the Congress will perish. Those who are in the Congress should not even dream of such things. Arguing thus a Congressman may say that, since he has been to jail, his son should be married to the best girl in India or that his daughter should be married to the best young man in India. Jawaharlal has not become the Vice-President or the Prime Minister because he has been to jail. If he does not get his salary, he will not starve. Rajendra Babu might have become the Chief Justice of Patna High Court but he voluntarily gave up practice and chose to live the life of a fakir. Rajaji also has not become a minister by virtue of his jail-going. It is not my contention that they are all

angels. They are men like us and all men make mistakes. And how many of us can be absorbed in Government offices? It is an unworthy thought and should be given up. We must never think that we should get some reward for having gone to jail. The reward of doing one's duty lies in the duty done.

I have been asked: "Whereas in Pakistan Mr. Jinnah has been made Governor-General, here in India it is the Viceroy who has been made Governor-General. Why should this be so? The battle for India's freedom was fought by the Congress. The Muslim League has had no part in it. Whenever the Congress resorted to civil disobedience or satyagraha the League refused to co-operate. Even so the Congress cannot get an Indian as Governor-General. This is not just. This will mean that we shall be safe only if we kowtow to the British or we shall die." I shall say that under the scheme that will come into effect on August 15, it does not matter whether the Governor-General is an Englishman, a Frenchman or a Dutchman, whether he is a brown-skinned Indian or a White or a Negro. If I had my way a Harijan girl would be the Governor-General. So if Lord Mountbatten becomes the Governor-General he will still be a servant of India. You will say this is the kind of talk to pacify children. Mountbatten, who is a scion of a Royal family, will not be anybody's servant. But I am not deceiving you. I do not expect any reward from Lord Mountbatten. So long I have been fighting against him. Maybe you will say that the Congress leaders have been deceived by him. Do you mean to say that Jawaharlal, Sardar and Rajaji are so softbrained as to be taken in? True, as I have been saying what I had wanted has not come to pass. But Mountbatten will be Governor-General because we want him. If we did not want him he would not hold that office. But Mr. Jinnah may have chosen to be Governor-General in order to show off. We should not be jealous and we should not be angry. He wants to show to the world what Islam is. Let us see whether he makes of himself a master or a servant. If even a single Sindhi flees, then the responsibility for it will rest on the Governor-General of Pakistan. He will have to be just to all, like Abubaker or Omar, or Ali. I do not say they were all non-violent. But I have in mind their bravery and their chivalry. I understand from the newspapers that originally the idea had been for India and Pakistan to have one Governor-General in common. But Mr. Jinnah later went back on his word. Who was then to prevent him from becoming the Governor-General of Pakistan? In

my view he did not do the right thing. When he had once agreed he should have accepted Lord Mountbatten as Governor-General and later if something had gone wrong he could have removed him. Now Islam is to be tested through Mr. Jinnah. He is assuming the Governor-Generalship of Pakistan with the whole world as witness. The world will now wait to see what special virtues Pakistan displays under him. The Congress has always been fighting against the British. Jawaharlal is a simple-hearted man. But the Sardar is a fighter. He used to quarrel with me because I trusted the British. When he himself has been caught up in their wiles, what can you or I hope to do? When he agrees that the Viceroy should be the first Governor-General of India, why should we object? We shall see whether he will serve India as Governor-General or betray her. It will be a new experience. There is wisdom in this and we have nothing to lose. After all we accepted Dominion Status on the advice of the Viceroy. He is an Admiral and a great warrior. Let us have him and if he does not come up to our expectations we can always fight with him.

When I went to see the Viceroy he confided in me that the young man to whom Princess Elizabeth had been betrothed was like a son to him and he hoped that I would write a few words of blessings to him. So when the Viceroy's daughter¹ came to see me two days ago I gave her a letter of congratulation addressed to the couple. She is such a sweet girl. At the prayer I offered her a chair but she declined the offer and sat down with us on the *duree*. And today I learnt from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur that the young Princess who has got engaged to be married will be the future queen of England because the king has no son. The Viceroy too has no son. Anyway if the Viceroy had been a bad man I wouldn't have been so free with my blessings. I do not consider him a bad man. If Jawaharlal or Sardar Patel had become Governor-General in his place it would have been a dangerous thing. Besides, the Governor-General wields no effective power. He will have to act on the advice of Jawaharlal and his cabinet. He will only be a figurehead.

But we have got into the way of thinking that Lord Mountbatten has great status and the English are capable only of devilry. Lord Mountbatten therefore will have to prove his honesty and love of justice and I am sure that he has come to India to do only justice.

¹ Pamela Mountbatten

Many Muslims come to see me these days. They too are nervous about Pakistan. One can understand Christians, Parsis and other non-Muslims feeling uneasy, but why Muslims? They say they are treated as Quislings, that they will receive even worse treatment than the Hindus in Pakistan and after full power has been transferred to Pakistan their association with the Congress will be considered a crime according to the tenets of *Shariyat*. I do not agree that this is the meaning of Islam. What crime was committed by the Congress having Muslims within its fold? Do muslims by associating with the Congress become criminals? Do they not say *Kalma* or perform the *namaaz*? Has Islam changed so much since the time of the Ali Brothers? How can nationalist Muslims be called Quislings? I do hope that Mr. Jinnah, while he protects the non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan, will also at the same time accord protection to these Muslims.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 239-43

55. SOCIALISM¹

Truth and ahimsa must come alive in socialism. This can only be possible when there is a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God.

This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in the body, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force denies to himself access to its inexhaustible power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. Many find themselves in this plight. The socialism of such people does not reach anywhere, what to say of the millions.

If such be the case, why is there no socialist who believes in God? If there are such socialists why have they not made any progress? Also there have been many believing in God; why is it they have not succeeded in bringing socialism?

There is no effective answer to this. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and his belief in God.

¹ A translation of this was also published in *Harijan*, 20-7-1947.

Equally, men of God perhaps never felt any need for socialism. Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism which believes in God, untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The nature of this Divine Force and its inexhaustible power have been matters of incessant quest.

My claim is that is the pursuit of that quest lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have already been formulated. I cannot say either that I myself know all the laws. This I do assert that every worthy object can be achieved through satyagraha. It is the highest and the most potent means, the most effective weapon. I am convinced that socialism will not be reached by any other means.

Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

NEW DELHI, July 13, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 20-7-1947

56. IN DEFENCE OF THE OLD¹

The correspondent, from whose letter I had quote the other day, writes:

I was in full agreement with the opinion you had expressed on the views set forth in a letter I wrote eleven years ago. Nevertheless, I lacked the courage to act up to them. I often say to myself, why go into the charcoal pit at all? Though you have placed before the world your conception of the ideal man with a view to promoting social good, nevertheless it seems to me that that good would be better served by keeping intact the restraints handed down by men of experience. It is true that awareness of distinction between man and woman should be removed. The feeling that woman is property should also go. But in propagating these tenets the harm that has been done by the communist Party is terrible. Kishorelalbhai objects even to sitting on the same mat with women. This perhaps only shows his orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the idea is not to be lightly set aside. We must not forget what the *Gita*² says: that whatever

¹ A translation of this was also published in *Harijan*, 27-7-1947 under the title "In Defence".

² *Bhagavad Gita*, iii. 21

great men do, common people follow. Therefore, it seems to me that it is wisdom for those who have reached a higher state to act in accordance with the capacity of those many who belong to a lower state and this they will do in order to avoid the risk of weaker people resorting to thoughtless imitation. I admit, however, one apt argument in defence of your position, viz., that if there was nobody to demonstrate the feasibility of the higher state, society would cease to have faith in it. Therefore must be someone to demonstrate it. As to this all I can say is that every great person must be left to choose his behaviour after due appreciation of the pros and cons.

I like the above criticism. Everyone should learn to know his own weakness. He who, knowing his own weakness, imitates the strong, is bound to fail. Hence have I contended that everyone should construct his own restraints.

I do not think that Kishorelal refuses to sit on the same mat with a woman. I should be surprised if that were so. I could not appreciate such taboo. I have never known him to advocate it.

I only see ignorance in likening a woman to a charcoal pit. It is an insult to both man and woman. May not a son sit beside his mother or a man share the same bench in a train with his sister. If he gets sexually excited in such company he is surely to be pitied.

Although I grant that for the sake of social good much must be given up, I nevertheless feel that there is room for discrimination. There are nudist groups in Europe. I was asked to join one but I refused. I said that until it could be shown that there was a certain measure of purity in the individual, nudity was not desirable. This I said although I believe that theoretically speaking there is nothing harmful in both the sexes going about completely naked. Such was the case with Adam and Eve in their innocence. But immediately they became conscious of their nakedness, they covered themselves and fell from Paradise. We are in that fallen state. If we forget it, we shall harm ourselves. I consider this an instance of observing conditions for the sake of social good.

It was in the interest of social good that pressure was brought to bear on me to give up insistence on the eradication of untouchability. Marriage of nine-year-old girls was defended in the name of social good. So was prohibition against crossing the seas. Such instances can be multiplied. Every custom has to be examined on its own merits.

Restraints must not be such as to perpetuate differentiation between men and women. We must remember that in most of our

daily transactions such differentiation has no place. Strictly speaking making such a distinction is relevant only on the occasion when one is overcome by sexual desire. Men and women who are overcome by this desire at all hours of the day show sickness of mind and cannot be instrumental in promoting social good. This is not the normal state of man. If the millions in villages were prey to such desire all day long they would be no good for any useful work.

NEW DELHI, July 13, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 27-7-1947

57. LETTER TO V. V. DASTANE

July 13, 1947

With whom will you fight?¹ Not the British.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 312

58. LETTER TO DATAR SINGH

NEW DELHI,
July 13, 1947

DEAR SARDARJI²,

I have read through your article. I can't usefully add anything to it. I shall discuss it with Rajen Babu.

You should not think of bringing your wife here till she is fairly restored.

And how is Kirpal?

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 2218

¹ Pyarelal explains that the addressee was feeling disconsolate over the partition.

² A Punjab farmer. For many years he acted as Adviser to the Government of India on Animal Husbandry.

59. A LETTER

July 13, 1947

We should learn to see our own defects rather than those of others. Is it the fault of the sun that we cannot gaze at it? It is the weakness of our own eyes that is to blame. If we can see the truth of this, all will be well with us.

Just as there can be no flower or fruit without sunlight, similarly man cannot grow without prayer.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 322

60. A LETTER

July 13, 1947

If people shed superstition, give up copying others and look at the current events with a sufficiently critical eye, I am sure our path will become quite smooth.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 322

61. A LETTER

July 13, 1947

I have not the least doubt in my mind that food control must go now—as soon as practicable. If a few Indians die in consequence, I will shed no tears. But the idea that we should share the available food equally cannot be spread through laws, and even if legislation were to succeed in doing so, I would not praise it. On the contrary, I would not hesitate to charge it with having done violence to the human spirit.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 323

62. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
July 13, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

There have already been two occasions when I was late for prayer. It has happened again today. I did my best to be here before 7 o'clock but I did not succeed. I had gone to see the Viceroy. Since I am vegetating here I have to be doing something. So many things are happening here and a person like me has to be saying something or other. I went to the Viceroy at four expecting to be free early. But there were various other people there and the result was I got delayed. However, I am very happy to observe that the prayer started punctually.

There has been a Press conference addressed by Mr. Jinnah. A report of it has reached me. He holds out the assurance that the minorities in Pakistan will not be put to any hardship. They shall be accorded the same treatment as Muslims. The Hindus will be free to visit their temples and the Sikhs their Gurudwaras.

Of course, I cannot take anyone's word at face value. Even today in Pakistan carnage and arson are rampant. This is happening in the Indian Union too. Who is doing this? Is it only the Muslims or are Hindus too responsible for it? I am flooded with letters of all kinds. People ask why they cannot live in peace. I ask Mr. Jinnah when his assurance will be put into practice. Will it be effective only after August 15? Sind will be a part of Pakistan. The Muslim League has the most influence there. Mr. Jinnah has become the Governor-General. Still there is a king in England and so long as he is there we are in some way still connected with him through the Governor-General and the Governor-General still remains responsible to the king. Mr. Jinnah also remains the President of the League. This further strengthens his status. He should act with justice. Why should Sindhis be running away from Sind? If even a single Sindhi leaves Sind it will be a matter of shame to Mr. Jinnah as Governor-General. The proof of a man's word is his action.

I do not know what has happened or not happened in U. P. But the Muslims of U. P. are walking in fear. They do not know whether they can continue to live there or not. But why can't they live there, I

ask? I ask U. P. and Bihar as I ask Mr. Jinnah: Can Muslims live in those provinces or not?

We have at last rid ourselves of the British. There was a time when they made us fight against each other. That time is now no more.

The Muslims of U. P. have a grouse over the proportion of Government jobs to be given to them. They say that whereas up to now they held between 60 and 70 p. c. of Government posts, now it is proposed that they should have only 14 p. c. according to their population ratio. I cannot share this complaint. When all is said and done, how many of us can have Government jobs? What good can they do to us? And then we take up jobs in order to serve the public, not merely to further our own interest. If what has been the practice so far is continued it will not be just. If the doctors and lawyers have been fleecing the population till now, does it mean that they should continue to do so? If I am asked by someone whether the percentage of jobs so far allotted to them will continue, I can ask in turn who gave them that percentage and how? The Congress fought against the Government and the Government bribed those who fought the Congress. Now the Government will be ours. Why should the Government be obliged to bribe anyone? It is now imperative for us to abolish untouchability. Would the Government have had the courage to open the temples through legislation? When I see that in Madras one temple after another is opening its doors to Harijans, it makes me happy. This is how dharma can be safeguarded. The same applies to Christians and Parsis. Our Government must be dedicated to raising the status of those who are downtrodden. If it does something for the Harijans, why should the Brahmins complain? Yes, if someone suggests that the Brahmins should be beaten and humiliated, then I shall say 'no, that is bad'.

If I can say anything on behalf of Muslims or the Indian Union, it is only this, that everyone should have justice. If this is ensured then there will be nothing more left to say and the pain of partition will have been forgotten.

People say that the work of partition is finished, that the army has been divided, the navy has been divided. I say we have been weakened. Foreigners will say India has no navy. They will in their own interest align themselves with one or the other Dominion and thus this division of the army will become a cause of civil war. But I hope

that Pakistan and India will be friends, that they will be just to their minorities.

Even if we have not learnt the lesson of ahimsa, we should at least from our thirty years of experience learn the lesson that we shall never again become slaves irrespective of whether we achieve this through violence or non-violence. I do not say that it should be only through non-violence. I have been saying this since I was in Bihar. People ask for guns and swords. I say, why do you want these weapons? Proclaim that you will never bow down. I said the same in Noakhali. If we can show that we have learnt this lesson after thirty years of experience, it will not matter whether people are violent or non-violent. If they come and ask me, I shall still say that they must follow only non-violence. If a single individual has to defy the world he can do so only through non-violence. Where there is non-violence, there is God. The sword breaks before it.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 243-6

63. A LETTER

July 14, 1947

If a strong-willed man who is ill resolves to get well, I am sure that he can get well through sheer power of the will. Thoughts energize the nerves and help greatly in restoring a sick man to health. Therefore, though you are in hospital and in doctors' hands, you should give them this help.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 331

64. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI

I have your letter. You cannot leave the Ashram in this manner. All of us are responsible for any sin committed in the Ashram and we should all become more vigilant in our own conduct. . . .¹ has not been guilty of immoral conduct. He assures me that he has been guilty of no lapse. He has entertained no impure thoughts. We should not, therefore, take any extreme step merely on suspicion. When the time to wind up the Ashram comes, I myself will give the call. There is room for much purification in us all. All vows have the same importance. Violation of any one of them amounts to violation of all. Relations of men and women attract our attention immediately. Moreover, we condemn such relations in a great many cases, but we ought not to assert positively that they really deserve our condemnation. All depends on the purity or otherwise of the mind. If my mind becomes affected by the sight of a woman's picture, I have committed adultery. But though I used to sleep with . . . by my side, my mind remained unaffected and so I could claim that I committed no immoral act. That my claim might not be accepted by others would be a different matter. That I should give up such practice if my co-workers cannot put up with it is also another issue. The point I am making is that we ought not to pass judgment on any action merely on the basis of suspicion. Though all the vows are of equal importance, some of them may be easier to observe than others. The vow of ahimsa seems to me the most difficult of all. Any thoughtless remark constitutes violence. Getting angry with anybody is violence. You can think of many other similar instances and calm yourself. You will find that, though you have risen high, you have still further to climb. Be calm and continue the watch.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 822. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhavé

¹ Omissions as in the source

65. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. No one can be punished privately by an individual.¹ We must not let ourselves be witnesses to such punishment. I do not know why Shantabehn tolerated it. I am writing to her. Let me have whatever further information you get.

Instead of feeling unhappy over what happened, you should take necessary steps to prevent a recurrence of it.

Aryanayakum should certainly ponder over this incident. But that will happen only if you handle the affair without getting excited.

I understand what you say regarding the infant's name.

Do not lose patience over the construction work.

I will look into the matter concerning²

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8406. Also C. W. 5624. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

66. *A LETTER*³

July 14, 1947

You should give up your fondness for writing with a pencil or fountain-pen. Anybody who wishes to improve his handwriting should use a reed-pen. How can all the children in the country afford to use fountain-pens? I suppose you know how much a fountain-pen costs. If I was a teacher and had my way, I would forbid the bringing of a fountain-pen into the classroom. But mine has become a lone voice now. If you have any influence with your friends, popularize the use of the reed-pen among them. I shall be more than satisfied if you do this.

Children must take exercise. It helps to build a sound body.

¹ A labourer working in the Ashram had been beaten by another for theft.

² The name has been omitted.

³ According to the source this was addressed to a child.

They should also be self-reliant. For example, they should wash their own dishes and clothes, sweep their own rooms, and so on.

It is a sin to use books without protecting them with covers. It is an affront to goddess Saraswati to do so. But the covers must not be made of mere waste paper or be folded shabbily. A cover lengthens the life of a book and thereby saves much money.

And surely you know that one must not eat before doing the day's quota of spinning. Similarly one must not miss the morning and the evening prayers.

One must also make it a regular practice to go to bed early and rise early.

Like you, I too have learnt Bengali alphabet and have made enough progress to be able to write a few words. Since you asked for some advice, I managed to spare time to write this much. I can write much more, but that will be after you have tried and carried out the foregoing suggestions. Write to me from time to time. Chi. Manu has progressed greatly in other ways, but her health has gone down badly, and that obliges me occasionally to be harsh with her and force her to lie down and take rest. That displeases her very much, but her pain is a sign not of wisdom but of ignorance. I have, therefore, to harden my heart in dealing with her. She starts crying, but I pay no attention to it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 330-1

67. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. I am thinking about Prabhakar. Sushilabehn will write. Hoshiari should take up physical work only after she recovers fully. What occasioned the coming of Anantram's wife? She may have left now.

Munnalal writes that the villagers beat up a Harijan.¹ What is all this? I have written a letter to Shantabehn, read it and give it to her.

I understand about Kamalabehn.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1983

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 14-7-1947.

68. NOTE TO G. D. BIRLA

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

I shall have rest either when complete peace is restored to the country or when God sends me to eternal sleep.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 332

69. TALK WITH MRIDULA SARABHAI AND OTHERS

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

India has been partitioned. But the division of the army has greatly affected me. Do not these people realize that if either India or Pakistan is invaded by a foreign power, it is equally the duty of both to resist the aggression? How humiliating will it be for us if Pakistan and India cannot remain united even in such a crisis? If the army is divided, a situation will arise when both the armies will start fighting one another, and that situation will be very difficult to control. On the whole it is harmful to both the countries. And that is why I am requesting...¹ to give a serious thought to this question. Even if we have not learnt non-violence in the last thirty years, we certainly will have realized that we will not be slaves to any third power, let alone the British. But I feel that... anything I say is not acceptable to people today. That is why I do not think too deeply over anything. I request these people to allow me to return to Bihar and then Noakhali. But the Viceroy and Jawaharal do not agree. And I do not want to go if it hurts their feelings.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 334

¹ Omissions as in the source

70. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is said that my speeches these days are such as to generate a feeling of pessimism. Indeed I am advised by some not to speak at all. It reminds me of a story about a painter. He placed a painting on display with a notice that critics might mark the spot where they found the painting faulty. The result was that the painting was soon reduced to a blur of colours. The painter had wanted to show that it was not possible to please everyone and he was satisfied that he had created a good painting. I am in a similar situation. I never speak merely for the sake of speaking. I speak because I feel that I have a message to deliver.

It is true that today there are differences between me and my closest colleagues. I do not approve of certain things that they have done or are doing. But it is not possible for me while I am in Delhi not to express my views on the present situation. What is at the root of these differences? If you go into it you will find that there is only one thing at the root of it. Non-violence is a creed with me while it has never been so with the Congress. The Congress accepted non-violence only as a policy—a policy has the status of a creed only so long as it is pursued. The Congress has a perfect right to change its policy the moment it feels that it is no longer necessary to pursue it. But it is different with a creed. It remains for ever and it cannot be changed.

In the Congress constitution non-violence is still the policy but in practice Congressmen have changed it. Legal pundits may well comment on it but you and I cannot do so nor should we. Why should Congressmen not change their policy? Besides, the constitution of the Congress says 'peaceful' and not 'non-violence'.

In 1934, at the Bombay Congress, I tried my best to have the term 'peaceful' replaced by the term 'non-violence'. But I was unsuccessful. Therefore anyone can, if he chooses, say that 'peaceful' means 'something little less than non-violent'. In my view there is no difference between the two. But my view is neither here nor there. It is the experts who must decide. You and I must only understand that the practice of Congress today is not in the least non-violent. If non-

violence had been the creed of the Congress, how would it be possible for it to support the army as it is doing today? If the army is so disposed it can crush the people and establish a military regime. Shall I give up the hope altogether that people will ever listen to me? And if they will not listen to me, what harm does it do if I speak out? Why should they seek to stop me?

I have repeatedly made it clear that the struggle that has been waged over the last thirty years was not a non-violent struggle. It was only passive resistance and such resistance is a weapon of the weak. It is not that people who use this weapon do not want to use the weapon of non-violence. It is simply that they do not know how to use it. If we had the courage for the battle of non-violence we would today be presenting to the world an entirely different picture of free India. But today we can show only a dismembered country where brother fights brother and no one can trust another. We are not able to attend to feeding and clothing the people and have nothing to offer those impoverished millions who can see God only in the form of bread and who have no interest in this unending violence.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 246-8

71. TALK WITH A VISITOR

[On or before *July 14, 1947*]¹

VISITOR : What about Russia? It is a big question at the moment.

GANDHIJI : It will remain so for some time.

Do you think Russia is a threat to world peace and the peace of India?

Any great power may be a threat.

Is the Communist Party very strong in India numerically or in terms of real support?

No.

Do you think the peasant may be ready to receive their message?

Not at the moment.

What about the relations between India and Pakistan? Do you think there will be difficulties or complications after independence?

There may be or there may not be.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 309

¹ The source places this in the second week of July.

72. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO ASAF ALI*

[After *July 14, 1947*]¹

Freedom has come but it leaves me cold. So far as I can see, I am a back number. I have come to the conclusion that our way was non-violent only superficially; our hearts were violent. It was enough to displace the foreign power. But the violence nursed within has broken out in a way least expected. Heaven knows where it will lead us.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 332

73. *LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN*

NEW DELHI,
July 15, 1947

DEAR NATESAN²,

Anna—Harihar Sharma—told me you were ill and bed-ridden. You have no business to be ill. Your work is not finished. Who is older—you or I ?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 2241

74. *LETTER TO KAJI*

NEW DELHI,
July 15, 1947

DEAR KAJI,

I have you full letter which is deeply interesting.

I can give no opinion. All I can say generally is that you should avoid parties within our own ranks.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

¹ According to the source this was written in the third week of July.

² (1873-1949); publisher; editor of the *Indian Review*

75. LETTER TO CHANDABHAI

NEW DELHI,
July 15, 1947

BHAI CHANDABHAI,

If you had given me instances of my negligence, it would have helped me. I am inquiring into what you have said. Don't give up your resolve.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

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

76. LETTER TO A STUDENT

July 15, 1947

Everything will be well with a people who are disciplined and who value integrity of character. The young should be taught this while they are students.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 335

77. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI¹

July 15, 1947

Right now it does not seem possible that I shall be able to go to Sevagram. It will be possible only when the watchword of 'do or die' has shown some result. If peace is restored in the country, the first part will have been fulfilled and I shall be able to go to Sevagram alive. Otherwise, well, the spirit is immortal. So if the second part of the resolve is fulfilled, my spirit will for ever be there. I am writing this under great pressure of work. Chi. Manudi is quite ill. But I have become more strict with her during the last four or five days and she is, therefore, taking care of her health and observing all the rules, and that is doing her good. I keep myself informed of the state of her

¹ Although the source does not mention the addressee it would seem from the contents that it was Jaisukhlal Gandhi.

health every hour. This is no burden. On the contrary, nursing is a hobby with me. If Chi. Manudi had fallen ill while with you there, that would certainly have weighed on my mind. Since she is with me, my mind is at perfect peace. She is under my own supervision and carries out all my suggestions. But I have to keep reminding her continually about medicines, food, fresh air, etc. If she learns to be careful about these things, she will never fall ill. There is no need to send her to you. She does not at all want to be away from me. Nor do I want it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 335-6

78. A LETTER

July 15, 1947

How can I today speak of tomorrow? Why should we, then, worry where I shall be and what I shall be doing next month? Why, we don't even know what is going to happen the very next moment. Rama might take me away even while I am writing this letter. Without, therefore, worrying about the future, we should only think how best to do the duty at hand. You should stay on there and finish the Course in *Nai Talim*. Only afterwards should you think about what to do next. Otherwise, it will be with you as it was with Sheikhchalli in the story : the *ghee* will be spilt before it reaches hoem. You will not be able to finish the course in *Nai Talim* and will be left nowhere. One must undertake a task only after careful thinking and, having undertaken it, one must cling to it till death. Nobody who weakens in this resolve can ever make progress.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 336

79. A LETTER

July 15, 1947

. . .¹ and I are convinced that we have been making one mistake after another. The partition was indeed an error, but the leaders (not I) felt that it was unavoidable. The partition of the army, however is a

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

terribl mistake we are making. Let God move us as He wills. How can we help if it is not ordained that India should have peace even now.

My health cannot be described as very good, but it is good enough. God will preserve it as long as He wishes to take service through me. Why need we worry?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 335

80. LETTER TO S. K. BELVALKAR

NEW DELHI,

July 15, 1947

BHAI BELVALKARJI¹,

I have your letter.

I am confident that you will have all success in what you are beginning with regard to the *Shanti Parva* on *Akhi-panchami*. I am also of the view that you should receive sufficient financial help in your venture.

Thank you for proposing to send me a copy of the *Bhishma Parva* when it is ready.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

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

81. A LETTER

July 15, 1947

You will have read my speech.² Perhaps you know that I am not happy with what is happening in the Working Committee and I cannot help saying what I feel. I therefore wanted to leave this place and go to Bihar or Noakhali. But I am Jawahar's slave. His love prevents me from going. I may have to go to Kashmir. Let us see what happens. I feel that we must do something in regard to the controls and the

¹ Sripad Krishna Belvalkar, Hon. Secretary, All India Oriental Conference, 1926-27, General Editor of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata*

² Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 14-7-1947.

general condition of the country. Only then shall we be able to win the confidence of the people.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 335

82. TALK WITH N. G. RANGA¹

NEW DELHI,
July 15, 1947

If there is enmity between Hindus and Muslims today the masses are not to blame. Opportunists are to blame. Those who have any energy should devote themselves to the uplift of the country without harbouring any prejudices. If there is one great fault in us it is that we cannot refrain from criticizing individuals in public and our public is not educated enough to analyse and judge a speaker. Everyone has virtues and vices. Today when swaraj is about to come, the handful of scholars that we have should make available to the masses whatever they have. Our leaders are almost all becoming old. The scholars should devote themselves to training of the younger generation so that they can carry on our heritage. Mere criticism is not going to help anyone.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 337

83. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The other day I spoke of the temples in Tamil Nadu and Malabar that had been thrown open to Harijan and I especially mentioned the Rameswaram temple. It is a huge temple and there is a lot of superstition concerning it. Some thought that the entry of Harijans would pollute the temple. I have received a letter today complaining that I had not mentioned the Tirupati temple in Andhra

¹President, All India Kisan Sabha and Andhra Provincial Congress Committee; Member, Congress Parliamentary at the Centre

Desh which is also a great and ancient temple. The correspondent asks me to rectify the omission and thus give satisfaction to the people of Andhra. I know the glory of this temple but I make no difference between Tamil Nadu and Andhra. Today the atmosphere is such that everyone wants separation.

Some friends from Bengal have been to see me. They say that with the division of Bengal Hindus in East Bengal are haunted by the fear that the Hindus of West Bengal will forget them. If that happens I shall be pained. It will be very bad if Hindus thus forget Hindus and Muslims forget Muslims. Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians all are Indians. Religion is a private matter. If I wish to worship God, what power on earth can stop me from doing so? But if Mussalmans, Parsis, Hindus and Christians all consider themselves separate, what is left of India? I admit that it was hardly necessary to divide Bengal. I have lived among Bengali Muslims. I have walked with them in Noakhali. I found only love in their hearts. Why should Hindus have harboured fear of Muslims? The madness that had seized them would not have lasted for ever. In my view no harm will come to the Hindus of East Bengal. But many things have happened which we did not want to happen. Bengal has been partitioned. And India and Pakistan are separate countries. But we should proceed forward from what has happened and later put it right. Hindus and Muslims of East and West Bengal have always lived together and speak the same language. If the Hindus of East Bengal treat the Muslims there as friends, would the Muslims still want to kill them? When not a single Hindu considers Muslims his enemies, all will be friends.

They also asked me if the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will be dissolved since it too has been divided into two. In my view the division of Bengal does not apply to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. It should continue in its present form. It is outside Government laws. If it divides itself, then I will say that West Bengal has broken faith. The structure of the Congress today is such that at the very bottom there are village Congress Committees, Mandal Congress Committees, District Congress Committees, then Provincial and at the very top the All-India Congress Committee. Thus there will be Congress Committees in East Bengal as well as in West Bengal. Both will then constitute the B.P.C.C. The Congress belongs to all, to Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others. It is not going to change its character in the days to come. The Bengali friends also wonder whether East Bengal has been so impoverished that it must

have even its ministers from West Bengal. But they should welcome this. For this will make for cohesion between East and West Bengal. East Bengal no doubt has an overwhelming majority of Muslims. But why should we assume that all Muslims are bad? So many Muslims were slaughtered in Bihar and yet I can say that the millions of Hindus in Bihar are not bad. It is wrong to condemn the whole community for the fault of a few individuals. It only goes to show that we ourselves are not clean, that we are cowards, that we have not the courage of non-violence, for the courage of non-violence is the courage to die, never the courage to kill. There are vast armies in the world but considering the population of the world, they are only a handful. But we have got into the way of never being able to see straight. Whenever there is some incident somewhere we at once ask for the army to be sent. In Noakhali, Bihar, the Punjab and the N.W.F.P., wherever there were riots there was only one demand : that the army be sent for their protection. Why should people who ought to be brave want this?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 249-51

84. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,

July 16, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I had a long talk with Panditji about Kashmir. He is firmly of opinion that I should go in any case, not minding it Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah or his deputy goes after my visit. He thinks, and I agree, that if now my visit is postponed, it will disappoint many persons in Kashmir. That I may not be allowed to see Sheikh Abdulla Saheb should not affect the Contemplated visit one way or the other. In the circumstances, I suggest that you should telegraph to the Maharaja Saheb that as my visit would not mean any speeches or public meetings, it should not cause any embarrassment to the State and that I should go to Kashmir at the earliest possible moment.

As I have said to you my suggestion is subject to your wish not to interfere with Panditji's wishes in the matter. If, for any reason, you wish otherwise, I would not go.

If I go, I would go as a private visitor. Hence I would not think of putting the Maharaja Saheb to any trouble on my account. Friends would make arrangements for my stay.

Finally, I should add that if, for any reason, I do not go to Kashmir, most probably Panditji would want to go for two or three days though he would prefer my going.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 273; also Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 352

85. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

I do not deserve the credit you give me. We have arrived as far as we have done through the co-operation of millions and the sacrifices of countless people. For the rest it is sheer ignorance to feel. 'I am doing this' like that of the dog who thought that it was carrying on its back the cart it walked under. In fact nothing happens without God's will.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 339-40

86. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

When a misfortune is impending, man's reason is first destroyed. That is why the Shastras say that at the hour of undoing reason becomes perverted. If there is one thing that has destroyed

¹ Lord Mountbatten, in his reply dated July 17, besides assuring Gandhiji of his help and co-operation, said : "I have received news that the Maharaja is sending his Prime Minister [Ramachandra] Kak to Delhi, early next week to join the discussions which I am arranging with the States Department. I feel it would be both courteous and wise if Pandit Nehru and you could have a talk with Pandit Kak before deciding on the precise date and details of your visit."

innumerable innocent and happy families in this manner it is described in a two-letter word : *satto*¹. It is time you turned your back on it. There is no happiness in this world like that of contentment. You can go to the Ashram and maintain yourself and your family by working there. The only condition is that every member of the family will have to work for eight hours daily and there will be no choice of work. May God grant you wisdom.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 340

87. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

There are differences between...² But I don't look upon such differences as a matter for serious concern. Truly speaking differences of opinion keep people alert. Honest differences of opinion do no harm whatever.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 340

88. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

It is true that, though we may have been efficient as satyagrahis, we are but novices as rulers. That is why I advise everybody to take advantage of the services of all those who have experience of administration, without harbouring prejudice against anyone, irrespective of whether or not the persons are supporters of the Congress. The only consideration should be whether the people's interest will be served.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 340

¹ Speculation

² Omission as in the source

89. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

I was much pained to see your letter written in English. If we have lost faith in our language, then I must say that we have also no faith in ourselves. All these are clear signs of our degradation. And, even in English, how many mistakes you make! Whenever I get letters written in bad English by persons whose mother tongue is Hindi or Urdu or Gujarati or Bengali Or Marathi or Tamil or Telugu, I feel that we are still slaves. All kinds of people come to see me, and if I don't know a visitor's language I can always have what he says translated.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 340

90. A LETTER

July 16, 1947

Now that you are becoming the manager of this institution and have asked for my blessings, I should like to say only this : the soul of an institution is its manager. May God grant you the strength to work in that spirit.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 340

91. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

July 16, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

I have your letter. I have the impression that I have already written to you something in reply to your criticism of my experiment.

I am doing nothing just now. There has been no change at all in my conviction up to now. On the contrary, it is deepening with the passage of time. That is, I believe that even if only one *brahmachari* of my conception comes into being, the world will be redeemed. But

the task is an extremely difficult one. Any progress in that direction will of course be a gain. On the other hand, there is no doubt that if the assumption is erroneous, much harm can come of it. Just now there is only one aspect of the question that presents itself to me. That is, that the difference of opinion between Kishorelal and myself on this issue pains me, for behind that difference lies great anguish of mind on Kishorelal's part. Were it not for that. I think the difference of opinion between us would not be so painful to me. I would advise you not to worry in the least about this issue as long as it is only at a theoretical stage.

I like you idea of going to East Africa for collecting funds.

There can of course be no doubt about the necessity of the laws being repealed. But I am afraid they will not be totally repealed. The fact that some of the workers are selfish is certainly a handicap, but it seems right to me that you should go on doing the best that you can in a spirit of detachment.

I think the changes with are taking place here will have an impact there. Let us see how things shape. The burden of work on me may or may not decrease, I don't worry about that. You also need not worry.

Prerhaps I may never be able to return to Sevagram. It seems likely that I shall have to stay on in these parts, that is, in Bihar and Noakhali.

I have had a letter from Kaji.¹ He has complained against Dadoo and others. The letter is a long one. However, it has produced no effect on me, for have we not had similar experiences in the past ?

I was indeed very happy to learn about your health and I wish you all success. I would even welcome your writing in detail on the subject. As a result of it you may even succeed where I failed and live up to a hundred and twenty-five years. For that, however, you should remember that diet is not the only thing. The chief thing is the mind. Food, of course, has an effect on the mind.

It is now 5 a. m. I must, therefore, get ready.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS]

Enclosed is a copy of my letter to S. I am sending it to be dispatched to you in case they have not sent one to you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5008

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Kaji", 15-7-1947.

92. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The *bhajan* that was sung today has been known to me ever since I was a boy just entering high school. It appeared as a prayer in a little book for children called *Bal Mitra*. It is a good and sweet *bhajan* and it teaches the truth that we should not be too concerned with the body. The body is there today and will be gone tomorrow. It will either be burnt up and become ashes or go to the grave and become mixed with the soil. If it is cast into water it will be eaten up by marine life. In the end it is all the same. What does not sound so good in the *bhajan* is the words ‘‘after me the deluge’’. True it has been composed by Kabir, but what of it? I do not like it. In my humble opinion it shows selfishness. Why should the deluge overtake the world after I am dead? In the first place we do not really die. For the self is immortal. As for the world it is ever changing. It is God’s play. But we do not go wholly by what the *bhajan* says. If we did, where was the need of a Constituent Assembly? Where was the need of all the laws that our leaders are busy enacting. If they had all taken up the attitude of ‘‘after me the deluge’’, no one would have been doing anything for anyone. This sentiment, therefore, is an expression of extreme selfishness.

Some newspapermen had been to see me. In the course of the talk Dravidastan was mentioned. Dravidastan comprises the Southern part of India beyond the Vindhyas. The languages spoken are Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. I have acquainted myself a little bit with each of these languages and I can say that they are all rooted in Sanskrit. If you hear Telugu spoken you will find that it is full of Sanskrit words. Tamil too has Sanskrit words in abundance. Only they have been given Dravidian dress. Malayalam too resembles Sanskrit. And the same is true of Kannada. I do not treat Dravidastan as something apart from India. The British have made us all one. Everyone living between Kashmir and Kanaya-kumari is an Indian. To make distinctions such as Aryans or non-Aryans or the Aryavrata and Dravidastan is foolish. I am quite certain about this.

That leads to the question of language. We have here two

languages, Hindi and Urdu, which were developed in India by Indians. Their grammar is the same. I have combined these two to form Hindustani. This is spoken by many crores of people. It is the common language of Hindus and Muslims. If you spoke Sanskritized Hindi or Urdu laden with Arabic and Persian expressions such as Prof. Abdul Bari spoke, very few people would understand you. Does it then mean that we are to ignore the four languages of Dravidasthan? That is not what I have in mind. All I want is that each province should use its own language for internal purposes but must learn Hindustani as the national language. All provinces have their own languages. Oriya, Bengali, Assamese, Sindhi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, they are all distinct from Hindustani. Should we rather learn these languages or accept English as our national language? If I were to speak to you in English, very few of you would be able to understand me. We can only have a very meagre smattering of English even if we work hard at it for eight or 10 years. It is enough to drive the country mad. English therefore cannot be our national language. It can be the language of international communication. It can be the language of commerce, though even in this capacity it has not found universal acceptance so far. The national language of India can be no other than Hindustani. While provincial languages must remain, the language spoken by the largest number of people is Hindustani. I have been associated with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. The kind of language used there is not easy to understand nor is very pure Urdu easily understandable. The language of the masses is Hindustani. We can create in it as much literature as we need. It is the duty of the people of Dravidasthan to learn Hindustani alongside their own languages. If they could learn Hindustani in both Devangari and Persian scripts it would be even better. Thus they should be able to have a knowledge of both the languages. But if they want to learn just enough Hindustani to make themselves understood they can learn it in their own respective scripts. In Madras the Hindustani Prachar Sabha is engaged in the work of teaching people Hindustani through their own script.

He freely admitted that if it was wrong for the Southerners not to learn Hindustani, it was equally wrong for the Northerners not to learn one or more of the Southern languages which had rich literature. He appealed to members from the South not to ask for an English speech in an Indian audience. They would then soon pick up Hindustani. Let them remember that India could exist as a free country only if it accepted moral government. Congress as a fighting machine against bondage was held together by its moral force.¹

¹ This paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*.

It is a misfortune indeed that while we have hardly disposed of one question, with Pakistan formed, we are faced with the demand for Dravidastan. If this tendency persists, where will India be? What can be more paradoxical than that, while as a slave country we remained united, we should begin to break up as soon as freedom is gained ?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 215-4; and *The Hindustan Times*, 17-7-1947

93. TALK TO I. N. A. MEN

July 16, 1947

If India wants to survive in a world of atom bombs, she must be disciplined and united first, and untouchability and caste distinctions should go. I have never heard or seen that an army helps in generating such a social and moral climate.¹ The army formed under the leadership of Netaji was not formed to promote these virtues, and if it showed unity and discipline it was because it had not other alternative. We have so many of those soldiers in India. Why did not they show their worth? We would not have witnessed two world wars which we did if there were any truth in the claim people make about the virtues of military training. And nobody can tell when a third world war may flare up. Both violence and non-violence have equal need for discipline and unity. Let me tell you that a peaceful and non-violent victory is far superior to a violent victory. There is not the least doubt about it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 343

94. FRAGMENT OF LETTER OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

July 17, 1947

We are going in for British extravagance which the country cannot afford.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 641

¹ They had argued that it was necessary to have an army because an army fostered unite and discipline among the people.

95. LETTER TO PYARELAL

July 17, 1947

CHI PYA.,

I indeed feel delighted to read about your work¹ and I long to return there. The Kashmir problem² is threatening to become serious. After going to Kashmir, if I do go, I intend to return there visiting Bihar on the way. I want to stay with you. But I do not know what God will prompt me to do.

If you have no workers with you, cannot you do with Kanu and others? I discussed your schemes with Satis Babu.

You seem to be on your feet for long hours till late in the evening. I must confess that I would not have had such courage. I am sure you can speak Bengali well enough by now.

If you send some toffee again, I shall have a look at it and may even be able to sell it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, between pp. 496 and 497

96. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

July 17, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I have neglected writing to you thinking that Manudi has been doing so. I am writing today, for Manu's health is not improving and I observe that she is not taking sufficient care. She seems to be having a low fever and cannot digest what she eats. Her weight has gone down. I have asked her to remain in bed and take complete rest from today. Since the day before yesterday, she has been under the treatment of Sushilabehn, who is here. There is no cause for worry.

¹ The addressee was doing relief work in Bhatialpur village in Bengal. He was one of the few who had continued the work in Noakhali after Gandhiji's departure in the first week of March.

² The reference is to the threat of independence held out by the State.

Abha has fallen ill and has, therefore, come here.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

97. A LETTER

July 17, 1947

“When the Lord of Janaki is your protector, who can harm you?” Seek refuge in him and nobody will be able to harm you.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 344

98. A LETTER

July 17, 1947

My advice is that constructive workers should not take part in politics. If they take interest in both, they will be able to do justice to neither.

You say that the Congress has become weak. I also say that. Why, Jawaharlal and Kripalani themselves say the same thing. But saying it will not make the Congress strong. It is not we ourselves who have made it weak? A little introspection would show us that we have enough strength instantly to overcome the weakness. The weakness is only due to decrease in the spirit of selflessness. However, there is no other institution in the country which has the stature and the spirit of self-sacrifice of the Congress.

If the importance of Indian languages is not recognized in the field of education, the national spirit will not be awakened. And is there a greater humiliation for the country than that? Similarly, the importance of khadi also should be recognized. If I had my way, I would give to the Government employees no uniform not made of khadi. All the cloth used in Government offices also would be khadi. The greater the progress we can make in this sphere the greater will be our gain.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 344-5

99. LETTER TO SWAMI BHASKARANANDA

NEW DELHI,
July 17, 1947

SWAMIJI,

I have your letter. I have read the statement you gave me yesterday. I do not like it although I don't mind your complaint against me.

The demands of the Akhil Bharat Dharma Sangh are not just. It would be useless to enter into a discussion. I cannot accept the draft you have sent me. But if Goswami will do me the favour, I shall certainly be happy to meet him.¹ My opinion is that dharma cannot be saved by following his path.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

BHASKARANANDA

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

100. LETTER TO MOHAMMED HUSAIN KHAN

HARIJAN COLONY,
July 17, 1947

BHAI SAHEB,

I have your letter. What need for me to argue? Enclosed is a copy of the Prime Minister's letter. In view of the letter I can only say that you may file a suit against him. I cannot pass a judgment. I have done whatever I could.

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

¹ See also "Letter to Swami Karapatri".

101. DISCUSSION WITH VISITORS

NEW DELHI,

July 17, 1947

That is what you think.¹ I tell you that I can show you the miracle today if Hindus maintain peace and show courage. But with what face can I tell the League not to indulge in atrocities? You say that if I give you the lead you will follow me. Have you ever thought against whom and to whom I can give the lead? The British have not partitioned the country. It has been done with the consent of the Mulsim League and the Congress. Isn't that so? The leaders had no other alternative. They thought it was better to partition the country so that both the parts could live happily and peacefully rather than let the whole country go to pieces. About this I did hold a different view. My view was that no one could take an inch of land by resorting to violence and murder. Let the whole country be reduced to ashes. They could take the whole country by friendly negotiations and peaceful methods. But though non-violence is a creed with me, it is not so with the Congress. There is only one other person in the country who has accepted non-violence as a creed and he is Badshah Khan. It is true that I had believed that our satyagraha struggles were based on non-violence. Only lately I realized that it was not true. I admit my mistake. I first started the satyagraha struggle in Sought Africa. At one of the meetings Mr. Hosken² said that Gandhi was fighting a weak man's battle. I strongly contradicted him and produly said that what was needed for satyagraha was spiritual strength and not physical strength, and that we were fighting with soul-force. As you know we were quite successful in that struggle. Immediately after that I came away to India. I employed the same method here. At the time I did believe that people were fighting with genuine spiritual strength. I would not have launched the struggle if I had then realized that it was only "passive resistance". But God had willed to use me for this mission and so he blurred my vision. And because our fight was not one of non-violence we see the result today. There is arson,

¹ The visitors, who were from the Punjab, had told Gandhiji that his belief that he was a spent bullet or that the country was not behind him was not true.

² William Hosken, who was the leader of a committee of European sympathizers of the Indian cause during Gandhiji's South African struggle

murder, loot and chaos all around.

Non-violence and weakness are contradictory terms. I have been in public life for the last sixty years and I have never felt so much despair as I do now. I learnt from my childhood not to admit such a thing as failure. Nevertheless today I am struggling against this all-pervading darkness to find some light somewhere. Bear in mind that India will be wiped out from the face of the earth if she rejects the path of non-violence. Nay, the whole world may be on the way to perdition. Quite soon we shall be getting our freedom from the British. But if now we again lose that freedom, the word itself will be forgotten and it is quite possible that a military regime will take over. This is the reason for the despair that has taken hold of my heart. How wonderful is non-violence of the brave! I am trying day and night to cultivate it. It will be enough if I can cultivate the non-violence of the brave as far as I am concerned. I pray to God that He may give me that strength.

I say to you that if someone comes to kill you, do not be afraid and do not move from your place but let him kill you. I shall be content if, when someone comes to kill me, I can remain composed, let myself be killed and pray to God that He may grant good sense to the killer—as these girls sing every day. I had said in the Asian Conference which was held here about four months ago that the man who made the atom bomb would have to come to India to study non-violence and the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world. Let us see when my hope materializes.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 345-7

102. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 17, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

We learn from newspapers¹ that the Indians in South Africa are being subjected to *goondaism*. They are being killed. I was in South Africa for twenty years and I know how Indians are treated in that country. There is a large number of Muslims there but they all call themselves Indians. May God give us all the sense at least to call ourselves Indians when we are in a foreign country.

Recently Sarup² had been to the United Nations along with Justice Chagla and other to present before the world body the case of the South African Indians. Since then harassment of Indian in South Africa has taken a new form. It is not the law that has been unleashed against them but *goondaism*. If this goes on, how will the handful of Indians be able to live there? Once I marched into the Transvaal with two thousand people. Not a single Boer so much as touched us. Some of them even gave us water to drink. We have plenty of water here. But it is not in such abundance there. People collect water when it rains and keep it stored in tanks. The Boers were friendly and we went wherever we wanted. But I see a different picture today. Now that we have two Governments here, I shall ask Mr. Jinnah and Jawaharlal to send a joint telegram to Smuts³. Mr. Smuts considers me his friend. As a friend I must entreat him to tell the Whites not to do physical violence to even one single Indian. And if he cannot make himself obeyed, he must resign. Lord Mountbatten too should not helplessly watch. He is an Admiral of the Fleet and is of Royal family. Philip Mountbatten, who is going to marry Princess Elizabeth, is like a son to him. Besides, up to the 15th of August he will be the Viceroy and afterwards the Governor-General. He should therefore make use of

¹ According to *The Hindustan Times*, 18-7-1947, the latest campaign against Indians in South Africa was the boycott of India traders by the European community with threats of violence.

² Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who headed the Indian delegation to U. N. O. during October-December, 1946.

³ Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950); Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, 1919-24 and 1938-48

these advantages and tell Smuth that India is now a Dominion even as South Africa is, that it is now a member of the vast family that is the British Commonwealth and that the ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa should forthwith stop.

It has been said that Dominion Status is even better than full independence. But till I have tasted this fruit I cannot say whether it is nectar or poison. Maybe it is nectar. But let us first taste it.

My advice to South African Indians is that they should live there as good citizens. Those of them who are wealthy should not neglect their Muslim brethren who are like untouchables there.

I had been asked, now that temples in Tamil Nad and Andhra have been opened to Harijans, what is the situation with regard to temples in the U. P.? There are the temples in Hardwar for instance. Can Harijans visit these temples? In Travancore this was achieved long ago. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, the State's Diwan, who at the moment is perhaps a little angry with us, had persuaded the Maharaja to abolish untouchability by law. In the U. P., besides Hardwar there is Kashi. Can Harijans visit the temples there? If the Harijans cannot visit those temples, then I shall consider those temples impure. All the religions of the world are today faced with a severe test. Hinduisms should in not 99 per cent but 100 per cent marks.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 255-7

103. DISCUSSION WITH SIKH VISITORS

NEW DELHI,

[On or before *July 18, 1947*]¹

VISITORS : It is not good that you still trust the nationalist Muslims. The Leaguers are not at all satisfied with the Pakistan they have got. They want Ajmer, Agra, Delhi and Aligarh. Only if you saw them yourself could you have an idea of the atrocities perpetrated by them. Still you blame the Hindus alone.

GANDHIJI360 : Let me take your last point first. I grant that Hindus there are being very cruelly treated. But to take revenge here for this increases my shame. Why do you not face them there even with arms and defend yourselves? What do you gain by taking an eye for an eye?

¹ In *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi* this appears among the items of July 20. However, in *Harijan*, Sushila Nayyar reported this under the date-line July 18.

Now about your misgivings about the nationalist Muslims. It is not becoming for us to distrust them. I will give you my own example. My eldest son Harilal often comes here. So many times he has given me his word that he will give up bad company and his many vices. And not once has he kept his word. But even so if he again comes to me today and promises that he will reform himself, how can I get angry with him? I will encourage him to keep his word. Only then is there hope of his reforming. In the same way we must trust the Muslim of India when they say that they will be loyal to India. But at the same time we should remain fully vigilant.

The world cannot function without trust. Isn't there a saying that faith makes the ships move? You have seen how much harm the British have done to India. I must confess the even now I have to be vigilant as far as they are concerned. And yet we would not have made so much progress if we had not trusted Lord Mountbatten.¹

We must however be prepared to fight the danger.

The real preparation lies in purging ourselves of our inherent weakness, selfishness and disunity.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 366-7; also *Harijan*, 27-7-1947

104. LETTER TO LADY MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
July 18, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

So you are celebrating the silver jubilee of your wedding amid a shower of congratulations and good wishes. Let me add mine to them and hope that your joint career here will blossom into citizenship of the world.

I hope your daughter is fully restored.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

LADY MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

From a photostat : G.N. 10831; also *Life of the Countess Mountbatten of Burma*, p. 131

¹ What follows is from *Harijan*.

105. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

NEW DELHI,
July 18, 1947

CHI. AMRITALAL,

I have just received your note about your having entered the 42 year. All public workers must now aspire to live up to a hundred and twenty-five years and conduct themselves accordingly. Do so and go on rendering service for many many years.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 10814

106. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR, NEW DELHI,
July 18, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I enclose Akbar's¹ letter. I find it quite reasonable. He has written to you also. Let me know what you think about it. If you do not have the time, forget about it. I will deal with the matter as best I can.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1, AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 356

¹ Akbarbhai Chawda, an Ashram inmate at Sevagram. He had written about the Jagirdari system in Sanoli.

107. LETTER TO MANIBEHAN PATEL

July 18, 1947

CHI, MANI,

Read the accompanying letter.¹ Show it to Sardar if you like. Drop the matter if he has no time. Let events take their own course.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Return Akbar's letter.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4 : Manibehn Patelne, p. 139

108. A LETTER

July 18, 1947

Is not politics too a part of dharma! It will have some effect on the people only if it is carried on with a sense of dharma Politics also requires purity of conduct.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 350

109. A LETTER

July 18, 1947

What other cause can there be for my despair? When one in disappointed in one's hopes, one should understand that God wishes to teach one some lesson. What is happening today has, therefore, woken me up, and I intend to search out and uncover whatever weakness may be lurking in me. How can we understand all that God does?

The reluctance to accept other people's services is, to my mind, a form of pride. True, it is a sin to exact service from other people

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

when we are in no real need of it, ourselves lolling the while in luxurious beds. But when we are too ill to attend to our needs, it becomes our duty to accept service from others, for the body is not our property but belongs to God. And there is nothing in the world which cannot be useful in some way or other.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 350-1

110. A LETTER

July 18, 1947

It is far better bravely to commit suicide than to yield out of fear and live. I see no violence in such suicide. There is violence in suppressing oneself and living in fear. Physically, suicide may be violence, but it is not so from a higher point of view. You will be able to see from this what sort of ahimsa it is that I cherish.

Repeating God's name is itself a form of prayer. If we practise any form of prayer in the right spirit, we shall automatically acquire control over our minds.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 351

111. A LETTER

July 18, 1947

You should obtain Chimanlal's permission. He is the Manager of the Ashram. I cannot interfere in the matter because I am not the Secretary of the Ashram.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 351

112. A LETTER

July 18, 1947

I very much like all the vows you intend to take. But do nothing merely because I advise it or just to please me. There is no sin as bad as self-deception.

We are falling lower and lower each day. Our depravity has

reached such a point that reports of atrocities committed on women have become a common thing. I tremble at this. God will show the path. Just now I have but one prayer:

‘Ishvar’ and ‘Allah’ are Thine names;

To all, O Lord, good sense give.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 351

113. LETTER TO ATMARAM

NEW DELHI,

July 18, 1947

CHI. ATMARAM,

It seems that although you believe in non-violence, you keep committing lapses, putting your dharma to shame and thereby harming your work. I gather this from Bhai Balwantrai's talk. You should observe the jail rules if you court arrest. Outside you should behave courteously and should not look upon anyone as your enemy, and if you are accused of something and a lawyer offers to help in the normal course without your begging him, you may accept his help. These are all signs of non-violence. Know the opposite to be violence.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

114. TALK WITH CHINESE COUPLE

NEW DELHI,

July 18, 1947

There is no reason to feel unhappy.¹ On the contrary I congratulate you that even though you hold such a high office you are not infatuated with this language. Besides, to me also English is a foreign language. So both of us are in the same plight.

If America does not put her affluence to good use, its very

¹ The husband had said that his wife was unhappy as she did not know English and could talk to Gandhiji only through an interpreter.

affluence will ruin it. If America tries to win friendship of other countries with the help of her money, and if China, Japan, Iran, India, Pakistan or any other country gets involved with her even in a small degree, both will come to grief. That is why I have been daily telling Rajendra Babu that import of foodgrains is the worst kind of slavery. There is nothing more degrading for a country than to beg from others when it cannot meet its requirements.

It is a practical principle that if you want to be friends with someone and if you want the friendship to endure, you should not seek economic aid from them. So, however rich America may be we shall only become crippled if we seek economic aid from her.

I am of the firm opinion that there is absolutely no need of machines either in India or in the rest of Asia. I have no use for machines which deprive men of employment and keep them starved and naked, no matter how much they are the fashion today and highly admired and how effective they may be in changing cities into paradises. I would certainly not feel sorry if there was an accident and all the machines were destroyed.¹

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 353-4

115. MESSAGE TO CHINESE WOMEN

NEW DELHI,

July 18, 1947

If only the women of the world would come together they could display such heroic non-violence as to kick away the atom bomb like a mere ball. Women have been so gifted by God. If an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered, what a celebration it would occasion. Similarly women's marvellous power is lying dormant. If the women of Asia wake up, they will dazzle the world. My experiment in non-violence would be instantly successful if I could secure women's help.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 354

¹ Before leaving, the couple requested Gandhiji for a message; *vide* the following item.

116. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

NEW DELHI,

July 18, 1947

Gandhiji began his speech by drawing attention to the *bhajan* of the evening and said that he did not know whether it was Mira's. The tune was different from Mirabai's ordinary tune. The sentiment was undoubtedly hers. It said God alone could extricate man from difficulties. Today India was passing through difficulties. Was she to look to man or God to deliver the country? If they believed in the *bhajan*, they were to look to God and none else and they would be perfectly safe.

The *bhajan* just sung is very much to the point, for we are today in great distress. We have no food to eat, no cloth to cover ourselves with. To whom shall we go for help? To Jawaharlal Nehru? Or Sardar Patel? For they have today become the rulers. The Viceroy has given up or is about to give up power. He will now be the Governor-General because we have chosen him to be so. Formerly important officials used to be appointed from London. But now the Indian Independence Bill has been passed and even the consent of the King has been secured for it.

According to the Bill, the Governor-General would be appointed by them, the people of India, and not imposed on India as hitherto. Therefore Lord Mountbatten would be Governor-General of India. By their appointment precisely as a *chaprasi* would be. This was not said in disparagement. It was a compliment paid to Lord Mountbatten that he had been elected to be Indian Union's servant deriving his appointment from them. It was necessary to say this in order to dispel the suspicion that still lingered in many minds.

All power therefore is now in the hands of our people. But this *bhajan* says that when we are in distress we do not go to anyone else, we go to God. He alone can help us. If we go about our affairs with God in our hearts, our affairs will prosper, otherwise not. He is the ruler of the world and our good lies in surrendering ourselves to Him.

There is a newspaper called *The Dawn*, published from Delhi. Every day it is full of abuse. I too have my share of it. I generally laugh it away. But today the editor has published an open letter addressed to me. It is well phrased. He says I have been shouting that Mr. Jinnah is soon going to be put to the test and that I should stop

¹ The first, the third and the last two paragraphs are from *The Hindustan Times*.

my shouting.

May I ask the editor why the Hindus are running away in fear and despair from Karachi which is going to be the capital of Pakistan? Why are the Hindus frightened? The Sind Hindus are first-class businessmen. Why are they running away to Bombay, Madras and other places? It will not be they who will be the losers but Sind. For they will make money for themselves wherever they go. One finds Sindhis in South America. There is hardly any place in the world where Sindhis are not found. In South Africa they were making big money and they gave of it liberally to the poor. They have one vice, viz., drinking. They do not seem to be able to give it up.

The Dawn asks why I address myself only to Mr. Jinnah and the other League leaders. What is happening in the U.P. which is my province? But Sind too is my province. The whole of India including Pakistan is my province. I consider myself a citizen of Pakistan but not because I want to claim any citizenship rights. I seek no office. All I want is just enough to eat, which God gives me. I know nothing about the U.P. Besides, I have not blamed anyone. The editor of *The Dawn* is a big man. If he thinks that what I say is not right, why does he bother? There are so many like me who go about saying what they want. But I had a talk with Pantji about the U.P. He told me that so far as he can he tries to protect the Muslims, but that the Government cannot reach everywhere because the Muslim Leaguers are everywhere hurling abuses at the Hindus and provoking them. Occasionally Hindus too lose their temper. Pantiji admitted that what the Hindus did at Garhmukteshwar was not right. According to newspaper reports even the League leaders of the U.P. have praised the Work of the Pant Ministry.

I should like to remind the *Dawn* editor that even if what he says is right and even if what Pantji says is not the gospel truth, there is no reason why for one Muslim throat cut in the U.P. ten Hindus throats should be cut in Sind or the Punjab. I want to live to see the day when this communal madness is forgotten. Whatever be our religion we should be Indians in action. Only then shall we be able to safeguard our freedom.

If the *Dawn* editor truly wants to serve Islam, I shall tell him that this is not the way of Islam. As for saying things to Mr. Jinnah I have been saying what I like even to Lord Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru. If Jawaharlal's words and actions differ, I shall shun him even

though he is a pandit. But I must advise the *Dawn* editor that he should flush the poison out of his pen. National newspapers contain many things that are good and many things that are bad. If we can agree and stop publishing news of mutual strife I shall consider that we have achieved something.

Gandhiji said he had a suggestion to make to *The Dawn* and all the newspapers, whatever their hue, they should avoid all exaggeration. In order to give effect to the suggestion, they should appoint a joint board to which all reports about communal trouble would be submitted and even passed on the responsible Ministers and, when necessary, given publicity.

His suggestion could find favour only if the editors realized their duty to the public and were anxious that a peremptory stop should be put to all communalism. Division having become a settled fact, it was surely time that the country was allowed to take up the task of feeding and clothing the ill-fed and ill-clad millions. The editors had a weighty part to play in the noble task. To foment trouble was ignoble.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 257-60, and *The Hindustan Times*, 19-7-1947

117. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
July 19, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I sent your kind letter of yesterday¹ to Pandit Nehru and he at once wrote saying that regard being had to your advice, my going to Kashmir should be postponed till after Pandit Kak's arrival in New Delhi. So I shall await Pandit Kak's arrival and further developments.

Your sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 274-5

¹ Actually of July 17; vide footnote 1, "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 16-7-1947.

118. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

I was pained by the facts narrated in your letter. I also can find no answer to the question why Congress workers are in such a rush to get into Government service. It would seem it is just selfishness which has blinded everybody.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 356-7

119. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

The money at the disposal of our institution is public money and any institution maintained with public funds must pay the utmost attention to economy. But one does not see this being done and the institution constantly finds itself short of funds.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 357

120. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

It is time people intending to take vows gave careful thought to the matter before doing so. But there should be no difficulty in giving up something that is repugnant to our way of life.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 357

121. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

Why should you not accept responsibility? Are you afraid of it? Then you have not fully learnt the lesson of ahimsa. I suggest that you accept the responsibility which has come to you and acquit yourself well of it. I am sure you understand that at times it becomes

one's duty to accept a responsibility. Take care of your health. Chi. Manu is very run down these days. If only she would give me a little help, I would soon restore her to health. She should remain in bed. But when I insist on her doing so, she cries and feels unhappy and makes her condition worse. Though I am like a mother to her I cannot explain to her the meaning of dharma. That is why she is ill. This is an instance of my crying in the wilderness. I am working at high pressure. On top of it there is a meeting of the Working committee today. God know what will happen there. Maybe I shall have to go to Kashmir.

I need not write more to you. You do not like my offering my good wishes to . . .¹ and expressing the hope that Pakistan will really become a holy land. But I do not care overmuch what other people like or do not like. I follow the dictates of my inner voice. But that is by the way.

I am a friend of Pakistan, too. It makes no difference to me if they don't regard me as their friend. Whatever, therefore, I say to them as a true friend is only for their good.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 357

122. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

I have read your letter twice, and I must say that I do not like it much. We should be generous to others. What right have we to make such a comparison? Making such comparisons between individuals demeans us. What is more, I smell envy in it. If we compare ourselves with other through envy, we ourselves shall be ruined. We should be happy to see somebody doing better than we. In the eyes of.. of course, all are equal; you are not inferior to her or she superior to you.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 357-8

¹ Omission as in the source

123. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

I was glad to have...’s frank confession. He who has such frankness will never be unhappy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 358

124. A LETTER

July 19, 1947

Anybody who wants to strive for great things must have infinite patience.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 358

125. LETTER TO SWAMI KARAPATRI

NEW DELHI,

July 19, 1947

SHRI GOSWAMIJI²,

Swami Bhaskaranandji has talked to me about you. If you can kindly come over here next Tuesday or Wednesday, we can talk about the protection of dharma..³ I shall await your reply.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

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

¹ Omission as in the source

² A religious leader

³ *Vide* “Letter to Swami Karapatri”, 24-7-1947.

126. LETTER TO SWAMI BHASKARANANDA

NEW DELHI,
July 19, 1947

SWAMI SHRI BHASKARANANDJI,

Your letter. Why do you write in English?

A letter for Goswamiji¹ is enclosed herewith. Kindly forward it to him and oblige.

I have not been able to understand your point in the third paragraph.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

127. INTERVIEW TO NAGA LEADERS²

July 19, 1947

GANDHIJI: Why not now? Why wait for August 15? I was independent when the whole of India was under the British heel. You can be independent and if you have non-violence in common with me, no one can deprive you of independence.

NAGA LEADERS: Government said that if we become independent military sanctions will be applied against us.

The Government is wrong. I will come to Kohima and ask them to shoot me before they shoot one Naga.

The trouble will not be started by us. It may be started in spite of us.

You have opened a very large subject. Independence, yes. But if you say you will be independent of the whole world, you cannot do it. I am independent in my own home. If I become independent of Delhi, I would be crushed to atoms. I have not stored food. I have to get it from Delhi. I have not stored water here; vegetables I have to get. As I can see, you are all slaves. I am not. From where do you get your

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² In the source, the author explains that these were “‘excerpts from the record of Pyarelal Nayyar’”. The delegation was headed by Phizo. The leaders told Gandhiji that they would declare themselves independent on August 15, 1947.

cloth?

It is foreign cloth.

Then you are slaves of foreigners. Will you go naked if the foreigners do not give you cloth? What of your food?

We grow enough.

You cannot be in complete isolation.

We do not talk of isolation.

Then no army will deprive you of your freedom. Those days are gone.

We will be friends with all.

Then you are safe so far as India is concerned. India has shed blood for her own freedom. Is she going to deprive others of their freedom? Personally, I believe you all belong to me, to India. But if you say you don't no one can force you.

Is there any word for the Nagas?

If I come there I will teach you the art of spinning and weaving. You grow cotton and yet you import cloth. Learn all the handicrafts. That's the way to peaceful independence. If you use rifles and guns and tanks, it is a foolish thing.

No, we certainly shall not do that.

Peace in Nagaland, Eight Year Story: 1964-72, pp. 83-4 and 224-5

128. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

There was a meeting of the Working Committee here but there is nothing to report that may be of interest to you. I should like to draw your attention to a disturbing phenomenon and that is that everyone in the Congress wants to climb the ladder by using his connection with the Congress. It is something very dirty. Had Congressmen been only a handful and they had cherished such a desire one could have understood it, but the Congress has many crores of people in it and if they all harbour ambitions of advancement the Congress rule will be killed. There are only two kinds of people who must have jobs: those who have no other recourse left and those who want to serve without

any thought of self-interest. Since the Congress now holds the reins of administration in its hands, it now commands huge revenues and the spending of the revenues. If Congressmen should entertain the feeling that a portion of all the money that is spent should go to them and if the tax-payers get it into their heads that they no longer need pay taxes, it won't do at all. It will mean that we have forgotten our duty and taken to unrighteous ways.

I am being flooded with telegrams. I cannot say I am the only one to receive telegrams. Those who are in the seats of power, I am sure, must be receiving many more telegrams., Some say cow-slaughter must be stopped, particularly cows which provide us milk and draught cattle should be saved. Perhaps the friends sending the wires do not know that even when I was in South Africa I was a devotee of the cow. And if we are devoted to the cow we have got to protect her. Unfortunately those who ought to be saviours of the cow have become devourers of the cow. People send me wires expecting me to persuade Jawaharlal and the Sardar to enact laws to protect the cow. But I will not do so. I will ask these devotees of the cow not to waste their money on telegrams. Let them spend that money on the cow. If they cannot themselves do so let them send the money to me. I must say that it is we who are responsible for cow-slaughter. We give the cows so little to eat and make the bullocks carry such heavy loads that they become like skeletons. We use the goad to make the bullocks go faster. What right have such people to demand the cow-slaughter be stopped? After all most cows are owned by the Hindus. Why do they sell them to slaughter-houses? No Hindu will think of buying a cow with a low milk yield. Goshala people might well buy one for they have money received from donations. The others go to slaughter-houses. I have never seen anywhere in the world such enfeebled cattle as in India. In the name of dharma we are practising *adharma*. No law that Jawaharlal Nehru or Sardar can enact will stop cow-slaughter. There were laws even during the war, for milk was in demand. Even then milch cows were slaughtered and this will be the case there too. This will be the case in Pakistan.

I have been asked some questions. Here is one: "One understands that the national flag that has been proposed will have a little Union Jack in a corner. If that is so, we shall tear up such a flag and, if need be, sacrifice our lives."

ANSWER: But what is wrong with having the Union Jack in a

corner of our flag? If harm has been done to us by the British it has not been done by their flag and we must also take note of the virtues of the British. They are voluntarily withdrawing from India, leaving power in our hands. A drastic bill which virtually liquidates the Empire did not take even a week to pass in Parliament. Time was when even very unimportant bills took a year and more to be passed. Whether they have been honest in framing the bill only experience will show. We are having Lord Mountbatten as our chief gate-keeper. So long he has been the servant of the British king. Now he is to be our servant. If while we employed him as our servant we also had the Union Jack in a corner of our flag, there would be no betrayal of India in this.

This is my opinion. But I understand that the report is not true. It pains me that the Congress leaders could not show this generosity. We would have thereby shown our friendship for the British. If I had the power that I once had I would have taken the people to task for it. After all, why should we give up our humanity.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 260-3

129. TRUE ISLAM

A Muslim correspondent sends a letter which is given below¹ barring personal references:

Islam is a universal religion and its great message is to strive and know the Truth... I would request you kindly to avoid bringing in the name of Islam when you refer to the actions of the Muslims, as the two are today different.

Would that this Islam might be exhibited in deeds under Pakistan and the correspondent's taunt dispelled!

NEW DELHI, July 20, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

¹ Only extracts are reproduced here.

130. MESSAGE FOR CHARKHA JAYANTI

NEW DELHI,
July 20, 1947

One age of khadi has ended. Khadi has probably been instrumental in doing one thing for the poor. What now remains to be shown is how the poor can become self-reliant, how khadi can become an embodiment of non-violence. That is the real task. We have to show dedication to it.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Khadi Jagat, p. 533

131. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

July 20, 1947

If you learn what you are doing not mechanically but with intelligent attention, it will in time come to you without effort.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 365

132. A LETTER

July 20, 1947

Haven't we been proved worse even than lifeless matter! What beautiful fragrance sandalwood emits when rubbed! A joss-stick burns up, but leaves behind an aroma of holiness in the air. If only we could learn from such examples.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 365-6

133. A LETTER

July 20, 1947

Every year young men and women get married. But marriage, as has been said, means stepping into a nobler state. But how many make this saying meaningful in their conduct? I hope that you two will do so.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 366

134. A LETTER

July 20, 1947

I am indeed impatient to go to Bihar, but a visit to Kashmir has also been mooted. The matter will be decided by the end of the month. The Kashmir visit will be only for two days. Doctors have suggested that I should not take Manu with me for those two days, for her health will not be able to bear the strain of the journey. But I believe that, even if it be only for two days, the Kashmir climate is bound to benefit her. Besides, even in her sleep she is often heard muttering, beseeching me not to leave her behind...¹ How then can I leave her here and go alone? Another suggestion also has been made, namely, that I should take her to Kashmir and leave her there with Begum Sheikh Abdulla. A month's rest there, together with the climate of Kashmir, will benefit her. I will, therefore, take her only if she agrees to this condition, otherwise, after returning from Kashmir I intend to leave for Calcutta and reach Noakhali on August 15 and I will take her along with me. This is just for your information. In the end I have to do what Manu wants.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 366

¹ Omission as in the source

135. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 20, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

The enclosed letter is for you to see. Also the copy of my reply, Give me detailed news about your health.

Abha is all right. The doctors say that hers is not a deeprooted malady; Manu's is. At present both of them are taking rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

136. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 20, 1947

CHI. JAMANA,

I have your letter. I hope by now the attack of asthma has subsided. In my opinion one can prevent it by leading a disciplined life. Whenever there is an attack, you should remain clam, repeat Ramanama and have faith that it will cure you. But the condition for this is that you must lead a regular life.

I see no point in sending Abha¹ there at present. She had better go there after she is completely recovered.

It seems I will have to go to Kanaiyo². I shall see where I go after that. I agree that he ought not to lose weight.

I had an acknowledgment from Narandas³.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Addressee's daughter-in-law

² Addressee's son who was working in Bengal

³ Addressee's husband

137. LETTER TO DIWAN CHAMANLAL

NEW DELHI,
July 20, 1947

BHAI CHAMANLAL,

I have your letter. I had a talk with the Raja Saheb of Sirmur.

For me to take the reins of the Congress in my hands is certainly difficult, even if it is not impossible. Who will listen to me today and why should they? Yes, the disturbances make me unhappy but what can I do?

Vandemataram from
M. K. GANDHI

From the Hindi original: Diwan Chamanla Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

138. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Some people tell me—as they have a right to tell me—that what I say these days is not calculated to enthuse the people. They remind me that the political freedom for which we had been fighting, we have at last secured and by and by economic freedom will also come. All that may be true. Nevertheless I cannot rejoice on August 15. I do not want to deceive you. But at the same time I shall not ask you not to rejoice. After all I cannot expect everything to be ordered according to my wish. I did not want India to be partitioned but it has been partitioned. What good can come of crying over it? Even if something worse had happened, I would have had to put up with it. India's partition has grieved me more than it could grieve you. I have been a rebel all my life. How can a rebel cry? When I went to Noakhali I found people crying and I wiped their tears. I told them nothing was to be gained by weeping for the dead. But the people in whose hands we have entrusted the reins of power are big people. If they say that we should have celebrations on Independence Day, then you should do so. You should not worry why Gandhi does not join in the

celebration. The Congress does not force anyone to celebrate. That I shall not celebrate does not mean that the British will not be leaving. By August 15, a number of British officers will have already left the country. Those who remain will stay under our authority. They will be appointed not from London but by us.

Unfortunately the kind of freedom we have got today contains also the seeds of future conflict between India and Pakistan. How can we therefore light the lamps? I shall consider freedom to have been secured only on the day Hindus and Muslims have cleansed their hearts. Only lately some Muslim League friends from the Punjab have held out the threat that if the Boundary Commission does not decide in their favour they will get what they want by fighting. The Sikhs also are holding out similar threats. But when we accept the principle of arbitration we must go by the award. We should not talk of fighting. I know only one kind of fighting and that is satyagraha. It purifies the soul. If that kind of fighting went on all the time in the world it would be very good for the world. I shall appeal to my Hindu, Sikh and Muslim brethren that once having accepted the Boundary Commission as the arbitrator they should accept its award.

Burma too will soon be a free country like India. The Burmese leader General U Aung San, has brought Burma to the gates of freedom. What does it matter that he was not a satyagrahi? He was a brave warrior and it is largely thanks to his efforts that Burma is about to get its freedom. It is a great tragedy that an armed gang of assassins killed him and his four comrades.¹ However far we may be from him, his sudden death is a matter of grief to us. If such things are to continue, then the world has come to a sorry pass. I cannot believe that the assassins were dacoits. I had spent a long time in Burma. I am acquainted with Rangoon, Mandalay and other places. Buddhism is the religion there as it is in the rest of Burma. Why should there be so much blood-shed in a country where Buddhism is the religion? I am sure behind these murders there is factional politics. It is sad that this has happened when Burma is about to gain its freedom. I hope India will take a lesson from this tragedy. Let us pray that in this time of sorrow God may grant comfort to the people of Burma who like us have been fighting for their freedom and grant strength to the relatives of the dead to bear the grief. Let us also pray that the hearts of the murderers may change.

¹ Aung San with six colleagues was assassinated on July 19 at the instigation of U Saw, a political rival. *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-7-1947.

The editor of *The Dawn* has in today's issue of the paper accepted two of my suggestions.¹ It makes me very happy. He says that he can assure me that in Pakistan Hindus and Muslims will live as brothers. He further says that there should be a committee of journalists which should examine reports of communal riots and should decide what should be published. He suggests that as I am a journalist myself I could become the chairman of such a committee. I must express to him my inability. I do not have the time. Also I am no longer fitted for this kind of work. Besides I am never at one place for long. How should I then preside over such a body? But if he is serious about it he can meet other editors and do something.

I must finally say once again that only when the minorities both in India and Pakistan say that they are happy can freedom be said to have been really gained and only then will it be time for us to rejoice.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 263-6

139. A LETTER

July 21, 1947

I received your long letter only yesterday. Yours is the first letter I have taken up after the prayer. It is ten minutes past four just now.

You are unnecessarily angry with...² Is it her fault that she did not see you? Don't you know that she feels deeply obliged to you? Is she likely to slight you. You have virtues and defects in equal measure. Let your defects remain with you. We will worship your virtues and extract from them whatever fragrance they are capable of giving.

You will rise still higher if you give up defending me and you will also oblige me.

I like what you say regarding your relatives. You should not copy me in the distinction you have seen me make in my behaviour between relatives and others. You should copy my virtues, but not my errors. Anything good I may do should be looked upon as golden. In such instances you should copy me both in speech and deed. You should, therefore, always keep in mind what I said regarding the

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 18-7-1947.

² Omission as in the source

brothers. I do not wish to make any change in it. My own sister is on her death bed, but I do not go to her, nor do I go looking for doctors. On the other hand, I did everything possible for Chakrayya. Draw a lesson from this if you can. If, nonetheless, you see any partiality in me, you should reject my partiality and copy only my concern for others. You should know that I also, like all living and lifeless things, have virtues and defects, and should behave accordingly. I think you did a wise thing in writing about this matter. It is because of that that I am able to explain my point of view to you. You may ask me for further explanation when we meet some time, if you and I remember the matter then. I liked your letter so much that, instead of tearing it up, I am giving it to Bisen and Manudi to read.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 370-1

140. LETTER TO AYAZ PEERBHOY

NEW DELHI,

July 21, 1947

BHAI AYAZ PEERBHOY¹,

I have gone through your letter. You are right. I have already said that the struggle we carried on for the last thirty years was non-violent in name only but was not non-violent in spirit. The violence which we harboured in our minds is now coming out. How can the ignorance of those thirty years be dispelled all at once? Those of us who understand this must do the best we can.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Weekly Observer*, 6-3-1948. Also from a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Editor, *Weekly Observer*

141. A LETTER

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,

July 21, 1947

I had a letter from. . .¹ She says that I waste my time on Manu. Poor woman, how can she know that in my eyes that time is most valuably spent? For I have undertaken to be a mother to that girl, and by devoting time to achievement of that aim I wish to uncover to the world a great spiritual mystery similar to that which I have demonstrated concerning truth and ahimsa. I am no doubt a father to so many other girls, but why am I a mother to Manu alone? That, however, is a long story. Here I will say only this, that I saw in her the necessary readiness to look upon me as a mother. She is devoted to me as a daughter to her mother, is eager to serve me and is as innocent as a child. I have not seen in any other girl the virtues I have seen in her. God has, therefore, given me a means at the right time whereby I can prove to the world that if men could develop the attitudes of mothers, humanity would be saved. In India and in Pakistan, women are being wickedly dishonoured. If that is to be ended, I think men will have to learn to be not father but mothers. But I shall not dwell further on this subject. I am short of time. I am not at all happy that your health has again taken a turn for the worse. I don't see your articles in *Harijan* these days. I should like you to go on writing something, if necessary, with somebody's help. For my part, I can barely cope with my work. I have Sushila and Rajkumari with me now and hope, therefore, that I shall get their help. Thinking over the matter, I even feel that I should stop the *Harijan*.

Chi. Manudi is improving gradually. But as soon as she feels better, she starts running about and falls ill again. As a result, I have to pay more attention to her when she is well than when she is ill. But I see that even she is being careful now.

Probably I shall have to go to Kashmir towards the end of this month... also is here. She has returned ill from Noakhali. I will see what I can do for her.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 371-2

¹ Omissions as in the source

142. A LETTER

July 21, 1947

A meeting of the Working Committee is going on these days. I am discussing with them the problem of Kathiawar, too. If there should be attempts going on to include Junagadh and Manavdar in Pakistan it would be nothing new,¹ though Mountbatten has said nothing so far. Much will depend on what the Kathiawar Princes are about. That is why I am trying to get Balwantrai Mehta included in the Working Committee. I have formed an impression about him that he will be a very useful man.

I see Bhai Anantrai from time to time. He also is a very energetic man. But one must know how to make use of the energy.

We shall have to be vigilant about Hyderabad. Then there is Kashmir of course. How many problems shall we be able to cope with?

The heat here has not yet come down, though there are clouds. Let us hope the rain god will be kind now.

This heat has affected my digestion, so I have had to make drastic changes in my diet. I don't feel much physical weakness but towards the evening I feel mentally exhausted....² How are your affairs?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 372

143. NOTE TO P. C. GHOSH

NEW DELHI,

July 21, 1947

You should be relieved from the Working Committee. That is better than abandoning the responsibility and coming here.³ How should we know? Anything may happen there at any time.⁴ This should have occurred to you. If what I say appeals to you, I would like you to see Jawaharlal, Sardar and Kripalani. I am of the firm

¹ Their Rulers acceded to Pakistan in September 1947, but the subjects repudiated the accession and joined the Indian Union in November that same year.

² Omission as in the source

³ The addressee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, had gone to Delhi to attend the meeting of the Congress Working Committee.

⁴ The communal situation in Calcutta and Noakhali had been tense.

opinion that those of you who are in responsible positions should not remain in the Working Committee.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 375

144. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

NEW DELHI,
July 21, 1947

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I have your letter. Whether you call it my despondency or grief the cause of it is the same. How can non-violence overcome the prevailing violence? Passing through the turmoil, I have realized that although our 30 years' struggle could be called non-violent, it was not firmly founded on non-violence and so it ought not to have been so called. If it were not regarded as non-violent, my energy would not have been spent over it. That is why God made me blind and allowed me to be used. How can we create non-violence out of what was mistakenly called non-violence but which was really violence? Isn't it all wrong training? How can one have the right training now, i. e., in true non-violence, after having had 30 years of wrong training? We may name this churning of the heart anguish or anything else you like.

Is your analysis correct? If we are cautious and take the right steps we can undo our earlier lapses. But who will do it and how? There is a barrier everywhere which we must cross.

So being far away don't magnify my anguish.

I am happy. One thing is true; the heat here does not agree with me but I don't feel like going to the hills either. There is nothing to worry about.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

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

145. LETTER TO SANKARAN

NEW DELHI,
July 21, 1947

CHI. SANKARAN,

I like your programme of work. If you have there all the facilities and if it benefits all, you may prolong your stay.

Of course some harm has been done by allopathy but the benefits are obvious. Otherwise there could never have been so many hospitals. Allopathy suits well the present atmosphere. If you read the lives of the doctors of former times, you will know about sacrifices they made. It is one's duty to see the good points of the other side. What sacrifices have the naturopaths made? And what pretensions they have! But the beauty is that nature cure flourishes in spite of the pretensions, the reason being that it is the natural thing.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

146. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

NEW DELHI,
July 21, 1947

CHI. KRISHNADAS,

I have your letter. Jinnah Saheb has himself said that non-Muslims will have the same place in Pakistan as the Muslims. But it remains to be seen whether or not such a policy is implemented.

The poor Hindus who will migrate owing to oppression will certainly be accommodated in India. But this much is certain that they will have to labour for their bread. I did say that those leaving behind property ought to be paid its value but I could not have said that they would be paid. Show me if I have written anything to this effect. I have spoken on this matter frequently enough in the course of me Noakhali speeches.

I certainly regard myself as a “practical idealist”¹. Who will define an *atatayin*²? Can we accept the definition as given by Manu? But it is no longer accepted today. And after having defined a criminal, who is to execute him? An individual or the State, i. e., the Panchayat? And should it follow or precede the judgment? Today to policy of capital punishment is itself being strongly opposed. What should be regarded as scripture? People raise such questions. It is not easy to answer the second point. An exchange of population cannot be carried out so easily. The whole question deserves to be thought over. Maybe, I shall say something in my speech³ today. I am thinking of going over to Noakhali soon. The question is how to get away from here.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

147. LETTER TO SWAMI SIVANANDA

NEW DELHI,
July 21, 1947

SHRI SWAMIJI,

I have your letter. There was violence in the name of non-violence and we are now tasting its bitter fruit. What more can I write?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SWAMI SIVANANDA
RISHIKESH

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

¹ The two words are in English.

² A criminal; according to *Shukranitisara* any one of the six : incendiary, poisoner, assassin, robber, usurper of land, rapist. Manu, who has not defined the term, however, says that such a one, whether a guru, a minor, a woman or a learned brahmin, may be unhesitatingly put to death.

³ *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 21-7-1947.

148. A LETTER

July 21, 1947

I have never imagined myself as perfect. Had I been a perfect *sthitaprajna*, would I today be seeing the failure of my aims? But failure does not grieve me, for I like to be awakened. I don't wish to die under any delusion.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 372

149. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 21, 1947

A friend from Pakistan writes :¹ “You in India are talking about celebrating August 15. Have you ever considered how we, the Hindus in Pakistan are going to celebrate it? Our hearts are full of forebodings for that day, Will you say some- thing about this? For us the day will be one for confronting troubles, not at all for celebration. The Muslims here have already begun to frighten us. We do not know what the Muslims in India think. Will they also not be frightened? We are even scared that attempts may be made to convert us on a large scale. You will say that we must ourselves safeguard our faith. This may be possible for an ascetic. It is not so for a householder.”

Mr. Jinnah is now going to be the Governor-General of Pakistan. He has said that non-Muslims will be treated exactly as the Muslims. My advice is that we should trust him and hope that non-Muslims in Pakistan will not be ill-treated. And also the Muslims in India will not be ill-treated. My feeling is that now that there are two States, India can ask for guarantees from Pakistan.

I nevertheless feel that August 15 is not day for celebration² whilst the minorities contemplate the day with a heavy heart. It will be a day for prayer and introspection. Only, if the two countries are to be true to themselves they should start being friends right now. Either all

¹ *Vide* “Letter to Krishnadas”, 21-7-1947.

² The rest of the sentence is from *The Hindustan Times*.

should together celebrate August 15 as brothers or it should not be celebrated at all. The day for rejoicing over freedom will be when we feel sincere friendship for each other. But this is my own individual opinion and nobody seems to share it.

The same friend from Pakistan then asks me: 'If all the Hindus of Pakistan or a very large number of them come away from Pakistan, will India give them shelter ?'

I think that such people should certainly be given shelter. However, if the well-to-do among them want to live in their old style, that will be difficult. In any case, they should certainly be given a place to live and they should be paid for their work. But I shall continue to hope that no non-Muslim will be forced to flee Pakistan out of fear and no Indian Muslim will flee his motherland.

The correspondent further asks: "What will happen to houses and landed property left behind in Pakistan ?"

I have already said that the Government of Pakistan should pay the market price of the land and houses. The practice in such matters is that the other Government also has a say. In this case it will be the Government of India. But why should I assume that the matter will go so far? It will be the duty of the Government of Pakistan to pay the price of such land and houses to the owners.

The correspondent reminds me that I consider myself a practical idealist. But what is going on in the country is inhuman. Can non-violence be practised towards the criminal, and if so, how? My endeavour always has been so to practise my ideal that it should produce results even though I may not always succeed. Whom shall I call criminal? All those described as criminal by Manu cannot be put to death today. Today attempts are being made to abolish capital Punishment and reformers even go so far as to advocate abolition of all corporal punishment. They say that evil-doers should be considered as sick and hospitals should be set up for them as for those suffering from other diseases. What I mean to say is that everything that goes by the name of scripture should not be accepted as scripture. Only that should be accepted as scripture which takes into consideration the various changes that are continually taking place. Attitudes keep changing from age to age. There are few laws which remain unchanged for ever. And then it is not everyone's province to punish criminals. This right belongs to the elected body or the government. The government makes laws and then courts are set up to

dispense justice according to those laws. If that were not so there would be the risk of all of us becoming criminals. The murders that were committed in Burma were brutal. Now we understand that they were political murders.¹ I am sure that the murderers regarded their victims as criminals. Our terrorists did not accept my advice. They sincerely told me that those whom they murdered were criminals. They never regarded themselves as criminals. That is why I say that he who takes the law into his own hands commits an offence. He commits violence against the people. Only an elected Assembly can dispense with the obligation to be non-violent. What is happening in the world today is brutality.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 266-8

150. A TERRIBLE CONTRAST²

Prof. Kumarappa is at present in London. From his letter received from there I quote the following extracts :

The air travel, as I explained to you, is extremely dull as the sense of motion that we get on surface travel is practically absent. From our height you can see nothing but the bare red earth with some streaks indicating rivers. Trees, etc., are not visible except as chumps of grass here and there. . . .

Last evening I strolled all over Marble Arch, Hyde Park, Kensington, Westminster, Whitehall, James' Park, Piccadilly, Bond Street, etc., clad in my *dhotijamma*. London is hot even for that. Our old-time London of plenty and pleasure seems to have undergone a radical change. There seems to be very effective rationing in which a great deal of credit should be given to the willing co-operation of the public in restraining themselves in the interests of all. This is in striking contrast to our lack of a public conscience. I used to think the efficiency of rationing here was a credit to the efficiency of the Government machinery here. But I think now that it is largely due to public self-control that even black markets are not able to hold their own. Our culture though based on self-discipline and self-control has to extend its influence to public behavior. This should be the foundation of our swaraj.

Assuming the correctness of the information the writer gives, the

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 20-7-1947.

² This appeared under "Notes".

contrast between the willing co-operation in London and the black marketing with all its implication here is terrible.

NEW DELHI, July 22, 1947

Harijan, 3-8-1947

151. REALIZATION OF DIFFICULTY

An English sister reading my recent speeches giving a glimpse of my grief over the happenings in India writes :

Does not this deep agony, this descent into hell, this feeling of something near despair, mean that you ought to extend your life-span even further than 125 years? How very much easier it would be to die! . . . Day and night one feels the narrow of hell. . . .

I know that she is not joking when she expects me to extend my life-span even further than 125 years. She is a brave woman of great faith. With me there is no question of extending my life-span even to one day longer than the allotted time. I am fatalist enough to believe that not a blade of grass moves but by His will. What I have done and still would wish to do is to aspire after a life of 125 years, provided that it is a life of uttermost service of humanity. But such a wish becomes quite empty if it is not accompanied by the requisite correctness of conduct. Answering the description of a steadfast man of the *Gita*, such are the lines according to Sir Edwin Arnold's rendering :¹

I confess that in spite of my trying to reach the state, I am far away from the condition of equipoise. I realize how difficult it is in the face of the storm raging round us.

She says in the same letter :

The only comfort is that mankind, some of it, has discovered its innate impotence apart from God.

The motto in her letter-head is:

In hearts too young for enmity

There lies the way to make men free. . . .

How true and yet how difficult!

NEW DELHI, July 22, 1947

Harijan, 10-8-1947

¹ The quotation from Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial* is not reproduced here.

152. LETTER TO E. NAGESHWAR RAO

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

DEAR NAGESHWAR RAO,

Your letter with the instructive enclosure. I have not the time to enter upon a detailed answer. So far as I am concerned your charge cannot be established. What will ultimately happen I do not know.

Yours sincerely,

SHRIE. NAGESHWAR RAO
RAO'S HOUSE
BILASPUR C. P.

From a photostat: G. N. 118

153. LETTER TO KULSUM SAYANI

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

Heaven knows what is in store for us. The old order changeth giving place to new.

Nothing is settled. Whatever is decided by the C. A., Hindustani with the two scripts remains for you and me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat: Kulsum Sayani Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also G. N. 8042

154. LETTER TO MAHARAJ KUMAR OF VIJAYANAGARAM

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

DEAR VIJAYA,

I am glad you have given up your knighthood.
Hope you have also given up your cold.
Love to you all.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

155. LETTER TO BARBARA HARTLAND

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI.
July 22, 1947

MY DEAR BARBARA.

I have your letter¹ which is so sweet. I know you are doing excellent work there and I know too that you will do so wherever you are. But you know that when you feel the call from India, work awaits you always.

Hope you are keeping perfectly fit there.

Love.

BAPU

MISS BARBARA HARTLAND
WARREN'S ACRE
NUTIEY (NEAR UCKFIELD)
SUSSEX

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

156. LETTER TO SUJATA DEVI

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

MY DEAR SUJATA,

I have your letter of 7th instant. I hope you are quite well.

It is not my letter which will fetch you a single rupee, but your work, if it is substantial, will fetch you all you want. You can show this letter to whomsoever you like. But be sure that you convince your host of the solid character of the work you are doing.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

SHRIMATI SUJATA DEVI
5 NAFAR KUNDU ROAD
KALIGHAT
CALCUTTA

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

¹ In which the addressee had written. "If you have any special work for me to do please let me know and I shall throw all my energy into it."

157. LETTER TO NRIPENDRA NATH BOSE

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

MY DEAR NRIPEN,

With reference to your letter¹ of 13th instant. I have been in constant correspondence with Premier Bardoloi. He telegraphed to me as to where to send paddy and I referred him to you. He must have corresponded with you. If not, please do so immediately. I hope there will be no hitch. I had another letter bearing your signature regarding maltreatment of Harijans. You will please keep me informed as to what happens. I referred to the incident vaguely in one of my evening speeches, which you may have noticed. I hope there is no exaggeration in the statement circulated by the Relief Committee.

Yours,
BAPU

DR. NRIPENDRA NATH BOSE
TIPPERA DISTT. RELIEF RESCUE &
REHABILITATION COMMITTEE
COMILLA

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

158. A LETTER

July 22, 1947

I do not see that I am of much use here. It may be asked why then I continue to stay on here. What reply can I give? Very often one has to bow to the demands of love. How many things Lord Krishna was forced to do through the bonds of love? Similarly, I have to do many things out of the love that binds me to Jawahar and Sardar. They have tied me up with the chains of thier love. I see no harm in such slavery and have, therefore, let myself be bound. If we

¹ In which the addressee had sought Gandhiji's help in the procurement of paddy from Assam for starting the scheme of paddy-husking for relief work in Noakhali and Tippera.

stop thinknig of the faults of others, we shall profit in many ways and be saved from much harm.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 379

159. A LETTER

July 22, 1947

After careful thinking, I feel that an Ashram should meet its own expenses. Only such Ashrams will be able to maintain themselves. Isn't there a saying that you can't go to heaven without yourself dying? Today only this much.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 379

160 .LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

NEW DELHI,

July 22, 1947

CHI. RAM MANOHAR,

This morning at 4.45 I read your statement about the Adivasis and others. It is good but it may not prove effective.

I find none who can undertake this work. The Nagas met me.¹ I understand what is happening.

We had only one force and we have lost it. That was moral force or spiritual force if you choose to call it that. The opposite of it is brute force or military strength. That we do not seem to have at present. It will ruin India. Now you will understand why I talked about. . . .², etc. As the saying goes, a word to the wise.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* "Interview to Naga Leaders", 19-7-1947.

² The source is not clear here. *Mahatma Gandhi*—The Last Phase Vol. II, p. 328. however, has: "You will now understand why I have laid so much emphasis on banning tea, cigarettes and such other articles of addiction."

161. LETTER TO LAKSHMINARAYAN AGRAWAL

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

BHAI LAKSHMIBABU¹,

This friend has come from Bihar. What do you say about what he has to relate? I do not want to form an opinion on the basis of a one-sided account. Can anything be done in this matter?

How is the work there going on?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi: C. W. 10426. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan

162. A LETTER²

July 22, 1947

The country is today passing through a critical time. If we do not unite and work together, I think neither the Congress nor the Socialists will succeed. Don't they both have the same goal? This is a time to think only of our duty as men. Consult among yourselves and let me know what you desire. I see no wisdom in people banding themselves into separate groups.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 379

163. TALK TO REFUGEE STUDENTS

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

If you ask me, my advice can appeal to you only if you have no love for degrees. Only then can I give you time. If you want degrees you can work for them without giving thought to anything else. You

¹ A khadi worker; Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Bihar

² According to the source, this was addressed to a Socialist leader.

will think it natural in me, an old man from your point of view, to advise students not to run after degrees. However it is not so. I say what I do with the fullest sense of responsibility. All that you learn is not real learning. It is no more than stuffing you merely with a knowledge of the letters. True education is that which proves useful in life and makes you industrious.

Students have played a big role in helping the country win its freedom. If students forget communalism and learn humanism they can easily bring about the unity which neither the laws nor the Viceroy, nor Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders can bring about. Let them persuade their school fellows, their parents, their sisters and purify the atmosphere in their schools, their homes and their neighbourhood. Student life is the foundation of life. It is a preparation for adult life. The building can be strong only if the foundation is strong. Therefore, instead of wasting time in memorizing false history, devote yourself to true knowledge. Certainly history will give you a sort of knowledge but you should acquire the knowledge which will provide you with food for life. Teach sanitation in your camp, learn to look after the sick, take lessons in nursing, organize bhajans and games for recreation in the evening so that those who are unhappy may forget their sorrow for a while and be comforted, the children get some knowledge of the letters and physical exercise and learn to keep their bodies and minds clean. The rainy season is approaching. Make arrangements through collective labour to protect yourselves from the rains. You can do so many such things. If you do that you will certainly learn so many things which you will never learn in your colleges. Knowledge gained through experience is far superior and many times more useful than bookish knowledge. I have no doubt about that.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 379-80

164. TALK WITH VISITORS

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

I do not consider myself a mahatma¹ I am, like you, an ordinary human being and want to serve the people as long as God gives me the strength to do so. Moreover, anyone who is not distressed or ashamed by the carnage that is going on in the country must either be God or a hard-hearted man. I am neither. I feel unhappy that every day innocent men, women and children are being murdered. The reason for all this is that what I had believed to be non-violence was not pure non-violence. I have now realized it but it is too late. Even so I am certain that if we want to bring about peace in the world there is no other way except that of non-violence.

Q. Now perhaps you will honour the British since they have willingly agreed to your terms.

G. Personally I never had any complaint against the British. I have no likes or dislikes for persons, for I consider every individual a friend and I have benefited from this. Let me make one thing clear. The British are not doing us a favour in leaving the country. They are going because circumstances have rendered their going inevitable. They ruined India during their 150 years of rule. They could have atoned for it if they had gone leaving the country whole. I must say that they have taken advantage of our weakness of will to create dissensions among us, whether knowingly or unknowingly. The fault no doubt is ours. We were so stupid as to go to them for justice. We should have told them, "Hand over the country to us. We shall settle our own affairs." It was our mis-fortune that a third party had to meddle in our domestic affairs. For this state of affairs we have to thank the power that kept us in slavery for so long. All the same the English are my friends. Many Englishwomen are staying with me as my daughters. They have so many things to teach us. I am sure if they can remain on terms of friendship with India, both the countries will benefit. England and America have gained nothing from their advance in technology and by manufacturing atom bombs. But I have

¹ The visitors, foreign nationals, had asked why Gandhiji, who was a mahatma, let himself be distressed by the communal carnage.

no doubt that if our so-called backward country pursues the path of non-violence it will have a place of glory in the world. I may not live to see that. My co-worker Jawahar, who is like a son to me, is working hard to make my dream come true. He will show light to the whole world. Jawahar and his colleagues appear old. The struggles of satyagraha and frequent incarcerations have reduced their expectation of life by twenty to twenty-five years. But I believe that not a blade of grass moves except by His will and I am, therefore, confident that though they are old their contribution in bringing stability to a tottering world will be very significant.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 381-3

165. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 22, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have received a letter today. It says: ‘You have given Lord Mountbatten too much of a build-up. You seem to imply that Lord Mountbatten can do no wrong. But if you will remember at the Second Round Table Conference¹ you had said that when freedom was achieved the Viceroy’s house would be turned into a home for Harijan children or a hospital. Your present attitude is not in conformity with this.’

I do not give anyone any kind of build-up. I want nothing from Lord Mountbatten. And he wants nothing from me. I do not want even titles and he has nothing else to give. It is said that I am always rebuking my own people and never can find anything good to say of them. So far as Lord Mountbatten is concerned he must for the moment continue to live in the Viceroy’s house. If I could drag him out of it I would keep him with me. But he has to meet the Princes there and rectify the mistakes of the past. He has to undo the harm those mistakes have done. And he has been made Governor-General precisely because he can work with speed. Giving him this office does

¹ In 1931.

not imply any flattery of him. And do you think Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel are the kind of people to flatter anyone? But if the Viceroy has deceit in his heart only he will be the loser. My sixty years' experience tells me that he who seeks to deceive other deceives only himself. But I do not really know whether Lork Mountbatten will remain permanently in the Viceroy's house or whether it will be made into a hospital. Only Jawaharlal and Sardar will know about it.

Another correspondent wants to know if the proposal to retain British officers in the army and the partition of the army has my approval. The correspondent should rather ask me if I approve of the retention of the army itself. Keeping an army, whatever its nature or size, can have no support from me. But times have changed. I had fondly assumed that we were all or almost all non-violent. But my eyes have now been opened. What I had taken to be non-violence, I now see, was only passive resistance. Passive resistance is resorted to by a person who does not have arms. We were simply obliged to be non-violent while we had violence in our hearts. And now with the British withdrawing from India we are spending that violence in fighting against each other. I am certain that I never had any violence in my heart. But what am I to do about others? They argue that the fact they were non-violent in the fight against the British does not necessarily mean that they should be non-violent now. The fault is mine. My teaching during the last thirty-two years was imperfect. If I am asked I will still say that I am not for maintaining an army. Is India going to be a military State? From Bengal, the Punjab and Bihar there are demands for the army to be sent. If at one place it is Hindus who want the army to protect them, at another it is Muslims. I therefore have no knowledge about how the army is going to be divided and I do not care to waste my time over things which do not interest me.

Four sisters came to congratulate me today because the tricolour with the wheel has been adopted as the national flag of India. I see nothing in it for congratulations. I am told that instead of the charkha there is only a wheel on the flag. But it is all the same to me whether they keep or do not keep the charkha. Even if they cast it away I will still have it in my hand and in my heart.

A friend tells me that the charkha is still there on the flag. Another friend tells me that it is not there, that it has been discarded

even while I am still alive. I do not know. What I do know is that even if the charkha was shown on the flag but was not in people's hearts, both the flag and the charkha would be fit only to be burnt. But if the charkha had a place in the hearts of the people, then it would not matter whether it was placed on the flag or not. I only want that the country should have only one flag and everyone should salute it. It made me very happy to hear that in the Constituent Assembly both Chowdhary Khaliq-uz-Zaman and Mohammed Sadullah, saluted the flag and declared that they would be loyal to the National Flag. If they mean it, it is a good sign.

But a telegram received from Sylhet is very disturbing. The referendum there is over but harassment of the people continues. Why have the Muslims there gone crazy? Nationalist Muslims are being killed and the telegram says that someone should be sent there as an observer. Whom can I send? It is only for Kripalani or Jawaharlal to find someone. I feel I ought to go to Noakhali now. Sylhet is close to Noakhali. But how can I go? I am imprisoned here. I am convinced that there is not a word of untruth in the telegram. The sender has signed his name too. It is reported that after the referendum Muslims burnt down a Harijan colony. It is a matter of shame. On one side we have Khaliq Saheb and Sadullah Saheb saluting the National Flag, on the other side in Pakistan such grisly things go on.

From Karachi comes a letter. It is from a rich man who says that the Pakistan Government has taken over his house. He is in a quandary, for he has nowhere to live. I must say to Mr. Jinnah and the other leaders there that I am shocked. At such a juncture instead of rejoicing we must pray that we may be rescued from this morass and have an opportunity to taste the fruits of freedom, the freedom of which we have so long been dreaming. This is indeed a time for prayer.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 269-72

166. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
4.15 a. m., July 23, 1947

CHI. SITA¹,

I have your postcard. Why do you lose hope so soon? No one has hurt your self-respect. Such things do happen when one is a student; there is nothing unusual about it. You must calm down and concentrate on your studies and build up a strong body. Observe all the rules carefully. Keep writing to me. Sumi² will be well. Her Bengali handwriting seems good. Have you tried to write something in Urdu below hers? Blessings to Vinodini³. Write to Manilal.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

167. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

CHI. PUSHPA,

I am writing this at 4.25 in the morning. There should be no complaint against you. You ought not to leave the Khadi Vidyalaya without permission. Those who cannot maintain discipline prove useless in the end. So wake up. Write to me what happened. How are you? How is your work going on? How is your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Daughter of Manilal Gandhi

² Sumitra, Ramdas Gandhi's daughter

³ Jaisukhlal Gandhi's daughter

168. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

4.50 a. m., July 23, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have forgotten about the difference between Gonds and Harijans and also about Kodabet. When replying to letters I do not have the original letters in front of me. Even when they are there I forget to look into them.

We have no time to think more. Do what all of you can do together. We are far away from the ideal of ahimsa. We should lead a thoughtful life. I do feel deeply concerned about the Mangs, but what can I do from this distance and in the midst of my other preoccupations? I therefore write nothing more on the subject.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

About Prahlad, do what is proper.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8406. Also C. W. 7221. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

169. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL CHOKSHI

July 23, 1947

CHI. NAJUKLAL,

I was pleased to see your letter. I take no interest in Sevadal and such other activities. My sphere of work is well defined. All days are the same to me. Your writing has no effect on me, but at the same time I see no reason for celebration either. You may do what seems best to you. I am glad that Moti¹ and the children are doing well.

Blessings from

BAPU

NAJUKLAL CHOKSHI

GHADIYARI POLE

BARODA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 12156

¹ Addressee's wife

170. A LETTER

July 23, 1947

Learning a language is certainly very useful. It also helps in one's mental growth. But the present practice of teaching the pupils compulsorily through English must be stopped now. The mother tongue should be given proper importance and its development encouraged. It is our country's misfortune that this plain truth has become the subject of a heated controversy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 391

171. A LETTER

July 23, 1947

You suggest that the Government should promote education by spending crores of rupees and setting up universities. I cannot swallow the suggestion. There is no dearth in our country of people who have an interest in education. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of them. They should form an organization and take up this work. A cultivator who wishes to grow corn ploughs and sows the field at the right time. If educationists, similarly, utilize this opportunity and work along the right lines in this field, their institutions will overflow with money. The university will be able to maintain itself through the labour of the students who join it. And if it becomes a people's institution, the public also will help of their own accord. True, it will also need some Government help, which it will certainly get. If, however, the university is run along the lines I have indicated, it will become self-supporting.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 391

172. LETTER TO PATIL

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

BHAI PATIL,

I have your letter. Retaliation¹ means revenge and revenge means blood for blood. We cannot therefore say that there is exaggeration in the cuttings that I have received. I feel we help nobody by now talking about revenge. What I said in this connection in my speech on Monday² should be pondered. This is a very critical time and we have to weigh every word we utter.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

173. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

July 23, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. What you say about Pushpabehn is correct. I have written to her.³ Read the letter.

The incident about the Gonds is painful. We are very far from ahimsa. We should go on striving.

Hoshiari should not fall ill.

I have no time to write more. Go on doing whatever you can there.

There will certainly be mistakes. Our task is to rectify them and go forward.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have forgotten the difference between Gonds and Harijans. I could not distinguish between a whip and a cane.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1985

¹ This word is in English.

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-7-1947.

³ *Vide* "Letter to Pushpa K. Desai", 23-7-1947.

174. LETTER TO SHANTA

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

CHI. SHANTA,

I have your letter. What is the use of experiments in non-violence in Sevagram? Villagers punishing the Gonds should not be tolerated. I understand what Kishorelalbhai writes. My mind is working in a different way. Where is non-violence? Physical punishment is not the only violence. Much greater violence can be done through thought. In my opinion the Gonds' case must make us think. What was the duty of us all in that episode? But I shall not go further, nor can I. Only this much for today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8413; also C.W. 5625

175. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

CHI. DEV¹,

Herewith Chand's letter. If Chand sticks to her word, what is there to worry about? I want to see your position as that of a *sthitaprajna*. This is how I understand Nai Talim. The work otherwise would be too difficult. Therefore you have to remain cheerful under all circumstances and, if you can sincerely do so, calmly write me a letter which I may pass on to Chand. I have written to Chand that I am sending on hers to you.

I do believe that I shall reach Patna by the end of this month,

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Brother of Pyarelal; he joined Gandhiji after N.K. Bose.

176. LETTER TO VITHALDAS

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

BHAI VITHALDAS,

Received your letter and the monthly *Arogya*. I do not know if you can render any service through the monthly. I have found the naturopaths to be full of hypocrisy and arrogance. If your monthly contains nothing but the truth you might possibly be able to render some service.

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

177. TALK TO MAHARANI OF NABHA

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

You have willingly divested yourself of these things.¹ Similarly the State treasury does not belong to you. It belongs to the people. You have been appointed by them a trustee. I wish you would keep an account of every pie as a trustee does of the public trust. Keep your personal needs within bounds. You will render a great service to middle class women and make an impression on the State if like other women you manage your household yourself and do all the domestic chores of the palace. How can you have any idea of the plight of middle class women? I know their plight because I take an interest in their lives. They hesitate to do any work from a false sense of shame. If they have not enough to eat in the house they will put up with it. Let alone doing any work themselves, in order to keep up the prestige of the house they think it necessary to have a servant to clean the house, fetch water and do the grinding. This is sin. For this, the rich are to blame. Their women live in affluence and not only do no work themselves but pass remarks on those who do. In Europe even men lend a hand in domestic chores. As a result women have too much free time, they become lazy and lose self-confidence. That is why I say the times have changed. Ladies of ruling families and rich classes should not miss this opportunity they have got of doing service. If

¹ The Maharani had presented to Gandhiji her gold bangles.

they take to doing household work they will create an atmosphere in which doing such work will no longer be regarded dishonourable but on the contrary will be respected. As a result the financial condition of the downtrodden middle class will improve and with it the education of their children, their health and their living condition also will improve. We can then feel proud of our country.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 389-90

178. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 23, 1947

Before the prayers started someone passed a note to Gandhiji. In it the writer had asked him whether he had seen God face to face. Answering the question after prayers, Gandhiji said that he had not seen God face to face. If he had, he would have no need to be speaking to them. His thought would be potent enough to render speech and action on his part unnecessary. But he had an undying faith in the existence of God. Millions all over the world shared that faith with him. The most learned could not shake the faith of illiterate millions. The *bhajan* sung during the prayers described the way to see God face to face. The poet asked the aspirant to shed anger and desire and to be indifferent to praise or blame if he expected to reach the blessed state. Gandhiji compared *nirvana* to *Ramarajya* or the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The dream of *Ramarajya* was far from realization. How could it happen when they had all along been nursing violence in their hearts under the garb of non-violence?¹

Today I wish to say something about salt. People say there was a time when I had marched to Dandi for salt but today there is no salt to be had or, if there is, an exorbitant price has to be paid for it. I can only bow down my head in shame. People say that although salt tax has been abolished it has not affected the price. Salt is not rationed but there is black-marketing in it. Traders are so mean that they derive huge profits even from salt. But we have become lazy.

There are many places in the countryside where people can make salt for themselves at no cost. This concession had been got even at the time of my agreement² with Lord Irwin. If we were not lazy we would be getting salt not only cheap but also clean. The salt available

¹ This paragraph is from The Hindustan Times, 24-7-1947

² Vide "Provisional Settlement", 12-3-1913.

in the market is very dirty. The reason is that people do not take pains. The salt that was given to me in jail I used to clean myself. We have become so selfish today that we cannot even let people have salt at a low price. How can we call a regime *Ramarajya* where even salt is denied to the people? Salt is needed not only for human beings but also for animals. What I fear is that now as a consequence of partition both the countries will need to increase their revenues and they may impose tax on salt. But will they be so lacking in sense as to deprive people even of salt? If that happens, too great a price will have been paid for freedom.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan–I, pp. 273-4

179. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

July 24, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL¹,

I did not say anything yesterday about the Maulana Saheb. But my objection stands. His retiring from the cabinet should not affect our connection with him. There are many positions which he can occupy in public life without any harm to any cause. Sardar is decidedly against his membership in the cabinet and so is Rajkumari. Your cabinet must be strong and effective at the present juncture. It should not be difficult to name another Muslim for the cabinet.

I have destroyed the two copies you sent me yesterday.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ The superscription and the subscription are in Hindi.

180. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR, NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

The more I think of it the more I am convinced that I should leave here as soon as the Kashmir affair is settled. I do not like much of what is going on. I do not say that for that reason it should be changed; but only that I should not be said to be associated with it. Moreover, I must reach Bihar and thence Noakhali before the 15th. That too is urgent work. I would request you not to detain me any more. There are still four or five days in any case.

I even feel that *Harijan* should now be stopped. I do not like leading the country in an opposite direction. Please think over all this when you have time.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI
[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 356-7

181. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS DAS

NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

CHI. KRISHNADAS DAS,

The existing flags will certainly do. The present flag is not prohibited. The new one will fly over the Government offices. This is a new version. But it does not eliminate the old one.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

182. A LETTER

July 24, 1947

Jawahar desires that I should go to Kashmir. He seems even to have decided that I should start on the 30th. Chi. Mridula has even fixed up the programme for the visit. But ...¹ does not seem to like the idea. I personally am not at all keen on the visit. But I do wish to go to Lahore. From there I will proceed directly to Bihar. If I get a few days there, I shall be able to do a good deal. Thus the whole thing is uncertain, and in these circumstances your coming here does not seem advisable. Go on doing what you can there. As for other things, I suppose you read my daily prayer speeches. In them I pour out my heart.

My mind is in Bihar and Noakhali now. Considering the pressure of work, my health is fairly good. Chi. Manu's is no good at all. She is a little better today. She will write the rest and complete this letter.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 399-400

183. A LETTER

July 24, 1947

Realizing Truth means realizing that all human beings are one, that all religions are one, just as our limbs are members of the same body.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 400

¹ Omission as in the source

184. LETTER TO MANILAL B. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your and Chi. Balkrishna's letter. Do what you can. Since Dr. Dinshaw does not approve of both of you becoming trustees it is best that you should not be one. Your work of course must not be affected. One place on the Board of Trustees must be kept vacant. Whatever the reason for Chi. Balkrishna's staying on there, I think he should remain. The fact that his health has improved is also, in my view, a good omen.

I note what you say about yourself. You vow¹ becomes you. God will help you to fulfil it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2726. Courtesy: Manilal B. Desai

185. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. Why need you feel unhappy because those dear to you fall ill? Anybody falling ill is a test for you. There is no reason for you to get panicky. It will be well if Dwarkadas² survives, and also well if he passes away. God will look after his children. You must complete your study. You should also know that there are a great many other people as unhappy as you. But rare indeed are those who find happiness in suffering. You are one of them, and may you remain so.

I have been tearing up your letters because you yourself wished so. But even if they had been preserved, what need would there be to read them again? I have never blamed you and will never do so. What

¹ To serve at Uruli-Kanchan all through life

² Addressee's brother

does it matter whether I have done anybody good or harm? Everybody will reap as he sows. Calm yourself. My blessings to Dwarkadas.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9611. Also C.W. 6583. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

186. A LETTER¹

July 24, 1947

Inciting the workers in this manner and making inflammatory speeches against the capitalists is not going to help. That will only lead to conflict and the economic problem will remain unsolved. Both the sides should adopt the method of reasoning and persuasion. Don't you see that, at a time when the communal virus is spreading, by exploiting the situation and pouring abuse on the Congress you are not furthering your own cause? I hope the reports in the papers are false. Please let me know. Do remember that both the Congress and your party pursue the same goal, which is eradication of poverty in the country and peace and prosperity for all. But the methods are different. We are passing through such difficult times that if the country's leaders and the people become divided into opposite camps, I don't know what will be the fate of the country. Please think whether the words of experienced old man, who has trained you all like his sons, have any substance in them. If you think that they have, then I don't at all wish to press you to join the Congress against your will but I do wish to suggest that you engage yourself in constructive activities like communal unity, etc. If you find no substance in what I have said, then tear up this letter. I wish nothing but what I believe is for the country's good and your own.

I hope Chi. . . .² and you both keep good health and are regular in your meals. I also hope that you no longer need medicines.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 400

¹ According to the source this was addressed to a Socialist leader.

² Omission as in the source

187. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI,

I have your letter. As the saying goes, ‘extremes should always be avoided’. Swaraj—as I have conceived it—is far away. Perhaps it may not materialize in my lifetime. It will not draw any nearer by your keeping standing.¹ If you can, go deeply into the matter. You will then make headway. But if you cannot, then it is your duty to do as I say.

Teach whoever is willing to learn. Do whatever body-labour you easily can. By vigilance at the Ashram, I do not mean the watch and ward business of a sentry but the voluntary observance of dharma and the restraining influence it will exercise. Let us not be another’s judge.

Let Pushpa stay at the Khadi Karyalaya. She should come to the Ashram only after becoming proficient in khadi work. She should have the utmost capacity to abide by rules.²

Blessings from
BAPU

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

188. LETTER TO SWAMI KARAPATRI

NEW DELHI,
July 24, 1947

GOSWAMIJI,

I have your letter. Thanks.

I think I know the five demands of the Dharma Sangh. I must say that I do not agree with the current interpretation of Sanatana Dharma.

I have called cow-protection *goseva*, i. e., service of the cow. Legislation hardly serves the cow, much less protects it.

¹Vide “Letter to J. P. Bhansali”, 14-7-1947.

²Vide also “Letter to Pushpa K. Desai”, 23-7-1947.

All my life has been and is being spent in protecting dharma. Dharmashastra undergoes modifications with the passage of time. Therefore I hold that as far as I know your activity harms dharma.

Untouchability has absolutely no place in Sanatana Dharma. If the former persists I see the ruin of dharma.

I have said all this in brief.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

GOSWAMI KARAPATRI

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

189. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

July 24, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I am sorry to read about the bullock. I think the bullock is like a son to the farmer. Animal husbandry is a difficult science. Agriculture can be fruitful only through co-operation. The larger part of it should involve manual labour. I have advised them in Noakhali to clear the fields by manual labour. Bullocks are scarce there. A large number of them were slaughtered. My advice will be that no new bullocks should be bought. How long can they go on buying bullocks? This whole question needs consideration.

Your dream was beautiful. If we comfort ourselves thus the whole problem will be solved.

Ponder over the song: “O good man, give up the pride in thy heart.”

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1986

190. A LETTER

July 24, 1947

God is our only support. Seek His help, what help can I give? I am but an ordinary weak man...¹ It seems to me that I may have to stop *Harijan*. I have today written² to . . . also and said that I don't wish to deceive myself. I say and write only what the inner voice dictates. It is possible that from the point of view of other people what I am doing may be wrong, but I can follow no other path as long as I myself am not convinced of the error. You may discuss this matter at length with ... I am not made to act in any other way.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 400

191. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

As I have said/repeatedly, when one is at prayer or engaged in similar sacred activity one does not smoke. Christians drink and smoke a good deal but I have never yet seen a Christian drinking or smoking when in a church. The same rule applies to mosques and gurudwaras. This place of course can be called a temple, a church or a mosque, since our prayer consists of texts taken from every religion. It would be good if you gave up smoking. Though I know that you are not going to do so on my asking you, still those who want to smoke can go out of the congregation and do so.

Then some people get up and walk away while the prayer is still going on. It may be they do not find it interesting. But interesting or not, our purpose after all is to utter the name of God. The rule is that till the prayer is ended—and it is I who end it—no one should leave.

The Charkha Sangh has a stock of old tri-colour flags valued at Rs. 2 lakhs. The Charkha Sangh is an organization of very poor

¹ Omissions as in the source

² The reference, presumably, is to "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel"; *vide* 24-7-1947.

people. I am its President. The people working in that organization are paid very little. They want to know what they are to do with the flags. There is not much difference between the new and the old flag except that the old one was a little more elegant. The old flag had the charkha. The new one has the wheel but not the spindle and the *mal*. The new flag does not render the old flag redundant. Even after the king is dead, the kingdom remains and old coins are not discarded for the new ones. When the new coins are issued old coins do not suffer any depreciation of value. Therefore, so long as there is even one old flag in stock at the Gandhi Ashram the two flags will have the same value. People who have old flags should not tear them up and if they want to buy more flags they should buy the same flags from the Gandhi Ashram so that Rs. 2 lakhs worth of goods are not wasted. Of course in future the Charkha Sangh will make flags only of the new design.

I have two questions before me today. A correspondent wants to know what will happen to the Congress after August 15 and what its programme will be. He says that till now anyone wishing to join the Congress had to swear an oath that he would fight for the freedom of India through truthful and non-violent means. Now that freedom of India has been won he wants to know what the position will be.

The Congress alone can tell what its programme will be. As a humble servant of the Congress I know that so long the task before us had been to fight foreign rule. We became rebels and we dislodged that rule. Outwardly we followed truth and non-violence. But inwardly there was violence in us. We practised hypocrisy and as a result we have to suffer the pain of mutual strife. Even today we are nurturing attitudes that will result in war and if this drift is not stopped we shall find ourselves in a conflict much more sanguinary than the Mutiny of 1857. India then did not have enough awakening and the mutiny was confined only to the sepoys. All that we did was to cut down Englishmen. In the end the British army overcame the mutineers. God forbid that the present strife should ever assume such dimensions. Therefore not only out of regard for truth and non-violence but also in the interest of the country, for which hundreds of thousands faced imprisonment and suffered hardships, I shall appeal to you not to prepare for warfare. For by so doing you will not only lose the country's freedom but you will send it back into slavery. England,

Russia, America or China—any of these countries may attack and enslave us. Do you, on the fifteenth of August, went to witness the spectacle of Hindus fighting Muslims and the Sikhs being crushed between the belligerents? I would rather that there was an earthquake and we all were crushed to death. Therefore since the Congress belongs to all India it should see to it that Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, and all the other communities are kept happy. I do not suggest that you should try to appease the Muslims or become cowards. I have never advocated cowardice. We should bravely pacify the people. This should be the chief programme of the Congress.

Although I have been President of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan twice it is my firm opinion that Hindi in Devanagari script can never become the national language of India. Today many of our leaders say that Gandhi talks nonsense. He is always out to appease the Muslims. Jinnah Saheb, however, while talking of two nations had accused me of wiping out Urdu. Thus today I am regarded as an enemy of both the languages. But I want to remain a friend of both. My claim that if there is any true friend of India, it is Gandhi, will be vindicated in the eyes of God. I can even today point out so many Hindus who neither know Hindi nor can write In Devanagari. We will have to adopt a language which is a mixture of Hindi and Urdu as the national language if Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs are to live here. I have no doubt that the language you speak can become a great language.

An Indonesian leader Sjahrir is on a visit here. He will meet Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Jinnah. India can give Indonesia its moral support which will be more effective than any military aid.

An Englishman says in a letter that now that India has been partitioned it will no longer have the status of a great nation. I do not agree, provided the two parts remain friendly with each other.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 274-7

192. LETTER TO HARIPRASAD DESAI

[Before July 25, 1947]¹

Why so jubilant? *Purna* swaraj is far off.

Have we got swaraj? Did swaraj mean only that the British rule should end? To my mind it was not so. For me Sabarmati is far off², Noakhali is near.

The Hindustan Times, 28-7-1947

193. LETTER TO SUNDERLAL

NEW DELHI,
July 25, 1947

BHAI SUNDERLAL,

I have your letter and the enclosed papers. Let me see when I can go through them. I am writing this at 4.50 in the morning.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

What a pity! Is there no other language than English for our work? Oh! what culture, what convenience!³

From Hindi: C.W. 10265. Courtesy: Purushottam Prasad

194. HINDI v. HINDUSTANI

Shrimati Perinbehn Captain writes :⁴

It was with shame, disgust and sorrow that I heard on the Delhi radio that our own group of men wished to dethrone our national language. . . Please write to me fully what you would like: (1) our Hindustani Committee to do, (2)

¹ The letter was reported under the date-line Ahmedabad, July 25.

² The addressee, an old associate, had asked Gandhiji to return to Ahmedabad as Gandhiji had pledged on the eve of the Dandi March to go back to Sabarmati Ashram only after India attained swaraj.

³ Gandhiji was referring to Hindustani Culture Society's letter-head used by the addressee.

⁴ Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

our honest and self-sacrificing Hindustani *pracharaks* to do, and (3) last but not least, those of our countrymen—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians and Jews, who have accepted and loved Hindustani as understood by the Congress resolution, to do . . .

Please try and prevent our friends from losing their vision through hatred and thereby losing all hopes of linking in true friendship and love the whole country from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Assam to Sind.

This represents the common grief of many nationalists like her, labelled congressmen or not. Since this letter was written the threat has been postponed for two months or until such time as the Constituent Assembly meets again. It is a wise postponement which gives time for passions to cool down in order to allow clear thinking.

Let the Hindu, by their conduct, direct or indirect, disprove the Muslim League statement that we, the Hindus and the Muslims of India, are not one nation but two and that too because of our respective religions. Congressmen have declared from the very inception of the Congress that India is one nation composed of men belonging to all religions and sects known in the whole world and it has proved the claim often enough at crucial moments in spite of many lapses which it would be easy to fling in its face.

Dadabhai Naoroji, whose grand-daughter has written the above letter with so much feeling, has become and still remains the only Grand Old Man of India.

Pherozeshah Mehta became the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency and after Dadabhai Naoroji's death ruled the Congress by right of service unselfishly rendered.

Who was Badruddin Tyabjee—at one time President of the Congress? Was he not a Mussalman every inch of him? Was he any the less an Indian? India has many religions but only one nationality and this, I dare to say, in spite of its two divisions. They may persist for a long time, but we must not be enemies one of the other for a single minute. It takes two to make a quarrel, but friendship does not require reciprocity. That which requires reciprocity is a bargain. This friendship, otherwise called love or non-violence, belongs not to the cowardly but to the brave and the seeing.

I entirely endorse Perinbehn's remark that not Hindi, highly Sanskritized written in the Nagari characters, nor Urdu, highly Persianized written in the Urdu characters, can even be the link between two or more communities in India. It can only be Hindustani

which is a fusion of the two forms robbed of their artificial character and written either in the Nagari or the Urdu characters. This natural fusion has been going on for many years and like all natural processes, it has been slow but nonetheless sure. It does not matter to me whether any Muslim brother reciprocates or not, by trying to understand my form of speech or writing, but surely I am richer for endeavouring to understand his form of speech and writing. Speaking to many Muslim divines I have not found it difficult to explain my meaning through Hindustani, though I have never attempted to pretend to speak their high-flown Persianized Urdu. They have as a rule been the losers and I invariably the gainer. What is true of me is true, I am sure, of many more.

Now about her main questions:

Every member of the Hindustani Committee is to live up to his creed, that is to say, he or she should himself or herself master both the scripts and be familiar with a mixture of the two forms, Hindi and Urdu. This will happen when both are diligently studied in their simple forms. And when this first requisite is fulfilled, he or she must try to induce others to acquire the knowledge.

Secondly, if the Hindustani *pracharaks* are honest and sacrificing they are bound to infect their surroundings with the spirit that actuates them.

Thirdly, those who have accepted Hindustani as the national language of the whole of India and love it, have to prove their acceptance by speaking and writing only in Hindustani, when it is meant for those who do not know the mother tongue. Thus a Tamilian will speak only in Tamil to a fellow Tamilian, but with a non-Tamilian he will make use of Hindustani and not English as is now the wont.

NEW DELHI, July 25, 1947

Harijan, 3-8-1947

195. SCHEDULED CASTES

A correspondent writes:

If the Scheduled Castes of x area are included in Pakistan, they would probably have no alternative other than embracing Islam.

The correspondent is well educated and is an M.L.A. The question immediately arises as to what will happen to the Scheduled Caste member in the Pakistan areas where they are not living in

contiguous areas. Will they all have to embrace Islam? I can only say that their religion must be very poor stuff if it admits of change like one's clothes. Religion (binding faith), is made of sterner stuff; it is a deep personal matter, more personal than honour. To be true, it must be able to defy coercion of the extremest type.

So much for those who are in fear of compulsory conversion. But what about those who inspire men and women with such fear? I have heard it seriously argued that people have often mistaken voluntary for compulsory conversion. I think the argument does not carry any conviction. People have been known in all ages to resort to conversion when they have known their friends, relations or neighbours to profess conversion under duress. When, therefore, there is suspicion all round, conversion should be stopped altogether. Here I remind myself of the argument of the correspondent used only the other day that my 'brave' words about personal religion would be all right if they were confined to *sannyasis* but not to householders who were exposed to a variety of temptations from life. Though I do not endorse this argument, for it weakens those on whose behalf it is led, I cannot help feeling that there is considerable force in it, especially when it is made applicable to members of the Scheduled Castes who have been ill-treated by their fellow Hindus and would, therefore, yield to compulsion in the hope of avoiding ill-treatment from their fellows who arrogate to themselves superiority, falsely so-called. Frequently this compulsion assumes subtle forms, as for instance, free grants of land or offer of service even beyond merit.

NEW DELHI, July 25, 1947

Harijan, 3-8-1947

196. LETTER TO PERINBEHN CAPTAIN

NEW DELHI,
July 25, 1947

CHI. PERINBEHN,¹

Your letter. You will see what I spoke yesterday on Hindustani.² You and I must work hard, even unto death for the purpose. Let us not lose heart.

Make an effort to speak and write Hindustani in both the scripts.

¹ The superscription is in Devanagari.

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 24-7-1947.

The agony is postponed for two months. Much can be done by earnest people during the breathing time.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

197. LETTER TO GERALD J. ROCK

BHANGI COLONY,

NEW DELHI,

July 25, 1947

DEAR MR. ROCK,

What you ask for is essentially American. I must confess my ignorance of *La Prensa* and in any case I do not feel inclined to lend myself to self-advertisement or the advertisement of a newspaper or an institution. I have come to the conclusion that men and things must be judged on their own merits and not on certificates of merit, however well-earned they may be.

When I went to London as a lad, I was brought up to think that I must procure certificates about all kinds of things and I had some. On my way back, I tore all the certificates I had had from friends about various things I had done or had not done and consigned them to the sea.

Yours sincerely,

GERALD J. ROCK, ESQ.

GENERAL MANAGER FOR D. E. INDIA

UNITED PRESS ASSOCIATIONS

MUBARAK MANZIL

1ST FLOOR, APOLLO STREET

BOMBAY

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

198. LETTER TO BHAKTAPRASAD

NEW DELHI,
July 25, 1947

BHAI BHAKTAPRASAD,

I have your letter. I wish you all success in your work of service.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

199. A LETTER

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
July 25, 1947,

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. However, I am very sorry I am not able just now to answer questions such as you have asked. please excuse. I am, of course, hoping that the French nation will put no obstacle whatsoever in the way of Indians in the French possessions in India merging in the Indian Union.

M.

GRAND HOTEL

OLD DELHI

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

200. A LETTER

July 25, 1947

It is true that a great calamity has befallen us, but if we think deeply we will see that it contains a unique opportunity for working for the prosperity and moral regeneration of the country. How I wish we realized this!

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 406

201. A LETTER

July 25, 1947

Why are you so sensitive? He who wishes to serve cannot afford to be sensitive. We townspeople have done such great injustice to the people of the villages that if they merely abuse us and stop at that, in my view they are letting us off very lightly. If, therefore, you bear with their abuses and in atonement for your sins patiently and selflessly try to become one with the villages, you will have no need to come to me.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 407

202. A LETTER

July 25, 1947

In the first place, if people change their religion as they change their clothes every day or every hour, religion will lose all its power. One's religion represents the priceless spirit of resolution arising from deep faith. If the strength of resolution is rooted in the heart, it will not yield or submit to any amount of force or coercion.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 407

203. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Rajendra Babu tells me that he has received some 50,000 postcards, between 25,000 and 30,000 letters and many thousands of telegrams demanding a ban on cow-slaughter. I spoke to you about this before. Why this flood of telegrams and letters? They have had no effect. I have another telegram which says that a friend has started a fast for this cause. In India no law can be made to ban cow-slaughter. I do not doubt that Hindus are forbidden the slaughter of cows. I have been long pledged to serve the cow but how can my religion also be

the religion of the rest of the Indians? It will mean coercion against those Indians who are not Hindus. We have been shouting from the house-tops that there will be no coercion in the matter of religion. We have been reciting verses from the Koran at the prayer. But if anyone were to force me to recite these verses I would not like it. How can I force anyone not to slaughter cows unless he is himself so disposed? It is not as if there were only Hindu in the Indian Union. There are Muslims, Parsis, Christians and other religious groups here. The assumption of the Hindus that India now has become the land of the Hindus is erroneous. India belongs to all who live here. If we stop cow-slaughter by law here and the very reverse happens in Pakistan, what will be the result? Supposing they say Hindus would not be allowed to visit temples because it was against *Shariat* to worship idols? I see God even in a stone but how do I harm others by this belief? If therefore I am stopped from visiting temples I would still visit them. I shall therefore suggest that these telegrams and letters should cease. It is not proper to waste money on them.

Besides some prosperous Hindus themselves encourage cow-slaughter. They do not do it with their own hands. But who sends all the cows to Australia and other countries where they are slaughtered and whence shoes manufactured from cow-hide are sent back to India? I know an orthodox Vaishnava Hindu. He used to feed this children on beef soup. On my asking him why he did that he said there was no sin in consuming beef as medicine. We really do not stop to think what true religion is and merely go about shouting that cow-slaughter should be banned by law. In villages Hindus make bullocks carry huge burdens which almost crush the animals. Is it not cow-slaughter, albeit slowly carried out? I shall therefore suggest that the matter should not be pressed in the Constituent Assembly.

Where trees are in abundance, rainfall too is abundant. The foliage in a forest attracts precipitation from clouds like milk from the udder of a cow. It is a law of nature that where there are no trees there is no rainfall and the land soon becomes a desert. I spent many years in Johannesburg. The climate there is very salubrious. After they planted trees there, rainfall too has been favourable. Therefore the programme of tree-planting that the authorities in Delhi have started is a very good thing. Those who have no spare patch of ground can still

grow vegetables in earthen pots.

I have been asked, 'Since in view of the atrocities being perpetuated by Muslims it is difficult to decide which of the Muslims are to be trusted, what should be our attitude towards the Muslims in the Indian Union? What should the non-Muslims in Pakistan do?'

I have already answered this question. I again repeat that all the religions of India today are being put to the test. It has to be seen how the various religious groups such as the Sikhs, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians conduct themselves and how they carry on the affairs of India. Pakistan may be said to belong to Muslims but the Indian Union belongs to all. If you shake off cowardice and become brave you will not have to consider how you are to behave towards the Muslims. But today there is cowardice in us. For this I have already accepted the blame. I am still wondering how my 30 years' teaching has been so ineffective. Why did I assume, to begin with, that non-violence could be a weapon of cowards? Even now if we can really become brave and love the Muslims, the Muslims will have to stop and think what they could gain by practising treachery against us. They will return love for love. Can we keep the crores of Muslims in the Indian Union as slaves? He who makes slaves of others himself becomes a slave. If we answer sword with sword, the lathi with lathi and kick with kick, we cannot expect that things will be different in Pakistan. We shall then lose our freedom as easily as we have gained it.

I like the statement that has been issued on behalf of the future Governments of India and Pakistan. But I wish to see it implemented. However, we cannot assume that they will not do in Pakistan what the statement says. To assume this will mean preparing for war. The two armies will confront each other and the two-nation theory of Mr. Jinnah will have been proved true. I pray to God that He may not let us drift into such a situation.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 277-80

204. DISCUSSION WITH A CONGRESSMAN¹

NEW DELHI,
[Before July 26, 1947]²

A Congressman came to Gandhiji the other day asking him how he would reorganize the Congress under the new set-up. Gandhiji was emphatic that if the Congress was to live as a potent force, it must become a body of constructive workers. Constructive work, he knew, had never been over-popular. He thought that it was never more necessary than now. Without the backing of constructive work and penetrating the villages, their legislators would practically be idle and the voters would be exposed to the machinations of the vote-catchers. The labour vote would presently be a drop in the ocean in the face of adult suffrage both for men and women. It was probably the boldest experiment known to the world on a vast scale. Unless it was well planned and all attendant dangers anticipated and provided against, adult suffrage might well prove a deluge drowning the whole country. He (Gandhiji) knew nothing so effective for the purpose as a well-thought-out constructive programme.

Harijan, 3-8-1947

205. LETTER TO SATISH

5 a. m., July 26, 1947

CHI. SATISH,

You are entitled to write to me. Now please write to Jawaharlalji the briefest note explaining what you want, etc. Then just wait in patience.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ The discussion is extracted from Dr. Sushila Nayyar's "Congressmen and Constructive Work", reported under the date-line New Delhi, 26-7-1947. It appeared under "Notes".

² *ibid*

206. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

July 26, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your postcard. It is 5 o'clock in the morning. You must firmly tell Dwarkadas that, if the diagnosis is correct, he will live only for a few days. Bear cheerfully whatever happens. You are on trial. God will see you through. I hope you got my airmail letter.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

207. *LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA*

July 26, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

Your letter. It is now 5.05 a. m. At 5.15 I go out for my walk. I hope that the cholera will subside. I do wish to reach Noakhali before the 15th of next month.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

208. *LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER*

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

MY DEAR HORACE,

I have yours of 22nd.

It is high time we met. I am not here now long I hope. I should be leaving in two or three days. Patna for four or five days and then Noakhali just before August 15.

You will know my programme and see where we should meet.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 1446

209. *LETTER TO CARL HEATH*

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,

July 26, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I was much touched by your letter¹ of 19th instant. I wholly agree with you that the number of years a person lives in this world is of no consequence whether to him or to the world but even a day spent in true service of mankind is of supreme and only importance. I further agree with you that hope and faith are as often as not synonymous terms. Of course good is eternal, evil transitory.

I must abide by my statement: there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Please do not look at my bad imperfect English but consider the heart of my meaning. I am sure you will agree with me that a man of peace is out of place in a society full of strife. He must know this fact and yet work and act in that society. I wonder if I have at all made my meaning clear. There is no such thing as surrender in me to the spirit of evil.

I do hope that your physical illness is under control.

Love to you all.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 1052; also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 323

210. *LETTER TO MECMANAGE*

July 26, 1947

DEAR MECMANAGE,

Your letter. My advice is: you should settle down in Ceylon and quietly serve the Ceylonese. The way of ahimsa is narrow.

If I know you, you will not be happy in the Ashram. Marry by all means. But marry a simple Ceylonese girl and see how you and she feel.

Yours,

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ The addressee, an English Quaker, could not agree with Gandhiji's reply to Richard B. Gregg; *vide* "From America", 22-6-1947.

211. LETTER TO BASANT K. DAS

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

DEAR BASANT K. DAS,

Your letter. I seem to agree with all you say. But do see me even tonight after prayer and walk with me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

212. LETTER TO DR. CHOUDHARI

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

DEAR DR. CHOUDHARI,

Many thanks for your letter. You will be surprised that I have no photographs of myself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DUBLIN
IRELAND¹

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

213. LETTER TO MOTWANI

July 26, 1947

DEAR MOTWANI,

I have your letter of the 18th inst. I have not mixed up socialism with sociology. I must confess I have read very little if anything at all about sociology.

Socialism as conceived in the West may go against Indian culture. Then it is faulty but socialism as defined by me in the articles you have read, is a living thing and true. It is undoubtedly an economic doctrine but not based on class warfare.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ The address is in Devanagari.

214. A LETTER

July 26, 1947

I have your letter. If a man believes that a *peepul* tree is haunted by a ghost, he will not get rid of his fear by going to the tree again and again. Only if he visits the tree several times in the company of a person who does not share his fear and nothing happens to him, will his fear go. This can happen in the case of *brahmacharya* only if a man of conventional ideas lives in the company of a perfect *brahmachari* from time to time. But then, how are we to find such a *brahmachari*? And who will accept such a claim by anybody?

The example of the *peepul* tree and the ghost is applicable only up to a certain point. I hope you know that I have never claimed that I am a perfect *brahmachari*.

When shall I know that state supreme,

When will the knots outer and inner snap?

I write this for a seeker. Just now it is not germane to go further than this. If the seeker finds his path, it might be pertinent to go further.

I have no doubt that if the Congress wishes to preserve its strength, it must vigorously pursue the constructive programme.

You worry about me from your sick-bed. But there is One who worries about you and me and everybody else; why don't you leave everything to that Almighty? And if I am destined to give still more service, nothing will happen to me. For you, prayer is the only unfailing remedy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 416

215. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR,
NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Two Khaksars came to see me yesterday. One of them wept bitterly. The other complained that although an official had assured them that now nothing would be done to them since they were going away, yet there was firing in the mosque the same evening, that many were killed, that an old man of seventy received seven bullets, that no one knew how many had died and how many had survived and that for three days the Khaksars were kept there without food and water, unable even to go out to answer calls of nature.

I was stunned to hear all this. I rebuked them. I said it could not be true. I said, "Sardar told me only today that since the Khaksars would not leave the mosque police officials had to enter the mosque, that they did so with the permission of the Imam, that the action that was taken was ordered by the Muslim officer, that no violence had been used, nothing beyond tear-gas had been fired and that no one had been killed. I therefore cannot swallow what you say." They answered, "If that is what your Sardar says, how can we hope to be believed? What use asking for justice now? One day you will know. Truth will be out." I said, "If I hear of a wrong being done I do not hide it even for the sake of my dear ones. I shall say no more. I will do my duty." Now if there is anything in this please let me know.¹

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1, AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 357-8

¹ According to *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II (p. 331), in his reply dated August 11, the addressee said: "The whole story . . . is a fabrication and no Khaksar has died . . . Khaksars were plotting to stage a demonstration during . . . independence day (August 15) . . . not to allow the Congress flag to be flown and to create a disturbance and indulge in violence. The Commissioner (a Muslim), therefore, used tear-gas in the mosque and arrested them.... The Khaksars want Delhi and Agra to be included in Pakistan, also Ajmer.... they want to establish a front in Delhi and create disturbance.... do not want... the Commissioner... Delhi. They take sanctuary in mosques. Local Muslims are not giving them any support."

216. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I have your letter. At the moment it seems there is some improvement in Manu's condition. She gets clear motions. There is no pain and no fever. She eats well. But I have to force her to take complete rest. She is fidgeting to resume her service of me. But I do not let her. She is being given no medicine. She is under Sushilabehn's treatment, and the latter believes, as I do, that the only medicine she requires is complete rest. Manu has now begun to realize this.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

217. LETTER TO MAHESH DATT MISHRA

July 26, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

You have not returned the book you had borrowed from Brijkrishna. Why? It belongs to the library here. Send it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6723. Also C. W. 4467. Courtesy: Mahesh Datt Mishra

218. TALK WITH KELLY

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

When such a mighty power is dislodged a country's condition becomes even worse. We shall see this if we examine the history of the world. Compared to that nothing has happened in India. That does not mean that our present inhuman conduct is justified. It is really shameful. I am pained because we have sullied the noble method by which without shedding a drop of blood we made a great power leave

in friendship. I also say that our countrymen are very simple at heart and that the British have taken advantage of that. We are so stupid. Perhaps you do not know that the person who treated me as a son and took me to Africa was an orthodox Muslim. If you go to Bengal, the U.P., Gujarat, or the Punjab, you will find that Muslims speak the same regional language. It is our good fortune and the grace of God that this poison has not spread to our villages.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 419-20

219. TALK WITH DR. SYED MAHMUD¹

NEW DELHI,

July 26, 1947

I can understand the five of us working in different directions and thinking in different ways, but how harmful it will be to you and to the country if we behave as if we were one another's rivals? All of you should think about this. It is not that such things are happening only in Bihar. That is so more or less in every province. If the five of us cannot work in amity and are not frank with each other, my attempt to solve this great question of Hindu-Muslim unity is bound to fail. However, my cry is "do or die". I said this to Ghanshyam Das² just now. I am sure about myself. But what will happen to the country?

Moreover, we are now filled with another kind of arrogance. We disregard the old and experienced diwans and other officials of the States and criticize them in public. I have also received the complaint that when they come to see us our behaviour towards them is very unbecoming. If it is true, then one day we shall be sorry for our arrogance. We should utilize the services of everyone. After all they are our countrymen, aren't they? They have not become our enemies because they served the British Government. How a person like Girijashankar Bajpai abused me in 1942! What poisonous falsehoods he spread at the time Ba died!³ Should we spurn him if he wants to help us now? The loss shall be ours if we lose such an intelligent and

¹ Minister for Development and Transport, Bihar Government

² G. D. Birla

³ *Vide* 7th footnote to "Letter to Additional Secretary, Home Department, Government of India", 4-3-1944.

experienced person. Please remember that they are at heart patriots. Only, for certain reasons they were not able to make sacrifices. If we seek the advice of such old and experienced persons, they will show their genius. They will easily be able to do what we can't. We are novices in the matter of administration. Our country will suffer if we don't take their help. So we will have to forget our old prejudices and work in unity.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 418-9

220. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I personally feel that a barrister and a scavenger should get equal wages. But it is easier said than done. And it is not something that can be accomplished through strikes. We should for the time being accept and assimilate the rise in salaries recommended by the Pay Commission¹ and then proceed to build up public opinion in favour of the principle of equality of wages. Strikes too are governed by a logic. Nothing is gained by indiscriminate strikes. Today unfortunately strikes are sweeping the country. There are strikes even where people have their own governments. I think that under British rule we did not have so many strikes. Today I have received a telegram from Calcutta and I also see from newspapers that the employees of the Accountant-General's office have gone on a pen-down strike. The strike includes the employees of the Post and Telegraph department which operates not for the good of any particular individual but for the good of the community. It is true that it has some big officers getting huge salaries and it is unjust that the members of the subordinate staff should be paid such low salaries. Why should the difference in salaries be so great as it is? This was started by the British and we liked it and continued it. But if people

¹ The report of the Central Pay Commission appointed by the Government of India was announced in New Delhi on May 16, 1947. A minimum basic salary of Rs. 30 per month and a maximum salary of Rs. 2,000 per month, to be relaxed only in the case of a few selected posts, were among its chief recommendations.

were to put down their pens, what would become of India? If through strikes they bring about a little rise in salaries it would not be a great thing. The method is wrong and is harmful to the country. The present plight of India brings to my mind the story of the goose that laid golden eggs. The owner of the goose wishing to have all the eggs at once killed her. As a result not only did he get no more eggs but he lost the goose as well. The administration that has come into our hands is somewhat like that goose. If we want to get out of it all the eggs together it will surely die and so shall we.

Strikes as I have said have a logic. I first tried the weapon of strikes in South Africa. Indians there were treated as coolies. Strikes had then a meaning because they had no other way of making themselves heard. Therefore anyone who knows anything about strikes will only say to the strikers everywhere that the path they have chosen will be their own undoing. India has already been partitioned and if the strikes continue God alone knows what will become of India. It is our duty quietly to go on doing the work that we have been doing. As a result of the recommendations of the Pay Commission the emoluments of the low-paid employees have been considerably raised. If you go on demanding more and more India will go bankrupt. It is true that the Government receives crores of rupees in revenue but that money cannot be spent for the benefit of only a handful of people. The largest share should go to the villagers from whom it comes.

Recently there has been a workers' strike in Bombay. The Government there had already given one or two crores of rupees to the workers, but they were not satisfied and in order to show their strength resorted to a token strike. What they ought to have done was to accept what they had been given and set about cultivating public opinion in their favour. But they chose the way of strike. The Congress itself has become divided into many factions and I am told that one of the factions was behind the strike. These token strikes, even if they last only a couple of hours, show a kind of arrogance. The party organizing such a strike seeks thereby to demonstrate its hold on the workers. What purpose otherwise can such a strike serve? The country can gain nothing from such strikes. Therefore what the workers of Bombay did seems to me wrong.

Must we destroy ourselves through such strikes? The motive behind them is not service of the country but selfishness pure and

simple. The British have hardly left the country. The reins of the Government have hardly come in our hands and we have started fighting over money. I hold in principle that a barrister and a scavenger should receive equal payment. But a barrister is able to snatch more and we gladly let him. I too was once a barrister but I found the idea of thus making money repugnant and I became a Bhangi. But where are we to find men who will have the talent to work as Governors, barristers, traders and the like? And who will be satisfied with the *e* wages of a scavenger? Even a tailor is able to earn four or five rupees a day. But who will pay a scavenger that much? The need today is for man to change his nature, to cultivate generosity and not to cut other people's throats to further his self-interest. If the assassinations in Burma cannot teach us a lesson, then what is going to be the plight of India and the world?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 281-3

221. DISCUSSION WITH AN AMERICAN PACIFIST¹

NEW DELHI,

[Before July 27, 1947]²

A young American pacifist came to see Gandhiji some days ago. He had brought a note of introduction from Miss Muriel Lester. He told Gandhiji how she had carried the message of peace to young Americans during the war and explained to them why they should stay out of the war. He asked Gandhiji how young American pacifists should behave today.

Gandhiji's reply was that they should behave as they would if the war was still going on. Even if they are a few individuals, they should not hesitate to do the right thing. The few would multiply into many.

The Friend was eloquent about Miss Lester. He had great admiration for her. He thought she was one of the greatest women. Gandhiji said:

She herself would contradict it. There are many great women, but few good women. If you had said that she was a very good woman, you would have been right. A true pacifist's language must

¹ The discussion is extracted from Sushila Nayar's "Notes", sub-title, "Good or Great?", dated New Delhi, 27-7-1947.

² *ibid*

be correct and thought exact. If you want to play your part effectively in this movement against war, you have to model your life accordingly. The movement against war is intrinsically sound. No one can question the value of peace. Yet it has not made enough headway. The fault lies with the pacifists.

The friend turned back to what Gandhiji called inexact language on his part because he had described Miss Lester as one of the greatest women. He said he had called her great because she was good.

Gandhiji retorted that he never knew that goodness and greatness were synonymous terms. A man might be great, yet not good.

Harijan, 10-8-1947

222. THE NATIONAL FLAG¹

The National Flag has been in existence since 1921. Those who say that what was so far the Congress Flag has now become the National Flag of India make a meaningless fuss and at the same time insult the Congress. The Congress has been national from its very inception. It has never been sectional. It embraces all sections and all Indians. Of course, it is open to the Congress to become sectional and commit suicide. If God's wrath descends upon it the calamity may well overtake it. Nevertheless, many will be praying that such a misfortune may not overtake it. Is it possible that Jinnah's jibe that the Congress is national only in name but Hindu in action, will be proved just?

Here, however, we shall confine ourselves to the Flag. What has happened is that, having acquiesced in the division of India, the Congress has nevertheless delivered it from the British domination and has taken over the larger part. Therefore, the flag under which the Congress has fought so many non-violent battles will now be the flag of the Government of free India. I see no haughtiness in this. The joy that one finds in climbing the Himalayas, the views one sees, are not to be had on reaching the top. The pleasure lies in the journey, not in arriving at the destination. Similarly the pleasure that it gave us to fight under the National Flag has now come to an end.

I have just reread an article I wrote for *Young India* of April 13, 1921. I advise the reader to glance through that article. It is

¹ A translation of this was also published in *Harijan* of the same date.

reproduced in this issue. The modified Flag has value only if it carries the significance attached to it. If it does not, it is to me valueless.

There is reason for this caution. Some say that the original flag has gone, that a new age has begun and with it have come new ways, and that the flag will be one to befit this new age. I have not known a worthy son to whom his mother appeared ugly. It may be possible to gild pure gold, but who can make his mother more beautiful? Hence, in my opinion nothing would have been lost if no changes had been made in the original flag. People are saying ‘the charkha was old women’s solace and Gandhi’s toy; but swaraj is not for old women. It is for the warrior and we therefore want the Asoka emblem with lions and if the lions do not find a place on the flag, it is merely for artistic considerations: they cannot be reproduced on cloth. But the lions must feature somewhere or other. We have had enough of cowardliness. Nobody has yet had the experience of the non-violence of the brave. We shall talk about it when we see it. It is the lion who is the king of the forest. Sheep and goats are his food. We are tired of wearing khadi. Now we shall wear clothes made of glass. Our forefathers used cloth to cover themselves. We wear clothes to adorn ourselves. Clothing therefore should be such as will show to advantage every limb of the body. The improved flag has no need of khadi. We do not want to disfigure with khadi the shop windows of our towns. The poor in the villages may by all means wear khadi. We shall not treat it as an offence. Old women in their huts may spin away on the charkha. In this new age this should be considered a favour.’

I will refuse to salute the flag that is modified on the above lines however artistic it may appear.

Happily there is the other side which says: ‘The new flag is merely an improved design of the original. The spinning-wheel continues on it. That it is without the spindle and the *mal*, is a failing of art. A picture after all is only a picture. It always leaves something for the imagination. The spinning-wheel in a picture has no slivers and no spinners at work on it. These are left for the imagination to fill in. This rule applies as well to the improved design of the flag. Thus conceived, the improvement must appear innocent. This tricolour flag with the wheel will certainly consist of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. Our country has called it khadi whether it is woven from hand-spun cotton or silk. When the original conception is kept intact

there is no harm in making a concession to art. When the country was at war with a foreign power, art lay in being engaged in the battle. Now that it has ended in success, art must have a place, though perhaps, a subordinate one. Otherwise we shall not be able to perpetuate the memory of the struggle.’ This is another interpretation.

If any further interpretations not inconsistent with this are added I see no harm in it. One may see some other subtle meaning in the same three colours. Those who see unity in the diversity of the universe may find it in the three colours. Looking at the wheel some may recall that Prince of Peace, King Asoka, ruler of an empire, who renounced power. He represented all faiths; he was an embodiment of compassion. Seeing the charkha in his *chakra* adds to the glory of the Charkha. Asoka’s *chakra* represents eternally revolving Divine Law of ahimsa.

NEW DELHI, July 27, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 3-8-1947

223. LETTER TO AKBARBHAI CHAVDA

NEW DELHI,

July 27, 1947

CHI. AKBAR,

I have your long letter and also the short one. I have given it to Sardar to read.¹ It is good and gives all the information. If necessary, I shall write more. These days I get no time at all. Now about the second. The story of my going to Gujarat is nothing but rumour. If I could go, I would certainly visit you to see your work. Perhaps the rest of my life will be spent in Bihar and Noakhali. We are all in God’s hands, aren’t we?

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI AKBAR MIAN,
KANZAR
SAMA, *via* PALANPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3240

¹ *Vide* “Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel”, 18-7-1947.

224. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
July 27, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

You are quite right. I can do nothing in a matter such as this. To the innocent, punishment is like a reward, and the guilty repays a part of his debt through it. Both, therefore, should shed fear and appear in the court without any lawyers. I will go through the draft. If God requires my services. He will let me live not a hundred and twenty-five but a hundred and fifty years, and if He doesn't require them any longer He may take me away even today. One must live as Rama bids.

Blessings from
BAPU

PROF. VALJI G. DESAI
14 GANESHWADI
POONA-4

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7503. Courtesy: V. G. Desai

225. A LETTER

July 27, 1947

It is a great mistake for a man to believe that he is always right and others are always wrong. Nothing in the world is wholly perfect and nothing wholly imperfect. Nothing is wholly good or wholly bad. It is we who think things to be perfect or imperfect, good or bad. How I wish you would learn to look at things in this way.

I shall most probably leave Delhi at the end of this month. Where I go will be decided tomorrow. I must reach Noakhali on August 15. But everything rests in the hands of God. . . .¹

If we do not pay vigilant attention to the villages, I do not know what will happen. After all, how many prosperous cities and towns are there in India? No more than can be counted on one's fingers. They do not make the country prosperous and happy. India means her

¹ Omission as in the source

seven hundred thousand villages. If there was but one worker selflessly working in each village, then in a year's time India's face would be transformed. But unfortunately "a worker" has now come to mean something exactly the opposite of this. I can see from the letters that I receive that a kind of reaction has set in among the workers. Without dwelling further on this point, let us hope that everybody will work with God as witness. I am quite well. Chi. Manudi also has improved a little, though not quite as much as one would wish. Probably we shall go to Kashmir and I hope that she will benefit from the magic climate there and improve during the two days' visit. Here is Rajendra Babu coming, and I am also being reminded by Lady Watch that it is time for my walk. So I obey her and stop here.

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 427

226. A TALK TO VISITORS¹

NEW DELHI,

July 27, 1947

That is what I say. We shall have to give the country a different lead. For this we shall have to train a whole army of workers. Their sole concern should be to mix with the people, familiarize themselves with their hardships and make them understand that now the country is theirs and the Ministers are people elected by them. It is an insult to the people rather than the Ministers if there are such demonstrations. However, if there is injustice done to the people, they can take the Minister concerned by the ear and remove him. We should now cultivate that kind of power. The Ministers are there not to rule over the people but to serve them. I gave the same advice to the Socialists. But even a person like ...² does not understand. I do hope to convince

¹ The visitors requested Gandhiji to issue specific instructions regarding strikes, etc. "Our own teaching," they said, "is being used against us."

² Omissions as in the source

him though. The Congress should forget its struggle against the British and launch a movement to educate the public in democracy. We had gained one thing in our struggle against the British and that was that we could speak with one voice and say to the British that they must quit India. There was none in India who said: 'Let them stay'... Similarly we must now say with one voice that we shall make our country prosperous, we shall not let even a single person go unfed and unclothed, we shall make our lives lofty, peaceful and happy. We should be prepared to make any sacrifices necessary to that end. In our struggle against the British we risked our lives. Thousands of people died. But that will not be so in our new movement. The only thing that will be wanted is that the rich should give of their riches. But the method of extracting money from them will not be the one suggested by the Socialists and Communists like Lohia, Ramgopal and others. Their method will lead to the moral and economic degradation of the labourers rather than that of the capitalists. Poor workers are like the sheep. They follow whichever way they are led. If they take to the ways of duplicity, destruction, plunder, it will be difficult to bring them to the right path. Besides, if they continue going on strike, they will go without wages. It is solely out of a desire for cheap leadership that these so-called leaders have brought the working class under their influence.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 427-8

227. MESSAGE TO ARMY OFFICERS

NEW DELHI,
July 27, 1947

I have only one message for you. You have got your guns and sten-guns and you are proficient in killing men and all living things. Instead of that you should learn the art of using the sickle, ploughing the land and producing the food necessary for men and other living beings. Forget violence and gain proficiency in non-violence. Maybe from this you will think that I have gone mad. But look at the way Capt. Shahnawaz and Col. Jiwansingh live and work today. They have ceased to be army officers and have become public servants and farmers. Thus they have become more powerful. They are themselves happy and have made people happy. One of them is a Muslim and is

doing wonderful work in Bihar. The other, in spite of being a Punjabi and orthodox Sikh, has identified himself with the Muslims of Noakhali. I mention just these two names because I happen to remember them. But many such persons have come to me. They have changed their lives and have become happy. Such a time is now coming. You note down in your diary that the world will curse the scientist who has made the atom bomb. People have wearied of bloodshed. They would like to follow the path of non-violence and peace. India alone can give a lesson in that. America has great riches. Even other countries have more money than we have. Because they have money, they are investing in devices of mass destruction. That is why our scriptures and the *Gita* teach us not to hoard wealth. The right way of becoming happy is the observance of truth, non-violence, non-hoarding, celibacy, non-stealing and physical labour. This is as true as a geometrical theorem. Our army will lead the world if it adopts non-violence instead of violence.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 429-30

228. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
July 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

There are more than 800 princely States in India. Some of them are very large and some very small. Recently the Viceroy had summoned the Princes to Delhi. So long the States had functioned under the protective umbrella of the British Empire which has now been taken away. The Viceroy spoke to them in very gentle terms. I liked his speech. He advised these rulers that they should all opt for either India or Pakistan. His speech was not a brief one. What hurt me was that in his lengthy address there was not even a mention of the States' people. The relationship of the British Government was with the rulers of the States. The subjects of the States did not figure anywhere. Therefore, when paramountcy lapses these States legally become independent and the British Government cannot interfere, but after all the rulers have certain duties and obligations. The States' subjects can no longer be ruled at the point of the bayonet. But the security they have under the British protection is no longer there.

Take some large State—Cochin, for instance. It has an extensive sea coast. It cannot enter into treaty relations with the whole world in order to ensure its security and it was the duty of the Viceroy to point this out. I would have been happy if he had somewhere in his speech also mentioned the States' People. Since I was born in a Kathiawar State as a subject I have a right to say something about this question. Formerly if a ruler wanted so much as to employ a Dewan he had to seek permission from the Viceroy. They certainly did not like this. If, therefore, they now have been deprived of British protection, they are also free of British pressure. But there is now pressure from their people. So, if the rulers want to stay as rulers, they can only do so as servants of their people. They should seek the advice and co-operation of their Prajamandals in the work of administration. It is true that the Prajamandals have no experience of administration. But then even the leaders of the Central Government have had no previous experience of administration. This does not mean that the rulers should nominate twenty or twenty-five persons and call them Prajamandal. They should do whatever they do with sincerity. So far as the question of their joining Pakistan or the Indian Union is concerned, regard will have to be paid to the geographical situation. A State in Gujarat or Kathiawar cannot unite itself with Bengal. The States thus cannot free themselves from the constraints of geography.

It is curious that the British have not said that the paramountcy which they had so long exercised now vests in India and Pakistan. This has complicated the problem both for India and Pakistan. I must say that the rulers are now on their trial. They may remain rulers but they must be servants of the people in fact.

I am saying this not because the Viceroy has complained to me about the rulers or that Jawaharlal or Rajendra Babu have said anything to me. The fact is that people are now watching what the Indian Government and Pakistan Government will do?

But what is the plight of the States' People? Are they happy at the thought of the coming freedom? Will they celebrate the day of independence? As for me I shall fast on the day and my prayer will be: 'O God, now that India is free do not destroy her.'

The States form one-fourth of the area of the country. Will the 10 crore subjects of the States celebrate August 15 as Independence Day? If the Princes declare that they will from now on be servants of their people, then all will be well. Then the taxes they raise from the

people will be for the uplift of the people. They will return their revenue ten times over not in the form of money but in the form of schools, hospitals, roads, gardens and public parks.

Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel have made no comment on the speech of the Viceroy though they could not be very happy in their hearts. But why should we have any poison in our hearts ? It is like a game in which all one's cards must be placed on the table. Only when there is no poison in our hearts can we genuinely celebrate August 15 as Independence Day.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 284-6

229. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

5 a. m., July 28, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have had to prepare the material this time in considerable haste. Please, therefore, be careful there. If the men are competent, there will be no difficulty. We may have to decide to close down *Harijan* altogether. If I have not so far intimated to you this view, I do so now. I have no heart in some of the things which our leaders are doing today. At the same time I cannot see myself opposing them too strongly. But what else can I do if the journal is continued ? And without me you people don't wish to run it. Nor does Sardar. This is the debate going on in my mind.

Blessings from

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9982. Also C. W. 6956. Courtesy: Jivanji D.Desai

230. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
July 28, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

It is my silence day. Hence this infliction in the shape of my handwriting.

Pandit Nehru told me last night that as there were hitches about my going to Kashmir, he had decided to go even if only for two

or three days.¹ Thus I am now free to go to Bihar and thence to Noakhali. Before doing so, I might go for two days to the Punjab. I should like to leave Delhi tomorrow. You wanted me to see you before leaving. If the need is still felt, I am at your disposal tomorrow. You will then name the hour.

May I say I deeply appreciated your wish to go to an unpretentious house as the chosen Governor-General of the millions of the half-famished villagers of the nation. I hope it will be possible to carry out the wish.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 275

231. NOTE TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR, NEW DELHI,

July 28, 1947

I have already written to you—haven't I—that I do not wish to go to Kashmir and that Jawaharlal will go instead. Now I have a letter² from the Viceroy saying I may go but not Jawaharlal. I therefore cannot make up my mind. What shall I do?³

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 359

¹ Replying the same day, Lord Mountbatten said he was told by Kak that he had informed Gandhiji as to “why the Kashmir Government were so very anxious not to have the visit from a political leader which might result in the spread of violence from the Punjab border”. The Viceroy added that Kak would “greatly prefer” Gandhiji to Jawaharlal Nehru, if Gandhiji “felt it was essential” that either of them should go. The addressee urged that Gandhiji’s “visit at this moment would be better than a visit from Jawaharlal Nehru”, for he really did not know “how the future Prime Minister can be spared from Delhi with only 18 days left for him to take over power”. Ultimately, it was Gandhiji who went to Kashmir; *vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 29-7-1947.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

³ In his reply, the addressee counselled Gandhiji to wait for a day as he was busy with the Working Committee.

232. LETTER TO SUSHILA PAI

July 28, 1947

The decision about Pakistan is of course wrong. But against whom am I to fight and to what end ?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 312

233. LETTER TO JUGATRAM DAVE

NEW DELHI,

July 28, 1947

CHI. JUGATRAM,

Jivanji¹ has passed on to me the postcard that you had written to him.

The distinction that you make seems to be too fine. There is no substance in it. Show me if you see any. I hope you are getting on well.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

234. LETTER TO SANYUKTA HARJIVAN

NEW DELHI,

July 28, 1947

CHI. SANYUKTA²

I read your letter addressed to Manudi. I have forbidden her to do any writing, and hence I am answering the letters. It is suspected she has intestinal tuberculosis. The disease, whatever it may be, is not in advanced stage. Manudi is very silly. She does not seem to understand that it is her duty to take care of her health. She will realise it now. There is no need at all to give her injections or medicines. She requires rest and change of diet. She is having both. Do not worry in

¹ Jivanji D. Desai of Navajivan Press

² Sister of Manu Gandhi

the least. Manudi does not at all wish to leave my side. If You sisters have any charm, use it. Can you say that you are now fully recovered?

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

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

235. *LETTER TO SITA GANDHI*

July 28, 1947

CHI. SITA,

I have your letter. You have received education but have learnt no practical wisdom. You have of course given no written undertaking. But what about the undertaking I have given on your behalf ? You must abide by all the rules in force there. The permission I have given for your meetings is independent of those rules but should be subject to them. You should, therefore, willingly submit to whatever restrictions they place on your movements. Only thus can you create a good impression about you there.

I wish you would tell me frankly how you feel about Krishna¹ deep down in the heart. If I feel that you are keeping back anything from me, I shall get nervous. I hope you know that you can free yourself from my discipline whenever you wish. That means that you are free to go back on your promise. I would not be happy to know that you were waiting for the year to end somehow. Whatever you do, do it willingly and cheerfully. Do not let the least trace of dissimulation creep into your conduct.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5011

¹ Krishna Kumar; *vide* "Letter to Sushila Gandhi", 2-7-1947.

236. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 28, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have your letter. I have gone through Kishorelal's letter. I understand Manilal's view. I prefer mine. If Sita were to marry today, she would not have my blessings. The world endures through vows. If I had not taken a vow before my mother, today I would be a drink-addict, a meat-eater and a lecher. If I was saved from these three vices, the credit goes to the vow. And I had not taken the vow of my own free will, but at my mother's instance and through my eagerness to go to England.

But in this case you are the mother and Manilal is the father, and I admit that the father and the mother know better than the grandfather. Therefore, what you two advise will be best. If you leave the decision to me, I shall not be able to take any other view. I send herewith the letter which I received from Sita today. I have replied¹ to her. I think she will send the letter to you.

I should be happy if you could come to some definite decision. I shall most probably leave Delhi tomorrow.

Enclosure: 1

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5010

237. A LETTER

July 28, 1947

If we give anything away there should be no condition attached to the gift. Only then will the giving be pure. I have observed that most disputes in the world arise from 'agreements' and 'conditions'. I, therefore, suggest that it will be more befitting if your donation to the institution in unconditional.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 434

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

238. A LETTER

July 28, 1947

We first deceive ourselves, and later comfort ourselves some way or other. We should not express our opinion on any matter without fully going into it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 434

239. A LETTER

July 28, 1947

Whatever you wish to tell...¹ you should tell him directly. To have it conveyed through a third party will be hazardous to both sides. After all he is not a tiger or a leopard that he will eat you up. Therefore try to explain the matter to him patiently. I have come to no final decision as yet about *Harijanbandhu*. Let me see how things develop.

I note... is going to be married. There should be no expenditure incurred, of course. The ceremony should be perfectly simple, with a prayer and the religious rites, and with the bride and the bridegroom fasting, observing silence, reciting the *Gita* and spending the day in the service of the cow, spinning, cleaning and similar activities of the Ashram, as a preliminary to expanding their field of service.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 434-5

240. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
July 28, 1947

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I have your letter. I shall let you know when something is settled about the date. We shall see what we have to do after we reach Noakhali. Let us not incur any expenditure now. Babua should be

¹ Omissions as in the source

well. Is not typhoid caused by water? Every-one should drink boiled water.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9283

241. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR, NEW DELHI,

July 28, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Jawaharlal told me last night that you might approve of his going to Kashmir but not mine; he has, therefore, left me free to do as I like. So now I propose to leave tomorrow for Lahore. Lahore and Amritsar on the 30th, Rawalpindi on the 31st. I may stay there for a day and then take the train for Patna. If this is all right, please give your endorsement so that I may make the necessary preparations. You will also have to make some arrangements, won't you?

My note¹ to the Viceroy is going right now.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 358

242. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

July 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I shall answer some questions today.

Q. After 15th of August will there be two Congress organizations in the two countries or only one or would there be no Congress at all ?

A. I think then the need for an organization like the Congress will be still greater. Its programme will no doubt be altered. If the

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 28-7-1-47.

Congress does not foolishly accept the two-nation theory, there will be only one Congress in the whole country. The partition of India does not and should not mean the partition of the Congress. The partition of India into two sovereign States does not mean that India is two nations. Sup- posing one or more Princely States kept out of the Union, would the Congress turn their representatives out of the Congress ? Would the States' people not expect it to take even greater interest in their welfare ? Of course the problems that this will create will be even more complicated and some of them will be more difficult of solution, but there still will be no reason for the Congress to be broken up into two. It will require greater political acumen, greater depth of thought and much more patient deliberation and decision. We must not anticipate incapacitating difficulties.

Q. Will the Congress now become a communal organization ? A demand is being vociferously raised that since the Muslims now consider themselves a separate nation, we too should candidly call ourselves Hindu India and place upon the country the deep imprint of Hinduism ?

A. The question betrays sheer ignorance. The Congress can never become an organization of the Hindus. Those who seek to make it such will be doing great harm to India and Hinduism. India is the country of the millions but their voice is not heard. It is only the vociferous sections living in cities who talk of two nations. We should not mistake their voice for the voice of the millions.

Then it must be remembered that Muslims in the Indian Union have not said that they are not Indians and Hinduism with all its shortcomings has never encouraged separation. People professing different religions have mingled to form the Indian nation and they are all citizens of India and no section has the right to oppress another section. The power derived from the sword or from numbers is not real power. Truth is real power.

Q. What attitude should non-Muslims adopt towards the Pakistan flag!

A. The Pakistan flag for the time being will be the Muslim League's flag. If the Muslim League represents Islam then the Muslims all over the world should have one flag and those who are not hostile to Islam should respect that flag. I do not know the flags of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity or of any other religion. And if I have not made a deep study of Islam, I can be mistaken about its flag. If the flag of Pakistan, whatever its colour, represents all the people

living in Pakistan then I shall salute that flag and so shall you. In other words the two Dominions cannot become enemies of each other. I am watching with much interest and more fear what attitude the Dominion of South Africa adopts towards India. Can the people of South Africa hate the people of India ? Will the South African Whites still refuse to travel with Indians in the same compartments?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 286-8

243. LETTER TO THADANI

July 29, 1947

MY DEAR THADANI,

You seem to have been resurrected.

You do not know how I have worked at your thesis. I discussed it with the late Principal Dhruva¹ who gave you credit for imagination but not for real discovery. You know how cautious he was in condemnation. It was his delight to see something good in everything. Then I discussed it with a scholar but a scoffer hard to please. I am unable to pass independent judgment and, not having any scholarship, all I can say is, like Barkis², “I am willin”.

Yours,

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

244. LETTER TO WANDA DYNOWSKA

NEW DELHI,

July 29, 1947

MY DEAR UMA,

Your letter. I am doing all I can.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI UMADEVI

ADYAR

MADRAS

From a photostat: G. N. 8063. Also C. W. 5104. Courtesy: Wanda Dynowska

¹ Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva of Gujarat College, Ahmedabad

² Character in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*

245. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

NEW DELHI,
July 29, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI,

You must not assume the entire responsibility for Pushpa. In fact you ought not to assume any. You are under my discipline. You should, therefore, assume only as much of that responsibility as I entrust to you. In doing that lies your good, as also mine, and that of Pushpa and of the Ashram too. It is indeed a good thing that you have lost the capacity to judge people. There was a time when you possessed it in good measure. But you were more inclined to see the defects of men and of institutions. You know the results of doing that. And so you became a *sannyasi*, wandered about and submitted yourself to a great many hardships. And now you are back where you were. I see nothing but God's hand in this. I think it will be best for you to assume no responsibility not entrusted to you by me. That is your real dharma and only by acting in that way can you keep a watch on the Ashram. I have also explained to you the meaning of keeping a watch.¹ It means that you should maintain the highest standard of purity in your own conduct so that everybody else may look upon you as the ideal to be followed. I know of no better method of keeping a watch. To notice and point at people's defects does not mean keeping a watch. You are sometimes swayed by emotion and act thoughtlessly. I heard that you undertook a fast once again. There was no need at all to do that. To permit Pushpa to slacken in the least degree in the observance of rules will be tantamount to betraying her. It was I who admitted her to the Ashram at some risk. I pained her parents by doing that. She has not succeeded in becoming a perfect devotee. She has realized that she is far away from that sublime state. But her wilfulness ...² have not yet vanished. She has still not realized the importance of abiding by the rules. You should, therefore, humbly renounce your claim to be Pushpa's elder brother or father or guardian. She must observe the Ashram rules with the utmost punctiliousness and become one with it

¹ *Vide* "Letter to J. P. Bhansali", 24-7-1947.

² Omission as in the source

as sugar becomes one with milk. Till she merits such a certificate, I shall not be relieved of my worry on her account. I owe a responsibility to her parents. Even if her renunciation in giving up her intention to marry the person whom she wished to marry was not the result of selfishness or wilfulness, she has yet to demonstrate that it was an act of supreme self-abnegation. I don't have to explain this to you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 823. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhavé

246. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,

July 29, 1947

CHI. DINSHAW,

Sushilabehn informs me that you keep writing to her letters full of despair and grief. The grief appears also in the letters you write to me.

I am leaving for Kashmir tomorrow.¹ I shall return in two days. I shall therefore not call you there, but you may meet me in Patna. You will know from the newspapers the date of my arrival there. Maybe I shall reach there on the 9th. I shall be putting up with Dr. Mahmud. Thence I shall proceed to Noakhali. If you come, I may take you along with me. You will gain some fresh experience. We shall talk to our heart's content and we shall know all the differences of opinion we have with each other. Notwithstanding all the differences of opinion, however, the relations between us can never be affected. If I did not earlier ask you to come, the reason simply was that I did not want that the work you were doing to earn some money should suffer. Now I understand that you attach little importance to this. Therefore the main reason for not asking you to come is obviated. I hope Mother is getting on well. Gulbai² and the children will also be well.

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

¹ Gandhiji left for Kashmir on July 31, 1947.

² Addressee's wife

247. LETTER TO FRENYBEHN KHANTIA

Air Mail

NEW DELHI,
July 29, 1947

CHI. FRENYBEHN,

I have your letter written in English. I saw your husband's signature also on it. Is your husband the same Khantia who used to visit me in the jail along with Dinshaw?

The news that you give me about Dinshaw is painful. Now, without mentioning your letter, I am writing¹ to him asking him to come over. It is good that you wrote to me. Never mind if you wrote in English, though all of you should cultivate the habit of writing in Gujarati. I hope you will be able to read what I am writing in Gujarati.

I hope you don't assume that you would understand better what is written in Gujarati if the same was written in English. But I know of many Parsi friends who have distorted their mother tongue to such an extent that they use it only at home and only in talking with the servants.

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

248. A LETTER

July 29, 1947

I have your letter of gentle rebuke and advice. It is true that I have got involved in too many things. But do not all the planets revolve round the sun? Similarly, all my activities revolve round the unity of India. And rest assured that either I shall die or this inhuman conduct of ours will cease. There is no third possibility.

I am leaving for Kashmir the day after tomorrow. I shall not make any public speeches or address meetings there. The Viceroy also feels that in the present circumstances it would be better if I went rather than Jawaharlal. I shall be there for two days, then reach Calcutta around the 8th and from there Noakhali on the 15th. But it will be as God ordains. You know that without His will not a leaf moves.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 440

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

249. A LETTER

July 29, 1947

Anybody who wishes to serve always finds enough for his needs. He can indulge in no luxuries, of course. If, therefore, you wish to live in the Ashram for the sake of service, you should be content with whatever you get. Otherwise you should leave the Ashram and find a job. A person like you should have no difficulty in finding one. There is no third course open to a public servant.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 440

250. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 29, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I have your letter. Your apprehension about freedom turning into ruin is justified. If that happens, whose fault will it be? Now we have to think what to do.

I want to reach there before the 15th. Let us see what God wills. Abha is better but one cannot say the improvement is very great. She moves about. I think she will be with me.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

How do you manage during the Ramzan? Don't you get goat's milk?

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 587

251. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

NEW DELHI,

July 29, 1947

CHI. AMRITA LAL,

You will find no difficulty in reading this much, I hope. I want to make all arrangements for reaching Noakhali before the 15th of next month. Therefore you need not come to Delhi.

Abha is all right, although I cannot say that she is completely cured. We should remain as God keeps us. I am glad that Ramen has recovered.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10424. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

252. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
July 29, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your long letter. I have written¹ a letter to Bhansali. Read it. Everything is included in it. What you have done is correct.

After reading the letter to Bhansali, do as you think proper. That there should be dearth of cow's milk either in the Ashram or in Sevagram is intolerable. Take whatever steps are necessary to improve the position.

It is a matter of shame for us that Champabehn should be obliged to take buffalo's milk. If we permit her to stay but cannot pro her with cow's milk at any cost, then we cannot help giving her buffalo's milk.

Consult Jajuji and find a solution.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1987

253. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have many important things to talk to you about today. I am told I should go to Kashmir. I am not particularly desirous of going there nor should I be. It is a beautiful place, hemmed in by Himalayan peaks. But there are many other beautiful places in the world and many other places of pilgrimage. I once did want to go to Kashmir.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to J. P. Bhansali", 29-7-1947.

The Maharaja of Kashmir had invited¹ me and Sir Gopaldaswami Ayyangar was his Prime Minister. But I can go to Kashmir only when God wills it.

When some time ago Pandit Jawaharlal had been detained in Kashmir² we needed him here. Maulana Azad was the President of the Congress. He wanted to have Jawaharlal back from Kashmir. Lord Wavell also felt the need of Jawaharlal's counsel and both Wavell and Maulana Saheb were worried. The Maulana then sent word to Jawaharlal that the mission he had undertaken was the mission of the Congress and as a matter of discipline he ought to return when the Congress wanted him to return. Jawaharlal agreed but he said that he would again be going to Kashmir. The Maulana said the matter could be taken up later and if necessary I could be sent there. I also told Jawaharlal that no one could prevent him from doing so later.

Now the Government has changed, the Viceroy has changed. I said I was prepared to go to Kashmir so that Jawaharlal might not be disturbed in what he was doing. But there were several complications and I said I would go if the Viceroy advised me to go. The Viceroy told me³ that he himself was going to Kashmir and that I might postpone my visit. So I did not go. And now the situation is such that either Jawaharlal or I should go to Kashmir. He cannot go. There is too much work for him here. Of course the climate of Kashmir is very good and, if he went there, he would gain in health. But there are also lots of problems there. If the head of the Interim Government makes a journey to Kashmir, it can be interpreted as an attempt on his part to make Kashmir accede to India. Therefore, it seems that it would be better for me to go.

Kashmir has a Maharaja and also the subjects of the Maharaja. I am not going to suggest to the Maharaja to accede to India and not to Pakistan. This is not my intention. The real sovereign of the State are the people of the State. If the ruler is not a servant of the people then he is not the ruler. This is my belief and that is why I became a rebel because the British claimed to be the rulers of India and I refused to recognize them as rulers. Now they are about to leave

¹ In 1938

² It was in June 1946; *vide* "Draft Reply to Jawaharlal Nehru", 21-6-1946 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 22-6-1946.

³ During an interview earlier in the day; for the Viceroy's note on the interview, *vide* Appendix "Lord Mountbatten's Note on Interview with Gandhiji", 29-7-1947.

India. Those who had come to rule have agreed to be servants. They now want to be servants in thought, word and deed. Mountbatten now will be Governor-General not because the King has so appointed him but because we, the Interim Government, want to make him the Governor-General. My idea was that a Harijan girl should be made the Governor-General. But I can see that under the present circumstances it is not possible because we have to negotiate with the Princes and attend to various other problems. Yes, when democratic rule is firmly established then it will be possible to do so.

So long the Maharaja of Kashmir could do as he liked under the protection of the Viceroy. Now the power belongs to the people. I do not want that the Maharaja should be inconvenienced. The pandits and mullahs in Kashmir know me at least by name. I have given a lot of money to Kashmiris. In Kashmir, shawl-making, embroidery, etc., are well developed handicrafts. The charkha also has done good work there. The poor people of Kashmir know me.

The people of Kashmir should be asked whether they want to join Pakistan or India. Let them do as they want. The ruler is nothing. The people are everything. The ruler will be dead one of these days but the people will remain. Some people wonder why I cannot say all this through correspondence. But that way I can do even Noakhali work through correspondence. I do not want to do anything in public when I am in Kashmir. I do not want even a public prayer, though I may have it, for prayer is part of my life.

Now as for my advice that we should fast and pray on August 15, I may say that I do not intend to mourn. But it is a matter of grief that we have no food and no clothes. Human beings kill human beings. In Lahore, people cannot leave their houses for fear that they will be killed. These are not the conditions in which we can rejoice and feast.

On April 6, 1919, the whole of India had woken up. But there were no celebrations on the day. I told Hindus and Muslims and everybody to pray, fast and spin. There was no enmity between the Hindus and Muslims at that time and everyone celebrated the day by fasting. The excitement that was witnessed on that 6th of April is something that one may not witness again. Today it is more imperative for people to fast. Millions are starving. It was a time when even collecting a crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund was difficult. We did not have the power in our hands. Today we have

many crores of rupees in our hands. We shoulder a great responsibility. At such a time if we are not humble what will happen? If on August 15 we feast and gorge, what will Rajendra Babu do on August 16? What will he feed the people on? I shall, therefore, say that we must celebrate the day but by fasting, praying and spinning. Yes, we should not mourn.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 289-91

254. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

NEW DELHI,
July 30, 1947

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. If I ask Jawaharlal, he will agree to be the Chairman¹, but he will be able to do nothing. Where has he the time? How is it that all the memorial committees require big names? Has no memorial an independent importance of its own? If there is any intrinsic worth in Pali literature, some persons are bound to be attracted to it.

I feel that we should do only as much as the Advisory Committee accepts. Further than that I shall not be able to go. I remember the episode about Bhai Prabhu. The whole of it was a painful affair. “In the very act of protesting innocence,” as the saying goes, “the man betrayed himself.” If he writes something to me, I will send it to Jiwanlal and then the path will be clear before him. I am now leaving Delhi. I am going to Kashmir. From there I will go to Patna and thence to Noakhali. If I reach Noakhali, a new life will take shape there.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I showed to J. the papers which you sent to me regarding Goa. He said he had copies of those papers. Our representative in Goa sends him copies of all his dispatches. Let events take their own course now. Nobody should force Goa to join either this or the other part. For the present it will be enough if it joins the Indian Union. It seems

¹ Of the Dharmanand Kosambi memorial committee

wants to grab things. You may give what guidance you can from there.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10989

255. A LETTER

July 30, 1947

I am going to Kashmir. I am going only in order to see for myself the condition of the people. In any case I shall have a glimpse of the Himalayas. Who knows if I am going there for the first and the last time? I was very eager to go to Uttarkashi, but that does not seem possible now....¹

Money comes seeking a man who wants to do public service. The progress of any public work is never held up for want of funds. If it is held up, we should conclude that there is some deficiency in us. I have had many experiences in my life which illustrate this.

Don't you remember the example of Sabarmati? Maganlal and I were greatly worried, and then all at once a motor-car came up and stopped in front of the Ashram and a stranger placed a large wad of notes in my hands.

Wasn't that also the fate of Narasinh Mehta's *hundi*? And isn't the story of Draupadi's garment similar? If, therefore, we put our trust in God and go on serving in a selfless spirit, our work will never be held up. . . .

I know that the atmosphere in Noakhali is full of fear. But my workers are there and I am sure that they will lay down their lives before any Hindu can be killed. That, at any rate, is my hope.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 446

¹ Omissions as in the source

256. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

SEVAGRAM,¹

July 30, 1947

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I had no talk with Balkrishna apart from polite enquiries after his health and so on. Where was the time? I did tell him to see me at four but he did not want to say anything.

I think I have replied to Kotwal. I do not in the least relish the idea of his going to jail in Ajmer. There is absolutely no need to come here. Why should he at all go to jail? Let him do whatever constructive work he can in Indore. If he does not get my letter, let him consider this as my reply to him.

Mishrilal had lost much weight. Now he should take it easy. The same is the case with Kanaiyalal Khadiwala. Many useless persons went to the U.P. I know it.

I was glad that you gave me news about Harilal. I am keeping fairly fit these days. You should think it a matter of duty to give yourself rest.

We are waiting for the rains. If it does not rain, people will suffer.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6091

¹ Permanent address

257. LETTER TO SYED MINHAJUL HASAN

NEW DELHI,
July 30, 1947

BHAI HASAN¹,

I have had a talk with Shuklaji². I find that you have lost the confidence of the others. Under the circumstances you had better resign from the Ministry without rancour and devote yourself to whatever other public service you can take up. This should not cause resentment. A ministry can work only with a homogeneous team. This is only my advice. Do as your inner voice prompts.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

258. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 30, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This is my last day here. From tomorrow there will be no prayer meeting. Of course, if you gather here for prayer, it will be good. But I shall not be present. If God grants I shall be in Shrinagar by day after tomorrow. As I said yesterday, I shall be staying there for two or three days. I have no particular business to attend to. I am not going there to attend a public meeting. I am only going there to meet the people. I shall not return empty-handed. But that is in the hands of God. I am only keeping a promise in going. After the promise is fulfilled I shall get away. From there I go to Noakhali.

I have a letter from a Bihari Muslim saying that now in Bihar Hindus and Muslims are living as brothers. Mr. Ansari³, a Minister in Bihar, tells me that now there are no riots there. People are returning by special trains but they are not coming at the expense of

¹ Health Minister, Central Provinces

² Ravi Shankar Shukla, Chief Minister, Central Provinces

³ Qaiyum Ansari, Minister for Public Works, Roads and Buildings, and Cottage Industries.

the Bihar Government. The Bihar Government is not sending them. The Bengalis had taken away people and it was for them to send them back. I shall advise the Bihar Hindus that they should accept the Muslims who are returning to Bihar. They should not depend on the Government. So long we have had to depend on the Government because power was not in our hands. Now that power is in our hands no one can say that the work has to be done by the Government. The country has been partitioned. I feel it was bad but bad or good it is now an accomplished fact. Pakistan in fact is nothing. Only the Government has been divided. This is all that I want to tell the Biharis.

Now I want to say something about Bombay. The Bombay Government have decided that the salaries of its employees will be increased according to the recommendations of the Pay Commission. I have been guilty of exaggeration. I had said¹ that the salaries had already been increased. As a matter of fact this has not yet happened. Still, since a decision has been taken the salaries will certainly be revised. Why then should the employees go on hunger-strike?

I have received a telegram from there saying that if I intervene, some agreement can be arrived at. I have said I do not hold any power. Of course they are all my friends. They have worked with me and they say that they will abide by my decision. But I cannot say anything. Ashok Mehta is there. He also wants to leave things in my hands. I must express my inability. So long we did not have power in our hands. Now that we have the power why should I destroy that power by my interference? I do not wish that people should make me a dictator. Only God can take work from me. The Government has done its work. It has agreed to implement the recommendations of the Pay Commission. Why should I spoil the thing by my intervention? Therefore, they should not expect me to do anything about it. The employees should also not indulge in token strikes and the like. I say this in all humility. I am their friend as well as the friend of the Government and of the Rajas. They should not persuade me to do anything which is wrong. It is the duty of all the parties to get all work done by the Government that will assume office on August 15. In the days of British rule we were hampered. We tried to assert ourselves. We started a non-violent battle. We can still do so. But we have got to be equipped for it. Public opinion has to be prepared.

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 26-7-1947.

Take, for instance, the question of banning cow-slaughter. Shall we bring coercion to bear on the Muslims ? Then why not on the Hindus? Why not on the Parsis? Cow-protection cannot be ensured in this manner. If we follow our respective faiths the cow can be saved without resort to legislation. I want that even Muslims should not slaughter cows. They should not eat beef. But this has to be left to them. We should not assume in our pride that since power has now come into our hands, we can force others to our will through law. I want that we should make proper use of the swaraj which we have won. Let us follow the path of dharma, so that the real swaraj we want may be ours soon.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 292-4

259. *EVEN PROUD GUJARAT!*¹

Shri Maganbhai Desai has sent me a copy of his correspondence with Shri Ratanlal Parikh. The latter writes :

The report in the newspapers of the Congress decision in regard to Hindi has made a great impression on the public mind. People are so much opposed to the Urdu script that it is as well that the move in support of it is no longer a live issue. Even staunch Congressmen have begun to oppose it. This means that the number of candidates for Hindustani examinations to be held in February is likely to be greatly reduced.

I hope that what Shri Ratanlal says is not true. Gujarat must not commit this folly. I do not approve of the dislike of the writers for Urdu, though of course I can understand it. But for the life of me I cannot understand this thoughtless dislike of the script. Does it not betray a bankruptcy of practical sense? The Gujaratis as businessmen do not discriminate between friend and foe. They gladly take money from both. Will they not show the same business sense in politics?

In Delhi I daily come in contact with Hindus and Muslims. Most of the Hindus speak a language which has very few Sanskrit words and many more Persian words. They or the vast majority do not know the Devanagari script. They write to me in Urdu or in indifferent English and when I take them to task for writing in English, they write in Urdu. If the national language is to be

¹ A translation of this was also published in *Harijan*, 10-8-1947 under the title "Thou too Gujarat !".

Hindi and the script only Devanagari, what will be the plight of these Hindus?

But I confess that in this matter I have a bias for Muslim brethren, though not of Gujarat. The Muslims of Gujarat do not know Urdu. They can learn it with difficulty. Their mother tongue is Gujarati. But the language of the Muslims in North India is Hindustani, that is to say, simple Urdu. The millions of villagers of India have nothing to do with books. They speak Hindustani, which the Muslims write in the Urdu script, while of the Hindus some write in Urdu and some in the Nagari script. Therefore, the duty of people like you and me is to write in both the scripts. The Gujaratis decided to perform this duty with gladness. They found joy in doing this. It was not a bitter draught. Why then have they developed a dislike for the Urdu script now? For me it has become all the sweeter in the present atmosphere of bitterness. The non-Pakistani muslims are all the dearer to me. They must not look up to Pakistan for their safety. Such a thing would be a shame for Hinduism. Sanatana Hindu Dharma is not narrow. It is liberal. It is not circumscribed like the frog in the well. It is the dharma of mankind. A Malayali commentator of the *Mahabharata* has, in my opinion rightly, called it the history of mankind. Be it as it may, the word Hindu is not derived from Sanskrit. The foreigners called the inhabitants on this side of the river Sindhu Hindus. We have adopted the title. Manu is not the name of any one man. The Law of Manu is known as *Manava Dharma Shastra* (the Law of Mankind). This Law has human origin. One can only guess as to how many of the *shlokas* are the original work of Manu and how many are interpolations. Dr. Bhagwandas has pointed out a number of interpolations. The Arya Samaj looks upon certain others as such. There has been some difference of opinion even on the interpretation. In my opinion whatever out of them appeals to the head and heart of the wise, is the law for mankind. There is, therefore, always room for addition or deletion. The *shlokas* looked upon as interpolations are the result of the efforts, successful or unsuccessful, of the reformers in different ages. Such a law belongs to all mankind. It does not permit of discrimination on grounds of caste and class. It knows no distinctions between Hindus, Muslims and Christians—all are equally men. How can one believing in this Shastra make distinction between one person and another. “This is mine and that is someone else’s, is the calculation of narrow minds’ is one of the pearls of wisdom. Going by this immortal *shloka* you and I cannot discriminate

between Hindustan and Pakistan. What even if you and I happen to be the only ones having such a belief. If we are true, others are bound to follow us.

The Congress has always had this broad vision. Today it is needed more than ever before. India has accepted partition at the point of the bayonet. This cannot be undone in the same way. The two can become one only when there is heart unity.

The omens today seem to point to the contrary. In this crisis the Congress must stand firm like a rock. The national language can only be one, not two. It cannot be Persianized Urdu or Sanskritized Hindi. It must be a beautiful blend of the two simple forms written in either script. How I wish Gujarat would remain unaffected by the gathering storm. Will those who have soared high now crash at the first blow? If I have my way, this will not happen. There is a Gujarati hymn which says, "Will he who has been purified by the fire of love ever turn back?" Let us follow the poet. Let us not turn away from the Urdu script. We must not turn back.

ON THE TRAIN TO KASHMIR, July 31, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 10-8-1947

260. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ON THE TRAIN,
July 31, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Your last words were penetrating. Personal service when it merges into universal service is the only service worth doing. All else is rubbish.

Keep well and cheer up.

The journey is going well. Not a soul at the stations. Hence the night undisturbed.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3706, Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6515

261. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

ON THE TRAIN,
4.30 a. m., July 31, 1947

CHI. MANI,

Read the enclosed¹ and do what is necessary. Your steadfast devotion to Father has given you a magnificent opportunity to serve. Utilize it as you wish.

Is there any truth in the letter I wrote about the Khaksars?² They have now written to me in detail. Pass on the enclosed³ to Rajkumari.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MANIBEHN
C/o SARDAR PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI,

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 139

262. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

ON WAY TO KASHMIR,
July 31, 1947

CHI. SHARDA,

I Keep thinking about you. You should do what you and Chokhawala think best. You should decide to “do or die” either in the Ashram or at Surat. I can think of nothing else. You should have no worry. Nobody should cling to life, not you certainly. Your body is what it is because you are so built.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10078. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

¹ A letter about the refugees. However, this is not available.

² *Vide* “Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel”, 26-7-1947.

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

263. *LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH*

[July 31, 1947]¹

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Yesterday I despatched the letters to you. I am sending three Europeans to you. Please look after them. Give them lots of work. Since they are poor they will need to be cared for. Do not show them undue importance. Treat them as you would our own people. They do not even take milk. If you find them a burden, you can send them on their way. They are good men. They are hard-working. Prabhakar and Wardekar have already come to know them.

Please take good care of the cows. Take Balvantsinha, Parnerkar and Aryanayakum into your confidence in all matters. Do what Jajuji says. In my view Sevagram cannot do without milk. Maybe we should dispense with the condition that everyone should get milk only from the village. Do what you think is right.

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

264. *INTERVIEW TO THE PRESIDENT, PUNJAB STUDENT CHRISTIAN LEAGUE*

RAWALPINDI,

[July 31, 1947]²

Replying to a question by the President of the Punjab Student Christian League, Gandhiji said:

Foreign missionaries will not be asked to quit India. Indian Christians will be free to occupy high official positions in the Indian Dominion.

Asked if non-Christians in the Indian Dominion would have freedom to embrace Christianity, Mahatma Gandhi said he would be guided in this connection by the rules and laws framed.

Christ came into this world to preach and spread the gospel of love and peace, but what his followers have brought about is tyranny

¹ In the source, this is placed among the letters of this date,

² Gandhiji was in Rawalpindi on this date.

and misery. Christians who were taught the maxim of 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,'¹ are divided among themselves.

The Hindustan Times, 3-8-1947

265. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

RAWALPINDI,²

July 31, 1947

Speaking after the *Ramdhun* he said that he had received two letters which he would like to answer. The first was in English. The handwriting was good but that was little consolation for him. The British were quitting India but the people had become so used to slavery that they still could not shake off the lure of the English language which few could ever hope to master. This linguistic conquest constituted a worse type of slavery than the conquest by the British sword. Every language was good in its own place. He would not ask the Zulus or the Dutch in South Africa to learn Gujarati, for instance. Similarly, he would not ask all the sisters assembled there to learn English. That was neither possible nor desirable. His mother tongue was Gujarati. He loved it. But he would not think of making it the lingua franca of India. There were hardly a crore of Indians who spoke Gujarati but there were nearly 21 crores who talked in Hindustani; whether they could read or write was a different matter. Hindustani was written in the Urdu or Nagari script.

The second letter was written in beautiful Urdu handwriting. He encouraged all those who came in contact with him to learn the two scripts and he was proud of the fact. He would rather teach Urdu to his boys and girls than teach them English.

In the letter written in English, the writer had asked him to spend at least a week in Rawalpindi and see with his own eyes what the Hindus had suffered. Why should he wish to go to Kashmir? His reply was that ever since he had gone to Delhi he had wanted to come to the Punjab. He wanted to visit Lahore, Amritsar and Rawalpindi. But he believed that he was in God's hands. God was the Master of all the universe and He could upset the plans of men. The original plan was that he would spend a day at Lahore and Amritsar, two days at Rawalpindi and at least ten days in Kashmir. Now he had only two or three days for Kashmir. And that too was in fulfilment of a promise.

¹ *St. Matthew*, xix. 19

² According to the report the meeting was held in the compound of Lala Devraj Anand. But it proved too small for it. The consequent overcrowding and noise made Gandhiji cut short the prayer to *Ramdhun* only.

Though he could not stay in the Punjab, he had not forgotten them. He had to reach Noakhali before the 15th. That again was in fulfilment of a promise. He was a devotee of Rama and Rama had said that a promise must be kept at any cost. He referred to the black flag demonstration that Hindu young men had arranged at the Amritsar railway station. All the time the train stopped they kept shouting 'Gandhi, Go Back' in English. He had to close his ears as he could not stand the noise. He closed his eyes also and kept on repeating God's name. They were too noisy and too excited, else he would have liked to get down and ask them what harm he had done to them to deserve such noisy hostility. He knew however that praise and blame must be received with equanimity. At the other stations people were extremely well-behaved and cordial. He had not been disturbed during the night and he was grateful for it.

In the second letter the writer had objected to the projected recitation from the Koran. If the people had been quiet, they would have heard the verse from the Koran. It was a fine verse and he saw no reason why he should avoid it simply because it was from the Koran and written in Arabic. No one could object to the sentiments expressed therein. If they wished to live in peace as brave men and women, they must cultivate the virtue of tolerance. The only right way of fighting the misled Muslims was the way of love. But if they did not appreciate it, they had the crude way of retaliation open to them; but to Insult the scriptures of either religion because of the misdeeds of its followers was a thing which he could never understand.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

266. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON¹

[July, 1947]²

Things are topsy-turvy. We are all, including the British, on our trial. God is great. He will make possible what appears impossible to man.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 1529

¹ This was a postscript to a letter from Amrit Kaur of the addressee.

² According to the addressee the letter was brought to her in July.

267. *BURIED ALIVE?*

A correspondent from Hyderabad (Deccan) writes: “Gandhi is being buried alive.”

Gandhi means Gandhi’s ideals. It is through these ideals that we have reached where we are. But we are kicking away the very ladder over which we have climbed so high. And it is those who are considered Gandhi’s greatest followers who are doing this. Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindustani, khadi and village industries have been completely forgotten. Those who still talk about them are either themselves deceived or are deceiving others.

This is by far the best way of burying me alive. But can I believe that I have already been buried ? Who is my greatest follower and who is the smallest ? I have only one follower, that is myself, or all Indians. My followers are those who have faith in the above-mentioned activities. I do hope that crores of villagers do believe in these few things. Even then the allegation is quite true. However, I find that even the members of the Muslim League have started saying that we are all brothers. It has even been accepted that we are citizens of both the States. For the time being there is no need for passports. That will become necessary if either of the two countries introduces them. Let us hope that passports will never be needed and let us so behave that they will not be needed.

Let us hope that neither of the communities will give up khadi and cause harm to the village industries. I have already written about Hindustani. How can we give it up? How can the Muslims whose mother tongue is Urdu give it up? They have to make their Urdu simple. Similarly the Hindus will have to make Hindi simple. Only then can the two communities understand each other. The correspondent has forgotten the most important thing. The Hindus have to purify themselves by eschewing untouchability and caste differences. Similarly, Muslims have to purify themselves by giving up their hatred of Hindus.

SRINAGAR, August 3, 1947

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 17-8-1947

268. THE TRI-COLOUR

The correspondent from Hyderabad who wrote “Gandhi is being buried alive”¹ writes further on :

The tri-colour was the symbol of our struggle. A grave sin has been committed by taking away the wheel from it. The new wheel or the old Asoka Chakra has no connection with Gandhi’s wheel; indeed it is incompatible with it. Gandhi’s wheel was above religion while the new wheel is a symbol of Hinduism. Gandhi’s wheel is a sign of ‘non-violent economy’ while the new one represents the Sudarshan Chakra² (as Shri Munshi³ says in his broadcast) which represents violence. In this way the new flag will encourage the violent tendencies in the nation. A deliberate attempt is being made in that direction. This is not the way to bring Pakistan back into the fold but to perpetuate the division.

I have not read what Shri Munshi said. The national flag is doomed if it signifies what the correspondent says. Under no circumstances can the Asoka Chakra become a symbol of violence. Emperor Asoka was a Buddhist and a votary of non-violence. The Sudarshan Chakra can have no connection with the wheel in the flag. According to me the Sudarshan Chakra is a symbol of non-violence. But that is my personal view. Generally the Sudarshan Chakra is believed to be an instrument of violence. We can say from the debates which took place on the new flag that if it has not rendered the spinning-wheel valueless it has without doubt diminished its value. Whether the Asoka Chakra and the spinning-wheel are the same thing will ultimately depend on the behaviour of the people.

SRINAGAR, August 3, 1947

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 17-8-1947

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² The wheel of Vishnu

³ K. M. Munshi (1887-1971); educationist and man of letters; Home Minister of Bombay, 1937; Member, Constituent Assembly; Minister for Food, Government of India, 1952; Governor, U. P., 1953-55; joined Swatantra Party in 1960; founded Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan

269. LETTER TO VENKATA RAO

SRINAGAR,
August 3, 1947

BHAI VENKATA RAO,

Two questions from your letter will be answered in *Harijan*.

I think it would be difficult to keep your wife in Sevagram. It does not appear that I shall be able to go there. The management of the Ashram is not in my hands. You should not leave her. Let her stay with you and serve her as best as you can.

I can do nothing about Hyderabad. You have to think and decide for yourself about going or not going.

Write to Kakasaheb Kalelkar at Wardha about the language matter. My knowledge of languages is superficial.

Blessings from
BAPU

19 CANNING LANE
NEW DELHI

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

270. THE REASON FOR ADDITION¹

During the three days I passed in Srinagar, though I had prayers in the compound of Lala Kishorilal's bungalow, where I was accommodated, I made no speeches. I had so declared before leaving Delhi. But some of the audience sent me questions. One was :

I attended your prayer meeting last evening in which you recited two prayers of the other communities. May I know what is your idea in doing so and what you mean by religion ?

As I have observed before now, the selection from the Koran was introduced some years ago on the suggestion of Raihana Tyabji² who was then living in the Sevagram Ashram and the one from the Parsi prayers at the instance of Dr. Gilder who recited the Parsi prayer

¹ This appeared under the title "Notes".

² Abbas Tyabji's daughter, a devotee of Lord Krishna

on the break of my fast' in the Aga Khan Palace during our detention. I am of opinion that the addition enriched the prayer. It reached the hearts of a larger audience than before. It certainly showed Hinduism in its broad and tolerant aspect. The questioner ought also to have asked why the prayer commenced with the Buddhist prayer in Japanese. The selection of the stanzas of the prayer has a history behind it befitting the sacred character. The Buddhist prayer was the prayer which the whole of Sevagram resounded in the early morning when a good Japanese monk² was staying at the Sevagram Ashram and who by his silent and dignified conduct had endeared himself to the inmates of the Ashram.

JAMMU, August 5, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

271. SPEECH AT GURUDWARA, PUNJA SAHEB³

[August 5, 1947]⁴

Replying to the address Gandhiji [said he] did not consider it possible that Eastern Punjab should be handed over entirely to the Sikhs to govern. He felt that Sikhs should never entertain such an unworthy ambition. The Sikhs were reputed, and rightly, to be a warlike race. With them of all the persons in the world, merit and merit alone should be the sole test for holding any office. He hoped that throughout the two dominions merit would be the sole test. The speaker invited the Sikhs to lead in this desirable competition.

Coming to the protection of Punja Saheb, Nankana Saheb and the other Gurudwaras that may be found in Pakistan or elsewhere, he said:

One Sikh is equal to one and a quarter lakh men. Why should he beg for anyone's help? If they have the mettle no one can cast an evil eye on Punja Saheb. But these days the Sikh brethren have taken to luxury and enjoyment. I do not intend to say that Sikhs alone have fallen into that habit. Among others women also have taken to fashionable ways though to a lesser degree. But do not think that I

¹ On March 3, 1943; *vide* "Talk Before Breaking the 21-Day Fast", 3-3-1943.

² Rev. G. Haishao

³ The Sikhs assembled at the Gurudwara of Punja Saheb, near Rawalpindi, one of the oldest of Sikh shrines, and presented an address to Gandhiji which described their sufferings and their fears for the Gurudwaras.

⁴ From *Calcuttano Chamatkar*, the report in which has been collated with the version in *Harijan*

am defending them. Some take liquor in large quantities while others take less but that does not mean that it is a virtue to drink less. Similarly it is not a virtue to be less fashionable. As long as true Sikhs are alive no one can cause you any harm.

Do not look to any other power outside yourselves for the protection of these shrines. I would like every Sikh to be a defender of his faith and, therefore, of all the Gurudwaras and not merely of Punja Saheb which is one of the greatest. At the same time I want you to shed all fear about the future. I would ask you to rely upon the plighted word of the Muslim leaders. They have got their Pakistan. They have no quarrel now with anyone in India—at least they should have none. If your fears materialize and any attempt at desecration of the Gurudwaras is made by the Muslims, it will be contrary to the tradition of Islam as I know it. And those Muslims who take part in such desecration would be partakers in the destruction of Islam. Every faith is on its trial in India. God is the infallible Judge and the world which is His creation will judge the Muslim leaders not according to their pledge and promises but according to the deeds of these leaders and their followers. What I have said of the Muslim leaders is also true of the leaders and followers of other faith.

Calcuttano Chamatkar, p. 23, and *Harijan*, 17-8-1947

272. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

WAH,

August 5, 1947

Gandhiji said that he was glad that he was able to visit the Refugee Camp at Wah and see the patients in the Camp hospital and other appointments in connection with it. He was glad too that he was able to pay what was his second visit to Punja Saheb. He had a talk with the representatives of the Camp.

Before, however, he dealt with matters arising out of these talks with the representatives of the refugees, he said that he would like to say a word about his visit to Kashmir. He had made up his mind not to hold any public meeting or address them but he was able see the workers. Begum Saheba (wife of Sheikh Abdulla²) was constantly with him throughout the three days he was in Srinagar. He was able also

¹ This appeared under the title “Kashmir and Refugees”.

² Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, President (1905-82); National Muslim Conference; President, All-India States People’s Conference; Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, 1948-53 and 1975-82.

to see the Maharaja Saheb¹, the Maharani Saheb and Prime Minister Kak Saheb². He was sorry that he was not able to see Sheikh Abdullah who was undoubtedly the leader of the Kashmiris. He had not gone there to see the Sheikh Saheb. He was able, however, to hold public prayers for two days in Kashmir and one day in Jammu. These were attended by thousands. He could say that on August 15, all being well, legally the State of Kashmir and Jammu would be independent. But he was sure that the State would not remain in that condition for long after August 15. It had to join either the union or Pakistan. It had a predominantly Muslim population. But he saw that Sheikh Saheb had fired Kashmiris with local patriotism. British Paramountcy would terminate on the 15th instant. Real paramountcy would then commence. He referred to the paramountcy of the Kashmiris. They had one language, one culture and, so far as he could see, they were one people. He could not distinguish readily between a Kashmiri Hindu and a Kashmiri Mussalman. In the large deputation that he saw it was very difficult for him to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu. Whatever it was, he had no hesitation in saying that the will of the Kashmiris was the supreme law in Kashmir and Jammu. He was glad to say that the Maharaja Saheb and the Maharani Saheba readily acknowledged the fact. He had the good fortune to read what was euphemistically called the Treaty of Amritsar³ but which was in reality a deed of sale. He supposed that it would be dead on August 15. The seller was the then British Governor-General⁴ and Maharaja Gulab Singh was the buyer. The treaty going, would the State revert to the British and therefore, to England? If to India, to which part? He held that without going into the intricacies of law which he had no right to dilate upon, common sense dictated that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Kashmir and Jammu. The sooner it was done the better. How the will of the people would be determined was a fair question. He hoped that the question would be decided between the two Dominions, the Maharaja Saheb and the Kashmiris. If the four could come to a joint decision, much trouble would be avoided. After all Kashmir was a big State; it had the greatest strategic value, perhaps in all India. So much for Kashmir.

He would now deal with the question of the refugees. Among them they were nearly 9,000. The Hindus and the Sikhs who discussed the question with him said that they were afraid of the approach of August 15. He confessed that he did not in any way whatsoever share the fear. Nor could he appreciate it. The Muslims had got their Pakistan. They could now have no quarrel with the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab. Jinnah Saheb and other Muslim Leaguers had given assurances that the non-Muslims were as safe in Pakistan as the Muslims. He invited the audience to accept the assurance. Supposing that the assurance proved untrue and the worst fears

¹ Hari Singh

² Ramchandra Kak

³ Of March 16, 1846, by which the State of Jammu and Kashmir was created

⁴ Sir Henry Hardinge

of the refugees proved true, it would be the beginning of the ruin of Islam. He refused to believe that Muslim leaders would be guilty of such a suicidal act. He asked the refugees, men and women, to dispel all fear. If he could put off his departure for Noakhali, he would gladly pass August 15 in the midst of the refugees at Wah. He proposed, however, to do the next best thing. The audience saw Dr. Sushila Nayyar taking notes of what he was saying. She herself belonged to the district of Gujrat in Western Pakistan. He had conferred with her before coming to the prayer meeting and though she was otherwise to accompany him to Noakhali, she had accepted his advice to stay with the refugees on his behalf, in order to help them to dispel all fear about August 15. He knew that she had no such fear. She was with him in Noakhali as was also her brother Pyarelal. She was posted in one of the worst-affected areas of Noakhali and through medical assistance she had become popular among the Muslims as she was undoubtedly among the Hindus. He had just heard from the District Commissioner who was a Muslim, that the refugees in and about Rawalpindi had nothing to fear. They should feel as safe as the Muslim inhabitants.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

273. NOTE ON KASHMIR VISIT¹

[August 6, 1947]²

No public prayer was held on the day of arrival but I appeared before them twice or thrice and said that I could not make any public speech, not because there was any prohibition but because I had promised to myself that if I was to make my visit devoid of political significance in so far as it was possible, I must not address public meetings. . . .³ The Prime Minister . . . told me that he had no objection whatsoever to public prayers. . . . Consequently, public prayers were held during the two days following in Srinagar and the third in Jammu.

During the two interviews with the Prime Minister I told him about his unpopularity among the people. . . . He wrote to the Maharaja . . . that on a sign from him he would gladly resign. . . . The Maharaja had sent me a message . . . that the Maharaja and the Maharani were anxious to see me. I met them The heir-

¹ This was sent to Jawaharlal Nehru "to be shared with Vallabhbhai Patel"; *vide* the following item.

² *ibid*

³ Omissions in the item are as in the source.

apparent with his leg in plaster was also present. . . . Both admitted that with the lapse of British Paramountcy the true Paramountcy of the people of Kashmir would commence. However much they might wish to join the Union, they would have to make the choice in accordance with the wishes of the people. How they could be determined was not discussed at that interview. . . .

Bakshi (Ghulam Mohammad¹) was most sanguine that the result of the free vote of the people, whether on the adult franchise or on the existing register, would be in favour of Kashmir joining the Union provided of course that Sheikh Abdullah and his co-prisoners were released, all bans were removed and the present Prime Minister was not in power. Probably he echoed the general sentiment. I studied the Amritsar treaty properly called "sale deed". I presume it lapses on the 15th instant. To whom does the State revert? Does it not go to the people ?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 357-8

274. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

LAHORE,
August 6, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I am sending a note² to Jawaharlal. He will show it to you.

Kak has written a letter to the Maharaja. He will be sending you a copy of it. He has shown it to me. He has a sweet tongue. I had an hour's talk with the Maharaja and Maharani. He agreed that only what the subjects want should be done. But he did not say anything about the main thing. He therefore sent his private secretary to express his regrets. The thing is that he wants to get rid of Kak. He has been deliberating on how he can do it. It had almost been decided to appoint Sir Jaylal³. I think you should do something in the matter. In my opinion the situation in Kashmir can be saved.

The work done in the Wah Camp is quite good. The people ought not to be removed from there. You should take up this matter with the Pakistan Government. Hindus and Sikhs should be

¹ Acting President of the Kashmir National Conference; became Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir after independence

² *Vide* the preceding item.

³ Judge of the Punjab High Court

rehabilitated in Rawalpindi. Read the speeches¹ I have made in the Punja Saheb and Wah Camp. I have made that suggestion.

I am staying with Rameshwari Nehru here and am leaving in the evening by the Calcutta Mail. I will stop in Patna for a day and then proceed to Calcutta and Noakhali.

As I felt it was necessary I have left behind Sushila² in the Camp. The people welcome it. They are in great panic but I see no reason for it.

I hope you are taking care of your health.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 361-2

275. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

LAHORE,

August 6, 1947

SARDAR SAHEB,

I am giving this note to the Khaksar friends who had met me there³. They complain of further injustice. They had left their luggage in a hotel and come to see me. The police took away their luggage in their absence. I told them I could do no more than write and enquire. They said: "No one would listen to us. Give us a letter so that someone may give us a patient hearing, after that what is ordained will happen." They say they desire nothing except to serve the people. I am not asking you to hear them yourself. It should be enough if you ask some official to hear their complaint.

Please send me a reply to my earlier letter on the subject.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 359-60

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Gurudwara, Punja Saheb", 5-8-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 5-8-1947.

² Dr. Sushila Nayyar

³ In Delhi; *vide* "Letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel", 26-7-1947.

276. TALK WITH CONGRESS WORKERS

LAHORE,
August 6, 1947

Mahatma Gandhi said :

The rest of my life is going to be spent in Pakistan, maybe in East Bengal or West Punjab, or perhaps, the North-West Frontier Province.

In answer to a question by Dr. Lehna Singh, General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Gandhiji said that if the Pakistan flag was such as would ensure equal rights and full protection to the minorities, they should all accept and honour the flag, and have absolutely no hesitation in saluting it. He added :

I would ask you not to disown the Pakistan flag merely on the ground that it bears the crescent. I must, however, say that in case no assurance of the kind I have mentioned is forthcoming, at least I will refuse to salute the flag.

Replying to a similar question in connection with the flag of the Indian Union, he said:

I must say that if the flag of the Indian Union will not contain the emblem of the charkha I will refuse to salute that flag. You know the National Flag of India was first thought of by me and I cannot conceive of India's National Flag without the emblem of the charkha. We have, however, been told by Pandit Nehru and others that the sign of wheel or the chakra in the new National Flag symbolizes the charkha also. Some describe the wheel-mark as Sudarshan Chakra, but I know what Sudarshan Chakra means.

Referring to the Punjab, Gandhiji said :

My heart has always been with the Punjab and the sad tales of woes and sufferings of the Punjab which I have been hearing, have made me always think of the Punjab. Do not think that I have forgotten your province. I am fully aware of the sufferings of the Punjab. I have been yearning to come to the Punjab ever since I came to Delhi, but there were certain forces which were against my coming to this province. My 10 present place is in Noakhali and I would go there even if I have to die. But as soon as I am free from Noakhali I will come to the Punjab. I hope to be free from Noakhali very soon.

I am grieved to learn that people are running away from the

West Punjab and I am told that Lahore is being evacuated by the non-Muslims. I must say that this is what it should not be. If you think Lahore is dead or is dying, do not run away from it, but die with what you think is the dying Lahore.

When you suffer from fear you die before death comes to you. That is not glorious. I will not feel sorry if I hear that people in the Punjab have died not as cowards but as brave men. I am not prepared to submit to any kind of compulsion or any interference with religion. I would refuse to stop saying 'Rama' if I am forced to do so and would prefer to be murdered. Similarly I cannot be forced to salute any flag. But if in that act I am murdered I would bear no ill will against anyone and would rather pray for better sense for the person or persons who murder me.

My conception of a Sikh has always been of a brave person, who does not fear death, but who will not do any harm to any innocent person.

Gandhiji said that if the present quarrel between Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs continued it would serve as an invitation to any foreign power to come and invade India. He, therefore, made an earnest appeal to put a stop to the present quarrel which did not credit either community.

The Hindustan Times, 8-8-1947

277. TALK WITH RAILWAY GUARD

[After August 6, 1947]¹

There were big crowds at all the stops on the way. On top of this, it began to rain heavily at night. The roof of Gandhiji's carriage leaked, flooding the compartment. The guard suggested that Gandhiji shift to another compartment.

GANDHIJI: What will happen to this one?

GUARD: The passengers from the other compartment will occupy it.

If it is good enough for them, it should be good enough for me, too. How can I think of making myself comfortable at others' expense!

Is there any service I can render?

Do not harass poor passengers and do not take bribes. That will be the greatest service you can render to me.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 361

¹ The talk took place while Gandhiji was returning to Patna, having left Lahore on August 6, in the evening.

278. A DRAFT DECLARATION

Shri Brijlal Nehru sends for publication the following draft declaration :

Draft declaration to be signed by all members of the Public Service in India, Civil or Military, and by all candidates for the Service, whether Central, Provincial or Local, and by all applicants for other profitable jobs under these Governments and the members of the legislatures including the Constituent Assembly :

I hereby solemnly declare that

1. I am a subject of the Union of India to which I pledge my loyalty in all circumstances.

2. I repudiate the theory that Hindus and the Muslims are two separate Nations and hold the view that all the people of India, to whatever race or religion they may belong, are parts of one Nation.

3. I shall to conduct myself in all my actions and speech as to strengthen this idea of One Nationality of all the inhabitants of this ancient and sacred land.

4. If at any time I am found guilty of a breach of this declaration, I shall render myself liable to removal from any office or post of profit that I may be holding at the time.

The wording may admit of improvement. But the spirit behind is surely admirable and worthy of adoption if we are to get out of unhealthy growth in the body politic.

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA, August 7, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

279. NOTES

WHY NOT INDIAN?

His second question was why Lord Mountbatten was selected as the first Governor-General. The reason so far as I know is properly guessed by the questioner. There was no equally suitable Indian for the post. He, being the part, if not the sole, author of the conception lying behind the Indian Independence Bill, seemed to the members of the Interim Government to be the fittest person to pilot the ship of State safe through the troubled waters. The appointment if it was a

credit to the British, was equally a credit to the Indian statesmen who had shown themselves free from prejudice and who were capable of rising above prejudice. They showed that they were brave enough to trust their erstwhile opponents.

THE MINORITIES

He next asks why I do not agree that the minorities should quit their respective dominions.

No one has asked me to agree. But I should oppose any such movement. There is no occasion to distrust the majority in either Dominion. And in any case, now that there are two sovereign States in India, each has to ensure the proper treatment of the minorities in the other. Let us hope that such a contingency will never arise. I hold too that every right carries with it a duty, better still, there is no right which does not flow from duty duly performed.

LEAVING POLITICS AFTER THE 15TH?

Fourthly, he asks whether I would leave politics after the 15th when India will be free.

In the first instance there is no freedom approaching the Kingdom of God. We seem to be as far from it as ever. And in any case the life of the millions is my politics from which I dare not free myself without denying my life work and God. That my politics may take a different turn is quite possible. But that will be determined by circumstances.

Lastly he says :

You have done a lot of work in Bihar; why was the Punjab ignored?

All I can say is that my not going to the Punjab must not be counted as my neglect of the province. Nevertheless the question is quite apposite and has been asked more than once. The neatest answer I gave was that I had no call from within and my counsellors gave me no encouragement.

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA, August 7, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

280. *STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES*

There is an attempt today to bring together all the existing students' organizations in a national convention, to revise the basis of the student movement and to evolve a united national organization of students. What, in your opinion, should be the scope of this new organization? What activities should this students' organization undertake in the new circumstances in the country?

There is no doubt that there should be one national organization including the Hindus, the Muslims and the others. Students are the makers of the future. They cannot be partitioned. I am sorry to observe that neither the students have thought for themselves nor have the leaders left them to their studies so that they can become good citizens. The rot began with the alien government. We, the inheritors, have not taken the trouble to rectify the errors of the past. Then the different political groups have sought to catch the students as if they were shoals of fish. And stupidly the students have run into the net spread for them.

It is therefore a herculean task for any students' organization to undertake. But there must be a heroic spirit among them who would not shrink from the task. The scope will be to knit them together into one. This they cannot do unless they will learn to steer clear of active politics. A student's duty is to study the various problems that require solution. His time for action comes after he finishes his studies.

Today students' organizations are more concerned with passing resolutions on political affairs than devoting their energies to the task of national reconstruction. This is partly due to the attempts which political party have been making to capture the students' organizations for their party purposes. Our present disunity too can be traced to these party politics. We, therefore, want to evolve some method by which we can prevent the repetition of all this party politics and disunity in the proposed national union of students. Do you think it is possible for the students' organizations to eschew politics completely? If not, what, in your opinion, is the extent to which students' organizations should interest themselves in politics?

This question is partly answered above. They must eschew active politics. It is a sign of one-sided growth that all parties 14 have made use of the student world for their purpose. This was probably inevitable when the purpose of education was to create a

race of slaves who would hug their slavery. That part of the business is over, I hope. The students' first business is to think out the education that the children of a free nation should receive. The education of today is obviously not such. I must not go into the question as to what it should be. Only they must not allow themselves to be deceived into the belief that it is the function only of the elders in the university senates. They must stimulate the faculty of thinking. I do not even remotely suggest that the students can force the situation by strikes and the like. They have to create public opinion by offering constructive and enlightened criticism. The senators having been brought up in the old school are slow to move. They can truly be acted upon by enlightenment.

Today, the majority of students are not interesting themselves in national service. Many of them are cultivating what they consider 'fashionable' western habits, and more and more students are resorting to bad habits like drinking, etc. There is little efficiency and little desire for independent thinking. We want to tackle all these problems, and build up character, discipline and efficiency in youth. How do you think we can do it ?

This deals with the present distemper. It will disappear when a calm atmosphere is produced, when the students cease to be agitators and take to sober studies. A student's life has been rightly likened to the life of a sannyasi. He must be the embodiment of simple living and high thinking. He must be discipline incarnate. His pleasure is derived from his studies. They do provide real pleasure when study ceases to be a tax the student has to pay. What can be a greater pleasure than that a student marches from knowledge to more knowledge?

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA, August 7, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

281. IS HE BURIED ALIVE ?

There is substance in the biting criticism.¹ But I cling to the hope that I am not yet buried alive. The hope rests on the belief that the masses have not lost faith in them. When it is proved that they have, they will be lost and I can then be said to have been buried alive. But so long as my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand

¹ *Vide* "Buried Alive", 3-8-1947.

alone, I shall be alive in the grave and what is more, speaking from it. The correspondent forgets untouchability and prohibition. The former is rapidly disappearing. And it looks as if prohibition is coming. I am quite sure that if the Congress forsakes the ideals it adopted in 1920, it will commit suicide.

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA, August 7, 1947

Harijan, 17-8-1947

282. EVIL OF HORSE-RACING

A well-known gentleman writes :¹

I have already written² about the evil of horse-racing. But it does not seem to have had any effect. Now we are independent. But we are still the same. If we are not careful, we shall have proved the saying that changing one's colour does not change one's nature.

It will be a very strange thing if the vices of the alien rulers persist while their virtues leave with them.

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA, August 7, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 17-8-1947

283. TELEGRAM TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

August 7, 1947

CHIEF MINISTER SUHRAWARDY SAHEB
CALCUTTA

I CONTINUE RECEIVE DOLEFUL WIRES ABOUT INCREASING LAW- LESSNESS NOAKHALI. I SUGGEST PROMPT ATTENTION WIRES OF SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA AND PROMPT ACTION. AM PUBLISHING WIRES.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: M.M.U./XXIII

¹ The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent had questioned the running of extra trains and cars between Bombay and Poona for races despite shortage of railway coaches and petrol and wondered how a poor country could afford such costly amusement.

² *Vide* "Horse Racing", 7-8-1946.

284. LETTER TO LILAVATI P. ASAR

PATNA,
August 8, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I received your letter yesterday on the train. I arrived here this morning. I shall be off to Calcutta in the evening. You seem to be facing many hardships. I have left Sushila at the Wah camp. She will be free after the 17th. You will be really free from anxiety when Dwarkadas has fully recovered. You are in the situation of a person under heavy debts for whom a little additional debt makes no difference.

Your ears will have been completely cured by now.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

285. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

PATNA,
August 8, 1947

CHI. JAIRAMDAS¹,

I have your telegram.

1. You have to do all your work in Hindustani. You should speak Hindustani, deliver speeches in Hindustani and write letters in Hindustani.

2. Live a natural and simple life.
3. The administration here is in a mess. Clean it up if you can.
4. The police problem is not resolved. It should be settled.
5. Maybe, the officers are not loyal enough. See about it.
6. All Ministers should do all work jointly.
7. Dr. Mahmud and Ansari have not resolved their differences.

¹ Governor of Bihar

Meet them both.

8. Take care of the interests of minorities.

9. The problem of zamindars has not been solved.

10. Remember, you are not only a constitutional officer. There are Biharis. They have a right to demand all sorts of service from you and they should get it.

11. Do not forget village industries and khadi. Go to villages and move about with people as one of them. There should be prohibition.

12. This does not mean that you should ruin your health. Meet Muslim Leaguers freely.

13. Your secretary should be efficient and should not be of any party.

Now your ahimsa will be tested.

I hope you can read this well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original. C. W. 9267. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

286. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

PATNA,

August 8, 1947

Gandhiji began his speech by saying that he was sorry that he could not come to Bihar earlier. But even in Delhi and other places he worked for Bihar and Noakhali. His 'do-or-die' determination was guiding him in all spheres, and for the fulfilment of that determination he was going to Noakhali.

He must reach Noakhali two or three days before August 15 as the people there were extremely nervous, although he knew that nothing was going to happen. Unnecessary panic did not help anybody and if people were brave and god-fearing it did not matter if they lost their lives. He was going to Noakhali to allay panic.

He did not know what God had ordained and he also could not say what the Government would do. To him the whole of India was his country and he could not reconcile himself to the idea of partition in water-tight compartments. He wanted to live both in Hindustan and Pakistan and both were his homelands. Similar was the

¹ The meeting was held in the University compound.

case with Jinnah Saheb. Muslims had got Pakistan. Now it was incumbent on the people of both Hindustan and Pakistan to live like good human beings and bring peace to the country.

Gandhiji warned the Hindus of Bihar never to think of repeating their crime of last year and said that they should help in rehabilitating all the refugees who were returning from Bengal. Love was the highest virtue and they should cultivate it for all. He hoped that he would be able to proclaim from Noakhali that Hindus and Muslims were forgetting their past and were living in brotherly feeling for each other.

The 15th is the day of our trial. Observe a fast on that day. Everyone should do his duty. No one should create any disturbance. The independence we are going to get is not of the kind we can celebrate by having illuminations. We do not have foodgrains, clothes, ghee or oil. So where is the need for celebrations? On that day we have to fast, ply the charkha and pray to God. We did not have illumination on April 6, did we? Didn't we celebrate the declaration of that day by fasting from April 6 to April 13? Moreover that day was better than today's independence. Brothers did not quarrel between themselves as they do now. Everyone could freely go to temples or mosques.¹

Mahatma Gandhi expressed his desire to return to Bihar after three weeks' stay in Noakhali and said that on his return he would stay in Bihar for about a fortnight.

The Hindustan Standard, 9-8-1947

287. WORK ALONE IS TRUE SPEECH

Shri Kanu Gandhi is working in the Noakhali district. He had sent me a lengthy report at Delhi about himself. I am quoting the following portion from it as it deserves to be read by all workers :²

ON THE TRAIN TO CALCUTTA, August 9, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 17-8-1947

¹ This paragraph is translated from *Calcuttano Chamatkar*, pp. 18-9.

² The report, describing how Hindus and Muslims volunteered to build a road and remove water-hyacinths from rice fields, is not reproduced here.

288. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
August 9, 1947

Gandhiji devoted the whole of his address to the situation in Calcutta. His destination, he said, was Noakhali but he had been listening the whole day long to the woes of Calcutta. Some Muslim friends and also some Hindus complained that they (Hindus) seemed to have gone mad, not that the Muslims had become wiser. But now that the Muslim police and officials were almost withdrawn and replaced by Hindus, the Hindus had begun to believe that they were now free to do what they liked as the Muslims were reported to have done under the League Ministry. He was not going to examine what was done under the League Ministry. His purpose was undoubtedly to know what his co-worker Dr. Ghosh's¹ Ministry was doing. Was it true that the Muslims were living in terror? If it was at all true, it was a severe reflection on the Congress Ministry. He was rightly asked before he went up to Noakhali to tarry in Calcutta to 'pour a pot of water over the raging fire' that was burning Calcutta. He would love to give his life if thereby he could contribute to the quenching of mob fury. He would never be able to subscribe to the theory that the doings in Calcutta were the result of goondaism. He held that the crude open goondaism was a reflection of the subtle goondaism they were harbouring within. Hence it was the duty of the Governments to hold themselves responsible for the acts of the goondas so called. He hoped that Calcutta would not present the disgraceful spectacle of hot goondaism when they were entering upon full responsibility.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

289. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

CALCUTTA,
August 10, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have your letter. I understand your point about *Harijan*. I am considering. So long as I can I shall continue to send articles.

I have left Sushila at the Wah Camp. We hope that she will be able to leave it on the 17th and join me in Noakhali.

Herewith some articles. Give Hingorani and Prabhu the

¹ Dr. P. C. Ghosh

permission they have asked for to publish the material. They are our men. They have no intention at all of making any profit.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9979. Also C. W. 69 53. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

290. INTERVIEW TO CONGRESS MINISTERS

August 10, 1947

The Congress Ministers of the Government of Bengal interviewed Gandhiji at 3.30 p. m. One of the questions which they wanted to discuss was the manner in which the 15th should be celebrated. Gandhiji said, according to him, the advice could only be for fasting, prayer and a dedication to the spinning-wheel. What else could they do when all around the country was burning, when people were dying from lack of food and clothing?

The question of the relation between Pakistan and India was also raised by one of the Ministers. Gandhiji said :

Each State should perform its duty properly. If the conduct is straight, there is likelihood of reunion. But what he witnessed today was a preparation for hostility not for friendship.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 256

291. DISCUSSION WITH MOHAMMED USMAN AND OTHERS

August 10, 1947

Mohammad Usman¹ again came. A large Muslim deputation accompanied him. They entreated Gandhiji to stay on in Calcutta even if it were only for two more days :

We Muslims have as much claim upon you as the Hindus. For you yourself have said you are as much of Muslims as of Hindus.

GANDHIJI: I am willing, but then you have to guarantee the peace of Noakhali. If I do not go to Noakhali before the 15th on the strength of your guarantee and things go wrong there, my life will

¹ Secretary, Calcutta District Muslim League and ex-Mayor of Calcutta

become forfeit; you will have to face a fast unto death on my part.¹

Gandhiji told them that though he was anxious to reach Noakhali as soon as possible, in deference to their wishes he could postpone going from the 11th August to the 13th.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 363

292. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
August 10, 1947

Gandhiji said that he had thought that he was to go to Noakhali the next day (Monday). Owing to the pressure from many Muslim friends who had seen him, he had decided to stay to see if he could contribute his share in the return of sanity in the premier city of India.² The argument of the Muslim friends went home. He had at the same time said that if he did not go to Noakhali and any mishap took place, his life would become forfeit as he had said already about Bihar. He had seen the Ministers and others too during the day. He would like to see the places where destruction was said to have been wrought by the Hindus. He had also learnt that there were parts of Calcutta which were inaccessible to the Hindus, though many premises therein used to be occupied by them. Similar was the case with the Hindu localities. He hung his head in shame to listen to this recital of man's barbarism. He would love to go to these places and see for himself how much truth there was in these recitals. He was told that there were not more than 23% Muslims in Calcutta. It was unthinkable that such a minority could coerce the majority without countenance from or incompetence of authority. Similarly it was unthinkable that in the midst of a government which knew the art of government, the majority could for one moment be permitted to coerce the minority. He was also told that as the Muslim police and officers were alleged to be doing before, now that the Congress Ministry was in power, the Hindu police and officers had become partial in the administration of justice. If this wretched spirit of communalism had entered the police force, the prospect was bleak indeed. He hoped that the police would realize the dignity of their profession.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

¹ According to the source the Muslim friends hesitated but ultimately gave the required guarantee on their and Muslim League's behalf. They promised to despatch wires to the local League leaders in Noakhali and undertook to send emissaries to help maintain peace in Noakhali. *Vide* also the following item.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

293. LETTER TO SIR FREDERICK BURROWS

SODEPUR,
August 11, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

What you could not do, a big Muslim deputation was able to do yesterday.¹ And so I am here at least till tomorrow. Man is veritably clay in the hands of the great Potter.

All my good wishes with you and yours.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SIR FREDERICK BURROWS
H. E. THE GOVERNOR
CALCUTTA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 277

294. NOTE TO N. K. BOSE²

August 11, 1947

I must not yield to the temptation. They must forget that I know English.

From a photostat: C. W. 10573; also *My Days with Gandhi*, p. 258

¹ *Vide* "Discussion with Mohammad Usman and Others", 10-8-1947.

² A representative of the British Broadcasting Corporation had asked Gandhiji for a message to be broadcast on August 15. Gandhiji sent word that he had nothing to say. When the addressee argued that it would be broadcast in various languages, Gandhiji wrote this on a slip of paper already used for conveying other messages to him.

295. LETTER TO AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

August 11, 1947

MY DEAR AMIYA,

I am sorry for your loss which in reality is no loss. Death is but a sleep and a forgetting. This is such a sweet sleep that the body has not to wake again and the dead load of memory is thrown overboard. So far as I know, happily there is no meeting in the beyond as we have it today. When the isolated drops melt, they share the majesty of the Ocean to which they belong. In isolation they die but to meet the Ocean again. I do not know whether I have been clear enough to give you any comfort.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 10506; also from a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, between pp. 88 and 89

296. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

SODEPUR,

August 11, 1947

MY DEAR SARAT,

What is all this black flag demonstration¹ against Rajaji? I am certain that it is a mistake on our part. In spite of his faults (moreover who among us can claim to be faultless?) he is as much a lover of the country as you and I. I am giving you the impression left on me. As regards the situation in Bengal you are a better judge.

Hope you are well.

Yours,

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 364

¹ The addressee considered C. Rajagopalachari's appointment as Governor of Bengal "an outrage upon Bengal's sentiments".

297. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

SODEPUR,
August 11, 1947

CHI. BALKRISHNA,

Dinshaw gave me your letter just now. I see no objection to your obtaining monetary help from proper sources for animal husbandry work. Proper sources means persons who will expect no return for the help given. From that point of view, I had suggested that we could not accept such help from Indore. There are some complications about it. Only the help given out of regard for your goodness or for the cause of cow service or both is proper.

Dinshaw tells me that your health is not very good. Is that right? Are you having cough? Take care and see that you do not fall ill.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 824. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

298. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

SODEPUR,
August 11, 1947

CHI. MANI,

It seems Dahyabhai has to sign the enclosed paper. Have a look at it. I do not know anything about this account. Perhaps it should be signed by someone on behalf of the Ashram.

I have already written to Sardar about Kashmir.¹ He must have received the letter. The long note² I have sent to Jawaharlal is meant for Sardar also.

The situation here has become complicated. I do hope that it will improve. From the speech I delivered yesterday³ you will know why I had to stay back.

Profulla and others meet me frequently.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 6-8-1947.

² *Vide* "Note on Kashmir Visit", 6-8-1947.

³ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 10-8-1947.

The Khaksars saw me in Lahore. You must have received the letter I gave them.¹ Is there any respite from work?

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 140

299. LETTER TO INDIRA

SODEPUR,

August 11, 1947

CHI. INDIRA,

I have your letter. Here is a hurried reply. Your handwriting is good. For some time continue to stay where you are. Look after Sarala. What you will get there is not to be found in Santiniketan. Go to Santiniketan after you finish your [training] there. That you have no interest in the place is itself enough to show that you have still a lot to learn. Interest is where there is scope for service. Learn to take interest. Also learn to write Urdu. Let me see your Urdu handwriting. Maintain good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

300. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

August 11, 1947

This evening I must devote to answering some questions addressed to me. One of them complains that prominent men were admitted but comparatively unknown persons were insulted. There was an inordinate rush throughout the day, it being Sunday. I agree that when there is such a rush, there should be no distinction made between known and unknown persons. But I had given previous appointments to some who had to be admitted. Then there were many

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", 6-8-1947.

who were specially working for the day. I would, therefore, plead with those who may feel disappointed on such occasions to have forbearance and patience as I would plead with the volunteers to be uniformly courteous and gentle with the public.

I read something about the Chittagong flood the day before yesterday, when I came to Calcutta. This is the third day and I see that the angry waters have not subsided, and the extent of loss of life and property no one can yet assess with any degree of accuracy. It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves in the face of such catastrophe that we may not think of East or West or Pakistan and Hindustan. Adversity makes strange bed-fellows. Surely then those who were bed-fellows till yesterday must not cease to be at least on such occasions, whatever their political or religious differences might be or might have been. It is a calamity to cope with not merely for East Bengal but for the whole of Bengal, and not for Bengal only but certainly for the whole of India. There must be a strong reliable committee to collect and distribute funds. Local men come first. Round them can arise an all-Bengal relief committee, and if need be an all-India one. No trouble need be given to all India if Bengal alone can cope with the situation. My whole heart goes out to Chittagong in its dire calamity. May the survivors bear it with fortitude.

Correspondents continue to ask all sorts of questions about appointments of Governors, Ministers and the like, as if I was a member of the Congress Working Committee or could affect its decisions. I know and admit that I have and shall always retain by right of service a place in the hearts of Congressmen. I know too that I shall forfeit that place immediately I begin to overstep my limits. Legal status I have none, moral status can be retained only so long as the moral platform is firmly held.

Do you agree that the leaders of both the communities should go to East and West Bengal and show that they have no differences now to quarrel over?

My answer is emphatically yes, if the leaders are one at heart. If the word belies the thought, the going about will be worse than useless. The newspaper war still continues. I would always prefer an open war to the war of hearts. Are we sure that the leaders trust one another? My fear is that neither at the top nor at the bottom are we cleansed of hypocrisy. I can, therefore, but repeat my old argument that we must unlearn the habit of retaliation in every shape and form.

Blow for blow is a crude form and probably more excusable than the subtle one of evil thought for its kind. Thought is the root of speech and deed. I am sorry that I am unable to return a more comfortable answer. There is none that I know. This is said to hearten ourselves, not to dishearten us. For I have said the naked truth. Within my experience it ever heartens. Is it not heartening to know the true remedy for a disease? Any other is a palliative and in the end aggravates the disease.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

301. INTERVIEW TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY¹

August 11, 1947

GANDHIJI: Do you want to suggest I should not leave on Wednesday and pass the whole of my time in bringing peace to Calcutta?

SUHRAWARDY : Yes.

I stayed (for these two days in Calcutta) very much against my will. But Usman Saheb overpowered me. He made a successful appeal to my heart. He asked me to see things with my own eyes and do something to allay the present communal feelings. I would remain if you and I are prepared to live together. This is my second offer² to you. We shall have to work till every Hindu and Mussalman in Calcutta safely returns to the place where he was before. We shall continue in our effort till our last breath.

I do not want you to come to a decision immediately. You should go back home and consult your daughter; for the implication of what I mean is that the old Suhrawardy will have to die and accept the garb of a mendicant (fakir).³

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 258-9

¹ According to the source this is a "summary of the conversation which took place" between Gandhiji and Suhrawardy who came with Mohammed Usman at 9.05 p. m. and left at 11 p. m.

² The first offer was made on May 12, 1947; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 29-7-1947.

³ Mohammed Usman came the following day at about 1 p. m. with the message that Suhrawardy had agreed to Gandhiji's proposal. *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 12-8-1947.

302. LETTER TO R. BAZIN

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,
SODEPUR,
August 12, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your original letter in French and the delicate consideration in sending me an accurate translation of the letter.

I appreciate the measures that are being taken to entrust the responsibilities of administration to the representatives of the population of Chandernagore. As to the fears expressed by you, you may depend upon my doing the very best I can to prevent them.

As for my going to Chandernagore, I know the distance is not great. Unfortunately for me, it is very difficult to leave Calcutta before the 15th instant, much as I would like to respond to your request.

Yours Sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MOUS R. BAZIN
ADMINISTRATOR
CHANDERNAGORE

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

303. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA

SODEPUR,
August 12, 1947

CHI. TARI,

I read your letter to Abha. I think I had passed on your letter to Dr. Sushila who must have replied to you.

I would advise you to consult Dr. Sushila about the tuberculosis case and do what she says. The same thing applies also to the question of expenditure. You seem to have already incurred some expenditure. If you have, and if you have not had it reimbursed from any source, let me know so that I can have it met from somewhere, unless it can be met from the Trust.

Where is the time to write anything else? It is 5 o'clock now according to the railway time. Do you take care of your health? News about me from the papers.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

304. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

August 12, 1947

Gandhiji said that the 15th instant was to be a landmark in India's history. It was a day when India would be declared free of the foreign yoke. It was to be an independent nation. He had explained how the day was to be observed,¹ but he was probably alone in the view. Already there was an announcement that the Muslims of Calcutta were to observe it as a day of mourning. He hoped that it was not true. No man could be compelled to observe the day in a particular manner. It was to be a perfectly voluntary act. He would ask his Muslim countrymen not to mourn over the freedom. The present distemper was to go. What were the Hindus in Pakistan to do? They should salute the Pakistan Flag if it meant the freedom and equality of all in every respect, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. He had heard further that on that day the Indians in the French and Portuguese possessions were to declare their freedom from France and Portugal respectively.

That, he said, would be a thoughtless act. It would be a sign perhaps of arrogance. The British were retiring, not the French and the Portuguese. He, undoubtedly, held the view that the Indians in these possessions were bound to merge in Independent India in good time. Only the Indians in those territories should not take the law in their own hands. They had constitutional means open to them and then there was their Chief Minister who had vindicated the freedom of Indonesia. Surely, he was not going to neglect his own kith and kin in the two possessions. If they had any doubt about the validity of his advice, they should act on Panditiji's advice.

He then came to another important subject. They knew that he prolonged his stay in Calcutta by two days at the instance of Muslim friends. Last night Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy had come to see him. He had suggested that it would be contrary to his (Gandhiji's) practice to leave Calcutta while it was going through the horrors of communal strife. Shaheed Saheb had suggested that Gandhiji should prolong his stay

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 8-8-1947.

in the city and work until real peace was restored. Gandhiji had replied that Suhrawardy Saheb and he should live under the same roof in the disturbed parts. It would be best to live unprotected by the police or the military. In brotherly fashion, they would approach the people, argue with them and tell them that now that partition had taken place by agreement, there was no longer any reason why the parties should quarrel. The decision of the Boundary Commission was going to be announced in a day or two, and it was in the fitness of things that all the parties should abide by the decision in a becoming manner. After all, the parties had appointed an arbitration tribunal. They were in honour bound to abide by the Award whatever it was.

Gandhiji's proposal to Suhrawardy Saheb was of such an important nature that the latter could not afford to give a hasty reply. Gandhiji had, therefore, asked Shaheed Saheb to consult his aged father as well as his daughter before coming to a decision.

During the afternoon, Mr. Usman, the ex-Mayor of Calcutta, had arrived with Shaheed Saheb's message stating that the latter had accepted Gandhiji's proposal without reservation. It was now time, therefore, for the two friends to choose quarters in the midst of the worst-affected areas and see what could be done by joint effort.

Gandhiji said that he was warned that Shaheed Saheb was not to be relied upon. The same thing was said about him (Gandhiji) also. He was described as the worst enemy of Islam. He was supposed to be a consummate hypocrite. God alone knew men's hearts. He asserted that he spoke and acted as he believed. He had known Shaheed Saheb since the days of the Faridpore Conference¹, to which the late Deshbandhu had taken him. Nobody had any right to prejudice anybody. He would trust as he expected to be trusted. Both would live under the same roof, and have no secrets from each other. They would together see all the visitors. People should have the courage to speak out the truth under all circumstances and in the presence of those against whom it had to be said.

Gandhiji finally referred to what the common citizens could do in order to help the cause. They were to bless them on the mission on which they were embarking.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

¹ Bengal Provincial Conference presided over by C. R. Das from May 2 to 4, 1925. *Vide* "Notes", 6-8-1925.

305. “TO MUSLIMS”

The foregoing¹ is reproduced just as it was received. Let us hope that the wise precepts would be followed up in action. An ounce of practice is worth tons of speeches and writings.

SODEPUR, August 13, 1947

Harijan, 24-8-1947

306. LETTER TO PERIN CAPTAIN

SODEPUR,
August 13, 1947

CHI. PERINBEHN,

I have your letter. I expect you read what I have written in *Harijan* about your letter.² Surely I can make use of your letter to that extent.

Your English letter also to hand.³ Of course you are working under my guidance. We must avoid all polemics. Let those who wish work for Sanskritized Hindi written in Nagari, let Urdu writers do likewise for Urdu. We work noiselessly but solidly for Hindustani, i.e., Urdu and Hindi made easy and written in either script. No one will write the same letter in two scripts at the same time. But a Hindustani scholar is bound to know the two scripts. Is that not what you mean?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ A letter “To Muslims” signed by four Muslim leaders quoting from the Koran and writings on Islamic history to hope that Islam did not discriminate against non-Muslims and expressing the hope that the non-Muslims would not feel insecure in Pakistan, is not reproduced here.

² Vide “Letter to Perinbehn Captain”, 25-7-1947.

³ The addressee had complained of the reported attempt “to dethrone our national language” and sought Gandhiji’s advice as to what the Hindustani Prachar Sabha should do.

307. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

SODEPUR,
August 13, 1947

CHI. SHRIMAN,

I have your clear letter. I have talked to Kakasaheb and Nanavati. As you say, it is better for you to leave the Secretaryship¹. You will be in the Working Committee and do whatever you can.

In my view our work is not against anybody but it is complementary. What is it to us whether anybody appreciates our work or not? If what we say is right it will hold.

Urdu cannot become the national language, nor can Hindi. It matters little that Hindi may have the approval of the Union. Our national language will be that language which both the communities can speak and write. Let Madalasa keep fit and Rasgulla² recover soon.

Fix the meeting in Delhi. It will be difficult for me to go there.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, pp. 311-2

308. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

SODEPUR,
August 13, 1947

CHI. RAJEN BABU,

Kakasaheb is here. He says that the meeting of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha must be held in Delhi irrespective of my presence or absence there. I think I shall not be there. Still it would be good to hold the meeting.

Just now I am held up in Calcutta. You will learn from the newspapers what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Of Hindustani Prachar Sabha

² Addressee's son

309. DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF DEMONSTRATORS¹

HYDARI MANSION, CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

Presently the representatives of the demonstrators were ushered in to meet Gandhiji. One of them began :

Last year when Direct Action was launched on the Hindus on August 16, you did not come to our rescue. Now that there has been just a little trouble in the Muslim quarters, you have come running to their succour. We don't want you here.

GANDHIJI: Much water has flown under the bridge since August 1946. What the Muslims did then was utterly wrong. But what is the use of avenging the year 1946 on 1947? I was on my way to Noakhali where your own kith and kin desired my presence. But I now see that I shall have to serve Noakhali only from here. You must understand that I have come here to serve not only Muslims but Hindus, Muslims and all alike. Those who are indulging in brutalities are bringing dis-grace upon themselves and the religion they represent. I am going to put myself under your protection. You are welcome to turn against me and play the opposite role if you so choose. I have nearly reached the end of my life's journey. I have not much farther to go. But let me tell you that if you again go mad, I will not be a living witness to it. I have given the same ultimatum to the Muslims of Noakhali also; I have earned the right. Before there is another outbreak of Muslim madness in Noakhali, they will find me dead. Why cannot you see that by taking this step I have put the burden of the peace of Noakhali on the shoulders of Shaheed Suhrawardy and his friends—including men like Mian Ghulam Sarwar and the rest? This is no small gain.

¹ According to the source, "an old abandoned Muslim house in an indescribably filthy locality, had hastily been cleaned up for Gandhiji's residence. It was . . . open on all sides An excited crowd of young men stood at the gate as Gandhiji's car arrived. They shouted : 'Why have you come here ? You did not come when we were in trouble. Now that the Muslims have complained all this fuss is being made over it. Why did you not go to places from where Hindus have fled?' . . . The situation threatened to take an ugly turn. Gandhiji sent some of his men outside to expostulate with the demonstrators and tell them to send in their representatives to meet him."

We do not want your sermons on ahimsa. You go away from here. We won't allow the Muslims to live here.

This means that you do not want my services. If you will co-operate with me and allow me to carry on my work, it will enable the Hindus to return and to live in all the places from where they have been driven out. On the other hand, it will profit you nothing to remember old wrongs and nurse old enmities.

An eighteen-year-old youngster interposed:

History shows that Hindus and Muslims can never be friends. Anyway, ever since I was born I have seen them only fighting each other.

GANDHIJI: Well, I have seen more of history than anyone of you, and I tell you that I have known Hindu boys who called Muslims 'uncle'. Hindus and Muslims used to participate in each other's festivals and other auspicious occasions. You want to force me to leave this place but you should know that I have never submitted to force. It is contrary to my nature. You can obstruct my work, even kill me. I won't invoke the help of the police. You can prevent me from leaving this house, but what is the use of your dubbing me an enemy of the Hindus? I will not accept the label. To make me quit, you have to convince me that I have made a mistake in coming here.

Thus it went on till eight o'clock. At last Gandhiji said :

I put it to you, young men, how can I, who am a Hindu by birth, a Hindu by creed and a Hindu of Hindus in my way of living, be an 'enemy' of Hindus? Does this not show narrow intolerance on your part?

His words had a profound effect. Slowly and imperceptibly the opposition began to soften. Still they were not completely converted. One of them said: "Perhaps we should now go." Gandhiji replied :

Yes, you must go. It is already late. Come again in the morning when you have thought things over.¹

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 365-7

¹ For the discussion which continued the next day in Suhrawardy's presence, vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 30-5-1947.

310. LETTER TO NELLIE SEN GUPTA

KHADI PRATISHTHAN,
SODEPUR,
CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. You will have seen that I spoke on Monday about the Chittagong affliction. Wires were received yesterday and now I have your letter. I have spoken to several people here, including the present Mayor, ex-Mayor Usman Saheb and the Prime Minister of West Bengal. You may depend upon my doing all I can, short of going to Chittagong, which too I would have gladly done were not my presence required here.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MRS. NELLIE SEN GUPTA
JOMALKHAN
CHITTAGONG

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

311. LETTER TO PYARELAL

HYDARI MANSION,
August 13, 1947

CHI. PYARELAL,

Today I have come to a Muslim locality. Now let us see when I can get away from here. I have left behind Sushila in Wah. She will leave Wah on the 17th and join me. I am involved in a controversy¹ since my arrival here. I may not be able to hold the prayers either. Young blood is boiling. I have reached here all right. I hope you are calm.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

312. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I have stuck here and now I am going to take a big risk. Suhrawardy and I are going to stay together in a turbulent area from today. Let us see what happens. Keep a watch. I will keep on writing.

Kak (Kashmir) seems to have left.

I came to know about Subhas Bose from your letter. I find it difficult to believe all these reports.¹

I had also written to Sarat Babu about Rajaji,² just as you did, but have not heard from him so far. Nor has he called on me so far this time.

I don't believe that Kripalani would have said what he is reported to have said.³ I did not like Liaquat Ali's⁴ statement.

The atmosphere is poisoned. It is difficult to say who is on whose side.

I understand about the Khaksars. I considered it my dharma to treat them in such a way that they will have no opportunity to say anything against us and I have acted accordingly. I deal with the others in the same way.

All this work is difficult and the difficulties go on increasing. On top of it there is a natural calamity. What are we going to do if the rains fail? Many surely will have to die.

The problem of the Princes is so complicated that you alone can deal with it. But who can deal with your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 363-5

¹ In his reply the addressee confirmed the reports that Subhas Chandra Bose had, while in exile, married and had at this time a four-year-old daughter.

² *Vide* "Letter to Sarat Chandra Bose", 11-8-1947.

³ The addressee had sent to Gandhiji a cutting of J. B. Kripalani's speech in Sind.

⁴ First Prime Minister of Pakistan

313. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. I sent back the papers unsigned as I thought that my signature was not required.

What will happen if the rains fail ? This independence is costing us pretty dear.

I am afraid Sardar's health may break down under the strain of the present work.

Read the enclosed and show it to Sardar. It seems a crime to take up even a single minute of his time.

Blessings from
BAPU

MANIBEHN PATEL
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 141

314. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

HYDARI MANSION,
August 13, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

If you read the newspapers you would have known that I have stayed on in this place, and am now in a Muslim's house in a Muslim locality. It is a palatial building. We are all under Rama's care and we have to live as He wills. I shall not know till the last moment when I shall leave this place. I write all this just because I am pleased with your letter. I have sent the relevant portion from it for publication in *Harijan*.¹ Abha is fine. However, I will not say that she is completely all right. Amritlal is here.

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

¹ *Vide* "Work Alone is True Speech", 9-8-1947.

315. LETTER TO SARALA

August 13, 1947

CHI. SARALA,

I have your letter. You are a sensible girl. You have understood why I don't send for you here. Have patience. Complete the Nayee Talim course and attain the highest proficiency in it. You must be reading in the newspapers about the developments here. I have been able to write this much under great pressure.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8769

316. LETTER TO E. W. ARYANAYAKUM

CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

CHI. ARYANAYAKUM,

You will learn of the conditions here from the newspapers. Today I want to write about the *goshala*.

There is a great uproar and the trouble is twofold; they cannot run the *goshala* themselves nor will they let others do so. And you have such a fiery temper that you cannot get along with anyone.

Now tell me what the fact is.

You are all keeping well, I hope. I have no idea when if ever I shall be able to return.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

317. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

HYDARI MANSION, CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I am under great pressure of work here. I am undergoing an ordeal. Noakhali is now out.

I have read everything about the *goshala*. What advice can I give from here? All I know is that Sevagram should have cows and the dairy must work. But how that can be, I do not know. You people should think over it and work it out.

Today I cannot write much. I am writing¹ to Aryanayakum.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1988. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

318. LETTER TO RADHAKRISHNA BAJAJ

CALCUTTA,
August 13, 1947

CHI. RADHAKRISHNA,

I am entrapped here. Well, we have to live as God wills.

I got your letter regarding the *goshala*. I have only to say that you must keep Sevagram supplied with milk. It is impossible for me to go into details. I am writing under great pressure of work.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

319. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

August 13, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

Today I have come to stay in a Muslim house. Shaheed Saheb is with me. God knows what will happen. I shall be tested. I do not know when I shall see you now.

Yesterday I met Baqui¹. He had with him Nawab Saheb's son and daughter. I hope you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 585

320. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

HYDARI MANSION,
August 13, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have just come to Beliaghata. Kshitishbabu² is with me, and so is Arun³. What I want is that both should go to Sodepur and see to the work there. Hemprabha⁴ wanted to look after me. I have detained her. Shaheed Saheb will be with me. Let me see what happens. I have taken many risks, perhaps this is the greatest of all. Who knows what will happen? We have to live as God wills and be content. I came for Noakhali but have stayed on in Calcutta. It is all right. If things go wrong here, then they will go wrong everywhere. If things improve here, then perhaps they will improve everywhere. Tell everyone that here also I am working for Noakhali. All Muslims say that it is good that I have stayed on in Calcutta and that too where Muslims feel unsafe and moreover in a Muslim's house.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9284

¹ Addressee's brother

² Addressee's brother and son

³ *ibid*

⁴ Addressee's wife

321. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

CALCUTTA,
August 14, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I had received your letter, but could get no time at all to reply to it. I am writing this after the morning prayer. I am being fairly severely tested here. Instead of going on to Noakhali, I have got stuck here. Yesterday I came here to live in a Muslim's house. This one fact, however, will not give you a complete picture of the situation and I have no time to write more.

You are unnecessarily taking things to heart. Manilal's letter is so transparent and so innocent. He has only poured out his heart in it. You had a right to draw the inference you did from the previous letter. Notwithstanding his own desire he had no objection to your staying on in Akola. But that letter did not reveal all he had in mind. You should now join him at the earliest opportunity.

Sita will have what is destined for her. I don't know what I shall be able to do. This time my train passed through Banaras. But it was late by four hours and Sita could not have come to the station at that time of night. But I think you yourself will be in a better position to think over the matter and decide. It is useless to come and see me. Rama alone knows where I shall be tomorrow. It looks like I shall be here. But if I am not here, where will you go wandering after me? If you need the advice of an elder, Kishorelal is there. You are bound to benefit by following his advice. What does it matter if our views do not agree? Each individual thinks differently. Maybe in this matter both of us think alike. But that need not worry you. You should do only what seems right to you. I have made the above suggestion in case you cannot do that. Manilal's letter is enclosed. Though it was in my file, nobody is likely to have read it. Everybody abides by the restrictions I place on them. The file is not likely to fall into any stranger's hands these days. There are only three persons with me, Bisen¹, Abha or Radha (Manu). But what does it matter who is with me? What can you have which you might want to keep private?

¹ Shiv Balak Bisen, a constructive worker who was acting as Gandhiji's stenographer

Manilal's and your letters are never sentimental. I, therefore, think that anybody who reads them is bound to learn something from them.

Remain calm and take every step after careful thinking. If you have any attachments overcome them.

If you reply to this letter, address it C/o Khadi Pratishthan, Sodepur.

Krishna wasn't there either in Kashmir or Lahore.

I am getting a copy made of this.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 1426. Courtesy: Sushila Gandhi

322. DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF DEMONSTRATORS¹

August 14, 1947

Gandhiji pointed out to them that united action on the part of Suhrawardy and himself in Beliaghata was only the first step. If and when the Hindus of Beliaghata invited their Muslim neighbours to return, they would next move to a predominantly Muslim area, where they would stay till the Hindus were invited to return and so on till each community had invited its neighbours to return to their former houses all over Calcutta. This time the young men were completely won over.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 367-8

323. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

BELIAGHATA, CALCUTTA,

August 14, 1947

He first said that the next day was the day fixed for deliverance from the foreign yoke. It was, therefore, a great day. They were bound to celebrate it. In his opinion it was a day when both the Dominions were to shoulder a heavy burden. He invited everyone to have twenty-four hours' fast and prayer during the day for the well-being of India as a whole and pass it in spinning as much as possible. For it was hand-spinning that had knit the poor and the rich together and that had given occupation to countless men and women who were without occupation.

¹ *Vide* also "Discussion with Representatives of Demonstrators", 13-8-1947.

² According to the source, "a packed audience listened to Gandhiji without the slightest disturbance."

He then returned to the reason for his postponing the visit to Noakhali and coming to stay in the present place. He said that Shaheed Saheb had come to see him and induce him to do his bit in bringing about peace in Calcutta which was burning. The appeal had its effect upon him. He agreed provided Shaheed Saheb went with him to the affected areas and stayed there under the same roof with him, till the fury had abated and till complete friendship between the two communities was restored. Therefore, they were to work with one mind without mental reservation and without any secrets in the matter from one another. Shaheed Saheb had taken one night to confer with his aged father and his daughter and had sent over his decision the next day.¹ And he had sent one message which brought them to the present place yesterday. He had had many warnings also against Shaheed Saheb. He was unaffected by the warnings. He was bound to believe his word as he expected him to accept his (Gandhiji's) word. Let them not think that they were to neglect the parts of Calcutta which were deserted by their Hindu inhabitants and were occupied by Muslims. They were working for the peace of the whole of Calcutta and he invited his audience to believe with them that if Calcutta returned to sanity and real friendship, then Noakhali and the rest of India would be safe. He mentioned that Shaheed Saheb was in the building, but he had, with his consent, kept himself away from the meeting as he wanted to avoid being the slightest cause of irritation to the meeting.² But he was glad that the audience had exhibited becoming tolerance and gave him the courage to bring Shaheed Saheb to the meeting. After all they should live and work together in the open and perfect co-operation if their difficult mission was to succeed.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

324. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

BELIAGHATA, CALCUTTA,

August 15, 1947

MY DEAR AGATHA,

This letter I am dictating whilst I am spinning. You know, my way of celebrating great events, such as today's, is to thank God for it and, therefore, to pray. This prayer must be accompanied by a fast, if

¹ *Vide* "Interview to H. S. Suhrawardy", 11-8-1947.

² According to *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, "realizing that Suhrawardy was not at the prayer meeting, some of the young men. . . went shouting for his blood towards the house and stone-throwing began again. . . . Prayer over, Gandhiji returned. . . He rebuked them for their attack on Suhrawardy. . . 'He will not be able to stick to me if he is not sincere. . . .' After a time when he had got them into a mood to listen to Suhrawardy, he beckoned him. . ." Suhrawardy's unequivocal admission of responsibility for the 'Great Calcutta Killing' . . . had a profound effect on the crowd. 'It was the turning point,' Gandhiji afterwards remarked. 'It had a cleansing effect, I could sense it.' "

the taking of fruit juices may be so described. And then as a mark of identification with the poor and dedication there must be spinning. Hence I must not be satisfied with the spinning I do every day, but I must do as much as is possible in consistence with my other appointments.

I got through Amrit your first letter at 4 o'clock in the morning. I have through her your second letter. This has been brought by Rajaji, the Governor of West Bengal. Rajaji could not afford to come himself. The Government House is surrounded by a huge admiring crowd. He is, therefore, a prisoner in his own house. He sent his secretary with Rajkumari's packet.

You refer me to Winterton's speech, which you will be surprised to learn, I have not read.¹ The speeches during the debate on the Independence Bill, I was not able to read. I rarely get a moment to read newspapers. Some portions are either read to me or I glance during odd moments. What does it matter, who talks in my favour or against me, if I myself am sound at bottom? After all you and I have to do our duty in the best manner we know and keep on smiling. Rest from the papers. I am about to finish my spinning. Therefore I must think of other things.

My love to all our friends. I was glad to find that Carl Heath was well enough to preside at the gathering described by you.

How I wish I could tell you all about the happenings here. Perhaps Horace will. He was with me for a few days. He left me only last night.

Love.

BAPU

MISS AGATHA HARRISON

OLD JORDAN'S HOSTEL

NEAR BEACONSFIELD BUCKS, S. W. II

From a photostat: G. N. 1528; also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 372

¹ During the debate on the Indian Independence Bill in the House of Lords, Earl Winterton, the Conservative Peer, had made a speech attacking Gandhiji.

325. *LETTER TO RAMENDRA G. SINHA*

BELIAGHATA, CALCUTTA,
August 15, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I must take you at your word. As you say, your father had in him non-violence of the brave. Such a one never dies, destruction of the body has no meaning for him. Therefore, it is not right for you, your mother [or anyone]¹ to mourn over the death of your brave father. He has left, in dying, a rich legacy which I hope you will all deserve. The best advice I can give is that you should all do whatever you can for the building up of the freedom that has come to us today and the first thing you can do is to copy your father's bravery.

Bravery of non-violence is shown in a variety of ways, not necessarily in dying at the hands of an assassin. There is no doubt that if you earn an honest price for the [loss]² of your [dear ones]³ that by itself will be a contribution to the preservation of the [dearly earned freedom].³

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

RAMENDRA G. SINHA
GOPAL MULLICK LANE
BOWBAZAR
CALCUTTA

From a photostat: G. N. 10517

¹ The source is illegible.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

326. *ADVICE TO WEST BENGAL MINISTERS*

August 15, 1947

From today you have to wear the crown of thorns. Strive ceaselessly to cultivate truth and non-violence. Be humble. Be forbearing. The British rule no doubt put you on your mettle. But now you will be tested through and through. Beware of power; power corrupts. Do not let yourselves be entrapped by its pomp and pageantry. Remember, you are in office to serve the poor in India's villages. May God help you.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 370

327. *TALK WITH C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

CALCUTTA,

August 15, 1947

The new Governor of the province, C. Rajagopalachari, paid him a respectful visit and congratulated him on the "miracle which he had wrought". But Gandhiji replied that he could not be satisfied until Hindus and Muslims felt safe in one another's company and returned to their own homes to live as before. Without that change of heart, there was likelihood of future deterioration in spite of the present enthusiasm.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 265

328. TALK WITH COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS

CALCUTTA,

August 15, 1947

At 2, there was an interview with some members of the Communist Party of India to whom Gandhiji said that political workers, whether Communist or Socialist, must forget today all differences and help to consolidate the freedom which had been attained. Should we allow it to break into pieces? The tragedy was that the strength with which the country had fought against the British was failing them when it came to the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity.

With regard to the celebrations, Gandhiji said:

I can't afford to take part in this rejoicing, which is a sorry affair.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 265

329. TALK TO STUDENTS

CALCUTTA,

August 15, 1947

Gandhiji explained in detail why the fighting must stop now. We had two States now, each of which was to have both Hindu and Muslim citizens. If that were so, it meant an end of the two-nation theory. Students ought to think and think well. They should do no wrong. It was wrong to molest an Indian citizen merely because he professed a different religion. Students should do everything to build up a new State of India which would be everybody's pride. With regard to the demonstration of fraternization he said:

I am not lifted off my feet by these demonstrations of joy.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 266

330. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

CALCUTTA,

August 15, 1947

Gandhiji congratulated Calcutta on Hindus and Muslims meeting together in perfect friendliness. Muslims shouted the same slogans of joy as the Hindus. They flew the tricolour without the slightest hesitation. What was more, the Hindus were admitted to mosques and Muslims were admitted to the Hindu *mandirs*. This news reminded him of the Khilafat days when Hindus and Muslims fraternized with one another. If this exhibition was from the heart and was not a momentary impulse, it was better than the Khilafat days. The simple reason was that they had both drunk the poison cup of disturbances. The nectar of friendliness should, therefore, taste sweeter than before. He was however sorry to hear that in a certain part the poor Muslims experienced molestation. He hoped that Calcutta including Howrah will be entirely free from the communal virus for ever. Then indeed they need have no fear about East Bengal and the rest of India. He was sorry, therefore, to hear that madness still reigned in Lahore. He could hope and feel sure that the noble example of Calcutta, if it was sincere, would affect the Punjab and the other parts of India. He then referred to Chittagong. Rain was no respecter of persons. It engulfed both Muslims and Hindus. It was the duty of the whole of Bengal to feel one with the sufferers of Chittagong.

He then referred to the fact that the people realizing that India was free, took possession of the Government House and in affection besieged their new Governor Rajaji. He would be glad if it meant only a token of the people's power. But he would be sick and sorry if the people thought that they could do what they liked with the Government and other property. That would be criminal lawlessness. He hoped, therefore, that they had of their own accord vacated the Governor's palace as readily as they had occupied it. He would warn the people that now that they were free, they would use the freedom with wise restraint. They should know that they were to treat the Europeans who stayed in India with the same regard as they would expect for themselves. They must know that they were masters of no one but of themselves. They must not compel anyone to do anything against his will.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

¹ The meeting was held in Rash Bagan Maidan, Beliaghata.

331. MIRACLE OR ACCIDENT?¹

Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy and I are living together in a Muslim manzil in Beliaghata where Muslims have been reported to be sufferers. We occupied the house on Wednesday the 13th instant and on the 14th it seemed as if there never had been bad blood between the Hindus and the Muslims. In their thousands they began to embrace one another and they began to pass freely through places which were considered to be points of danger by one party or the other. Indeed, Hindus were taken to their *masjids* by their Muslim brethren and the latter were taken by their Hindu brethren to the *mandirs*. Both with one voice shouted "Jai Hind" or "Hindu-Muslims! Be one". As I have said above, we are living in a Muslim's house and Muslim volunteers are attending to our comforts with the greatest attention. Muslim volunteers do the cooking. Many were eager to come from the Khadi Pratishthan for attendance, but I prevented them. I was determined that we should be fully satisfied with whatever the Muslim brothers and sisters were able to give for our creature comforts and I must say that the determination has resulted in unmixed good. Here in the compound numberless Hindus and Muslims continue to stream in shouting the favourite slogans. One might almost say that the joy of fraternization is leaping up from hour to hour.

Is this to be called a miracle or an accident? By whatever name it may be described, it is quite clear that all the credit that is being given to me from all sides is quite undeserved; nor can it be said to be deserved by Shaheed Saheb. This sudden upheaval is not the work of one or two men. We are toys in the hands of God. He makes us dance to His tune. The utmost therefore, that man can do is to refrain from interfering with the dance and that he should render full obedience to his Maker's will. Thus considered, it can be said that in this miracle He has used us two as His instruments and as for myself I only ask whether the dream of my youth is to be realized in the evening of my life.

For those who have full faith in God, this is neither a miracle nor an accident. A chain of events can be clearly seen to show that the two were being prepared, unconsciously to themselves, for fraternization.

¹ The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 24-8-1947.

In this process our advent on the scene enabled the onlooker to give us credit for the consummation of the happy event.

Be that as it may, the delirious happenings remind me of the early days of the Khilafat movement. The fraternization then burst on the public as a new experience. Moreover, we had then the Khilafat and swaraj as our twin goals. Today we have nothing of the kind. We have drunk the poison of mutual hatred and so this nectar of fraternization tastes all the sweeter and the sweetness should never wear out.

In the present exuberance one hears also the cry of 'Long Live Hindustan and Pakistan,' from the joint throats of the Hindus and the Muslims. I think it is quite proper. Whatever was the cause for the agreement, three parties accepted Pakistan. If then the two are not enemies one of the other, and here evidently they are not, surely there is nothing wrong in the above cry. Indeed, if the two have become friends, not to wish long life to both the States would probably be an act of disloyalty.

BELIAGHATA, August 16, 1947

Harijan, 24-8-1947

332. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

CALCUTTA,
August 16, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Your two letters the same day. It was impossible for me to write to you before. This I am writing just after the morning prayer. Your letter together with the other post I read yesterday after the morning prayer and the time for the walk was on. During the day there is hardly any quiet. I am in a Muslim house. They are all very good. I have taken no one from Sodepur. Hence the help I need comes only from Muslim friends. This is not for me a new experience. It reminds me of old days in South Africa and the Khilafat days here. For the moment I am no enemy. Who knows how long this will last? Hindus and Muslims have become friends practically in a day.

Suhrawardy has become transformed, so it looks. His association was the condition of my stay in the disturbed area of Calcutta.

So you are a Minister.¹ You have to be firm and true.

What about education? You must watch. You should insist on team work. Then most things will come under your notice. Though there is rejoicing, somehow or other, there is disturbance within. Is there something wrong with me? Or are things really going wrong?

I see you will have the whole family on your hands now. It is all as it should be.

Harijan may stop, not the dictionary². Can you cope with it? You will tell me when it becomes too much for you.

I must be off for the walk.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

The first half sheet was by mistake taken for the whole. When I detected the mistake I had already got through some lines!

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

C/O SARDAR V. PATEL

NEW DELHI

From the original: C. W. 3707. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6516

333. *DISCUSSION WITH REV. JOHN KELLAS*³

CALCUTTA,
August 16, 1947

The principal question discussed was in connection with the relation between education, religion and the State.

Gandhiji expressed the opinion that the State should undoubtedly be secular. It could never promote, denominational education out of public funds⁴. Everyone living in it should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance, so long as the citizen obeyed the common law of the land. There should be no interference with missionary effort, but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the State as it

¹ The addressee had been appointed Minister of Health in the Government of India.

² The English-Hindustani dictionary which was being serialized in *Harijan*.

³ Principal, Scottish Church College, Calcutta, had called on Gandhiji along with some members of his staff.

⁴ This sentence is from *My Days with Gandhi*.

did during the foreign regime.

While discussing these matters with Principal Kellas, Gandhiji incidentally remarked that although we had thrown overboard British political supremacy, we have not yet been able to throw overboard the cultural one. In his characteristic style, he said:

We have discarded foreign power, not the unseen foreign influence.

What he would like the new India of his dream to do was to lay the foundation of a new life in keeping with its natural surroundings. In every State in the world today, violence, even if it were for so-called defensive purposes only, enjoyed a status which was in conflict with the better elements of life.

‘The organization of the best in society,’ was the aim to which new India should dedicate herself; and this could be done only if we succeeded in demolishing the status which had been given to goondaism today.

One of the scientist members of the staff then asked Gandhiji what scientific men should do if they were now asked by the free Indian Government to engage in researches in furtherance of war and the atom bomb? Gandhiji promptly replied:

Scientists to be worth the name should resist such a State unto death.

Harijan, 24-8-1947

334. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,
August 16, 1947

Gandhiji expressed his pleasure that at the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan the tricolour was hoisted by an elderly Harijan *Mehtrani* who is faithfully serving the institution. Similarly, for a District Congress Committee (of which he had forgotten the name for the moment), a Harijan girl performed the hoisting ceremony. This was along right lines and in keeping with the present fraternal spirit of Calcutta. He hoped that the spirit was permanent and that there would be no trace of untouchability or inequality in Hinduism and that Hindus and Muslims being from the same God, would never quarrel among one another. If this spirit persisted, it would spread throughout the length and breadth of India. Then there would be no fear of disturbance in Noakhali or the Punjab.

He then proceeded to refer to the crowd taking possession of the Government House. Historians have testified that in ancient India, people had no need to lock

their doors. In Ramarajya thefts were not known. Such is our tradition of honesty and truth. It was a matter of shame that there was a show of the military to induce the crowd to vacate the Government House. He was also grieved to learn that some plate in the Government House was pilfered. He would be glad to find that the plate was returned to the Government House. He then mentioned that an American friend who was the Qaid-e-Azam told him the day before that the Qaid-e-Azam said that India would show to the world that there was no longer any quarrel between the two and that there was no majority and minority community. Rajaji, their Governor, confirmed the same information.

Harijan, 24-8-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi,—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 373

335. FOOD CRISIS AND SOIL FERTILITY

The suggestions contained in this paper¹ are worthy of attention and adoption. I have no doubt that proper treatment and judicious use of our soil should allay all fear of dearth of food.

Harijan, 17-8-1947

336. AN INDIAN GOVERNOR

In construing the word India, here it includes both Hindostan and Pakistan. Hindustan may mean the country of the Hindus strictly so called, Pakistan may mean the country of the Muslims. Both the uses are, in my opinion, irregular. Hence, I have purposely use the word Hindostan.

The Khilafat-Swaraj-Non-co-operation Resolution of 1920 passed in Calcutta at the Special Session of the Congress², which has brought freedom from the British yoke, was for both the Hindus and the Muslims, designed to induce self-purification so as to bring about non-co-operation between forces of evil and those of good. Hence

1. An Indian Governor should, in his own person and in his surroundings, be a teetotalter. Without this, prohibition of the fiery liquid is well-nigh inconceivable.

2. He and his surroundings should represent hand-spinning as a visible token of identification with the dumb millions of India, a

¹ By Dr. N. R. Dhar, is not reproduced here

² *Vide* "The Non-co-operation Resolution", 5-9-1920.

token of the necessity of 'bread labour' and organized non-violence as against organized violence on which the society of today seems to be based.

3. He must dwell in a cottage accessible to all, though easily shielded from gaze, if he is to do efficient work. The British Governor naturally represented British might. For him and his was erected a fortified residence—a palace to be occupied by him and his numerous vassals who sustained his Empire. The Indian prototype may keep somewhat pretentious buildings for receiving princes and ambassadors of the world. For these, being guests of the Governor, should constitute an education in what "Even Unto This Last"—equality of all—should mean in concrete terms. For him no expensive furniture, foreign or indigenous. Plain living and high thinking must be his motto, not to adorn his entrance but to be exemplified in daily life.

4. For him there can be no untouchability in any form whatsoever, no caste or creed or colour distinction. He must represent the best of all religions and all things Eastern or Western. Being a citizen of India, he must be a citizen of the world. Thus simply, one reads, did the Khalif Omar, with millions of treasures at his feet, live; thus lived Janaka of ancient times; thus lived, as I saw him, the Master of Eton in his residence in the midst of , and surrounded by, the sons of the Lords and Nabobs of the British Isles. Will the Governors of India of the famished millions do less?

5. He will speak the language of the province of which he is the Governor and Hindustani, the lingua franca of India written in the Nagari or Urdu script. This is neither Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu. Hindustani is emphatically the language which is spoken by the millions north of the Vindhya Range.

This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of the virtues that an Indian Governor should represent. It is merely illustrative.

One would expect that the Britishers who have been chosen by Indian representatives as Governors and who have taken the oath of fealty to India and her millions would endeavour as far as possible to live the life an Indian Governor is expected to live. They will represent the best that their country has to give to India and the world.

CALCUTTA, August 17, 1947

Harijan, 24-8-1947

337. *GOD IS GOOD*

Not in the same sense as X is good. X is comparatively good. He is more good than evil, but God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in His own image. Unfortunately for us man has fashioned Him in his own. This arrogation has landed man-kind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again God lives but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is life. Therefore goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turn to dust because apart from God they are lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and ennoble us.

Conversely God conceived without Goodness is without life. We give him life in our vain imaginings.

CALCUTTA, August 17, 1947

Harijan, 24-8-1947

338. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

CALCUTTA,

August 17, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I have gone deaf from all the shouting. I am expected to never tire of giving *darshan*. I am at any wit's end how to free myself from this. As for the rest of the news—you will have what you can from the newspapers.

I am reminded of the days of the Khilafat. But what if this is just a momentary enthusiasm?

I enclose herewith a telegram about Lahore¹. I have not replied to it. If what it says is true, it is a serious thing. Do let me know the truth. At present I am stuck here. The second is a letter from Horace Alexander. What he says certainly commends itself to me. If he makes the recommendations after a study of the whole thing, any injustice that might be done can be prevented.

In Chandranagore some rioters have surrounded the house of the Administrator;² so Prafulla Babu has gone there.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhai, pp. 365-6

339. *LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI*

CALCUTTA,

August 17, 1947

CHI. ANAND,

I have your letter. Is Gangi well? What foreword can I write for my writings? Ask someone else.

If you want to go to America for your ear trouble, you may go. Why do you want my permission? One can do as one wishes. I am returning the Press cutting.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ Where Hindus had been massacred

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-8-1947.

340. SPEECH AT NARKELDANGA¹

CALCUTTA,

[August 17, 1947]²

Gandhiji said that there were indications that all was not well with the Muslims. Some Hindus were now beginning to feel that they had the upper hand, and some Muslims were afraid that they would have to play the underdog in the Union today. Gandhiji said that this would be shameful indeed. If a minority in India, minority on the score of its religious profession, was made to feel small on that account, he could only say that this India was not the India of his dreams. In the India for whose fashioning he had worked all his life every man enjoyed equality of status, whatever his religion was. The State was bound to be wholly secular. He went so far as to say that no denominational educational institution in it should enjoy State patronage.

All subjects would thus be equal in the eye of the law. But every single individual would be free to pursue his own religion without let or hindrance so long as it did not transgress the common law. The question of the protection of minorities was not good enough for him; it rested upon the recognition of religious grouping between citizens of the same State. What

he wished India to do, was to assure liberty of religious profession to every single individual. Then only India could be great, for it was perhaps the one nation in the ancient world, which had recognized cultural democracy, whereby it was held that the roads to God were many, but the goal was one, because God was one and the same. In fact the roads were as many as there were individuals in the world.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

341. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

CALCUTTA,

August 17, 1947

Gandhiji said that it was well for Shaheed Saheb to speak sweet things. They were justified. There was no exaggeration in his speech. But he felt bound to draw attention to certain disturbing things. They should not be drowned in the pardonable

¹ Extracted from N. K. Bose's report "Many Roads, One Goal"

² Gandhiji was at Narkeldanga on this date.

³ The prayer was held in the Victoria Nursery Grounds in Narkeldanga.

exuberance they were witnessings. There were isolated spots in Calcutta where it was not all well. He had heard that in one spot the Hindu residents were not prepared to welcome back the Muslim residents who were obliged to leave their places. All this was bad. It was like a bad boil in an otherwise wholesome body. If the boils were not looked after in time, they might poison the body.

Then he mentioned a letter he had received from Mahammed Habibullah Bahar, Secretary of the Muslim League. He made a worthy suggestion about a joint influential committee going to the East and West of Bengal and consolidate the good work being done in Calcutta. He hoped the suggestion would be quickly acted upon. Another suggestion was that the havoc caused by the flood in the East Bengal should be a joint concern of the Hindus and the Musalmans. He agreed and hoped that there would be a body of Hindu and Muslim workers who would tackle the subject efficiently. Both grain and workers were wanted more than money. The Mayor of Calcutta had sent him a cheque for Rs.15,000 in aid of relief. He was thankful for the cheque. He would see to it that it was well employed.

Gandhiji then turned to Chandranagore from which the news was received that the Administrator's bungalow was surrounded by those who called themselves satyagrahis but were in fact *duragrahis*, if the statement received by him was true. It was suggested that he had approved of the step. He must say it was wholly untrue. Some persons had come to him and he had said that this was no time for satyagraha. There never could be any for *duragraha*. Pandit Nehru was there to look after such affairs. After all the French were a great people, lovers of liberty. They must not be subjected to any strain by India which had come in possession of liberty. India was bound to protect the French possessions in India against any untoward action by the Indians. So he was glad that the Chief Minister had proceeded to Chandranagore to find out the truth and do what he could.

Continuing, Gandhiji dealt with way in which the people were treating the police who were posted to protect Shaheed Saheb and him. It was most improper to disregard the police instructions. He had seen them undertaking their difficult task with exemplary patience and courtesy. It was wrong for crowds to take the law in their own hands. That way lay slavery, not freedom. He warned the public that he was thinking of approaching the authorities to withdraw their forces, for he did not like them to be subjected to insult for doing a public duty. He, however, expected that the crowd would become perfectly orderly, so that the contemplated withdrawal might not be necessary. The police and the military today were after all servants of the public and not their masters.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to the coming Id celebration. For twenty years in South Africa he had participated in the celebration with Muslim friends in *masjids*. Now that a flood of goodwill was sweeping over the city of Calcutta, he expected

everyone to take such steps as would render the friendly feeling permanent. It was easy to share in a rising tide of emotion; but it was quite another matter to produce constructive workers who would toil from day to day in order to consolidate the feeling. Gandhiji would love to see such work in the city, for, he was sure that its effect would then be felt by the rest of the country. If they failed to do this, Gandhiji warned them, today's freedom would prove only a nine-day wonder.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

342. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 18, 1947

The joy of the crowd is there but not in me is any satisfaction. Anything lacking in me? . . .¹ Hindu-Muslim unity seems to be too sudden to be true. They ascribe the transformation to me. I wonder! Probably things would have been like this even if I had not been on the scene. Time will show.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 374.

343. NOTE TO KHULNA CONGRESS WORKERS²

CALCUTTA,

[*August 18, 1947*]³

There can be no two opinions. The Union flag *must* go, Pakistan's must be hoisted without demur, with joy if possible. Award is award good or bad.

From a photostat: C. W. 10574; also *My Days with Gandhi*, pp. 267-8

¹ Omission as in the source

² The visitors had sought Gandhiji's advice as to what they should do with the tricolour they had hoisted to celebrate August 15 in Khulna, now that the Boundary Commission had awarded the place to Pakistan. Gandhiji wrote this as he was observing silence.

³ From *My Days with Gandhi*

344. NOTE TO PEOPLE OF BARRACKPORE¹

August 18, 1947

I hope the decision not to have music in the vicinity of mosques at the *namaz* time is acceptable to all and will be regarded as binding by *all* Hindus, not only those who are present on the spot. The League and the Congress have agreed to solve all differences by peaceful methods and without resort of force.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 375

345. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

BELIAGHATA,

August 18, 1947

My first duty is to wish *Id Mubarak* to all those Muslims who are present here. There was a time when both the Hindus and Muslims embraced each other on this day. I must confess that after many years I am witnessing this scene. I am very happy to see the members of the Muslims League, National Guards and Congress volunteers here. How-ever, this unity should be everlasting. We have to take the place of the British. I will never be able to forget the scene I have witnessed today.

[From Gujarati]

Calcuttano Chamatkar, pp. 40-1

¹ Gandhiji visited Barrackpore, 14 miles north of Calcutta, following reports of some trouble over a procession. Peace had already been established when Gandhiji, who was still observing silence, reached there.

² The meeting held in the compounds of the Mohammedan Sporting Club was attended by about four to five lakh people.

346. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

CALCUTTA,
August 19, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter and the wire. When can a message be sent to Manilal? After the 15th? That is over.

What do you mean by saying that Sita has been betrothed? According to me, the betrothal took place the day they stole each other's hearts. Does betrothal mean that they have now taken a step further and can take more liberties with each other? But you are now leaving. What is bound to happen will happen.

You must have received my long letters.¹

I am writing this letter under very great pressure for time.

I understand about Sita's college. Some inconvenience must be endured, or boys and girls become secretive and think that they are progressing.

Show this letter to Manilal also.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5012

347. LETTER TO NANDLAL MEHTA

CALCUTTA,
August 19, 1947

CHI. NANDLAL,

Your letter and the watch were received well in time.

What you have done is like caparisoning a donkey in gold. I was shocked and wondered if it was of gold. Shaheed Saheb was sitting with me. He opened the watch and discovered it was only gilded. Still I did not like it. I need only ordinary things. This watch cannot even take a khadi string. It will need a silken string.

And because there is no radium on the dial, I shall need a torch

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Sushila Gandhi", 14-8-1947.

or something at night. Of course it is not to be expected that it will have an alarm.

This does not mean that you should get a new one. Of course, if a watch with radium and alarm was available, I would surely exchange. But even that for how long? Our days are now numbered. We must be resigned to whatever we get. If something improper is presented, we must put it aside. But I am digressing.

The watch seems to be keeping accurate time. How is it that Urmila does not come to lend her shoulder? Let her study a lot. But she should not fall prey to the present-day business. You must have understood what I am hinting at.

The fulfilment of your desire is difficult. I can live up to 125 years if I can become detached. I get angry with myself. Who belongs to me?

Blessings to you three from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Hindustan

348. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,

August 19, 1947

Gandhiji apologized for being late by an hour and a quarter. His party was not at fault. Because of the misdeeds of the majority, who were Hindus in Kanchrapara¹, the Chief Minister, Shaheed Saheb, he and others had to go to Kanchrapara. Then on return they were stopped by parties who wanted to acclaim their joy. This sort of acclamation, if it was not tempered with restraint, would kill their leaders and then they would deplore the embarrassing affection. He then warned them against being unduly elated by all the fraternization that they were witnessing. Behind it there were pointers like Barrackpore,² Kanchrapara and other places he could mention. He would not let them plead excuse or extenuation. There was neither excuse nor extenuation for the majority in Pakistan or Hindustan. If the Hindu majority treasured

¹ An industrial area, 26 miles north of Calcutta, where following a dispute over playing or music before mosques, the police had opened fire causing many deaths.

² *Vide* "Note to People of Barrackpore", 18-8-1947.

their religion and duty, they would be just at all cost. They would overlook the limitations or mistakes of the minority who had no one but the majority to look to for justice. He had to listen not without shame and sorrow to the statement that a Muslim friend made to him. He said with a sigh that there was nothing left but a kind of subjection to the Hindu majority and they might have to suffer in silence the playing of music before mosques whilst they were offering prayers. He would have no such despair on the part of Muslims. The friend, who made the remark, did not realize that he unconsciously implied that Muslims majority would inflict revenge in Pakistan. He hoped it would never be so either in Hindustan or Pakistan. The proper thing was each majority to do their duty in all humility, irrespective of what the other majority did in the other State. He suggested, therefore, that until the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and the Union agreed upon another course in both the States, the practice that was followed during the British regime often under compulsion, should be fully and voluntarily followed in both the States. Those who thought that they could haughtily impose their will on the minority were foolish and were vastly mistaken. If, therefore, they wanted to consolidate the prevailing goodwill, they would see to it that they acted on the square under all circumstances.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

349. TALK WITH STUART NELSON¹

CALCUTTA,

[Before August 20, 1947]²

Professor Nelson asked him why it was that Indians who had more or less successfully gained independence through peaceful means, were now unable to check the tide of civil war through the same means?

Gandhiji replied that it was indeed a searching question which he must answer. He confessed that it had become clear to him that what he had mistaken for satyagraha was not satyagraha but passive resistance—a weapon of the weak. Indians harboured ill will and anger against their erstwhile rulers, while they pretended to resist them non-violently. Their resistance was, therefore, inspired by violence and not a by regard for the man in the British, whom they should convert through satyagraha.

¹ This and the following item extracted from “Non-violence and Free India” appeared under the date-line “Calcutta, 20-8-1947”. This talk however, according to the source, took place two or three days before it was reported.

² *ibid*

Now that the British were voluntarily quitting India, apparent non-violence had gone to pieces in a moment. The attitude of violence which we had secretly harboured, in spite of the restraint imposed by the Indian National Congress, now recoiled upon us and made us fly at each other's throats when the question of the distribution of power came up. If India could now discover a way of sublimating the force of violence which had taken a communal turn, and turning it into constructive, peaceful ways, whereby differences of interests could be liquidated, it would be a great day indeed.

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that it was indeed true that many English friends had warned him that the so-called non-violent non-co-operation of India was not really non-violent. It was the passivity of the weak and not the non-violence of the stout in heart who would never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests, who would even try to convert and not coerce their adversary.

Gandhiji proceeded to say that this was indeed true. He had all along laboured under an illusion. But he was never sorry for it. He realized that if his vision were not covered by that illusion, India would never have reached the point which it had today.

India was now free, and the reality was now clearly revealed to him. Now that the burden of subjection had been lifted, all the forces of good had to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence in order to settle human conflicts whether it was between two States or between two sections of the same people. He had yet the faith that India would rise to the occasion and prove to the world that the birth of two new States would be, not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind. It was the duty of Free India to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving collective conflicts, if its freedom was going to be really worth-while.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

350. TALK WITH STUDENTS

CALCUTTA,
[Before August 20, 1947]

Gandhiji first asked them if any of them had taken part in the riots, to which they replied in the negative. Whatever they had done was in self-defence; hence it was no part of the riot.

This gave Gandhiji an opportunity of speaking on some of the vital problems connected with non-violence. He said that mankind had all along tried to justify violence and war in terms of unavoidable self-defence. It was a simple rule that the violence of the aggressor could only be defeated by superior violence of the defender. All over the world, men had thus been caught in a mad race for armaments, and no one yet knew at what point of time the world would be really safe enough for turning the sword into the plough. Mankind, he stated, had not yet mastered the true art of self-defence.

But great teachers, who had practised what they preached, had successfully shown that true defence lay along the path of non-retaliation. It might sound paradoxical; but this is what he meant. Violence always thrived on counter-violence. The aggressor had always a purpose behind his attack; he wanted something to be done, some object to be surrendered by the defender. Now, if the defender steeled his heart and was determined not to surrender even one inch, and at the same time to resist the temptation of matching the violence of the aggressor by violence, the latter could be made to realize in a short while that it would not be paying to punish the other party and his will could not be imposed in that way. This would involve suffering. It was this unalloyed self-suffering which was the truest form of self-defence which knew no surrender.

Someone might ask how it could be called self-defence if through such non-resistance the defender was likely to lose his life. Jesus lost his life on the Cross and the Roman Pilate won. Gandhiji did not agree. Jesus had won, as the world's history had abundantly shown. What did it matter if the body was dissolved in the process, so long as by Christ's act of non-resistance, the forces of good were released in society?

This art of the self-defence by means of which man gained his life by losing it, had been mastered and exemplified in the history of individuals. The method had not been perfected for application by large masses of mankind. India's satyagraha was a very imperfect experiment in that direction. Hence, during the Hindu-Muslim quarrel, it proved a failure on the whole.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

351. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

CALCUTTA,
August 20, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters and wire. I hope you got mine at Pratap Nagar. All your letters were received.

So you have not gained by your stay in the Himalayan Hills! You are evidently unable to build up your body.

I suggest your giving up all activities including cow-keeping.

What about the buildings you have erected and the ground taken? You can certainly come back to me and stay at will. Have no irons in the fire till your body is like true steel. I hold that it can be like that if the conditions are fulfilled.

I hope the examination of your heart will prove satisfactory.¹

I am fixed up here for the time being. Then the intention is to go to Noakhali. When that time will come I do not know.

This letter has taken me two hours to finish. There were many interruptions.

BAPU

[PS.]

I had expressed the intention to pass my days in Pakistan, no promise.

From the original: C. W. 6531. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9926

¹ The addressee had written to Gandhiji of her decision to go to Delhi to get her heart examined as the strain of the Himalayan hills had left her health very unsatisfactory.

352. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

BELIAGHATA,

August 20, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have your letter. I am very sorry to learn that you got the articles on Wednesday the 13th. I take the utmost care to see that you get all the material on Monday evening. With that aim, I send the material by air-mail from Calcutta on Sunday. But I cannot attend to everything myself. I have got to trust somebody, Nobody can be forced to do anything. We should, therefore, be content with whatever service we get. I have no paid employee. I have so arranged my life that those who are with me can leave me this very day. Such lapses, therefore, will continue. Also I must confess that I have no more zest in running *Harijan*. I constantly feel that it is only through actions I should try to give the people what I can. But I am not going to decide anything in a hurry. Whatever happens will happen in the natural course.

I have received a copy of Prabhu's publication. I understand about Anand Hingorani. You may rest assured that he is not after money, nor is he dishonest. He is certainly capricious, being the son of a rich father. He is highly educated and has been brought up in indulgence. His father-in-law also is a big man. He has now lost his hearing. He would be happy to be able to popularize any ideas of mine. He doesn't write anything else or make profit by publishing books. However, he must abide the rules which normally govern the permission we give to all such publications.

Do you send anybody to the airport on Mondays at the time of arrival of the aeroplane? It would be better to send somebody every day till you receive the *Harijan* Packet.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9983. Also C. W. 6957. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

353. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

CALCUTTA,
August 20, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I am enclosing Aryanayakum's letter. As asked for pay Radhakisan Rs. 75,000.

So the *goshala* work goes on after all as usual; or has there been anything new?

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

354. LETTER TO E. W. ARYANAYAKUM

August 20, 1947

CHI. ARYANAYAKUM,

I have your letter.

I have written¹ to Chimanlal to give Rs. 75,000 to Chi. Radhakisan for the *goshala*.

My letter² about the *goshala* must have reached you.

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

355. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS³

CALCUTTA,
August 20, 1947

QUESTION: There is a talk of sending Miss Chandralekha Pandit⁴ as ambassador to the U.S. A. What can a young girl of eighteen do there?

GANDHIJI: It is an attack on Jawaharlal Nehru. I can give an apt reply to it. But at the moment I do not want to involve myself in politics. I am busy with the work concerning Hindu-Muslim unity.

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² *Vide* "Letter to E. W. Aryanayakum", 13-8-1947.

³ Gandhiji met the journalists at his Beliaghata residence; Suhrawardy was also present.

⁴ Daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit

You may ask any question you like on the subject. I do not want to render the Press useless. I want to utilize it in the work of Hindu-Muslim unity. I am eager to see the day when Hindus and Muslims will cease to stab each other even if the Government of India or of Pakistan should go mad. Whatever I say in my prayer meetings or in my writings is done after the due deliberation.

Let the past be buried. Do not rake it up. Think of the future. Analyse things. Do not hesitate to point out the defects if they are detected. Do not exaggerate. The country has often suffered from exaggeration.¹

[From Gujarati]

Calcuttano Chamatkar, pp. 42-3

356. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

CALCUTTA,
August 20, 1947

Gandhiji drew attention to Chittagong and said that it was their duty to collect funds, distribute food and clothing and medical necessities. Enough volunteers should be sent to afford relief. He was glad to find that the Marwari Relief Society as also the Friends' Service Unit under Mr. Muirhead had already sent workers to the scene.

Referring to the Punjab, Gandhiji said that he had received letters to the effect that now that there was peace in Calcutta, he should proceed to the Punjab. He said that when God called him, he would most certainly go there. But the two Prime Ministers of the two Dominions had announced that their major preoccupation would be to restore complete peace in the Punjab. They would use every resource at their disposal to establish peace and they would mobilize public opinion in the Punjab. This should be enough for them to hope that things in the Punjab would be as good as in Calcutta. The two Prime Minister of the Punjab and Master Tara Singh and Master Giani Kartar Singh have said likewise.

Mentioning about the Central Peace Committee, Gandhiji said that it should consolidate the results so far achieved. They had to see that poor Muslims were rehabilitated just as the Hindus had to be rehabilitated in the areas from which they had been evacuated. Local peace committees should be set up in each *mohalla*; and

¹ This paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21-8-1947.

² The meeting held at Khengrapati, Barrackpore, was attended by over four lakh people.

they must find at least one Hindu and one Muslim of clean heart to work together. These committees must tour the areas under their jurisdiction. They should work to create the feeling of friendliness wherever it was lacking. For the purpose of rehabilitation they would have to go into details. Food, shelter and clothing had to be found for the evacuees returning to their homes. It would be a great day indeed for Calcutta if its men and women co-operated in this manner to consolidate their good feelings, which had been so much in evidence during the last few days. In this task all the parties were to co-operate. For, now that all the parties concerned had come to an agreement with regard to the division of India into two dominions, there was no longer any reason to quarrel and they could join hands in the task of restoring peaceful conditions.

Gandhiji then referred to the question of flags. Personally he was of opinion that as the two States were on friendly terms with each other, there was no reason why they could not display each other's flags in the two Dominions just as England and America could do.

Gandhiji then referred to the proposal of stopping cow-slaughter by means of legislation in the Indian Union. He said that he was of opinion that if they tried to do so through law, it would be a great mistake. He had been a devotee of the cow for over half a century. She had a permanent place in the economy of India. The cow can indeed be saved if they could win over the hearts of the Muslims in such a way that they voluntarily understood the responsibility out of deference to the feelings of their Hindu friends. This had been abundantly demonstrated during the Khilafat days. Now that India was free, the same old relation could be restored if they behaved towards one another correctly.

Hinduism, he lastly said, would be wrongly served if compelling legislation was resorted to in such matters. Hinduism could be saved only by doing unadulterated justice to man to whatever religion he might belong.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

357. *LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR*

CALCUTTA,

August 21, 1947

CHI. DEV,

I don't see the difficulty Jivanji has pointed out in respect of the article "My Neighbours". I sent for the book and read it. As far as I understand the English language, the improvement you suggested has no place in it. If Jivanji could suggest some other improvement I

might understand his point.

I have sent replies to the other questions with Shah Nawaz. Do write to me whatever you wish. Never mind if I am not able to reply promptly although I shall try to do so.

I got up at 2.30 and am now writing this. It is 3.30 by the Calcutta standard time.

It is undecided where I shall go. But the talk is going on about my leaving soon for the Punjab.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

358. LETTER TO TERESA RADDY

CALCUTTA,

August 21, 1947

DEAR TERESA,

What a long letter to express your jubilation. When your studies are over I wonder [if] you will retain the same enthusiasm as now for the service of the country.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

MISS TERESA RADDY
C/O MR. T. L. THOMAS
69 AUSTIN TOWN
BANGALORE CANTT.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

359. *LETTER TO J. WOLFF*

CALCUTTA,

August 21, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your cablegram preceding your letter. To your cablegram I sent the following reply: WOLFF POST RESTANTE JERUSALEM. AM HELPLESS. GANDHI".

You are impatient. Non-violence is never impatient. Impatience betrays lack of faith and understanding. Go on doing your duty to the full and leave the rest to God.

J. WOLFF, ESQ.

POST RESTANTE

JERUSALEM

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

360. *SPEECH AT WOMEN' S MEETING'*

CALCUTTA,

August 21, 1947

I have been to many women's meetings. But today the noise is too much. I am but a servant. I have come to this meeting because I was ordered to do so. I would like to leave as soon as possible. All the women who have come here should call on Muslim women. Women can do much work. My grand-daughter was with me in my Noakhali tour. I used to send her to Muslim women daily. It was amazing the way they talked with her. Those women used to test her also. Women should work for eradicating untouchability.

[From Gujarati]

Calcuttano Chamatkar, p. 45

¹ The meeting was held in the University. There was so much noise that Gandhiji had to wait for about forty-five minutes before he could address the gathering.

361. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

CALCUTTA,

August 21, 1947

Gandhiji drew attention to the two flags of Pakistan and the Indian Union that were being prominently flown among the audience and hoped that that pleasing sight would be universal in India. He was glad too that Shaheed Saheb had suggested the revival of the slogan '*Hindu-Muslim ki Jai*', for it was started during the palmy Khilafat days. He recalled the memory of the old days when a Muslim fellow-prisoner used to sing Iqbal's *Sare Jahanse Achchha*. He used to have it sung equally sweetly by the late Saraladevi Chowdharani. The third time was this evening when he heard it sung with equal sweetness and force. The words of the poem were as sweet as the tune. And among them what could be sweeter than that religion never taught mutual hatred? He hoped and prayed that the beginning thus auspiciously made would last for ever and that they would never resort to the sword for the solution of their difficulties. If that was to be so, they would see that no untoward incidents were allowed to happen and flimsy things were not exaggerated so as to make them look like a communal disturbance as had come to his notice even that very day. He pleaded, too, that a strong rehabilitation committee might collect enough funds to give aid where it was required.

Absolute impartiality was needed to bring all the evacuees back to their places. There was a complaint that certain Muslims, who used to supply carts for transfer of goods from place to place, were displaced during the direct-action days. They had not found any other occupation. He was clear that if the statement was true, they should be reinstated. What was then to be done with the substitutes who were imported from other provinces? It was a ticklish question. But it was not beyond the wit of merchants. Where there was a will, there was a way. In scrupulous attention to such matters lay the foundation for permanent unity. There was, too, the question of landlords taking undue advantage of the evacuees who were eager to return. They must not expect payment for the days that the *bustees* were unoccupied or think of charging higher rents. He added that if they were quite honest in all their dealings both the communities were true to one another, he was sure that the union of hearts would act unfailingly on the Punjab and help the good work that was being done by the ministers of the two Dominions.

He then came to the Award of the Umpire in the Boundary Commission. The

¹ Held in the Park Circus Maidan, a predominantly Muslim locality, the meeting began with Iqbal's song *Sare Jahanse Achchha Hindostan Hamara*.

Umpire was chosen by all the parties to the dispute. It would be unjust and unworthy to impute motives to the Umpire. He was specially invited by the parties to the thankless task. The parties and the public they represented, were loyally to abide by the Award. No Award that he knew—and he had to do with many arbitrations—completely satisfied the parties. But having made the choice they were bound to carry out the terms of the Award. No doubt the best way was for the parties to adjust differences themselves. This royal road was open to them any time as Khwaja Saheb Nazimuddin and Dr. Ghosh, the two Premiers, had wisely pointed out.

He knew that the Muslims of Murshidabad and Malda were as gravely disappointed as the Hindus in Khulna or Gopalganj and the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill tracts. The latter had gone to East Bengal. He would say to all these parties that it was not only foolish but unbecoming to quarrel over the Award. It should not matter that on the 15th, the day was celebrated according to the national division. If he had been consulted he would have advised non-celebration because of the state of uncertainty. But having by mistake flown in the respective places the wrong flag, there should be no hesitation whatsoever in replacing the wrong flag by the right one. But as he had already said, there was no flag wrong in their Dominion for the simple reason that there was no quarrel left between the parties. Both the Dominions had sincerely professed mutual friendship and mutual regard. Therefore, he would advise the parties to fly both the flags of both the Dominions or be equally respectful whichever flag was flown for the time being.

He could not understand the misgivings of the Muslims in that Murshidabad and Malda went to West Bengal, nor could he understand the misgivings of the Hindus in Khulna and Gopalganj and of the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill tracts. For, in view of the friendship professed by all the parties, there was not the slightest occasion for entertaining any fear. Surely, there would be no compulsion used against the minorities in either of Bengal. The minorities would enjoy equal rights with the majorities.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

362. HOW TO SAVE THE COW?

There is serious ignorance about the place of the cow in Hinduism and in the economy of Indian life. At the same time that India has become independent of foreign rule, by common consent it has been cut into twain so as to induce the untenable belief that one part is popularly described as Hindu India and the other part as Muslim India. Like all superstitions, this of Hindu and Muslim India will die hard. The fact is that the Indian Union and Pakistan belong

equally to all who call themselves and are, sons of the soil, irrespective of their creed or colour.

Nevertheless, a large number of local Hindus have begun to believe in the superstition that the Union belongs to the Hindus and the that, therefore, they should enforce their belief by law even among non-Hindus. Hence an emotional wave is sweeping the country, in order to secure legislation prohibiting the slaughter of cows within the Union.

In this state, which I hold, is based on ignorance, claiming to be a knowing lover and devotee, second to none in India of the cow, I must try in the best manner I can to dispel the ignorance.

Let us at the outset realize that cow worship in the religious sense is largely confined to Gujarat, Marwar, the United Provinces and Bihar. Marwaris and Gujaratis being enterprising merchants, have succeeded in making the greatest noise without at the same time devoting their business talent to the solution of the very difficult question of conserving the cattle wealth of India.

It is obviously wrong legally to enforce one's religious practice on those who do not share that religion.

In so far as the pure economic necessity of cow protection is concerned, it could be easily secured if the question was considered on that ground alone. In that event all the dry cattle, the cows who give less milk than their keep and the aged and unfit cattle would be slaughtered without a second thought. This soulless economy has no place in India although the inhabitants of this land of paradoxes may be, indeed are, guilty of many soulless acts.

Then how can the cow be saved without our having to kill her off when she ceases to give the economic quantity of milk or when she becomes otherwise an uneconomic burden? The answer to the question can be summed up as follows:

1. By the Hindus performing their duty towards the cow and her progeny. If they did so, our cattle would be the pride of India and the world. The contrary is the case today.

2. By learning the science of cattle-breeding. Today there is perfect anarchy in this work.

3. By replacing the present cruel method of castration by the humane method practised in the West.

4. By thorough reform of the *pinjarapoles* of India which are

today, as a rule, managed ignorantly and without any plan by men who do not know their work.

5. When these primary things are done, it will be found that the Muslims will, of their own accord, recognize the necessity, of only for the sake of their Hindu brethren, of not slaughtering cattle for beef or otherwise.

The reader will observe that behind the foregoing requirements lies one thing and that is ahimsa, otherwise known as universal compassion. If that supreme thing is realized, everything else becomes easy. Where there is ahimsa, there is infinite patience, inner calm, discrimination, self-sacrifice and true knowledge. Cow-protection is not an easy thing. Much money is wasted in its name. Nevertheless, in the absence of ahimsa the Hindus have become destroyers instead of saviours of the cow. It is even more difficult than the removal of foreign rule from India.¹

CALCUTTA, August 22, 1947

Harijan, 31-8-1947

363. *LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI*

BELIAGHATA, CALCUTTA,

August 22, 1947

CHI. KANTI,

I was pleased to read your postcard. I am busy writing a large number of letters. After completing your study, devote yourself to service even at some risk to yourself.

For the present I shall have to remain here. How is it that Suru² and Shanti³ keep indifferent health?

Blessings to all of you from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7385. Courtesy: Kanti Gandhi

¹ For Gandhiji's note appended to this article, *Vide* "A Note", 23-8-1947.

² Addressee's wife, Saraswati

³ Addressee's son

364. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

CALCUTTA,
August 22, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I have your wire.¹ The work here is proceeding well. Yes, I must go to Noakhali. Some days are to be given to Bihar. Under the circumstances, when can I go to the Punjab? Nevertheless, you must tell me when I have to go.² No time to write more. I wanted to write in English but the pen went off into Hindustani. See the enclosed; is there any truth in it?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

365. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

CALCUTTA,
August 22, 1947

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

What a letter? You must have a frank talk with Jayaprakash. Nothing can be settled through correspondence. If it is all true, then the socialists cannot do anything.

Nandalal's watch seems useless. The back of the casing comes off. I will see what can be done about it.

I have sent Saheb's papers to Panditji.

Has Sushila come? Tell her that I have intentionally not written to her. I had thought that she would be coming here. But if she feels that it is her duty to stay there for a few days, she may do so.

I have sent your watch with Aruna.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2499

¹ After a visit to the riot-affected areas in the Punjab the addressee had wired to Gandhiji on August 21, sending his "respectful congratulations on the wonderful change in Calcutta" and telling him that the Punjab needed his "healing presence".

² The addressee replied: "I do not ask you to go to Punjab immediately. We must face the situation now. Later I might request you to go there."

366. LETTER TO RAM MANOHAR LOHIA

August 22, 1947

CHI. RAM MANOHAR,

I will write tomorrow about Nepal.

Smoking can be given up all at once. Those who smoke moderately cannot keep to a limit. If we workers do not have such will power, what work can we expect to do? It is now that we have to do real work.

Have you understood the Goa problem fully?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, between pp. 120 and 121

367. DISCUSSION WITH KASTURBA TRUST TRAINEES¹

CALCUTTA,

[August 22, 1947]²

One of the teachers had submitted a statement about her experiences with regard to the method of training itself.

But Gandhiji did not wish to enter into the actual details of the training course; he was sure this had to be adjusted to the conditions and needs of rural Bengal and the details must naturally be worked out by the teachers from their own experience.

The question which Gandhiji took up for discussion was asked by one of the trainees: In view of the resistance encountered from the rural people and the numerous disappointments which they had to face, how would Gandhiji advise them to proceed, so that success could be ensured?

Gandhiji began by saying that he was glad that a very fundamental question had been raised. He had, however, only one answer for it. The education through which India had passed for over a century was essentially designed for a particular purpose. In order to feed the interests of capitalism, the entire economic life of India had been changed, the city had become the centre of gravity and not the village; the village had been dethroned from its position of supremacy and virtually been

¹ Twenty-three trainees and three teachers from the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust training camp, Shahib Nagar, had called on Gandhiji.

² From Calcuttano Chamatkar

converted into a slum, kept as far away from city as practicable. The educational system had been planned to supply the needs of this lop-sided economy. If, now, we wanted to create a new India our outlook must be changed altogether. Democracy has to be built up inch by inch in economic, social and political life. Considering the magnitude of the task, it would naturally require a very stout heart to grapple with the problem.

To the trainees, his advice was one. They must be brave, intelligent and persevering. The villagers might not readily respond. They might even prove hostile. Many interests would have to be disturbed before the necessary change could be effected. But non-violent workers should choose the line of least resistance. They should suffer in their own persons before they could aspire to gain the co-operation of the inert or hostile villagers. Day in and day out, they must persevere at their chosen task, whether it was village sanitation or the imparting of education to a few children, whom perhaps nobody else would care to touch. They might not have the resources to supply their own bread. But even then, through hunger, they must persist without retirement, without bitterness. *Then* only would their conduct strike the imagination of the villagers; and this element of surprise would open the way to their hearts. Once the inert mass had begun to yield, work would make rapid progress.

Another trainee then said that there were no signs of response from the villagers even after a year of patient work. Gandhiji comforted her by saying that one year's work was not enough. We had to sweep aside the accumulated debris of centuries of subjugation. Even a lifetime might not prove enough.¹ If our education had been otherwise, we might not have perhaps yielded so readily to despondence. We had to steel our hearts and look towards the bright future to enable us to get out of the Slough of Despond. So long as we persevered, the struggle itself was victory. It was only courage of this kind which could lead India to the New Age.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

¹ According to Calcuttano Chamatkar, Gandhiji referred to Prema Kantak and Yashodhara Dasappa as the two workers who had dedicated themselves to the villages for many years.

368. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

CALCUTTA,

August 22, 1947

Gandhiji drew attention to the fact that while some men in the audience responded and kept time, the women hardly responded. He said that those who had some experience knew the power that the *Ramdhun*, meaning recital of God's name from the heart, meant. He knew the power that lakhs of soldiers marching in step to the tune of their band meant. The desolation that military prowess had wrought in the world, he who ran could see. Though the War said to have ended, the aftermath was worse than actual warfare. Such was the bankruptcy of military power.

Without the slightest hesitation he was there to contend that the power exerted by the *Ramdhun* recited by millions of mankind with true beat of time, was different in kind from and infinitely superior to the display of military strength. And this recital of God's name from the heart, would produce lasting peace and happiness in the place of the present desolation they witnessed. That brought him to what was going on in the Punjab. If there was lasting peace in Calcutta, it must have its effect on the Punjab. But it was not so as yet. He felt sorrow and shame to learn that the Hindus were leaving Lahore and the Muslims were leaving Amritsar. It was deplorable that the Muslims should distrust the former. He hoped that the Muslims and the Hindus and the Sikh leaders would stop the reported exodus.

Gandhiji referred then to the visit he had from some Muslims from Kharagpur. Though now there was comparative quiet there, there was no assurance that it would last. They complained that the Hindu officer was partial. He hoped this was not so. He must warn all the officers and their men in the police force that in their work they were neither Muslims nor Hindus nor Sikhs. They were Indians bound by oath to give full protection to the afflicted without regard to their religion. Thereby they did not cease to be Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs, but became better.

Religion was a personal matter and if we succeeded in confining it to the personal plane, all would be well in our political life. The manifestation of brotherhood which was being witnessed today would prove a passing show if we did not consolidate it by suitable acts in the social and political spheres. If officers of the Government as well as members of the public undertook the responsibility and worked wholeheartedly for the creation of a secular State, we could build a new India that would be the glory of the world.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

¹ The meeting, held in Deshabandhu Park, was attended by several lakhs of people who became restive and began to disperse. Gandhiji, therefore cut short his speech.

369. A NOTE¹

The average quantity of milk that the cow in India yields is said to be roughly 2 lb. per day, that of New Zealand 14 lb., of England 15 lb., of Holland 20 lb. The index figure for health goes up in proportion to the increase in the yield of milk.

August 23, 1947

Harijan, 31-8-1947

370. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

CALCUTTA,

August 23, 1947

Gandhiji first referred to the cry of *Allah-o-Akbar* to which some Hindus had objected. He held that it was probably a cry than which a greater one had not been produced by the world. It was a soul-stirring religious cry which meant, God only was great. There was nobility in the meaning. Did it become objectionable because it was Arabic? He admitted that it had in India a questionable association. It often terrified the Hindus because sometimes the Muslims in anger come out of the mosques with that cry on their lips to belabour the Hindus. He confessed that the original had no such association. So far as he knew, the cry had no such association in other parts of the world. If, therefore, there was to be a lasting friendship between the two, the Hindus should have no hesitation in uttering the cry together with their Muslim friends. God was known by many names and had many attributes. Rama, Rahim, Krishna, Karim, were all names of the one God. *Sat Shri Akal*, was an equally potent cry. Should a single Muslim or Hindu hesitate to utter it? It meant that God was and nothing else was. The *Ramdhun* had the same virtue.

He then came to *Vande Mataram*. That was no religious cry. It was a purely political cry. The Congress had to examine it. A reference was made to Gurudev about it. And both the Hindu and the Muslim members of the Congress Working Committee had to come to the conclusion that its opening lines were free from any possible objection, and he pleaded that it should be sung together by all on due occasion. It should never be a chant to insult or offend the Muslims. It was to be remembered that it was the cry that had fired political Bengal. Many Bengalis had given up their lives

¹ This was appended to the article "How to Save the Cow?".

² The meeting was held in "Woodlands", the Alipore residence of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.

for political freedom with that cry on their lips. Though, therefore, he felt strongly about *Vande Mataram* as an ode to Mother India, he advised his League friends to refer the matter to the League High Command. He would be surprised if, in view of the growing friendliness between the Hindus and the Muslims, the league High Command objected to the prescribed lines of the *Vande Mataram*, the national song and the national cry of Bengal which sustained her when the rest of India was almost asleep and which was, so far as he was aware, acclaimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal. No doubt, every act, as he pointed out the previous evening, must be purely voluntary on the part of either partner. Nothing could be imposed in true friendship.

The third thing he referred to was about his friend Shaheed Suhrawardy. He was receiving verbal complaints and complaints by letters that Shaheed Saheb was not to be trusted and that the Hindus had suffered a lot during the tenure of his ministry. The complaint was not new. He knew it before they embarked on the joint mission which seemed to be bearing unexpectedly good fruit. It was due to the givers of the warning that he should deal with it. He had not had the time even to discuss the matter with his friend. He was in no hurry. His was a trusting nature. He had never lost anything by trusting in good faith. Just as he would expect others to believe his word, unless he was proved untrue, he would likewise believe the word of another. That, he held, was the only honourable way of living among men. He held that man never lost by trusting and that the deceiver ever lost. He would have to answer for his crime before his Maker. He could say that during the few days they were together, he had found no occasion to regret the friendship. This he could tell them, that without his association in the work, he (the speaker) would have been able to do nothing.

He referred next to a deputation¹ he had from the Punjabi friends, who had drawn a terrible picture of what was said to be going on in the Punjab and who on the strength of the information asked him immediately to proceed to the Punjab. They had informed him that before the killing and arson in the Punjab, what had happened in Bengal was nothing. They added that Lahore was almost denuded of the Hindus and Sikhs as was Amritsar of the Muslims. He hoped that the information was highly coloured. The Punjabis of Calcutta could not know the true situation in the Punjab. Be that as it may, he was sure that if the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims of Calcutta were sincere in their profession of friendship, they all would write to their fellows in the Punjab and ask them to desist from mutual slaughter. The declarations of the Dominion Premiers could not go in vain. He could not believe that the Punjab leaders would not like any non-Muslims in the Pakistan part and non-Hindus and non-Sikhs in the other part. The logical consequence would be that there would be no

¹ A deputation of the Punjab Hindu-Sikh Sabha, led by Niranjan Singh Talib, had called on Gandhiji in the afternoon.

gurudwaras and *mandirs* in the West Punjab and no mosques in the East Punjab. The picture was too gruesome to be ever true.

Lastly, he came to the nationalist Muslims who were good enough to see him. They twitted him for giving importance and life to the Muslim League and neglecting the nationalist Muslims. He could not plead guilty to either charge. The League had gained importance without his or the Congress aid. It became great because, rightly or wrongly, it caught Muslimfancy. The Congress and he had to deal with and recognize the fact that faced them. He was not sorry for having visited Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah eighteen times in Bombay. His friends should also know that he alone could have done nothing without Shaheed Saheb and Osman Saheb and the other League members. There was no question of neglect of the nationalist Muslims. Nationalism of a man was its own merit. It demanded no recognition. He would advise his friends to remain what they were and exhibit in their every act courage, self-sacrifice and true knowledge born of study and he was certain that whether they were few or many they would make their mark on India's future. He would even advise them to join the League and oppose it from within, whenever they found it to be reactionary. Whilst he said all this, he would advise his League friends to approach the nationalist Muslims in a friendly spirit, whether they remained out or came in. True friendship did not admit of exclusion without the soundest reason.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

371. IS “HARIJAN” WANTED?¹

CALCUTTA,

August 24, 1947

It occurs to me that now that freedom from British rule has come, the *Harijan* papers are no longer wanted. My views remain as they are. In the scheme of reconstruction for Free India, its villages should no longer depend, as they are now doing, on its cities, but cities should exist only for and in the interest of the villages. Therefore, the spinning-wheel should occupy the proud position of the centre round which all the life-giving village industries would revolve. But this seems to be receding into the background. The same thing can be said of many other things of which I used to draw a tempting picture. I can no longer dare to do so. My life has become, if possible, more tempestuous than before. Nor can I at present clam any place as a permanent habitation. The columns are predominantly filled by my

¹ A Gujarati translation of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 31-8-1947

after-prayer speeches. In the original I contribute, on an average, only one and a half columns per week. This is hardly satisfactory. I would like, therefore, the readers of the *Harijan* weeklies to give me their frank opinion as to whether they really need their *Harijan* weekly to satisfy their political or spiritual hunger. They should send their answers to the Editor of the *Harijan*, Ahmedabad, in any of the languages in which they get their weekly, telling me very briefly at the same time, why, if they need it In the left hand upper corner of the envelope containing the answer, the writer should state: “About *Harijan*”.

Harijan, 31-8-1947

372. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

August 24, 1947

Punjabis in Calcutta have been pressing me to go to the Punjab at once. They tell me a terrible story. Thousands have been killed. A few thousands girls have been kidnapped! Hindus cannot live in the Pakistan area, nor Muslims in the other portion. Add to this the information that the two wings of the army took sides and worked havoc! Can any of this be true?

When do you think I should go to the Punjab if at all? I have still work in Calcutta, then in Noakhali and Bihar. But everything can be laid aside to go to the Punjab if it is proved to be necessary.¹

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 385

373. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI

CALCUTTA,
August 24, 1947

CHI. PUSHPA,

I have your letter. I was glad that you wrote frankly. All I said was that I would not object if you decided to go to Jugatram. Your

¹ The addressee visited the Punjab again and wrote to Gandhiji, as soon as he returned on August 25: “This morning at a meeting of the Defence Council, Mountbatten urged me to request you to go to the Punjab and he hoped that you would repeat your Calcutta miracle there. I told him that I was myself not clear about it. I feel you should go but not just yet” *Vide* also “Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru”, 22-8-1947.

duty is to live in the Ashram and overcome all your ignorance. The Ashram, such as it is, is your refuge, Your good lies in doing as I advise, since you have faith in me and have made yourself my daughter. The final responsibility should rest with me. You should welcome anything that Chimanlal or Balvantsinha may say. But if you do not like it, you can refer it to me.

Bhansali is a respected elder. But in my estimate he is unworldly, an *avadhuta*. He cannot be an example for you to follow. It would do you no good to let you accompany me on my tours.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9280

374. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,

August 24, 1947

In thanking the Corporation for the address, Gandhiji said he could not help recalling the late Dr. P. C. Ray under whose roof he had lived for one month in 1901. When he was with the late Deshbandhu, he used to see him with a few friends engaged in lively but strictly scientific conversation under the shadow of the *Orchelony* Monument near which they had met. That was their recreation. Gandhiji asked Dr. Ray whether they had any drinks or eatables. Dr. Ray emphatically said, "No." Their food and drink consisted of their instructive as distinct from idle conversation.

Referring to the address, Gandhiji said that this was third time he was receiving an address from the the Corporation. The first was given to him by the Deshbandhu when he was the Mayor.¹ He recalled the fact that the caskets were then auctioned in the interest of the Harijans. He hoped that this casket too would be sold in the same interest by the Mayor.

He would repeat what he had said in answer to the first address that he could not be satisfied till Calcutta had become the premier city in the world for sanitation. He included in this the sanitation of the streets in Calcutta which was absent today. The citizens should have healthy minds in healthy bodies. That they would have no goondas, no vagabonds, no drunkards. If the mortality in Calcutta was to be reduced, Calcutta should be flowing with clean milk. Today it was a most difficult commodity to procure. Then he would expect the corporators, by honest application, to put the friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims on a permanent footing in the manner

¹ *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Corporation Address, Calcutta", 6-11-1924.

Shaheed Saheb had pointed out.

Gandhiji said that he had a message from Khwaja Saheb Nazimud- din¹ that he (Gandhiji) should help in procuring at least 500 tons of rice out of the shipment that was coming from Burma. The need was so urgent that the ship with the rice should be diverted to Chittagong to deliver the 500 tons. He gladly associated himself with the request and he hoped that Dr. Rajendra Prasad would, if it was at all possible, allow 500 tons of the precious cargo to be delivered at the Chittagong port.

In this connection he could not help mentioning the complaint that petty officials in charge of flood relief confined the distribution to Muslim sufferers only. He hoped the news was not true. If unfortunately it was, he had no doubt that the ministers and high-rank officials would redress the wrong. If the two Dominions were to live creditably and as friends, the communal spirit would be wholly purged. It was up to the Hindu and Muslim leaders to see that the seeds of poison that were sown, while they were fighting, would be removed forthwith. Then he said he deplored the fact that the Muslims in Government services when the choice was offered to them, preferred Pakistan and the Hindus, the Indian Union. The choice was made, he did not doubt, in haste. He would be sorry to find that the communal virus had entered the services. He advised that the two Premiers should confer with each other and if it was at all honestly possible, the services should be given the opportunity to reconsider their choice. It would be a sorry thing for India if Hindu officials could not be trusted by Muslims and vice versa. Much would depend upon the leaders who influenced the services and the public.

Lastly, he had heard that Khulna was to celebrate its entry into Pakistan. He deplored such celebration after the Award. But he was consoled by Shaheed Saheb that celebration would be joint and that the Hindus were associating with it. Nevertheless, he could not regard the example with happiness. The jubilant parties ought to restrain themselves, as the aggrieved ones should accept the Award with perfect resignation. It must be regarded as final except to the extent that the ministers of the two Dominions agreed to vary it for the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned. There was no other worthy or gentlemanly way.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

¹ Chief Minister of East Bengal

375. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

August 25, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I have your letter. You are hasty. Nothing can be accomplished by your going to the Punjab. If anything could be accomplished by your going I would send you promptly. You are not sitting idle where you are. I shall leave when the time comes for me to go to the Punjab. I am in correspondence with Jawaharlal on this subject.¹ Let us see what God would have us do.

I started this letter early in the morning. Then one after another, people kept coming and now at 5.10 I have reached only up to this. The rest you will have from Abha and Manu.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

376. TELEGRAM TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

CALCUTTA,

August 25, 1947

SATIS BABU

GANDHI CAMP

RAMGANJ

NOAKHALI

TELL KANU IDEA GOOD BUT PERMISSION OF LOCAL
AUTHORITY NECESSARY.² AMTUSSALAAM SHOULD WAIT.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 9285

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 22-8-1947 and "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 24-8-1947.

² *Vide* "Letter to Kanu Gandhi", 25-8-1947.

377. LETTER TO DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, CHITTAGONG

CALCUTTA,
August 25, 1947

THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE
CHITTAGONG

DEAR SIR,

A representative of the Humanity Association is soon proceeding with funds to render such aid as is possible to the floodstricken area. I have no doubt you will render such aid as is possible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 9296

378. LETTER TO AKBAR HYDARI

CALCUTTA,
August 25, 1947

DEAR HYDARI¹,

Your dear note. Much as I should love to visit Assam and try to do the work you suggest, I fear I shall not get the time.

Kaka Saheb has told me how kind you were to him.

Love to you and yours.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ Governor of Assam

379. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

CALCUTTA,

August 25, 1947

I am sorry that today being my silence day I cannot speak to you. I have, therefore, to write out what I wish to say to you. I have been speaking every day about the vital duty of the Hindus in Western Bengal, who are the majority community, towards their Muslim brethren. This duty they will perform truly, if they are able to forget the past. We know how all over the world enemies have become fast friends. The example of the Britons and the Boers who fought one another strenuously, becoming friends we all know. There is much greater reason why the Hindus and the Muslims should become friends. We cannot do that if we are not great enough to shed all malice.

This evening I wish to devote to Sylhet. I have received frantic telegrams from Sylhet about the serious riots that have broken out there. The cause is not known. I am sorry that I am unable to go just now to Sylhet, nor am I vain enough to think that my presence would immediately abate the mob fury. I know, too, that one should not without peremptory cause abandon his present duty, however humble it may be, in favour of one which may appear to be higher. To adopt the Salvation Army language, we are all soldiers of God to fight the battle of right against wrong, by means which are strictly non-violent and truthful. As His soldiers ours is "not to reason why", ours is "but to do and die". Though, therefore, I am unable to respond to the urgent call of the sufferers of Sylhet, I can appeal, not in vain, to the authorities in East Bengal in general and Sylhet in particular to put forth their best effort on behalf of the sufferers and deal sternly with the recal-citrants. Now that there is peace between the Hindus and the Muslims, I am sure the authorities do not relish these ugly outbreaks. It would be wrong and misleading to underestimate the trouble by calling it the work of goondas. The minorities must be made to realize

¹ The meeting was held at Howrah Maidan. As Gandhiji was observing silence he wrote out his speech to be translated into Bengali by N. K. Bose, who however was delayed due to rain and reached the meeting an hour late. By then it was time for Gandhiji to break his silence. The first two paragraphs of the speech were written. The rest is a report of what Gandhiji spoke.

that they are as much valued citizens of the State they live in, as the majority. Let the Premiers of the two divisions of Bengal meet often enough and jointly devise means to preserve peace in the two States and to find enough healthy food and clothing for the inhabitants and enough work for the masses in East and West Bengal. When the masses, Hindu and Muslim, see their chiefs acting together and working together honestly, courageously and without intermission, the masses living in the two States will take the cue from the leaders and act accordingly. To the sufferers I would advise bravely to face the future and never to give way to panic. Such disturbances do happen in the lifetime of a people. Manliness demands there should be no weakness shown in facing them. Weakness aggravates the mischief, courage abates it.

Gandhiji first apologized to the vast audience for having to stand or sit on the wet and muddy ground. He then referred to the insult that was done to Shaheed Saheb at a meeting held in honour of Major General Shah Nawaz in Howrah. The General had gently rebuked the men who were guilty of discourtesy.

Gandhiji said that the past must be forgotten and whilst they were both acting together for a common cause without mental reservations, the insult done to one was done to the other also. And as they together tried to represent Hindu-Muslim unity, the insult done to a Hindu or a Muslim, was an insult done to the two partners.

He then referred to the visit of Punjabi friends who pressed him to visit the Punjab as early as possible. He assured them that he was in constant correspondence with Panditji. After all, the Punjab was as much his as any other part of India, for he claimed to be the servant of the whole of India. Moreover, he had passed six months in that Province during the Martial Law days. He would hasten to the Punjab as early as necessary. Indeed, he was wanted in Sylhet, Malda, Murshidabad and other places. It was not given to any one man to cover all calls upon his time nor was it healthy to depend upon man's assistance in times of trouble. It was manly and dignified to rely upon God for the dissolution of all troubles. He was the only infallible Help, Guide and Friend.

He then pointed out that rehabilitation was not going on smoothly. The landlords seemed also to be in the way. They were in duty bound to invite and receive evacuees with open arms. He expected them not to charge or expect rents for months or days enforced absence.

The last thing he referred to was a letter from a Muslim who described himself as a *sufi*. He had sent this communication through Shaheed Saheb.

The purport was that in his opinion there was nothing common between Hinduism and Islam and that the two could not be as if they were one. For, he argued that the Hindus did not believe in the one and only God but held cows and goats as superior to man and believed in high and low, whereas Islam was a brotherhood in

which there was no hierarchy and which believed in one God as Allah. In this there was a caricature of Hinduism. There was no Hindu who put animals, the cow and the goat, before man. But he submitted that if anyone like him believed himself to be the lowest in God's creation, there was nothing wrong. It was a sign of true humility. He held that every Hindu believed in the one and only God. He admitted that excrescences had grown round Hinduism and that its votaries had not always been true to Hinduism undefiled. It was, therefore, up to an impartial man to understand Hinduism as its votaries like him understood it, just as it was the duty of an impartial Hindu to understand Islam as a good Muslim understood it. That, he held, was the safest rule of interpretation for any faith. Then it would be found that all great religions sprang from the same source and the fundamentals were common to them all.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

380. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

August 25 [/26]¹, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

I have your letter. I have today sent a wire² to you and Amtussalaam through Satis Babu. I like your idea. But we are not in Wardha. We will have to seek permission from Chittagong.³ We can go there only if we have the permission. I have no idea how things are there. I don't know them when I am destined to reach there. Hence, although your idea is excellent, I don't see how it can be implemented.

You have asked for a bag like Nirmal Babu's. Luckily an American friend has sent one. If you are keen on having it I shall give it to you. But you can make one like it out of khadi. Does the American product have anything special about it?

I began the letter yesterday. But I am so very busy meeting people that I hardly get time to write or even dictate letters. Hence I could complete this only after the morning prayers. I might have to make a sudden dash to Delhi or to the Punjab. I might not therefore be able to come to you. Even then let things go according to your idea.

It is not possible to write more.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ From the contents

² *Vide* "Letter to Satis Chandra Das Gupta", 25-8-1947.

³ *Vide* "Letter to District Magistrate, Chittagong", 25-8-1947.

381. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

CALCUTTA,
August 26, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I have your letter. It made painful reading. However, you have done everything you could do. I did leave Sushila in the jaws of death. If the refugees in Wah feel sure she may well be freed, otherwise let her die with them. I came to know of her whereabouts only from your letter. She wrote to me a letter from Wah soon after I left her there. After that there was none, so I had been wondering.

What is going to happen to the Punjab? The enclosed letter arrived only today. Can it all be true? I am being strongly pressed to go to the Punjab. I do not know what to do. Jawahar also writes that I should go, though not just yet. According to the present arrangement I am here at least till Sunday. Then the idea is to be to Noakhali. Then on to Bihar from there. This will easily take a fortnight. I do not see what I could do in Delhi if I want there. I feel I would only be intruding.

Kripalani inquires if he may resign now. From the talks I had with you and others I had gathered that he would resign after the fifteenth. None of you have a high opinion of him. If he does not enjoy the confidence of his seniors, it is best to let him go. We have to consider who the next President shall be. The present situation appears dangerous to me. I can understand that those of you who are in the midst of the danger may not be able to see what I see from here. This is the state of my mind. I can see that my place is in this part of the country. I may include the Punjab also, though I doubt whether anyone would want my presence there.

How is your health? The Hyderabad problem has become complicated. But you will be able to cope with it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhai, pp. 367-70

382. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

August 26, 1947

CHI. MANI,

I feel sorry for you. Why should I, though? You are strong enough to carry the burden. Do that, and lighten some of Sardar's.

I heard only from you that Ramaswami was seriously injured.¹ There was a letter to that effect but I did not believe it. I did not write to him at all. I shall do so now.²

Forward the accompanying letters.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 141

383. *LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA*

August 26, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

Three letters are enclosed herewith. Your letters keep coming but I do not get all the news.

Will it be all right if I do not go there? The question will not arise if I do not have to go to the Punjab. The work here will keep me engaged till Sunday. After that I go to Noakhali unless I have to go to the Punjab or Delhi. They are asking me to go over to Sylhet. How can I choose where to go?

Can Pyarelal, Kanu, Amtussalaam [and] Prabhudas be relieved from there? You, of course cannot be relieved from there nor Jiwan Singh.³

Kanu desires to have a camp at Chittagong Cantt. Have a talk with Kanu.

Blessings from
BAPU

¹ Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar, Dewan of Travancore, had been assaulted at a public meeting.

² *Vide* "Letter to C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar", 27-8-1947.

³ Of the Indian National Army

[PS.]

An article is enclosed. His it any substance? I have written to the writer that you are my expert. You have made a deep study of dairy science.

BAPU

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

384. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

CALCUTTA,

August 26, 1947

CHI. DEV,

Your three letters of the 17th, 18th and 22nd are lying in front of me. Mridulabehn may not be able to return at present. She has been sent to Amritsar. Mahesh should remain where he is most useful. I have had a talk with General Shah Nawaz. About the refugees I shall try to send someone from here by and by. But some officer from there ought to meet the officers from here.

Perhaps the problem of sanitation is very difficult all over India. Whatever is possible should be done.

I shall consider both aspects of Saran¹.

I have read both the Muslim League's memorial and the reply that you sent to me.

I shall be here till Sunday at any rate. I do intend leaving for Noakhali on Monday but one cannot say what will happen. And from there on to Bihar, and of course the trip to the Punjab in between. But my going or not going to the Punjab depends upon the news coming from there. If I have to go my programme will change.

Sushila is still at the Wah Camp. Things are happening contrary to my anticipation. It means it was very good that I left behind Sushila because people were very much afraid and their fear proved right. Thus Sushila's stay has been all to the good.

Now for your reply to the League memorial, I find it weak at several places. Of course I have not been able to go deep into the matter. Probably such a lengthy reply was not even required. On page 9 you have stated about Rajbir that Hindus had committed no great

¹ Saran District in Bihar

crime. Some youths had done something and the Hindus extinguished the fire. Then why the collective fine of Rs. 5,000? Similarly in the fourth column you say there was insufficient evidence. But a fine was imposed. There are similar inconsistencies at some other places too. Perhaps there is no occasion for such a lengthy reply now. For whom has the memorial been drafted?

I shall be able to answer your query about non-violence only after looking up the book. I shall try to obtain the book.

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

385. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

CALCUTTA,

August 26, 1947

There was a huge crowd at the meeting and the audience was talking among themselves, creating a noise which, Gandhiji said, disabled him from speaking as he wanted to. As, however, a large part of the audience was patient, he said he would say a few words. He referred first to the fact that rehabilitation was not proceeding as rapidly as could be wished. If the process was not completed in time and the evacuees did not return to their places, the peace, in spite of the very large meetings every day, would prove transitory. He drew pointed attention to the fact that the Lake Area was inhabited by rich men. If they made up their minds to do their duty, it was possible for them to make their contribution to the rehabilitation scheme. If the police but did their duty without fear or favour, he said, half the work would be done.

He next referred to the visit he had from Anglo-Indian sisters and brothers. While he was not able to address them at a meeting, he would gladly mention them at one of his prayer meetings. During the foreign regime, they were a favoured community. He could not hold out any hope that the favoured treatment would be continued during independence. But they are entitled to the full justice that was the right of every citizen. The Anglo-

Indians were as much citizens as any other group in India. It was the duty of both the Hindus and the Muslims to regard them as fully their equals and as brothers and sisters.

He then referred to the provincial spirit that seemed to be infecting the provinces. Thus he saw in the papers that some Assamese thought that Assam belonged exclusively to the Assamese. If that spirit fired every province, to whom could India belong? He held that the people of all the provinces belonged to India and India belonged to all. The only condition was that no one could go and settle in another

¹ The meeting was held at Lake Maidan.

province to exploit it or rule it or to injure its interest in any way. All were servants of India and they lived only in the spirit of service. The same provincial spirit was reported from Bihar against the Bengalis. The extreme instance reported was from Darjeeling. It was said that there was a Gurkha League whose business it was to resent the entry into Darjeeling of the plainsmen. They were reported to be resorting to force for the prosecution of their purpose. He hoped that the poison was confined to a very few young men who lacked imagination and love for India. He had the pleasure of meeting distinguished Gurkha officials who took pride in considering themselves part of India. He had provided the golden rule of conduct. No one could dare migrate to any province to its injury and no force should be used to attain one's end.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

386. TELEGRAM TO DR. CHALAPATHI RAO

[On or after *August 26, 1947*]¹

SORRY, TELL SATHSASTRI HIS FAST UNWARRANTED. HE
SHOULD BREAK IT AND LIVE TO SERVE.

GANDHI

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

387. LETTER TO A. K. BHAGWAT

CALCUTTA,

August 26, 1947

BHAI BHAGWAT²,

I have your letter. I have just gone through it after the morning prayer. I fear we cannot do anything to advocate preservation of health without milk. From practical experience it is difficult to remove this fear. You may certainly experiment with those who can live without milk.

Let all work together in Uruli. I think it is desirable to go by the opinions of Balkoba and Manibhai. Within the limits of the Ashram rules personal life should be raised as high as possible.

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's telegram of August 26, 1947 which read: "Sathsastri fasting seventeenth day. Condition serious causing anxiety. Pray guide him. He would see you after recovery."

² Of Nature Cure Clinic, Uruli Kanchan

Dr. Mehta is here. Nothing has been settled with him.

If I am not there, it is because I am helpless.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 2725. Courtesy: Manibhai B. Desai

388. *LETTER TO C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR*

CALCUTTA,

August 27, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

You will forgive me for this belated solicitude about you. I was perplexed about your attitude on Travancore. I read newspapers only casually. No time. When I heard about the attack on you, I regarded it as of no consequence. It must have been a mere scratch, probably a made-up affair. But Krishna Hutheesing and Manibehn opened my eyes to the serious attack.¹ I could not be guilty of any unholy wish. I hope you will regain your original health and vigour.

I am amazed at my unbelief. Pardon me for it.

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR

MADRAS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

389. *LETTER TO DHIRU*

CALCUTTA,

August 27, 1947

CHI. DHIRU,

I have your letter. I see nothing wrong about your going to Bombay if Balkoba wants to take you along.

I understand what you say about eczema.

This should be shown to Balkoba.

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

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Manibehn Patel", 26-8-1947.

390. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

CALCUTTA,
August 27, 1947

Gandhiji said that the present was his second visit to Motiaburz. The first was when Maulana Saheb Abul Kalam Azad and he visited them years ago because there was a fight between Hindus and Muslim workmen. Fortunately when they reached the scene of trouble, it was almost over but they got undeserved credit. The present was a happy occasion. The Hindus and the Muslims had adjusted their differences and had become friends. He hoped that this was a lasting friendship. He wanted to say a few words to the workmen in the working men's locality. He hoped that there was no distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims in labour. They were all labourers. If the communal canker entered the labour ranks, both would weaken labour and therefore, themselves and the country. Labour was a great leveller of all distinctions. If they realized that truth, he would like them to go a step further. Labour, because it chose to remain unintelligent, either became subservient or insolently believed in damaging capitalists's goods and machinery or even in killing capitalists. He was a labourer by conviction and a Bhangi. As such his interests were bound with those of labour and he wished to tell them that violence would never save them. They would be killing the goose that laid golden eggs. What he had been saying for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour which extracted precious ore from the bowels of the earth. He could quite conceive of labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour. They could work wonders in co-operation. But that could happen only when labour was intelligent enough to co-operate with itself and then offer co-operation with capital on terms of honourable equality. Capital controlled labour because it knew the art of combination. Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in co-operation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom ocean greyhounds. Similarly, if all the labourers in any part of the world combined together, they could not be tempted by higher wages or helplessly allow themselves to be attracted for a pittance. A true and non-violent combination of labour would act like a magnet attracting to it all the needed capital. Capitalists would then exist only as trustees. When that happy day dawned, there would be no difference between capital and labour. The labour will have ample food, good and sanitary dwellings, all the necessary education for their children, ample leisure for self-education and proper medical assistance.

Then he came to the nationalist Muslims who had sent him the following

¹ Held on the grounds of Clive Jute Mills

note:

You have expressed the opinion that the nationalist Muslims should join the League. Then does it imply that the Congress has now become a communal organization.

Gandhiji said that he was not guilty of asking them to discard nationalism or of expecting the Congress to be another Hindu Sabha. He hoped that the Congress would never commit suicide by being communal organization. When the Congress ceased to represent all who were proud to call themselves Indians, whether prince or pauper, Hindus, Muslims or any other, it will have destroyed itself. Therefore, he could not advise a Muslim Congressman to join the League if the condition of joining the League was to discard or suppress his Congress membership. He would vote for those resolutions of the League which were in the nation's interest and against those which were contrary to the nation's interest. He had in mind several Muslims of staunch faith who were neither in the Congress nor in the League. He advised the nationalist Muslim friends to join the League if they wanted to affect the Muslim masses. Real nationalists needed no encouragement from him or anyone else. Nationalism, like virtue, was its own reward. His one warning was that they should never think of power or bettering their worldly prospects by joining the one or the other organization. A nationalist would ever think of service, never of power or riches. There could be one President of the Congress or the League. Presidentship came by merit and strength of service. The League had become what it was, not by his or Congress cajolery. The Qaid-e-Azam was an able President, whom neither riches nor titles could buy. He was a front-rank barrister and rich man. Being the son of a merchant he knew how to multiply his earnings as a lawyer by wise investments. This acknowledgement did not mean that Gandhiji liked all his ways or that the latter had led the Muslims in the right way. He had his differences with the Qaid-e-Azam and the League. But he could not withhold merit where it was due. It was, he hoped, clear to the nationalist Muslims under what conditions he advised them to join the League.

Gandhiji then came to the question addressed to him by some members of the Azad Hind Fauj.¹

Harijan, 7-9-1947

¹ The meeting came to a close as it started raining. For Gandhiji's reply to members of the Indian National Army, *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 28-8-1947.

391. A LETTER

[On or after *August 27, 1947*]¹

I hope you are all right.

I don't know where I may be tomorrow. The time is critical.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

392. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

[Before *August 28, 1947*]²

CHI. AMRIT,

Your letter.

Ten days for cleaning up a first-class house? What a commentary!

Are you in charge of physical health only or moral also? The latter seems to be worse than the former. I am waiting, watching and praying.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3708. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6517

393. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

CALCUTTA,
August 28, 1947

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. I had told Amritlal that so long as the substance of my draft resolution was preserved he could make in it any changes he liked. And in the last resort the general body of the Conference has an unfettered right to alter even the substance. It would, of course, be a question whether it could retain me after it has altered the substance. But that will be considered if and when such an

¹ The letter is placed among those of August 27 and 29.

² The date is illegible in the source. The letter was received by the addressee on August 29.

occasion arises.

I might agree that the teaching of two scripts at the same time can be unscientific, but I regard knowledge of both the scripts indispensable, so much so that I would not give a certificate even for the first course in the national language to a candidate who did not know both the scripts. He would be eligible for the certificate only when he had learnt the second script, too.

It is not correct to say that because I have not used the phrase “whereas” in the draft resolution, the language of the draft is not legal. The word is used in court documents. And those who draft the resolutions are mostly lawyers, they use the language of court documents and make the resolutions uncouth. After all even a resolution is an appeal.

The Conference has a right to make changes under pressure of new circumstances. I do not, in this case, wish to yield to such pressure because I think that that will harm the country. Hence my emphatic advice in the present circumstances is to be cling all the more resolutely to the policy to which we have adhered till now.

To me, ever since I understood the problem, Hindi and Hindustani have been two forms of the same language. And there will be a difference between Urdu and Hindustani as there is between Hindi and Hindustani.

I would, thus, describe Hindustani as a language midway between Urdu and Hindi, one which would bring about a confluence of the two. Accordingly, if in course of time only one script survives in use, Hindustani will have become and will remain one from of Hindi and Urdu.

We need not object if the Governments do not make knowledge of the two scripts obligatory but only encourage it. If we keep our house in order and clean it regularly, we shall have done our duty.

It will be tantamount to harassing the Urdu-speaking people to make the Nagari script compulsory for all. I would, therefore, earnestly appeal to all the members of the Conference that they should not only acquire a good knowledge of both the scripts, but also boldly advocate such a policy in public. Only then shall we be able to influence the various State Governments.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: G. N. 10990

394. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

CALCUTTA,
August 28, 1947

CHI. LILAVATI,

I got your letter. You are being tested quite severely, and also having sweet experiences of the women there. I keep extremely busy these days. If Dwarkadas recovers completely, half your anxiety will be over. Give him by blessings and tell him that he should get well soon. I hope you are calm. And do go on with your studies. You will have to pass the final examination.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRIMATI LILAVATI ASAR
LADIES' HOSTEL
G. S. MEDICAL COLLEGE
PAREL, BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9612. Also C. W. 6584. Courtesy:
Lilavati Asar

395. LETTER TO A MAHARAJA

August 28, 1947

MAHARAJA SAHEB,

I have already sent you an acknowledgement of the sum of Rs. 100, 000 sent by you. I find that I have with me Rs. 150,000 earmarked for use in Noakhali. I am thus able to carry on my work for the present. Now I have on hand relief work in Tripura, Chittagong near Noakhali, Calcutta and Bihar, for which I have a small sum. It will facilitate my work, if in addition to it, I can use for the relief of both Hindu and Muslim victims in these parts the sum received from you.

Kindly let me have your reply.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

396. LETTER TO DHIRENDRA NATH CHATTERJEE

CALCUTTA,
August 28, 1947

CHI. DHIREN,¹

I have your letter. Write to me after your examination. Then I will tell you what to do. There is nothing to be said now.

It is good that you have passed the third level in Hindustani without much effort and with distinction.

It is sad that you are not keeping well. It has to do a good deal with your mind. I find that your mind is not stable. This in turn affects the body.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 5107

397. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

CALCUTTA,
August 28, 1947

Gandhiji addressed after prayer the students of Calcutta. He said that he had done teaching in his own way from his early youth and probably the very first meeting he addressed after his return to India in 1915 was that of students. Since then he had addressed numerous student-meetings throughout his many wanderings in India. He was not new to them nor were they new to him. But of late he had ceased to address meetings as he used to do before. He was, therefore, glad that he was able to address the students. Their Vice-Chancellor was good enough to see him about the evening's proceedings. He was nervous about the students' behaviour towards Shaheed Saheb. He said that he would have only the prayer and his usual after-prayer speech. It should not have been so. Everywhere there appeared to be anarchy in the student world. They did not tender obedience to their teachers and their Vice-Chancellor. On the contrary, they expected obedience from their teachers. It was a painful exhibition on the part of those who were to be the future leaders of the nation. They gave an exhibition of unruliness that evening. He was forced with placards in the foreign tongue depicting his comrade Shaheed Saheb in unbecoming language. He

¹ Son of Amrita Lal Chattarjee

² Held in the University Science College

suggested to them that inasmuch as they had insulted Shaheed Saheb, they had insulted the speaker. Shaheed Saheb could not be insulted by the language used against him. But the speaker could not take up that attitude. The students should be, above all, humble and correct. They had an object lesson in their Vice-Chancellor. The Chief Minister, Shaheed Saheb and he sat on the platform provided for them but the Vice-Chancellor sat among the rest of the visitors. His humility reminded him of Krishna who, when Raja Yudhishtira performed his *yajna*, chose the menial work of washing the feet of the guests. Thereby he showed his innate nobility. The greatest to remain great had to be the lowliest by choice. If he could speak from his knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of a student was to correspond to the life of a sannyasi up to the time his studies ended. He was to be under the strictest discipline. He could not marry nor indulge in dissipation. He could not indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour was to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint. Had they lived at all up to the pattern, they would not have done what they did at the prayer meeting.¹

The evening before he had a note² from some members of the Azad Hind Fauj as to his opinion about them. He said that he had come in close contact with some of the officers of the Fauj. In referring to the Fauj he felt constrained to refer to Netaji who, he was of opinion, was dead in the body but lived in the servants of India. He had the pleasure of coming in touch with Subhas Babu when the latter had just returned from England with the determination to sacrifice a lucrative career that was open to him. He preferred selfless service to selfish ambition and placed himself under the Deshbandhu. Therefore he was able to come in close touch with the speaker. Though Subhas Babu became a non-violent non-co-operator, he never saw eye to eye with the speaker in his unadulterated non-violence. His was a life full of perilous adventure and romance. His daring was unequalled. He scraped together an army composed of Indians drawn from all provinces, belonging to all religions and by his glorious example he had infused into them the spirit of willing discipline and obedience. It was not a small thing for his handful of army which his genius had scraped together to offer battle to the mightiest empire of modern times. Gandhiji was told by the officers of the Azad Hind Fauj that Subhas Babu had advised the members of the Army to carry out what he (Gandhiji) might suggest; for the struggle in India was of his (Gandhiji's) conception as the struggle outside India was of Netaji's. His answer to the question asked was that the members of the Azad Hind Fauj were not to expect to be absorbed in the current military ranks nor to be a separate unit of the army in any of the two parts of India. He held it to be impracticable at least for some time to come. The best thing for them was

¹ Gandhiji then invited Nirmal Kumar Bose to translate his speech, but continued to speak at the request of the audience.

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 27-8-1947.

to work as a separate compact body of servants of India. It would be best for them to hold together on a plot of land, to turn their swords into ploughshares and grow more food for the hungry millions. If they did not like the suggestion, they should be absorbed into the civil life and serve the country. 'Once a soldier always a soldier', would be a dangerous doctrine in free India. He had lived in South Africa for 20 years where every Boer was a first-class soldier when soldiering was necessary, otherwise he was a wonderful farmer. Such was General Botha¹. Such is Field Marshal Smuts². He is a great lawyer, a great farmer, owning a magnificent farm and everyone knew him to be a distinguished soldier. What was Netaji himself? Was he less than Field Marshal Smuts? Soldiering was never his profession. Today when India was shaking with communalism and fratricidal disturbances, let the members of the Fauj set a noble example of what they were under Netaji, who evoked such affection from his men that he (the speaker) had known his officers being unable to think of him without tears. Let them translate that affection into action.

That in spite of all his affection and respect for Netaji, they had differences of opinion was a matter of no consequence. Such divergence would exist between the best of friends. Let the students too, whether, they believed in violence or non-violence, understand that strictest discipline was common to both.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

398. *LETTER TO AN ASHRAM INMATE*

[On or after *August 28, 1947*]³

I have your letter. I shall be so glad if your boy⁴ is cured.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 379

¹ Louis Botha (1862-1919); Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, 1910-19

² Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950); Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919-24, 1938-48

³ According to the source this and the following two letters were written between August 28 and 31.

⁴ Who was suffering from an incurable disease

399. LETTER TO MOHANLAL NAYYAR

[On or after *August 28, 1947*]

I have your letter. . . . What does it matter if everything you possess in Gujrat is lost? In this general conflagration no one may expect to escape. Sushila¹ is in her proper place. She is under God's care. Pyarelal²⁴ will meet me today or tomorrow. He is expected.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 380

400. LETTER TO TARADEVI NAYYAR

[On or after *August 28, 1947*]

Why do you worry about Sushila³? God is the Lord and Master of all. Let us not cease to trust in Him. Rajkumari has brought news that Sushila is all right. I hope you are keeping well. Baby⁴ must be delightfully naughty!

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 380

401. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

CALCUTTA,

August 29, 1947

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I got up at 2.30 and sat down to write letters. I get no time during the day. I have to see visitors.

Your letter is before me. I see from it that our points of view differ, though both of us have the same end in view. This is an old difference between us. Don't you remember our difference of view regarding the verses in the morning prayers? I read allegorical meanings in them. . . .⁵ them innocent. You found them objectionable. I do not know whether it is so even today. . . .⁶

¹ Addressee's sister and brother

² *ibid*

³ Addressee's daughter

⁴ Nandini, daughter of Mohanlal Nayyar

⁵ Two words here are illegible.

⁶ A word is illegible here.

In saying that God deludes man, I am not disregarding God or violating Truth, nor am I using ambiguous language. What does the saying “God confounds those whom He wants to destroy”¹ mean? Man babbles and tries in vain to describe, in his imperfect speech, Him who transcends speech and thought, who is “Not this, not this”. What else can he do? Till he has risen to the highest level of preserving unbroken silence or living in complete solitude, he must use speech. Islam, to attain the state of non-duality. . .²

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

402. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

CALCUTTA,

2.50 a. m., August 29, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

I had your two letters yesterday. I am glad you are better.

Your 55 years is as nothing for a disciplined life. But “you are care-ful for nothing.”³ But of this when we meet and can talk “outside business”.

My movement has become uncertain.

You will know from the papers where I am the next day. “Look at the sparrows.” They do not know what they will do the next moment. Let us literally live from moment to moment.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6529. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9924

¹ The source has this in English.

² The letter is incomplete.

³ Philippians, IV, 6

403. LETTER TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

Air Mail

CALCUTTA,

August 29, 1947

DEAR DR. HOLMES¹,

Many thanks for yours of 11th instant.

I am forwarding your letter with enclosures to Punditji. It is a sad story.

We are all looking forward to your arrival.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

KENNEBUNK BEACH

MAINE

NEW YORK, U. S. A.

From a photostat: C. W. 10969. Courtesy: Roger W. Holmes and Mrs. Frances L. Brown

404. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

August 29, 1947

Herewith is a letter from one Sardar Ajit Singh. You will see he is insistent on my going to the Punjab without a moment's delay. You will judge what I should do. Will it be any use my going after life and property are destroyed to the saturation point? Will it not be a mockery? I put before you for consideration the thoughts welling up within me. I have three wires pressing me to go.²

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 393

¹ (1879-1964); American clergyman; founder-member of American Civil Liberties Union; editor of *Unity*; author of *My Gandhi* and other works

² The addressee wired his reply the same day saying: "I still think that time has not come for you to visit the Punjab but feel your presence in Delhi very desirable so as to keep in touch with the Punjab situation and advise us."

405. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Your note even when you were tired.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean. If a few drops are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty. And do not let your body suffer. You have to take much work from it.

I am glad Sushila is keeping well. Of course her place was in the Wah Camp so long as the men needed her services.

The work here goes on. I cannot yet go to Noakhali. They want me there, as also in Bihar and Sylhet. Now J. wires I should be in Delhi.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3709. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6518

406. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

CHI. BALKOBA,

I have your letter.

I have already written about the *goshala*.¹ I can see no harm in accepting donations from persons who offer them without expectation of any return and purely from philanthropic motives.

Do you wish to take Dhirubhai along with you? I have replied² that, if you do, I shall have no objection.

I hope you are taking care of your health.

I understand what you say about the building.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI BALKOBAJI

NIJDHAM

URULI KANCHAN, POONA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 825

¹Vide "Letter to E. W. Aryanayakum", 20-8-1947.

²Vide "Letter to Dhiru", 27-8-1947.

407. LETTER TO RAMPRASAD VYAS

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

CHI. RAMPRASAD,

I have your letter. I shall be very glad if Jivram gets well. I understand how the expenditure on food is met at Pilani. The information is given clearly.

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

408. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

CHI. PREMI,

Your letter. God is my guide. But the same can be said for all.

I don't know where I shall be tomorrow. The work here is tough. Who can say what will happen ultimately?

Tell Father¹ that I have replied to his telegram.

Do you regularly help him?

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

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

409. LETTER TO ABDUL QAYYUM ANSARI

August 29, 1947

BHAI ANSARI²,

Manubehn told me about your illness. In my view it is a crime for a voluntary worker to fall ill. I hope you have recovered by now.

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

¹ Jairamdas Doulatram

² Minister for Rehabilitation, Bihar

410. LETTER TO DR. SYED MAHMUD

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

BROTHER MAHMUD,

I have your letter. I do not know what happened but things seem to be all right.

You were to come with me but stayed back. If the work there goes on smoothly, it is just as well that you did.

Mehboob did meet me. Here I do not have a moment to spare. The day began at 2.30 a.m. for me.¹ I get very little time for writing. If one wants to do public work one must meet people. I hope Begum Saheba is well. It is good you will be staying in Ranchi for some days.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 5107

411. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

CALCUTTA,
August 29, 1947

Gandhiji, therefore, commenced his speech by congratulating Shaheed Saheb and the other Muslims on standing. He purposely kept seated because he had learnt that their culture did not require standing as a mark of respect when any national song or *bhajan* was sung. It was an unnecessary importation from the West. A respectful posture on such occasions was the correct attitude. After all, it was the mental attitude that mattered, not the superficial appearance. He then suggested that there should be one universal notation for *Vande Mataram*, if it was to stir millions; it must be sung by millions in one tune and one mode. After all, national songs could only be two or three. But they should all have their common notation. It was up to the Santiniketan authorities or some such authoritative society to produce an acceptable notation.

Gandhiji then referred to the Christians. He had had the pleasure of receiving them the day before. They said that the major communities had taken care of themselves but what was to happen to the Christian Indians? Were they to have no

¹ The source has: "The standard time today began at 2.30 a.m."

² The meeting was held on Tolly Gunge Police Ground. When *Vande Mataram* was sung everyone including Suhrawardy and other Muslims had stood up.

seats in the Governments or the legislatures? He told the friends that the poisonous favouritism of the foreign rule was dead and gone. Merit should now be the sole test. In a well-ordered society there should be no minority. Why should they not feel that they were of the forty crores, but not a mere handful in the forty crores? Whatever their religion, all born in India and proud of their birth were equal in the eye of the law. On the strength of merit, i.e., intellectual capacity, self-sacrifice, courage and incorruptibility, a Christian could be the Chief Minister without exhibiting greater merit than a Hindu or Muslim. Religion was a purely personal matter. He expected that what was true of the Union was equally true of Pakistan. He asked his Christian brethren also not to take their Christianity as it was interpreted in the West. They knew that there they fought with one another as never before. After all Jesus was an Asiatic depicted as wearing the Arabian flowing robe. He was the essence of meekness. Gandhiji hoped that the Christians of India would express in their lives, Jesus, the crucified of the Bible, and not as interpreted in the West with its blood-stained fingers. He had no desire to criticize the West. He knew and valued the many virtues of the West. But he was bound to point out that Jesus of Asia was misrepresented in the West except in individuals.

Then he answered the question whether the minorities would have recognition as religious minorities had; thus, whether Bengalis of Bihar, though a minority, would have recognition. This was a ticklish question. In his opinion an Indian was a citizen of India enjoying equal rights in every part of India. Therefore, a Bengali had every right in Bihar as a Bihari. But he wished to emphasize that a Bengali must merge in the Bihari. He must never be guilty of exploiting Biharis or feeling a stranger or behaving as a stranger in Bihar. If the speaker brought his Gujarat manners to Bengal and imposed himself on the province, he would expect the Bengalis to expel him. He could not then claim the rights of an Indian as against Bengalis. All rights flowed from duties previously and duly performed. One thing he must stress, that in both the Dominions of India, the use of force for the assertion of rights must be eschewed altogether if they were to make any progress. Thus, neither the Bengalis nor the Biharis could assert themselves at the point of the sword, nor could the Boundary Commission Award similarly be changed. It was the first lesson to be learnt in a democratic, independent India. Their independence was yet only a fortnight old. Liberty never meant the licence to do anything at will. Independence meant the voluntary restraint and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law in the making of which the whole of India had its hand through its elected representatives. The only force at the disposal of democracy was that of public opinion. Satyagraha, civil disobedience and fasts had nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open. But even these had restricted use in democracy. They could not even think of them whilst the Governments were settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

412. ABOUT STUDENTS¹

A correspondent says :

You have begun writing in time about the student world of India. Your opinion was highly necessary. The late H. G. Wells has somewhere described the students as “Undergraduate Intelligence”. The exploitation of the half-baked student world is highly dangerous. It tears the students under exploitation from the essential work of study and its assimilation. In these critical times the harm done by the exploitation of “Undergraduate Intelligence” recoils upon the exploiters. Your writing referred to above gives rise to one question: Was it not Gandhiji who first drew the students to politics? I know that this is not true. But it is necessary for you to reiterate your position.

The second thing is: What should students’ organizations do? What should be their objective? Today, as you know, students’ organizations are considered as stepping-stones to entrance into political life. Some exploit them for that purpose.

Only during this week I had the misfortune to experience what harm “Undergraduate Intelligence” can do. I was invited by the Vice-Chancellor to address a students’ gathering.² Sad to say, they indulged in a hostile demonstration against Shaheed Saheb. Afterwards they saw reason and they repented. And they gave a demonstration of how half-baked intelligence could do right under wise guidance. This would be apparent from the report of my post-prayer speech in the current issue of the *Harijan*.

Let me hope that the rendering into Gujarati in the columns of the *Harijanbandhu* will be quite in keeping with the original in English. The English rendering is the translation of the speech that was delivered in Hindustani. But it has not been possible to give the properly edited Hindustani and its authorized English translation. Who could shoulder that burden? I have deprived myself of the assistance of Pyarelal and Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who are engaged in better work. Rajkumari’s services have been unavailable for several months. Now she has become a Minister.

If there is one compact students’ organization, it can become a mighty instrument of service. Their objective can only be one: Never

¹ This is an adaptation of the original in Gujarati, which appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 7-9-1947.

² Vide “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 28-8-1947.

for the purpose of finding a lucrative career but fitting themselves for the service of the motherland. If they were to do so, their knowledge would attain a great height. Agitation is only for those who had completed their studies. While studying, the only occupation of students must be to increase their knowledge. Education, as it is prescribed today, is detrimental, conceived in terms of the masses of India. It is possible to show that the present education has been of some use to the country. I regard it as negligible. Let no one be deceived by it. The acid test of its usefulness is this: Does it make, as it should, an effective contribution to the production of food and clothing? What part does the student world play in stopping the present senseless slaughter? All education in a country has got to be demonstrably in promotion of the progress of the country in which it is given. Who will deny that education in India has not served that purpose? Hence one purpose of the organization should be to discover the defects of the present education and seek to remove them so far as possible in their own selves. By their correct conduct they will be able to convert to their view the heads of education. If they do so, they will never be entangled in party politics. In the revised scheme, constructive and creative programme will naturally have its due place. Indirectly their action will keep the politics of the country free of the spirit of exploitation.

Now for the first question. What I said in the matter of students' education at the time of the country's battle for freedom is evidently forgotten. I did not invite the students to devote themselves to politics whilst they were in schools and colleges. I had suggested non-violent non-co-operation and that they should quit these educational institutions and throw themselves into the battle for freedom. I had encouraged national universities and national schools and colleges. Unfortunately, the snare of the education given in our schools and colleges was too strong for the students. Only a handful were able to disengage themselves from it. Thus it is not proper to say that I drew the students to the politics of the country. Moreover, when, after 20 years of exile in South Africa, I returned to India in 1915, the students, while they were engaged in their studies, had already been drawn to political life. Probably, there was no other way. Our foreign rulers had so devised the whole life of the country that nobody could engage in politics suitable for the deliverance of the country from bondage. The

foreign rulers had so devised and controlled the education of the country that the youth remained under that control and millions were kept in comparative darkness. This was the way in which foreign control was rendered as permanent as possible. Therefore, apart from the colleges and schools controlled by foreign rulers, patriotic workers were left with no other choice. To what extent this foreign education was misused need not be considered here.

CALCUTTA, August 30, 1947

Harijan, 7-9-1947

413. SWARAJ ASHRAM, VEDCHHI

A printed report¹ of the work done in this Ashram during 1945-46 has been received. It is an interesting document. The most important portion from it has been reproduced below with the expectation that the reader would obtain a copy of the whole report and read it. The activities of the Ashram are likely to be useful in understanding what I have recently written about education. The training given there may be imperfect but all the activities have originated from and have bearings on the present situation in the country and help in improving it.

1. Ku. Annapurna Chunilal Mehta, Vedchhi
2. Shri Sumant Morarji, Titwa
3. Shri Kanjibhai Jagabhai Dasharibehn, Beda
4. Shri Makanji Kotabhai Chowdhari, Amba Pardi
5. Shri Velji Kanji Chowdhary, Vedchhi
6. Shri Jhaverbhai Shankarbhai Patel

These six village workers are engaged in these activities.

CALCUTTA, August 30, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 28-9-1947

¹ Not reproduced here; it explained the various constructive activities of the Ashram.

414. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

CALCUTTA,
August 30, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your letter which His Excellency the Governor sent me yesterday afternoon. I do not know if Shaheed Saheb and I can legitimately appropriate the compliment¹ you pay us. Probably suitable conditions were ready for us to take the credit for what appears to have been a magical performance.

Am I right in gathering from your letter that you would like me to try the same thing for the Punjab?² I am in correspondence with the Pandit and the Sardar.

I hope your new office³ is not unduly more arduous than as Viceroy.

It filled me with joy when I read in the papers that Lady Mountbatten had flown to the Punjab. I hope she is none the worse for the trying visit.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE LORD MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 278

¹ In his letter dated August 26, the addressee *inter alia*, wrote: "In the Punjab we have 55 thousand soldiers and large-scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our forces consist of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One-man Boundary Force, not forgetting his Second in Command, Mr. Suhrawardy."

² *Vide* also the following item.

³ Of Governor-General of independent India

415. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

August 30, 1947

About my going to the Punjab, I won't move without your and Vallabhbhai's wish. I want to say, however, that every day pressure is being put upon me to rush to the Punjab before it is too late. If you wish I could send you all that comes to me so as to enable you to come to the right decision.

If I am not going to the Punjab, would I be of much use in Delhi as an adviser or consultant? I fancy I am not built that way. My advice has value only when I am actually working at a particular thing. I can only disturb when I give academic advice as on food, clothing, the use of the military. The more I think, the more I sense the truth of this opinion. Left to myself I would probably rush to the Punjab and if necessary break myself in the attempt to stop the warring elements from committing suicide. From a letter I just have from Lord Mountbatten I get the same impression.¹ He would welcome my immediate going to the Punjab.

On this side I have work which must help you all.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 394

416. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

BELIAGHATA,

August 30, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I have your letter. I have received from Jawahar also a telegram² similar to what you have sent. My reply is contained in the accompanying letter. I therefore do not write more here.

May God give all of you the strength and the wisdom the situation demands. Did you ever think that you would have to face such a difficult situation so soon ?³ His will be done.

Horace⁴ is with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 370-1

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² *Vide* footnote to "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 29-8-1947.

³ As Deputy Prime Minister the addressee was in charge of Home, States and Information and Broadcasting.

⁴ Horace G. Alexander

417. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

August 30, 1947

CHI. MANI,

All the letters are enclosed. Send them to the addressees. I hope I am not burdening you with too much work. This is the only way I can get the letters delivered in time. Show to Sardar the letter addressed to Jawaharlal and then have it delivered as soon as you can.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 142

418. INTERVIEW TO RANDOLPH CHURCHILL¹

August 30, 1947

Gandhiji said that his views on partition were very well known, and he, even how, considered partition to be a sin. But whether there would be reunion or not was not for him to decide. If the people of both States became so friendly that they voluntarily wished to be one, there would indeed be nothing like it.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 268

419. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,

August 30, 1947

Gandhiji said that this was Shaheed Saheb's constituency. He was, therefore, glad that he was expected to visit Barasat. He noticed the absence of the Pakistan flag or the Muslim League flag. Why did not the Hindus of Barasat go out of their way to invite their Muslim brethren to fly the Pakistan flag side by side with the tricolour? That never meant that the Muslims were to impose the Pakistan flag or the League flag on the Hindus. He would apply the same rule where the Muslims were in a majority. If a Hindu girl was in their midst, they should encourage the solitary girl to unfurl the tricolour and recite *Ramdhun*. That was the sure sign of Hindu-Muslim friendship which then would be capable of bearing the severest strain upon it. No doubt, they learnt the daily tale of family strife in the Punjab. It had become difficult

¹ Son of Winston Churchill, who met Gandhiji in the evening and asked him about his ideas regarding the reunion of Pakistan and India; Suhrawardy was also present.

for the Muslims to live in the East and the Hindus and Sikhs in the West. Was there to be a transfer of crores of population? The way to stem the tide of this savagery and inhuman conduct was for the Hindus and Muslims of the two divisions of Bengal to preserve their equanimity and to demonstrate by their unbreakable friendship the way for all the communities to live. The way of mutual strife and exclusiveness was the way to perdition and slavery. If there was heart friendship, he could not understand the objection of Muslims, wherever they were in a majority, to being included in Western Bengal as in Murshidabad and Malda or for the Hindu majority, to being included in Pakistan. This was a sign not of friendship but of unworthy and mutual distrust.

He then referred to a letter he had received from the local Gurkha League saying that he was misinformed by his correspondent on the strength of whose letter he had issued¹ his advice to the Gurkhas of Darjeeling. They contended that they claimed to be as much Indians as any. They could have no repugnance towards the Bengalis or the Marwaris who had settled in Darjeeling. But they expected Gandhiji to share their apprehension if they found the Bengalis or the Marwaris to be lording over them. Let them not be proud of their learning or riches and treat the Gurkhas as if they were born to be bearers of burden. Would he not expect perfect equality among them and expect the Bengalis to lift them up by giving them knowledge of letters and the Marwaris to share with them the secret of conducting honest trade? Gandhiji said that he had no hesitation in endorsing the Gurkha position and hoped that the Bengalis, Marwaris and others who had settled on that beautiful hill, would share with their Gurkha brothers their best and show them that they were their friends and servants, in no sense exploiters.

He then came to refer to a question which Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose had prepared for him as a result of his discussions with visitors. What did he mean by bread labour and what was its application to the present state? The economics of bread labour was the living way of life. It meant that every man had to labour with his body for his food and clothing. If Gandhiji could convince the people of the value and necessity of bread labour there never would be any want of bread and cloth. He would have no hesitation in saying to the people with confidence that they must starve and go naked if they would neither work on the land nor spin and weave. They read in the papers that the whole of India was on the brink of starvation and nakedness. If his plan was accepted, they would soon find that India had enough food and enough khadi which the masses would produce for themselves. No doubt they should be assisted in the matter of using the land wisely and should also be supplied with spinning and weaving accessories, and instructors. He added that he had not hesitated even to discuss² his method with Mr. Casey (Governor of Bengal) who was taking keen

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 26-8-1947.

² In December 1945.

interest in the water supply of Bengal. No doubt, Mr. Casey's was gigantic scheme requiring years and tons of money. His was an efficient but unambitious and inexpensive programme.

Harijan, 7-9-1947

420. THE NATIONAL FLAG

Professor Radha Kumud Mookerji brought the above note¹ personally and on my drawing attention to the popular meaning of the Sudarshan Chakra as a symbol of violence,² he said it was wholly wrong.

CALCUTTA, August 31, 1947

Harijan, 7-9-1947

421. QUESTION BOX

QUESTION: You have often stated while you were in Noakhali that failure of your mission there would be the failure of your own ahimsa and not of ahimsa itself. In the light of what has been achieved here (Calcutta), do you think that your ahimsa has succeeded or is on the way to success?

ANSWER: It is a correct statement that has been attributed to me. Ahimsa is always infallible. When, therefore, it appears to have failed, the failure is due to the inaptitude of the votary. I have never felt that my ahimsa has failed in Noakhali, nor can it be said that it has succeeded. It is on its trial. And when I talk of my ahimsa I do not think of it as limited to myself. It must include all my co-workers in Noakhali. Success or failure would, therefore, be attributable to the aggregate of the activities of my co-workers and myself.

What I have said about Noakhali applies to Calcutta. It is too early to state that the application of ahimsa to the communal problem in this great city has succeeded beyond doubt. As I have already remarked, it is wrong to contend that the establishment of friendliness between the two communities was a miracle. Circumstances were ready and Shaheed Saheb and I appeared on the scene to take the credit for

¹ Not reproduced here. The note pointed out that the chakra on the national flag was taken from the Buddha's *Dhamma-Chakka* and that its origin could be traced farther back to Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra which had a spiritual significance.

² *Vide* "The Tri-Colour", 3-8-1947.

what has happened. Anyway, it is premature to predicate anything about the application. The first thing naturally is that we, the two partners, have one mind and are believers in ahimsa. That being assured, I would say that if we know the science and its application, it is bound to succeed.

CALCUTTA, August 31, 1947

Harijan, 7-9-1947

422. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

CALCUTTA

August 31, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I got both your letters. Radhakisan may be given Rs. 75,000. I don't understand why my letter¹ could not reach you. God knows if something went wrong at this end. I cannot do everything promptly.

Which Vallabhbhai? It is all right if Bhansali has left. It was bound to have its effect. He is rather crazy but that does not affect his nobility.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

423. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

August 31, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

Your letter. One cannot be so ill because of smoking *bidis*.

You may go to the Andhra High School. Return soon.

I am glad that Zohra² and Kamala have recovered.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Chimanlal N. Shah", 20-8-1947.

² Wife of Akbar Chavda

424. ADDRESS TO MUSLIM MERCHANTS¹

CALCUTTA,
August 31, 1947

In his speech before the moneyed men Gandhiji said that he want to them as a beggar. Somehow or other when he began life after studies he found that he had the gift of begging from the rich and the poor alike. He hoped that his appeal would not go in vain. There were two ways of rebuilding and rehabilitation—either the Government or the rich men of Calcutta had to find the money. He held that if the Government found the funds, it would carry no merit. But if the moneyed men took up the duty, it carried double merit. They as citizens, would have of their own free will discharged their duty and it would be a substantial proof of real friendship between the communities.

Mahatma Gandhi in his speech congratulated the organizers of the function which was to cement Hindu-Muslim unity. He asked them to form their own committees, for raising funds, and making expenditure for rehabilitation work. Those who were interested and those who were in a position to pay should sit together and devise the programme. They should not merely think of rehabilitating these poor sufferers in the kind of *bustees* that existed today and which the poor had been forced to choose as their abodes. But they should think more as to how these people could live with comfort. Those who had money should not think that it was for themselves alone. As a matter of fact, they must look upon themselves as trustees and should pay for the cause of suffering humanity. They knew that Dr. P. C. Ghosh, their Chief Minister, wanted a crore for rehabilitation work. They should apply themselves to that. If Hindus and Muslims, rich and poor, could work together, it was bound to have effect in East and West Punjab and the work that they would do here would be the work for the whole country.²

The spectacular meetings were, no doubt, necessary, but they were not all. That which led to permanent friendship was contented rehabilitation. All parties, all groups, had to do their duty in the direction. For the purity of hearts it was necessary for all to forget the past. Forgetfulness properly cultivated was a great gift. It was a rich gift bestowed upon man by the Maker. The rich men would not be able to put their hands into their pockets, if they had not the faculty for forgetting the past. He asked the rich men, after Shaheed Saheb and he had withdrawn, to sit together and not to leave the Hotel till they had come to a wise decision.

Harijan, 21-9-1947, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1-9-1947

¹ The Muslims of the Lower Chitpur Road held a function for Hindu-Muslim unity at the Grand Hotel. Gandhiji, who was accompanied by Suhrawardy, was presented with a purse of Rs. 1,001 by Haji Shamsuddin, Chairman of the Reception Committee, for repairing Hindu temples.

² This paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

425. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,
August 31, 1947

After prayer Gandhiji said that as he had addressed the meeting of the wealthy men, he did not propose to say much to the audience. He was glad to be informed by Kamal Babu, their M.L.A., that there was now perfect friendship between the two communities and that the evacuees were ready to return. The great obstacle was that the factories where they were earning their livelihood had not started working. The Muslim neighbours had undertaken to renovate the evacuated premises. If all the information was cent per cent true, the truth will work its way into the whole of the affected parts of Calcutta. He informed the audience that he proposed to leave for Noakhali on Tuesday. If Shaheed Saheb too could accompany him at the same time, he would do so. He did not propose to stay in Noakhali for long and hoped to return to Calcutta to finish the work that had begun under happy auspices. Meanwhile, he hoped that the work of rehabilitation would be continued with double speed. It did not admit of delay if there was to be lasting peace.

Harijan, 21-9-1947

426. TALK WITH PYARELAL¹

August 31, 1947

My resolve to go to Noakhali has collapsed after this evening's happenings.² I cannot go to Noakhali or for that matter anywhere when Calcutta is in flames. Today's incident to me is a sign and warning from God. You have for the time being, therefore, to return to Noakhali without me. You can tell the people of Noakhali that if my colleagues for any reason cannot be there, they will find me, surely, in their midst.

And then casually he hinted that if the conflagration spread he would have no alternative but to fast.

Have I not often said that there is yet another fast in store for me?

Harijan, 14-9-1947, and Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 404

¹ Pyarelal along with Charubhushan Chowdhary met Gandhiji to appraise him of the situation in Noakhali and to seek his advice.

² The reference is to a violent demonstration by some Hindus on August 31 in front of the house where Gandhiji and H.S. Suhrawardy were staying. *Vide* "Statement to the Press", 1-9-1947.

427. A NOTE

[August 1947]¹

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.

M. K. GANDHI²

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, facing p. 89

428. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

KASHMIR,

[August, 1947]³

CHI. HARJIVAN,

I have received your resignation. It is all right if you have sent it after due thought. But I sense anger in your language. The Charkha Sangh shall think about management when you have gone bankrupt. I too have not thought about removing you from the Sangh. I have thought about freeing you from Kashmir though. But the Sangh has given no thought to it. Hence, I am once again drawing your attention to your duty. Let me know what needs to be done.

I shall think about the shares. You must send the. . .⁴ if possible.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ In the source, this appears among the illustrations for August 1947.

² The signature is in the Devanagari and Bengali scripts.

³ Gandhiji had visited Kashmir only once, in August 1947.

⁴ A few words here in the original are not intelligible.

429. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

CALCUTTA,

September 1, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I got your letter. Bhopal (Nawab's) letter is strange.¹ I did not like it. Your task is hard indeed. May God grant you the necessary strength. If Bhopal plays the game, Hyderabad's problem will be easy to solve. And the same will be true of Pakistan.

I have already sent you my programme, but now even that is as good as cancelled. We were to go to Noakhali tomorrow morning. So Shaheed Saheb went home. I am the only elderly person in the house. Dinshaw Mehta is here, but what can he do? He does not know the language and his large body is of no use.

Someone received knife wounds in Machhva Bazaar. No one knew who stabbed him. People brought him here for demonstration. Perhaps they wanted to attack Shaheed Suhrawardy, but they could not find him; so their anger was turned on me. There was an uproar in the front yard. Both the girls² went out among the crowd. I was in bed about to go to sleep. Our Muslim landlady came in to have a look as she was afraid I might come to harm. I sensed danger and got up. I broke my silence. My vow permits me to break it on such occasions. I went to face the crowd but the girls would not leave my side. Other people also surrounded me. Glass windows were being broken and they started smashing the doors also. There was an attempt to cut the wires of the electric ceiling fans but only a few were snapped. I started shouting at the crowd, asking them to be quiet. But who would listen? I could, moreover, speak only Hindustani and they were Bengalis. There were also some Muslims nearby. I asked them not to strike back. So they merely stood around me. There were two groups; one trying to

¹ While informing the addressee of his decision to join the Union of India, the Nawab of Bhopal on August 26, had *inter alia* written: "During our talk on the 22nd you had expressed surprise, at one stage, that I had so much opposed your plan. I do not disguise the fact that while the struggle was on I used every means in my power to preserve the independence and neutrality of my State. Now that I have conceded defeat I hope that you will find that I can be as staunch a friend as I have been an inveterate opponent."

² Abha and Manu Gandhi

incite the crowd, the other trying to pacify it. There were two policemen also. They also used no force. With folded hands they addressed [the crowd] in a loud voice and they stopped me. Kalyanam suggested that I should go and sit inside. Bisen was in the centre. He was wearing only pyjamas and was taken for a Muslim. Bricks were thrown. One hit a Muslim. No one was wounded, but the brick could have struck me. The Superintendent of Police came soon after and the youngsters dispersed after causing considerable damage to the house. Prafulla Babu¹ and Annada² arrived. Prafulla suggested the posting of more police guard but I objected. Everyone suspects the Hindu Mahasabha [was behind the attack]. I have asked them to see Syamaprasad³ and Chatterji⁴ before arresting the mischief-makers and not to do anything in a hurry. Such is the position here. I could thus go to bed only at 12.30 a. m. Of course I had to get up at the usual hour.

Please tell Jawaharlal about this when you meet him.

Read the accompanying wire. I feel totally lost. I pin my hopes on you two. The copy of my reply is on the reverse.

In this situation you may take it that I am here. “As for tomorrow, who can tell?”

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 372-4

430. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

September 1, 1947

CHI. MANI,

I am glad that you do not feel overburdened. There should be someone with the Sardar who is one hundred per cent fit.

¹ Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

² A constructive worker of Calcutta

³ Syamaprasad Mookerjee and N. C. Chatterji, Hindu Mahasabha leaders

⁴ *ibid*

Give him my letter¹ when he is free.

Send to Sushila the material meant for her.

Last evening's developments here were altogether unexpected. The man who was alleged to have been stabbed was not stabbed at all. There was a scuffle between two persons, in which that man fell to the ground. Now I hope to get more news.

I have just come out after a bath and am writing this.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI MANIBEHN PATEL

NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 142

431. LETTER TO DURGA M. DESAI

September 1, 1947

CHI. DURGA²,

I got the letter about Babla's³ marriage yesterday. Since it is an alliance of mutual choice, what could my blessings add? Both are competent and public spirited. I think anything that is auspicious needs no blessings; and blessings never come true when the thing is inauspicious. However, I certainly wish them both a long life; may they ever serve the people.

Since Bablo and his wife will be there, you are sure to be settled comfortably. Could you live separately from them?

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² Widow of Mahadev Desai

³ Addressee's son, Narayan

432. TALK WITH MARWARI DEPUTATION¹

CALCUTTA,
September 1, 1947

Go in the midst of the rioters and prevent them from indulging in madness or get killed in the attempt. But do not come back alive to report failure. The situation calls for sacrifice on the part of top-rankers. So far the unknown, nameless rank and file alone have been the victims of the holocaust with the one exception of the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.² That is not enough.³

Harijan, 14-9-1947

433. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

September 1, 1947

I regret to have to report to you that last night some young men brought to the compound a bandaged man. He was reported to have been attacked by some Muslims. The Prime Minister⁴ had him examined and the report was that he had no marks on his body of stabbing which he was said to have received. The seriousness of the injury however is not the chief point. What I want to emphasize is that these young men tried to become judges and executioners. This was about 10 p.m., Calcutta time. They began to shout at the top of their voices. My sleep was disturbed but I tried to lie quiet not knowing what was happening. I heard the window-panes being smashed. I had lying on either side of me two very brave girls. They would not sleep but, without my knowledge, for my eyes were closed, they went among the small crowd and tried to pacify them. Thank God the crowd did

¹ Some leading members of the Marwari community sought Gandhiji's advice as to what they should do to quench the fire of communal riots.

² *Vide* "Speech on Kanpur Riots, Subjects Committee Meeting, Karachi", 27-3-1931, "Telegram to Balkrishna Sharma", 1-4-1931 and "Notes", 9-4-1931.

³ Even as he uttered these words, he was cogitating within himself, as to where he came into the picture which he was presenting to them. For he added: "Of course, I cannot do today what I have told them to do. I will not be permitted to. I saw that yesterday. Everybody will protect me from harm if I went in the midst of the maddened crowd. I may drop down from sheer physical exhaustion—that is nothing. It won't do for a soldier to be exhausted in the midst of battle."

⁴ The reference is to the Chief Minister of Bengal, Dr. P. C. Ghosh.

not do any harm to them. The old Muslim lady in the house endearingly called Bi-Amma and a young Muslim stood near my matting, I suppose, to protect me from harm.

The noise continued to swell. Some had entered the central hall and began to knock open the many doors. I felt that I must get up and face the angry group. I stood at the threshold of one of the doors. Friendly faces surrounded me and would not let me move forward. My vow of silence admitted of my breaking it on such occasions and I broke it and began to appeal to the angry young men to be quiet. I asked the Bengali grand-daughter-in-law to translate my few words into Bengali. All to no purpose. Their ears were closed against reason.

I clasped my hands in the Hindu fashion. Nothing doing. More window-panes began to crack. The friendly ones in the crowd tried to pacify them. There were two police officers. Be it said to their credit that they did not try to exercise authority. They too clasped their hands in appeal. A lathi blow missed me and everybody round me. A brick aimed at me hurt a Muslim friend standing by. The two girls would not leave me and held on to me to the last. Meantime the Police Superintendent and his officers came in. They too did not use force. They appealed to me to retire. Then there was a chance of their stilling the young men. After a time the crowd melted.

What happened outside the compound gate I do not know except that the police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd. Meantime Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Annada Babu and Dr. Nripen walked in and after some discussion left. Happily Shaheed Saheb had gone home to prepare for tomorrow's proposed departure for Noakhali. In view of the above ugly incident which no one could tell where it would lead to I could not think of leaving Calcutta for Noakhali.

What is the lesson of the incident? It is clear to me that if India is to retain her dearly won independence all men and women must completely forget lynch law. What was attempted was an indifferent imitation of lynch law. If the Muslims misbehaved, the complainants could, if they would not go to the ministers, certainly go to me or my friend Shaheed Saheb. The same thing applies to Muslim complainants. There is no way of keeping the peace in Calcutta or elsewhere if the elementary rule of civilized society is not observed. Let them not think of the savagery of the Punjab or outside India. The recognition of the golden rule of never taking the law into one's own hands has no exceptions.

My secretary Devprakash in Patna wires: "Public agitated Punjab happenings. Fell statement necessary impressing duty of public and the Press." Shri Devprakash is never unduly agitated. There must be some unguarded word by the Press. If that is so at this time when (we) are sitting on a powder magazine, the Fourth Estate has to be extra-wise and reticent. Unscrupulousness will act as a lighted match. I hope every editor and reporter will realize his duty to the full.

One thing I must mention. I have an urgent message calling me to the Punjab. I hear all kinds of rumours about recrudescence of trouble in Calcutta. I hope they are exaggerated if not quite baseless. The citizens of Calcutta have to reassure me that there would be nothing wrong in Calcutta and that peace once restored will not be broken.

From the very first day of peace, that is 14th August last, I have been saying that the peace might only be a temporary lull. There was no miracle. Will the foreboding prove true and will Calcutta again lapse into the law of the jungle? Let us hope not, let us pray to the Almighty that He will touch our hearts and ward off the recurrence of insanity.

Since the foregoing was written, i. e., about four o'clock during my silence, I have come to know fairly well the details of what has happened in the various parts of the city. Some of the places which were safe till yesterday have suddenly become unsafe. Several deaths have taken place. I saw two dead bodies of very poor Muslims.¹ I saw also some wretched-looking Muslims being carted away to a place of safety. I quite see that last night's incident so fully described above pales into insignificance before this flare-up. Nothing that I may do in the way of going about in this open conflagration could possibly arrest it. I have told² the friends who saw me in the evening what their duty is. What part am I to play in order to stop the rot? The Sikhs and the Hindus must not forget what East Punjab has done during these few days. Now the Muslims in West Punjab have commenced the mad career. It is said that the Sikhs and the Hindus are enraged over the Punjab happenings.

I have adverted above to an urgent call for me to go to the

¹ Two young Muslims had died in a hand-grenade attack on an open truck in which they were being escorted to safer localities.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

Punjab. But now that the Calcutta bubble seems to have burst, with what face can I go to the Punjab? The weapon which has hitherto proved infallible for me, is fasting. To put an appearance before a yelling crowd does not always work. It certainly did not last night. What my word in person cannot do my fast may. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements even in the Punjab if it does in Calcutta. I therefore begin fasting from 8.15 p.m. to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta. I shall as usual permit myself to add salt and soda bicarb¹ to the water I may wish to drink during the fast.

If the people of Calcutta wish me to proceed to the Punjab and help the people there they have to enable me to break the fast as early as may be.²

From a photostat: C. W. 10575. Courtesy: N. K. Bose. Also *Harijan*, 14-9-1947

434. DISCUSSION WITH C. RAJAGOPALACHARI³

September 1, 1947

RAJAJI: You don't expect me to approve of your proposed step. . . . Can you fast against the goondas ?

GANDHIJI: The conflagration has been caused not by the goondas but by those who have become goondas. It is we who make goondas. Without our sympathy and passive support, the goondas would have no legs to stand upon. I want to touch the hearts of those who are behind the goondas.

But must you launch your fast at this stage? why not wait and watch a little?

It would be too late afterwards. The minority Muslims cannot be left in a perilous state. My fast has to be preventive if

¹ The original draft statement after this had the words "and sour limes" which were scored out on Rajaji's suggestion; *vide* the following item.

² The statement was completed at 11.10 p.m. in the presence of C. Rajagopalachari, Pyarelal, Charubhushan Chowdhary and N. K. Bose. In a supplementary statement to the Press Rajaji said that if trouble had not broken out in Calcutta, Gandhiji would have gone to the Punjab. It was in their hands to send him to the Punjab. "The women and children of the Punjab are eagerly looking forward to his presence in their midst and to the healing influence of his word and spirit. Let us send him with the laurels of victory round his aged brow to that affected province."

³ Gandhiji showed the draft of his statement to the Press to C. Rajagopalachari who called on him at 10 p. m.

it is to be any good. I know I shall be able to tackle the Punjab too if I can control Calcutta. But if I falter now, the conflagration may spread and soon, I can see clearly, two or three powers will be upon us and thus will end our short-lived dream of independence.

But supposing you die, the conflagration would be worse.

At least I won't be there to witness it. I shall have done my bit. More is not given a man to do.

But why add sour lemon juice to water, if you are to put yourself entirely in God's hands?

You are right. I allowed it out of weakness. It jarred on me even as I wrote it. A satyagrahi must hope to survive his conditional fast by a timely fulfilment of the condition.

Harijan, 14-9-1947

435. *LETTER TO MAGANBHAI P. DESAI*

[After *September 1*, 1947]¹

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

Read this. My morning was spent in reading the enclosed. There is no mention of Karnataka. Which editor wrote it? I think there is some mistake about it.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

436. *LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

CALCUTTA,
September 1/2, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Today here they are preparing to fight. I have just returned after seeing the dead bodies of two Muslims who had died of wounds. I hear that riots have broken out in many places. Thus what was regarded as a miracle has proved a short-lived nine-day wonder. Now

¹ This was in reply to the editor's letter dated September 1, 1947

I am thinking what my duty is in the circumstances. I am writing this at about 6 p. m. As the post will go only tomorrow, I shall be able to add something more. Jawahar wires that I should go to the Punjab.¹ But how can I leave Calcutta now? I am thinking within myself and silence helps in that. See the accompanying wire from Mirpur Khas. What could it mean? I have not replied.

4.45 a. m., September 2, 1947

This much was written last evening. After that I heard much more. A number of people came to see me. I went on thinking of my own duty. The news I received settled it and I decided to undertake a fast. It began at 8.15 last evening. Rajaji called at night. He admonished me a lot, tried hard to persuade me not to go on a fast. But none of his arguments appealed to me. I saw my duty clearly before me. You should not worry, nor should anyone else. Worrying is not going to help. If the leaders are sincere the riots will stop and the fast will be broken. If the riots continue what will I do by merely being alive? What is the use of my living? If I lack even the power to pacify the people, what else is left for me to do? If God wants to make use of me, He will enter the people's hearts and calm them down and preserve my body. I have started the fast only in His name.

May God keep all of you safe. In this holocaust, no one else can do anything.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 374-5

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru had sent a wire on August 31. *Vide* also the following item.

437. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*¹

September 2, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,²

I replied to your message of yesterday.³

I would have started for Lahore today but for the flare-up in Calcutta. If the fury did not abate, my going to the Punjab would be of no avail. I would have no self-confidence. If the Calcutta friendship was wrong, how could I hope to affect the situation in the Punjab? Therefore my departure from Calcutta depends solely upon the result of the Calcutta fast. Don't be distressed or angry over the fast.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the original: Jawaharlal Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

438. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

September 2, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Of course, you will not only not deplore my fast but welcome it as the only act so far as I am concerned. Had it not been for the flare-up in C[alcutta] I would have started for Delhi this evening on my way to the Punjab. Jawaharlal thinks it is time now for me to go there. If the disturbance continues, the so-called friendship was some accident. The fast will show where I am.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's wire of even date which read: "I feel sure now that you should come to Punjab as early as possible." On receiving the wire, Gandhiji is reported to have said: "I now feel happy and at peace because I am doing what my duty requires of me."

² The superscription and subscription are in Hindi.

³ This communication, however, is not available.

439. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

September 2, 1947

CHI. MANI,

Arrange to [despatch] the accompanying papers. You will have found no difficulty in understanding the reason for my fast. Rajaji strove hard with me,¹ but the more he argued the more I was confirmed in my own decision. Was the amity of a fortnight a mere sham?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 143

440. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

September 2, 1947

Somebody has handed over this. Quite a few things in it are workable. Give it to someone to read and let him tell you the gist.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

441. A NOTE

[September 2, 1947]²

My fast started last night. There was no alternative. It was no small matter that riots started after the demonstration of friendship for fifteen days. No one need rush to me.

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

¹ *Vide* "Discussion with C. Rajagopalachari", 1-9-1947.

² From the reference to the fast

442. DISCUSSION WITH SARAT CHANDRA BOSE¹

September 2, 1947

GANDHIJI (laughingly): So, it needed a fast on my part to bring you to me?

SARAT BOSE: I had a feeling that you no more cared for me. But I will not tax your strength. Are you permitted to talk?

I have to, at least in pursuance of the object for which I am fasting.

I have always been opposed to partition. I have never made any secret of my views. I am a frank man. I did not come before because, as I have already said, I had a feeling that you had not much use for me.

Representatives of all groups and parties have come and asked me why I did not send for you. Some of them said, they had a suspicion that the Forward Bloc² people were behind the disturbances. I told them that Sarat Bose knows my door is always open to him. He will come whenever he thinks fit.

That you have wronged me doth appear in this. In your prayer address³ you said I was spending money like water. . . in corrupt practices.

Was it not then your clear duty to come to me and remove my doubts—if they were ill-founded? It is the privilege of friendship to speak out one's mind unreservedly without the fear of being misunderstood. Otherwise what is friendship worth? Even your Suhrawardy has said, you spend money like water. But if you had a grievance on that score, why did you not contradict it publicly? Or you could have written to me. I would have then either explained to you what I meant, or you would have removed the misconception under which I was labouring. I would have then withdrawn my remarks. That was what true friendship demanded.

Let bygones be bygones. What is your complaint now against the Forward Bloc?

The Hindu Mahasabha people say Forward Bloc people are behind this holocaust. I owe it to you to place their allegation before

¹ Gandhiji had about 8 ounces of cold water at 3.45 p. m. Soon after, Sarat Chandra Bose called on him.

² Founded by Subhas Chandra Bose, younger brother of Sarat Chandra Bose

³ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 8-6-1947.

you.

You may believe it if you like. But I tell you, a number of Hindu Mahasabha people are behind this business. It is they who are inciting the Sikhs by telling them that it is unmanly on their part passively to look on while the Punjab is burning. I could even mention names.

Mutual recrimination will lead us nowhere. I am not here to judge. My fast is an appeal to everybody to search his heart. It should result in all-round self-purification. When the initial cleansing of the hearts has been effected, parties of Hindus and Muslims should go out together to patrol the troubled areas and relieve the police of its arduous duties. Or they should openly say they want to fight. What is the use of the Forward Bloc and the Hindu Mahasabha bandying words and engaging in mutual recrimination? How long can we carry on with the help of the police and the military?¹

The best use I would have for such tea would be to pour it down the drain. But, perhaps, you will retort that strong tea is better than weak independence.

The deterioration in Bengal set in with the introduction by Suhrawardy of armed police from the Punjab. Does he now want the British?

No, he did not say the British. He only said mixed. But there I have a bone to pick with him too. If the hearts of our volunteers could be cleansed, peace would immediately return. For that, cleansing of the hearts on the part of the leaders is necessary. Then alone will they be able to give the masses a clear lead. This today is lacking. You should first declare in unequivocal terms what you stand for and then back it by appropriate personal example. If in the course of it, some topranking leaders are killed, I will not grieve. On the contrary, I shall dance with joy. I told the same to some leading members of the Marwari community who came to seek my advice yesterday.² Peace processions by themselves will be an empty show if the basic honesty of intention on the part of the leaders and the rank-and-file workers is not there. If such a volunteer organization wedded to non-violence and ready to make the supreme sacrifice for the achievement of unity and peace begins functioning, I will not mind if the entire police force in the city is withdrawn. And if in the result the whole of Calcutta swims in blood, it will not dismay me. For it will be willing offering of

¹ The conversation was interrupted here by the arrival of tea for Sarat Chandra Bose.

² *Vide* "Talk with Marwari Deputation", 1-9-1947.

innocent blood. I know how to tackle such a situation. You and I shall then have to rush barefoot in the midst of the flames and work without respite day and night till either peace is restored or we are all dead. That is my conception of a peace mission—not a mealy-mouthed, milk-and-water business. I do not care if I am alone in these thoughts. Enough unto me is my faith. I shall be content if I get honest and whole-hearted co-operation of you all in this work. We shall then be able to control the situation in the Punjab too.

I had the authorities withdraw the armed police guard that was posted at my residence. Unfortunately, it has again come back. I have suffered it to remain not for mine but for Suhrawardy's sake. He feels nervous. If on the night of the 31st August, he had not luckily gone out to get ready for the journey to Noakhali, who knows what might have happened to him, and consequently to me?

I have often asked why there should be any further trouble now that the League and Jinnah have got what they wanted. If only Jinnah had accepted my offer embodied in the Rajaji Formula¹, all this could have been avoided. . . . I was prepared to go even further. If after the British had quitted, the collective wisdom and statesmanship of India were still unable to achieve a peaceful solution, I would have invited the Muslim League to take charge of the Government.² The Congress Ministers would have made way for them if I had asked them to. Pandit Nehru and the Sardar had told me that they would carry out my orders if I took over command.

I shall endeavour to do my best on your lines for the establishment of peace.
Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 411-4

443. DISCUSSION WITH P. C. GHOSH

September 2, 1947

GHOSH: You have been very unfair to the Ministry in undertaking the fast without taking them into your confidence.

GANDHIJI: Perhaps you are right. But the conflagration was spreading so fast that every moment counted. Any avoidable delay would have meant further loss of innocent lives.

¹ *Vide* "C. Rajagopalachari's Formula", before 5-8-1942.

² *Vide* "Outline of Draft Agreement", 4-4-1947.

I do not wish to prolong the argument.¹

That is just like you. I had expected of you nothing less.

One thing, however, strikes me. You have launched your fast at a time when a section of the Hindus have begun to look upon you as their enemy. They foolishly feel that by asking them to practise non-violence, when the other side has shed all scruples, you are being very unfair to them. I would have had nothing to say if you had declared a fast for anything wrong that the Ministry did.

All this is wide of the mark. Don't you see, this now gives me the right to fast against the Muslims, too. My fast is intended to serve both the communities. The moment the Hindus realize that they cannot keep me alive on any other terms, peace will return to Calcutta.

Your fast weighs down on us more than anything else. How can we effectively set to work under the heavy weight of your fast?

It is a wrong way of looking at the thing. My fast is intended to strengthen your hands and to spur everybody to greater activity. You will be done for if you regard it as an oppression.

H. S. Suhrawardy, intervening, said: Already Hindus and Muslims are feeling the pressure. Let us call their representative together and confer with them at the earliest opportunity.

Dr. Ghosh replied that he had already invited the representatives of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to meet him the next day. He asked: "Should it be here or at my residence?"

"Not here but at the Chief Minister's residence," suggested Suhrawardy. Gandhiji supported Suhrawardy's suggestion. A preliminary conference should be held at the Chief Minister's residence. Afterwards all or a few out of them could come to him, if necessary.

That was also the procedure followed at the time of my twenty-one days' fast at Delhi in 1924.²

Dr. Ghosh told Gandhiji of the stringent action his Ministry had already taken in regard to the Press. Any paper indulging in inflammatory propaganda would summarily be suspended.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 414-5

¹ An hour's animated discussion without interruption had started telling upon Gandhiji which P. C. Ghosh had not failed to notice.

² Vide "Statement to the Press on Unity Conference", 24-9-1924.

444. DISCUSSION WITH SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

September 2, 1947

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee was the next to come. He was accompanied by some other Hindu Mahasabha leaders. Before he could say anything, Gandhiji made solicitous inquiries about his health. This concern for him, by one who was himself fasting, touched Dr. Mookerjee deeply.

DR. MOOKERJEE: The general feeling here now is in favour of peace. But there is danger of a delayed repercussion in East Bengal. The news from Dacca is disturbing. There may be a flare-up there any moment.

GANDHIJI: It is inevitable if the situation here does not improve immediately.

DR. MOOKERJEE: From tomorrow Hindustan National Guards (of Hindu Mahasabha) will be patrolling the streets along with the Muslim National Guards.

SUHRAWARDY: The bulletins about Gandhiji's health ought to be more widely publicized. His fast must be terminated within two days.

I will break my fast when Dr. Mookerjee reports that all is quiet in Calcutta—not before that.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 415

445. TALK WITH DINSHAW MEHTA

September 3, 1947

On the 3rd September, the second day of the fast, when Dr. Dinshaw Mehta saw him in the morning, Gandhiji reported that he had had a very peaceful night both physically and mentally.

GANDHIJI: I am not at all anxious to terminate my fast. At this rate though the body might become weaker and weaker I feel I could go on even for one month.

DR. MEHTA (misunderstanding Gandhiji's meaning): Yes, if you can take that much amount of water there will be no difficulty.

What I meant to say was that I have a feeling of the presence of God within me this time as never before. . . . If Ramanama has fully penetrated my heart, I am sure, I shall not need to drink even water to survive.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 416

446. NOTE TO ANGSHU RANI MITRA¹

September 3, 1947

Pyarelal has just given me the news that your husband who was mortally stabbed in the course of protecting others has succumbed to his wounds today.² Do not let this be an occasion for sorrow but only for joy. Sachin has become immortal. You must not grieve but lose yourself in service in emulation of him.³

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, P. 417

447. DISCUSSION WITH HINDU-MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVES⁴

September 3, 1947

One of the Muslims, a prominent member of the Bengal Muslim League, with tears in his eyes entreated Gandhiji to give up his fast. "I worked with you during the Khilafat movement. I undertake that no Muslim in this area will again disturb the peace. Your mere presence in our midst is an asset to us. It is the guarantee of our safety. Do not deprive us of it."

GANDHIJI: My presence did not check the rowdies the other day. My word seems to have lost its power so far as they are concerned. My fast will now be broken only when the conflagration ends and the glorious peace of the last fifteen days returns. If the Muslims really love me and regard me as an asset, they can demonstrate their faith by refusing to give way to the instinct of revenge and retaliation even if the whole of Calcutta goes mad. In the mean time, my ordeal must continue.

The Hindu representatives also gave a similar assurance and promised to live in peace with their Muslim neighbours. Gandhiji remarked :

The heaven has begun to work.

But it was not enough, he added. Not till the condition which he had laid down was fulfilled in letter and in spirit, he told the deputation, would he give up the fast. To give it up prematurely from a desire to live would be a denial of God. He asked the

¹ The Hindi original of this is not available.

² Sachin Mitra, who was working with Thakkar Bapa in Noakhali, was wounded on September 1 while proceeding towards Noakhoda mosque which was supposed to be a danger spot.

³ A group of ladies, who called on Gandhiji, wanted the body of Sachin Mitra to be taken out in a procession. Gandhiji deprecated the idea, saying he hated too much being made of the physical body and added, "If anybody tried to take out my body in a procession after I died, I would certainly tell them—if my corpse could speak—to spare me and cremate me where I had died."

⁴ Two Hindus and two Muslim representatives met Gandhiji at 6.30 p.m.

deputation, instead, to work for peace with still greater will and determination. The friends retired with heavy hearts.¹

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 418

448. INTERVIEW TO A BRITISH JOURNALIST²

CALCUTTA,

[Before September 4, 1947]³

An English journalist came to Beliaghata the other day. It was a busy day for Gandhiji and he could spare only a few minutes. . . .

Although Gandhiji's activities ranged from wide social and political fields to the smallest and intensely personal ones, the journalist asked him, how he was able to maintain a spirit of detachment in such a surprising manner. Gandhiji replied that it was not true that he was never off his balance. Such occasions were rare, yet the long exercise of self-restraint enabled him, through God's grace, to keep his irritation within very narrow bounds.

This led the interviewer on to a more fundamental question. From a reading of Gandhiji's writings, the friend had gathered that the root of all of Gandhiji's activities was the desire for *moksha*, emancipation. But why was not this aspect emphasized sufficiently ?

Gandhiji replied by taking recourse to a simile. He said the desire for *moksha* was indeed there, but it was not meant for anyone other than the individual himself. The world was interested in the fruits, not the root. For the tree itself, however, the chief concern should be not the fruit, but the root. It was in the depth of one's own being that the individual had to concentrate. He had to nurse it with the water of his labour and suffering. The root was his chief concern. But society was concerned with the fruit alone. It had no other data for judgment than the fruits. Was not a tree judged by its fruits?

It was this practice of trying to limit himself to the root, and then not be concerned about the fruit that had given Gandhiji the apparent detachment which the English friend had noticed. But, in his personal opinion, he was yet far from the fullness of its realization. He was still a soul yearning to be wholly free, but ever failing to reach the ideal which he knew to be true. Hence, it would be enough if he could take care of the immediate task before him, whether great or small, with all the care and freedom from bias or mental worries which he could bring to bear upon it.

Harijan, 28-9-1947

¹ After they had left Gandhiji added: "Let the evil-doers desist from evil, not to save my life, but as a result of a true heart-change. Let all understand that a make-believe peace cannot satisfy me. I do not want a temporary lull to be followed by a worse carnage. If that happens, I shall have to go on an unconditional fast unto death."

² This appeared under the title "The Root and the Fruit" with the date-line "Calcutta, 4-9-1947".

³ *ibid*

449. RIGHT OR WRONG¹

Among my correspondence there is a typical letter in Gujarati from which I give below the following summary :

In the *Young India* of 15th September, 1927 A. D., in your Madras speech² reported therein, you have said that that which is opposed to true economics is not religion and that economics which is inconsistent with religion is not true and should, therefore, be denounced.

I am aware that you have held the view for many years, but it has not commanded universal acceptance. Therefore, it seems to me that your devoting your time and energy to the abatement of atrocities being committed in the name of religion is not proper. Where is your constructive programme today? The National Congress has the reins of Government in the best part of India. Complete political independence is in our hands. The British power has quitted. In such a case, is it not well that you should devote your energy to the prosecution of the constructive programme and through it demonstrate to the country that religion and economics are not two opposites? . . .³ You write nothing against the unmoral economics of India. The consequence is that credulous people have begun to believe that you are behind the present economic policy of the Congress Government. I have begun to believe that you, who are the creator of constructive programme, are now destroying it. So far as I know, there is not a single institution connected with khadi or village industries which is based on true economics and on principles of self-sufficiency.

This writer has written in a moment of excitement. Therefore, he has not been able to express the whole truth. The main fact is that communal unity is a vital part of my being. It was so when khadi and all the village industries were not even conceived by me. At the time communal unity possessed me, I was a lad twelve years old, just a beginner in English. It was then that I had realized that all Hindus and

¹ This is an adaptation from the original in Gujarati which appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-9-1947.

² Vide "Speech at Y. M. C. A. Madras", 4-9-1927.

³ Omission as in the source

Muslims and Parsis were sons of the same soil and, as such, were pledged to complete brotherhood. This was before 1885 when the Congress was born. Moreover it should not be forgotten that communal unity is itself an integral part of the constructive programme. For it I have run many a risk. It is my conviction that if that unity is not achieved, the constructive programme cannot make substantial progress, at least not at my hands. For I should not know how to prosecute it in the midst of communal disturbances. The logical consequence of my correspondent's argument will be that I should not have hastened to Noakhali and thence to Bihar. That is to say, the work that I know how to tackle and which I have been doing for years, I should neglect in the nick of time. Surely this is impossible for me to do. To neglect it for the sake of the other items of the constructive programme would be tantamount to neglect of immediate duty. The result would be, I would have given up what was in my hands and got nothing for the manifest breach of duty.

Those who are in charge of the Congress Government are my fellow-workers. It is possible to say that they flourished in company with me in the Congress and now occupy top places. If I have failed to convince them of the soundness and feasibility of the economics referred to by the correspondent, how should I expect to convince others? They do not feel that they would be able to carry the people of India with them in the prosecution of what may be summed up as the 'Khadi Economics' and to renovate the villages of India through village industries.

He (the correspondent) rather suggests that I should prepare Shri Jajuji¹, Shri Kumarappa² and such like to take the reins of Government in their hands. What hallucination is this? What right have I so to prepare people? Government of the people, by the people and for the people cannot be conducted at the bidding of one man, however great he may be. Again who are more capable or penetrating than the present holders of the reins of Government? When more capable men are found, I am sure they will give place to their betters. As far as I know them they are not place-hunters. Therefore without being told by anybody they will of their own accord give place to abler hands and feel grateful for what will amount to a relief for them.

Let no one make the mistake of thinking that I can replace any

¹ Shrikrishnadas Jaju

² J. C. Kumarappa

one of them. I know that they would welcome me if I was ready to shoulder the burden. But I must confess that I have not unlimited capacity in me. That belongs to God, whom I love to invoke as Rama. But I am only His humble devotee. His devotees cannot claim to be He. They have got to dance to His tune.

It is worthy of note, too, that they themselves are giving the best part of their time to the very work of communal harmony, which I try to do. I in my own way, they in theirs. For they, too, believe with me that so long as this question is not satisfactorily settled and peace does not reign in India, nation-building works can make little or no progress.

Finally those who think like my correspondent should realize that the constructive programme, to be of any use, has to be reduced to practice by the millions of India. For that purpose we need thousands of workers. It is of little consequence that it was conceived by one brain. It has been before the country for years. The All-India Spinners' Association, the Village Industries Association, the Goseva Sangh, the Talimi Sangh, the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, the Adivasi Seva Sangh, the Harijan Sevak Sangh and such others which might have escaped my memory, came into being for that very purpose and are still working according to their capacity. All of them have realized the necessity and beauty of the relation between religion and economics. Whilst I am doing communal work, my interest in other constructive activities has not flagged. Whenever I can, I take part in their deliberations too. More should not be expected of me. I dare not leave the work in hand, being tempted to run after another, probably better. Hence the warning that the correspondent has given me should really be taken to heart by himself and by those who think alike and they should whole-heartedly devote themselves to the service of the nation in which they may be engaged.

I have repeated times without number that for national work it is not necessary that national workers should have political power. But it is necessary for the people to keep in constant touch with those whom they put in power. These can easily be counted. They are too few. But if the people were to realize their power and use it wisely and well, things would right themselves. Our independence is a new-born baby eighteen days old. It is inconceivable that things would of themselves be arranged harmoniously. Moreover those who have been placed in power are themselves new to this vast administrative work. They are assiduously adapting themselves to it.

CALCUTTA, September 4, 1947

Harijan, 14-9-1947

450. LETTER TO KHWAJA NAZIMUDDIN¹

September 4, 1947

This will be presented to you by Pyarelal. . . . You may know that Satis Babu and some inmates of Khadi Pratishthan together with the helpers, whom I brought with me from Delhi, were posted in Noakhali to help the terror-struck and demoralized Hindus and, if possible, to prevent them from running away from Noakhali. . . . In doing so, I felt that I was serving the Muslims, too, of Noakhali, though they stood in no need of help from me. But on reaching there I found that I could be of some help to them also. I had announced that I would do or die in Noakhali in the sense that I would prefer to die there unless through what I could do the two communities should become friends. Meantime, there came a call from Bihar. . . and I hurried to Bihar, this time to help the Muslims of whom large numbers had already fled to Bengal, Sind and other Muslim-majority parts. Since then I have not been able to return to Noakhali. When at last I came to Calcutta on the 9th ultimo, I found myself caught by Shaheed Saheb and here I am. The sequel you know.

I am dictating this letter from my bed. Everybody consoles me by saying that the first fifteen days of peace will soon return. If so, I may be able to break my fast early enough to enable me to resume my work forthwith. I have an urgent call from both parts of the Punjab, which have gone, in my opinion, utterly mad. Meanwhile, I would like you to tell me all about Noakhali. Pyarelal will tell you all about it from my point of view. . . . I know that you have become Premier of East Bengal² at a most critical period. May God help you.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 425-6

¹ Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

² On July 3, 1947, consequent upon the partition of Bengal

451. TALK WITH DR. SUNIL BOSE¹

September 4, 1947

Gandhiji told him he could not exclude relevant talk. Such necessary loss of energy was inevitable. He was certainly desirous of living, but not at the cost of work that duty demanded. He said :

I can't interrupt the work which has made me fast and which makes me live. If my life ebbs away in the process, I would feel happy.

Harijan, 14-9-1947

452. DISCUSSION WITH FRIENDS²

September 4, 1947

The present occasion was not one in which there was scope for a sympathetic fast. Hindus and Muslims had fought for one whole year, at the end of which the major parties had agreed that India should be divided into two States. Both had Hindu and Muslim subjects. It was now time for everyone to create the sense of common citizenship, to rebuild the land so that men might taste the fruits of freedom. To this end all should work. Gandhiji said that if the friends had come to him only for the sake of saving his life, it was nothing.

Referring to the Poona Fast which ended with the desired amendment of the Communal Award, [Gandhiji said that] it was suggested by some that though the amendment was not to their desire, they accepted it for the sake of saving his life. This was a wholly wrong approach. Such fasts were intended to stir the conscience and remove mental sluggishness. Truth could not be sacrificed even for the sake of saving a life, however precious it was. Gandhiji, therefore, warned the present company that they should create real Hindu-Muslim unity by educating the people in a sense of common citizenship of the State, where every single man enjoyed perfect equality of rights which flowed from duty performed. If they worked with this aim in view, and succeeded after a few days' effort in making the Muslims in Calcutta feel safe where they now did not, it would be time for him to break the fast. Gandhiji was

¹ Brother of Subhas Chandra Bose. He met Gandhiji at 11.30 a.m. "with a request that he must take plenty of rest and not talk at all."

² Shortly after the talk with Dr. Sunil Bose twenty-seven friends belonging to Central Calcutta promised Gandhiji that "there would be no more incidents". They tried to persuade him to "break his fast now, otherwise all of them were prepared to go on a sympathetic fast". This is a summary of a long argument extracted from the article "The Fast" by N. K. Bose.

clearly of opinion that although his work was now confined to Calcutta, yet his one aim with respect to the Hindu-Muslim question was that the solution would be complete only when the minority, whether in the Indian Union or in Pakistan felt perfectly safe even if they were in the minority of one. There would be no favoured and no depressed community anywhere. All should forget their religious affiliations. He was working to this end. He was working in such a manner that the majority community in each State should go forward and create the necessary conditions for freedom.

Someone asked him: Was it possible that his fast would have any effect on the anti-social elements in society? Today, i.e., during the present recrudescence, it was this element which had gained the upper hand. Could their hearts be converted by Gandhiji's crucifixion ?

Gandhiji's answer was very clear and emphatic. He said that goondas were there because we had made them so. During the past one year of anarchy, it was understandable how these elements in society had gained respectability. But the war between Pakistanis and those for Undivided India had ended. It was time for peace-loving citizens to assert themselves and isolate goondaism. Non-violent non-cooperation was a universal remedy. Good was self-existent, evil was not. It was like a parasite living on and round good. It would die of itself when the support that good gave was withdrawn. The hearts of the anti-social elements may or may not be changed; it would be enough if they were made to feel that the better elements of society were asserting themselves in the interest of peace and in the interest of normality.

To the interviewers from Central Calcutta Gandhiji's advice, therefore, was that they should desist from a sympathetic fast, go forth among the oppressed in each quarter, assure them that they were safe and rebuild life so that safety would be a permanent feature of the new State of India. He would personally have loved to move about from quarter to quarter in Calcutta in order to place his views before the various bodies, but his physical condition would not permit it. If others worked, how could he rest? Yet he was bound to make his contribution. He felt that it should be in the shape of a fast.

Harijan, 14-9-1947

453. *DISCUSSION WITH A DEPUTATION*¹

September 4, 1947

Gandhiji told them that he would break his fast only when they could assure him that there would never again be recrudescence of communal madness in the city even though the whole of West Bengal and, for that matter, India, might go forth into a blaze, and the Muslims themselves would come and tell him that they now felt safe and secure and, therefore, he need not further prolong his fast.² He did not expect, he proceeded to explain, to be able to control all the goondas in the city, though he would love to, as he had not the requisite degree of purity, detachment and steadfastness of mind. But if he could not even make them purge themselves of the communal virus, he would feel that life was not worth living and he would not care to prolong it. They had referred to the oppression of his fast. He could not understand that. Why should they have a feeling of oppression if what they had told him came right from their hearts? If a single step was taken under pressure of the fast, not from conviction, it would cause oppression; but there should be no oppression if there was complete co-operation between the head and the heart.

The function of my fast is to purify, to release our energies by overcoming our inertia and mental sluggishness, not to paralyse us or to render us inactive. My fast isolates the forces of evil; the moment they are isolated they die, for evil by itself has no legs to stand upon. I expect you therefore to work with even greater vigour under the instigation of my fast, not to feel its oppression.

Harijan, 14-9-1947

¹ A group of about fifty people, reported to be controlling the turbulent elements in Calcutta, met Gandhiji and told him that the ring-leaders would all surrender themselves to him and take whatever punishment might be meted out to them. Would not Gandhiji on the strength of that assurance now break his fast? If not, what was his condition, they asked.

² *Vide* also the following item.

454. *ADVICE TO DEMONSTRATORS*¹

September 4, 1947

My penalty for you is that you should go immediately among the Muslims and assure them full protection. The moment I am convinced that real change of heart has taken place, I will give up the fast. Let me tell you I am as anxious to end the fast as you, as I want to proceed to the Punjab at the earliest. That is what is sustaining me in my ordeal. But if you do not now hurry up it may be too late. I cannot last for many more days.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 421

455. *DISCUSSION WITH CITIZENS' DEPUTATION*²

CALCUTTA,

September 4, 1947

The deputation told Gandhiji that they had been to all the affected parts of the city and there was quiet everywhere. They would hold themselves responsible for anything untoward that might happen thereafter. They had every reason to hope that there would be no recrudescence of trouble which they maintained was “really not communal” but “the work of the goondas”. They requested him to terminate his fast.

After some reflection Gandhiji spoke. He deprecated the suggestion that the outbreak of violence was not communal in character but really the work of the goondas.

It is we who make the goondas and we alone can unmake them. Goondas never act on their own. By themselves they cannot function.

It was the cowardice or passive sympathy of the average citizen or “the man with a stake” that gave the so-called goondas the power to do mischief.

My fast should make you more vigilant, more truthful, more careful, more precise in the language you use. You have all come here

¹ Some of the callers in the afternoon included those who had led the disturbances in Gandhiji's camp on September 1. They surrendered themselves before Gandhiji and their leader made a confession and said, “I and the whole party under me will gladly submit to whatever penalty you may impose; only you should now end your fast.”

² A deputation of prominent citizens representing various communities met Gandhiji at 6 p. m. Present among others were H. S. Suhrawardy, N. C. Chatterjee, Niranjana Singh Talib, C. Rajagopalachari, J. B. Kripalani and Dr. P. C. Ghosh.

out of affection for me to ask me to give up my fast. The ringleaders also have been to see me and have apologized for what they have done.¹ But before I can accede to your request, I want to ask you two questions: (1) Can you in all sincerity assure me that there never will be repetition of trouble in Calcutta? Can you say that there is a genuine change of heart among the citizens so that they will no longer tolerate, much less foster, communal frenzy? If you cannot give that guarantee, you should rather let me continue this fast. It won't hurt me. When a man fasts like this, it is not the gallons of water he drinks that sustains him but God; and (2) if trouble breaks out—since you are not omnipotent or even omniscient—would you give me your word of honour that you would not live to report failure but lay down your life in the attempt to protect those whose safety you are pledging? You should remember, too, that if you break your pledge after giving it to me, you will have to face an unconditional fast unto death on my part. I do not wish to live in a fool's paradise. If you deceive me, if you say one thing and mean another in your heart, my death will be upon your heads. I want a clear and straight answer. Your assurance must be in writing.

SUHRWARDY: You had said that you would break the fast when Calcutta returned to sanity. That condition has already been fulfilled. In asking us to give a guarantee for the future, are you not imposing a fresh condition ?

Characterizing Shaheed's argument as "legalistic", Gandhiji replied that no fresh condition was being imposed. All that was implied in the original terms of the fast.

What I have spoken now is only a home truth to make you know what is what. If there is complete accord between your conviction and feeling, there should be no difficulty in signing that declaration. It is the acid test of your sincerity and courage of conviction. If you sign it merely to keep me alive, you will really be compassing my certain death.

SUHRWARDY: In such a big city, things may happen in spite of our best efforts. Surely, you cannot fast for any stray incident that may happen.

Gandhiji explained to Shaheed that he had missed his point. He did not mean that Calcutta would become completely free from all crime for good. All he meant was that even if madness should seize the whole country, Calcutta would not lose its head.²

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² The discussion was interrupted here, when C. Rajagopalachari and J. B.

SUHWARDY: Now that even the Muslims have joined in the appeal, won't you break your fast? This shows that they have fully accepted your peace mission although they are the aggrieved party in the present riots. It is all the more strange because at one time they looked upon you as their arch enemy. But their hearts have been so touched by the services you have rendered them that today they acclaim you as their friend and helper.

RAJAJI: If I may vary the language, I would say that he is safer today in the hands of the Muslims than in those of the Hindus.

G. Do not think of Muslims as the aggrieved party. The essence of our present peace mission is that we are to forget the past. I do not want the Muslims to feel that in West Bengal they are the underdog. Unless we can forget the distinction, we will not have done solid work.¹

S. But, Sir, is it any good my signing this document? I may any time be called to Pakistan and then what happens to my pledge?

G. You must in that event have confidence that those whom you leave behind will deliver the goods. Moreover, you can come back.

S. I have no desire to hoodwink you and I never will do so deliberately.

G. Well, I will break this fast now and leave for the Punjab tomorrow. I shall now go there with far greater strength and confidence than I could have three days ago.

S. You cannot leave tomorrow. Your presence is necessary here at least for a couple of days yet to consolidate the peace.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 421-2; also *Harijan*, 14-9-1947

Kripalani proposed that they might confer among themselves leaving Gandhiji for a while. Just then they received an appeal signed by Hindu and Muslim representatives of the "worst affected" localities. The signatories had promised "not to allow any untoward incident" and begged Gandhiji to break his fast. When Suhrawardy read out the appeal and remarked that their effort had not been in vain, Gandhiji replied, "Yes, the heaven is at work." What follows is extracted from Pyarelal's report in *Harijan*.

¹ The members of the deputation then retired to the next room and soon returned after preparing a pledge, as dictated by Rajagopalachari. According to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5-9-1947, the document read: "We the undersigned promise Gandhiji that now that peace and quiet have been restored in Calcutta once again, we shall never again allow communal strife in the city and shall strive unto death to prevent it." The following were its signatories: Surendra Mohan Ghosh, President, Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, Sarat Chandra Bose, H. S. Suhrawardy, Niranjana Singh Talib, N. C. Chatterjee, Debendranath Mukerjee, President and Secretary of Provincial Hindu Mahasabha and Radha Kisan Jaidka, Punjab leader.

456. SPEECH BEFORE BREAKING OF FAST

CALCUTTA,

September 4, 1947

I would like to tell you something before breaking the fast. I am breaking this fast so that I might be able to do something for the Punjab. I am doing so at your assurance and not for any other reason. It would indeed be very unfortunate if anything happened to make me regret my step. I would like to live—as people tell me—to serve all the more. I have the will power to live and would like to live but I do not want to be deceived in order to live. I expect that the Hindus and Muslims here will not force me to undertake a fast again. On the first day Rajaji had asked me whether I had undertaken the fast hoping for something to happen. I told him that people would not let me prolong the fast. It lasted for three days, it could have for thirty.

Still I would like to warn you that you should not be lulled into complacency after I break my fast. What happens here is bound to have its effect in the Punjab and Noakhali. If something happens here how can I control the rowdy Muslims in Noakhali? Calcutta today holds the key to the peace of the whole of India. If you want to achieve great things, you must work for them. Even if the whole world went up in a blaze, Calcutta should remain untouched by the flames. May God grant wisdom to everyone. These girls have just now sung *Ishwar Allah tere nam, sabko sanmati de Bhagwan*. And, of course, above all, there is God, our witness.¹

[From Hindi]

Calcuttano Chamatkar pp. 89-90

¹ After a short prayer, Gandhiji broke the fast at 9.15 p.m. with a glass of diluted orange-juice.

457. MESSAGE TO UNESCO CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION¹

[Before September 5, 1947]²

I am deeply interested in the efforts of the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization to secure peace through educational and cultural activities. I fully appreciate that real security and lasting peace cannot be secured so long as extreme inequalities in education and culture exist as they do among the nations of the world. Light must be carried even to the remotest homes in the less fortunate countries which are in comparative darkness, and I think that in this cause the nations which are economically and educationally advanced have a special responsibility. I wish your Conference every success, and I hope that you will be able to produce a workable plan for providing the right type of education particularly in countries in which opportunities for education are restricted owing to economic and other circumstances.

Harijan, 16-11-1947

458. APPEAL TO FRIENDS

[Before September 5, 1947]

Gandhiji has been receiving letters and telegrams from friends asking for permission to come to Calcutta to help in any matter. Gandhiji would warn friends against rushing to Calcutta. Any such arrival would complicate matters. He has efficient nursing and other necessary attendants. He, therefore, requires no extra help for his bodily assistance.

Accommodation in his new residence is strictly limited as it is all over Calcutta. Food is rationed. In this condition of scarcity Gandhiji is of opinion that those friends including Ashram members, who are naturally anxious to be near him should understand him and respect his wish that they should restrain themselves against their natural desire. They will help him

on the contrary by strict adherence to their duty in which they are at present engaged.

Gandhiji wishes to add that he is perfectly at peace and ease and has fullest trust in God's succour.

The Hindustan Standard, 5-9-1947

¹ Held at Nanking. The message was received at the Conference with great ovation and the entire audience stood up while it was being read out.

² The Conference acknowledged receipt of the message on September 5, 1947.

459. *ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN*¹

September 5, 1947

Act as peace squads without arms.²

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5-9-1947

460. *MESSAGE TO SHANTI SENA DAL*³

September 5, 1947

My life is my message.

GANDHI

The Hindustan Standard, 7-9-1947

461. *LETTER TO SHYAMA PRASAD BANDOPADHYAYA*

CALCUTTA,

September 6, 1947

BROTHER SHYAMA PRASAD BANDOPADHYAYA,

I congratulate you on the heroic death of Smritish⁴ as he went to save the Muslim brothers with his friends. I don't grieve over such a death. I hope you and others also do not grieve over it. I wish we have thousands of Smritishes⁵ amongst us.

Blessings from

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6567

¹ There was a stream of young men in the morning who brought some country-made arms and surrendered them to Gandhiji. Dr. Dinshaw Mehta showed the arms to Gandhiji who smilingly said: "I see some of them for the first time in my life. I saw one sten-gun for the first time only last night."

² The young men promised that they would never do anything which might break the peace of Calcutta.

³ Written in Bengali this was given to Devtosh Das Gupta, Secretary, Shanti Sena Dal, who called on Gandhiji. Blessing the "soldiers of peace" Gandhiji said that they should courageously face any odds that might come in their way.

⁴ The source has "Shrinish", apparently a slip. Smritish Bannerjee was killed on September 3 while trying to protect a peace procession of school-boys and girls.

⁵ *ibid*

462. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

CALCUTTA,

Spetember 6, 1947

Gandhiji, referring to the Deputy Mayor's speech, said that the word farewell was misapplied. He had made his home in Calcutta among the Muslim friends in Beliaghata and not in Khadi Pratishthan, Sodepur, which was his permanent home. He would not even allow Hemprobha Devi and her co-workers to come to his new abode for looking after him. He said that he would be satisfied with what Muslim friends gave him in the shape of service. He had made no mistake. He was accustomed to living comfortably in Muslim homes in South Africa.

He then referred to the martyrdom of Sachin Mittra¹ and Smritish Banerjee. He was not sorry. Such innocent deaths were necessary to keep the two communities together. Let them not make the mistake that such martyrs were to be found among Hindus only. He could cite several instances of Muslims who had lost their lives in the act of protecting Hindus. He had had similar personal experiences in life. There was evil and good among all communities and climes. That brought him to Shaheed Saheb about whom he had many Hindus coming to him, and many letters from them to the effect that he was a fool to have accepted Shaheed Saheb as his associate in the task. He must say that he was no fool. He knew what he was doing. He had nothing to do with what Shaheed Saheb had done in the past. But he (Gandhiji) was there to testify that he (Shaheed Saheb) had given his full co-operation all the precious days they were together. He was free to confess that without his valuable help they would not have found him (Gandhiji) working in their midst. It was an insult to intelligence to think that there could be any base motive behind the work into which he had thrown himself with his whole heart. He had a palatial house and a brother whom he regarded as superior to him in talent. He had another whom Gandhiji had had the pleasure of knowing in London at the Round Table Conference and who was Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University. His uncle Sir Abdulla was the author of the *Sayings of the Prophet*. If they distrusted the motives, they would be vastly mistaken. Neither they nor anybody else had any right to question a man's motives. The speaker said that he would not like his motives to be judged by his actions. That was the only right way to get on with people. They should know that he had been condemned as enemy No. 1 of Islam and that in spite of his protestations to the contrary. Would the audience, therefore, like the Muslims never to accept his actions at their worth?

Lastly let them consider the awful consequence of such distrust. I might ruin the present unity and thus jeopardize what probably was the only chance of saving the Punjab from fratricidal strife.

He then referred to the Shanti Sena and other organizations which were doing

¹ Vide "Note to Angshu Rani Mitra", 3-9-1947.

strenuous work to preserve peace. Women had come forward to do their bit. The students had excelled themselves in their devotion to the cause of communal amity. Some young men had brought their unlicensed arms including stenguns, hand-grenades and other less destructive weapons. He thanked them for their courage in bringing them to him. He hoped that the good example would be copied by all possessors, Hindus and Muslims, of unlicensed arms. It would be a proof of mutual trust and trust in God. He was assured by the Chief Minister that those who delivered up such arms within a given date (the shorter the better) would be thanked for their open help in the work of peace and that no punishment would be inflicted on them, now or hereafter, for what was undoubtedly an offence. He asked, therefore, all such possessors to deliver these to the authorities or to their friends, to be delivered to the authorities.

He congratulated the Corporation staff which the Deputy Mayor told him, had worked the whole night for completing the arrangements for the meeting which was so well attended in spite of the rains.

Last of all, he told them that by breaking the fast only after one day's absence of strife, on the strength of the pressure of friends drawn from all communities in Calcutta and outside, he threw the burden on them of preservation of peace at the cost of their lives.¹ Let them not be guilty of having, though unwittingly, brought about his death by the abrupt end of the fast. He could have, as they might have, waited for some days to enable him to gauge the situation for himself, but he could not properly do so in the face of the earnestness of friends, say like Shri N. C. Chatterjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Shaheed Saheb and others too numerous to mention, but he threw all the greater weight on the shoulders of all Calcutta citizens and sojourners. What they wanted was not peace imposed by the Government forces but by themselves. If, unfortunately it was broken, there would be no alternative but a fast unto death. He could not, like a child, play with them and each time say, he was going to break his fast if they resumed sanity. He made that solemn declaration for Bihar, then for Noakhali and now for Calcutta. As his life was made, he had no other alternative. If God willed that he should still do some service, He would bless all with wisdom to do the right thing in the matter. Consider the consequence of Calcutta remaining sane. It must mean the automatic sanity of all Bengal, East and West. It meant also Bihar and consequently the Punjab where God was sending him, and if the Punjab came to its senses, the rest of India was bound to follow. So may God help them all.

Harijan, 21-9-1947

¹ *Vide* "Discussion with Citizens' Deputation", 4-9-1947.

463. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[On or before *September 7, 1947*]¹

PANDIT NEHRU

NEW DELHI

GOD WILLING LEAVING FOR DELHI WAY PUNJAB.
INFORM SARDAR BIRLA² BRIJKRISHNA³.

BAPU

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, between pp. 152 and 153

464. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

September [7],⁴ 1947

CHI. MANI,

I am leaving for Delhi today. Hence this short letter. Your objections do not hold water. I simply have to go to Delhi when pressed so hard. Sardar and Jawahar will decide what I should do next. They may put me up where they like. Not that I have boycotted Birla House, but I would prefer to stay at the Bhangi Colony despite the many inconveniences. And Sardar's honour also lies in letting me stay there. Never mind if no one can come to me at night.

Train: Delhi Express.

Inform Brijkrishna.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 143

¹ Gandhiji left Calcutta for Delhi on September 7.

² G. D. Birla

³ Brijkrishna Chandiwal

⁴ The source has "8", obviously a slip as Gandhiji left Calcutta for Delhi on September 7.

465. *LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR*

[September 7, 1947]¹

CHI. DEV,

Show the Bihar.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy:
National Archives of India

466. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*²

CALCUTTA,

September 7, 1947

Gandhiji said within the last few days the Shanti Sena had done excellent work and there appeared to be a need for them in Calcutta. He was going away but would be watching the situation. Those who belonged to the Shanti Sena must be prepared to sacrifice themselves in the interest of peace. If they really counted themselves as members of that organization they should come in between warring factions and stop the fight even to the extent of losing their lives. They were fighting not with swords but with love.

Soldiers who go to war, Gandhij continued, die and those who remain alive are acclaimed as heroes. Mahatma Gandhi said it was really those who died that kept others alive and they were the real heroes. Some members of the Shanti Sena had sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace. They were the real heroes and peace had been restored on account of their sacrifice. Gandhiji wished to see whether this peace

¹ The date is inferred from the reference to “going to Delhi on way to the Punjab”.

² The meeting was held in the compound of Gandhiji’s Beliaghata residence. The speech was translated into Bengali By H. S. Suhrawardy.

was going to be permanent —whether it was founded on true friendship and love.

There was another work before them and that was to bring back those to their homes who had been driven away or whose homes had been looted or destroyed. They had got to provide shelter for them as well as food till they were able to stand on their own legs. The Central Peace Committee had taken up this work and a Finance Committee had been formed to raise funds for the purpose. The work had to be done as soon as possible. They were not to see whether other people were doing the same thing elsewhere. Gandhiji did not wish to hear any Hindu saying that he should first see what Muslims were doing to rehabilitate the Hindus and *vice versa*.

Mahatma Gandhi concluded by saying that each one should start to be good irrespective of what anyone else was doing; and the goodness of one would be reflected in another.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-9-1947

467. SPEECH AT GOBRA LEPROSY HOSPITAL¹

CALCUTTA,

[*September 7, 1947*]²

Gandhiji visited the Leprosy Hospital this evening before leaving Calcutta. Addressing the patients and the staff he said that the he considered it wrong that leprosy should carry more stigma than any other infectious disease. Real stigma in his opinion attached to moral ailments rather than to physical ones. Drunkards, gamblers and those who suffered from such other ailments of society deserved far more abhorrence than a disease like leprosy. He advised them to take refuge in God. He alone was the Healer of all ailments—physical, mental or moral.³

The members of the asylum had no occasion whatsoever to feel dejected. The fact that moral lepers were worse than the physical ones was surely a matter of some consolation to them. The real consolation lay in their utter reliance on God. Then they would not feel the want of games and other aids to whiling away time. This however did not mean that society did not owe a great duty to the lepers in its midst who after all were the outward symbol of society's many blemishes which being general were not noticed. He thought that the abhorrence which was shown towards lepers was a superstition born of ignorance. This he had learnt during his visits to most of the leper asylums of India.

From a photostat: C. W. 10576. Courtesy: N. K. Bose

468. A NOTE

[*After September 7, 1947*]⁴

A gentleman from Phulwari Sharif came to see me yesterday. He stated that the returning Muslims are being threatened by Hindus there who do not allow them to cultivate their fields. Sikhs come from outside and say all sorts of things. If this is correct, do enquire into the matter; and people must be prevented from behaving thus. You may publish this note, if necessary, to do so. A fake picture of a naked woman is being distributed. It is very bad if it is a fact.

From a microfilm of the Hindi. Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy: National Archives of India

¹ After the prayer meeting Gandhiji along with Sushila Nayyar, H. S. Suhrawardy and N. K. Bose proceeded to Gobra Leper Hospital.

² *ibid*

³ The report up to this in Sushila Nayyar's handwriting, was corrected by Gandhiji.

⁴ This is written on the reverse side of a letter dated September 7, 1947.

469. TASK BEFORE MINISTERS¹

I have before me quite a number of letters fiercely criticizing what they consider to be their luxurious life. They accuse them too of favouritism, even nepotism. I know that much criticism comes from ignorance. Ministers should not be sensitive. They should take in good part even carping criticism. They would be surprised if I were to send them the letters I receive; probably, they receive worse. Be that as it may, the moral I draw from them is that the critics expect much more from these chosen servants of the people than from others in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty and industry. In this matter we cannot imitate the English rulers of the past, except perhaps in industry and discipline. The whole purpose of this note will be served if on the one hand the ministers profit by valid criticism and the critics learn to be sober and precise about their facts. Inaccuracy or exaggeration spoils a good case.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, September 8, 1947

Harijan, 21-9-1947

470. BIHAR FOR BIHARIS AND INDIA

Bihar is undoubtedly for Biharis but it is also for India. What is true of Bihar is equally true of all the provinces in the Union. No Indian can be treated as a foreigner in Bihar as he may be treated in Pakistan of today and *vice versa*. It is necessary to bear this difference in mind if we are to avoid difficulties and heart-burn[ing].

Though then every Indian of the Union has a right to settle in Bihar, he must not do so to oust the Biharis. If the qualification was not actively operated, it is possible to conceive such an inrush of non-Bihari Indians as to flood out the Biharis. We are thus forced to the conclusion that a non-Bihari who settles in Bihar must do so to serve Bihar, not to exploit it after the manner of our old masters.

This way of examining the proposition brings us to the question of the zamindars and the ryots. When a non-Bihari enters Bihar for the sake of making money, he will in all probability do so to exploit the ryot in league with the zamindars. If the zamindars really became the

¹ This appeared under "Notes".

trustees of their zamindari for the sake of the ryots, there never could be an unholy league as has been here conceived. There is the difficult zamindari question awaiting solution in Bihar. What one would love to see is proper impartial and satisfactory understanding between the zamindars, big and small, the ryots and the Government, so that when the law is passed it may not be a dead letter nor need force be used against the zamindars or the ryots. Would that all changes, some of which must be radical, took place throughout India without bloodshed and without force! So much for the newcomer from the other provinces of India.

What about the services? It seems that if the provinces are all to make equal progress in all directions the services should be largely confined to the inhabitants of the province concerned for the sake of India as a whole. No province and no tribe or clan can be kept backward if India is to stand up erect before the world. It will never do so through its arms of which the world is sick. It must shine through its innate culture expressed in every citizen's life and in the socialism I have recently described in these columns. That means elimination of all force for the sake of popularizing one's doctrines or schemes. A thing which is truly popular rarely, if ever, requires force save that of public opinion to make itself acceptable to all. Therefore, the ugly scenes of violence by individuals witnessed in Bihar and Orissa and Assam should never have been. Popular Governments are functioning to redress any irregularity or encroachment by persons from other provinces. The provincial Governments are bound to give full protection to all the comers from outside their provinces. "Use what you consider yours so as not to injure others," is a famous maxim of equity. It is also a grand moral code of conduct. How apposite today?

Hitherto I have dealt with the question of new arrivals. What of those who were on the 15th of August in Bihar—some in Government employment and some otherwise employed? So far as I can see, they should be on the same footing as the Biharis unless they make another choice. Naturally they should not form a separate colony as if they were foreigners. "Live in Rome as the Romans do," is a sound commonsense maxim so long as it does not apply to Roman vices. The process of progressive blending must be one of rejecting the bad and absorbing the good. As a Gujarati in Bengal, I must quickly absorb all that is good in Bengal and never touch that which is bad; I must ever serve Bengal, never selfishly exploit it. The bane of our life is our excluding provincialism, whereas my province must be co-

extensive with the Indian boundary so that ultimately it extends to the boundary of the earth. Else, it perishes.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, September 8, 1947

Harijan, 21-9-1947

471. PROHIBITION OF INTOXICANTS¹

This is the fittest time for this reform. There is a people's Government. Both parts of India including the Indian States are ready for the reform. All over the two parts there is a shortage of foodstuffs and clothing. Dare one think of indulging in intoxicants—drinks or drugs—when people are on the border-land of starvation and nakedness? The money spent on wines and opiates is not only a waste, but it adds to it loss of self-control. One labouring under the influence of intoxicants will do things which he will never do in a sober state. Thus from every point of view prohibition is a vital necessity.

We cannot eradicate the evil merely by passing laws. The addict will manage to satisfy his craving anyhow. Those carrying on the black trade will not readily give it up.

Therefore the following steps will have to be taken simultaneously in order to make a success of the reform :

1. Passing of the requisite law
2. Educating public opinion
3. Opening at the same place as grog shops refreshment rooms selling harmless drinks and providing innocent entertainment in the form of books, newspapers, games, etc.
4. The income from the sale of intoxicants should be spent on cultivating public opinion in favour of prohibition.

It is criminal to spend the income from the sale of intoxicants on the education of the nation's children or other public services. The Government must overcome the temptation of using such revenue for nation-building purposes. Experience has shown that the moral and physical gain of the abstainer more than makes up for the loss of this tainted revenue. If we eradicate the evil, we will easily find other ways and means of increasing the nation's income.

ON THE TRAIN TO DELHI, September 8, 1947

Harijan, 21-9-1947

¹ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-9-1947.

472. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,

September 9, 1947

‘Man proposes, God disposes’ has come true often enough in my lifetime as it must have done in many others’. I knew nothing about the sad state of things in Delhi when I left Calcutta on Sunday last. On reaching Delhi, I have been listening the whole day long to the tale of woe that is Delhi today. I saw several Muslim friends who recited their pathetic story. I heard enough to warn me that I must not leave Delhi for the Punjab until it had regained its former self.

I must do my little bit to calm the heated atmosphere. I must apply the old formula “Do or Die” to the capital of India. I am glad to be able to say that the residents of Delhi do not want the senseless destruction that is going on. I am prepared to understand the anger of the refugees whom fate has driven from West Punjab. But anger is short madness. It can only make matters worse in every way. Retaliation is no remedy. It makes the original disease much worse. I, therefore, ask all those who are engaged in the senseless murders, arson and loot to stay their hands.

The Central Government, the ablest, the most courageous and the most self-sacrificing team that the Union could produce, have not been in the saddle for even a month after the declaration of Indian independence. It is criminal and suicidal not to give them a chance to set the house in order. I am fully aware of the shortage of food. Mob rule is dislocating everything making distribution of food-stuffs all but impossible. May God restore peace to distracted Delhi.

I would close with the hope that Calcutta will fulfil the promise made on my departure and which sustains me in the midst of the surrounding madness.

Harijan, 21-9-1947

473. TALK WITH P. C. JOSHI

[After *September 9, 1947*]¹

Answering Shri P. C. Joshi², Gandhiji said:

First of all I want you not to report our conversation in any paper. Not that I have anything to conceal, but it will not help the cause. The situation for me is baffling. I do not remember an occasion in my life— and it has been a life full of struggle—when I have felt baffled as I am doing today. It is a matter of shame for us that the Mussalmans in the Union should feel downcast. Here there should be no room for a single person to feel downcast. Is it so today? No. Only today I heard that Dr. Kitchlew³ has had to leave his home. It is a frightful thing that he cannot stay in his own house and has to go to Kashmir. I wholly endorse your remark that no one in the Union can afford to say that we are doing this by way of retaliation, and that too of a savage type. We must not degrade ourselves by following the ways of Pakistan. Somehow or other I have never felt so resourceless as I am doing today. You say mobilize all the democratic forces and give them the marching orders. But I feel like a General without an army. To whom am I to give orders?

JOSHI. It is not true. The General has no confidence in himself. He is not calling the army. Calcutta was a hundred times worse than Delhi.

GANDHIJI. You do not know the story of Calcutta. There it looked literally like overnight conversion. It would not have happened but for the incident that night. You know the details of the attack on me. They saw my behaviour with their own eyes. That turned the wave. The Muslim mind was ready. The trading mind was tired of strife and the mischievous elements saw that whatever they did was a misfire. They must desist.

It was like the overnight conversion of the European mind in South Africa. I was lynched. I might have been killed but for the resourcefulness of the European Superintendent of Police. When the whole thing including my interview appeared in the press the next

¹ Gandhiji arrived in Delhi, where the interview took place on September 9, 1947.

² General Secretary, the Communist Party of India

³ Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew

morning, the Europeans felt ashamed and the atmosphere changed.¹ If some such thing happened here, my mission would succeed. But I am afraid it will not happen.

JOSHI. No. They have learnt the lesson. They want the old man to quit and then have a second round.

GANDHIJI. Yes. I know that. That is why I have pledged myself to do or die in Delhi.

Joshi: You have made the nation. You must take them on. Give the call.

GANDHIJI. I have made them and I have unmade them. I have not mastered your technique. I have not got that amazing self-assurance and I am not sorry for it. I simply say take me for what I am worth.

I have no enemies. Therefore the Communists too in spite of all their differences with me come to me. They came in Noakhali too. I had given them five minutes. But I took to them and gave them an hour and asked them to come again. I know the stuff you are made of. Most of you are young men. I shall pick from you what I can.

JOSHI. Do not say that.

GANDHIJI. I mean what I say. I am biding my time. I am very patient. My patience is being taxed to the utmost. Keep in touch with me. Kumaramangalam sees me often. So does Habib, Dr. Mahmud's son. He is a fine young man. He never puts his parents in an awkward position, never comes in their way, but goes on with his work. And he is so brave. I keep myself in touch with all who come to me. I know you have some fine stuff amongst your ranks. If you had just riff-faff who have their own axes to grind, you cannot lead such a party.

From draft notes: Pyarelal papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

¹ *Vide* "Memorial to Secretary of State for Colonies", 15-3-1897.

474. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

NEW DELHI,

September 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

When I reached Shahadara Sardar Patel, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and others were there to welcome me. But I did not find the usual smile on the Sardar's lips. Gone too was his jocular temperament. After alighting from the train I found some police personnel and others also equally sad. Has the city of Delhi which always appeared gay turned into a city of the dead? Another surprise was in store for me. Instead of the Harijan colony where it was a pleasure to stay I was taken to the palatial Birla House. I was greatly pained to know the reason for this. Even so, I was pleased to stay in a house where I had often come and stayed on earlier occasions. Whether I stay with the Valmiki friends in the Harijan colony or at the Birla House, I am a guest of the Birla brothers. Even if I am in the Harijan colony their men look after me with total devotion. It is not the Sardar who is responsible for this. He can never be so weak as to be concerned about my safety in the Bhangi Colony. I am always very happy to be in the midst of the Harijans, though, I cannot live in the very houses in which the Bhangis, through the negligence of the New Delhi Committee, are packed like sardines.

I have been brought to stay at Birla House because refugees have been accommodated in the Harijan colony. Their need is much greater than mine. But is it not a shame on us as a nation that there should be any problem about refugees in our country? Along with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Liaqat Ali Khan and other Pakistani leaders had declared that in the Indian Union as well as in Pakistan the minority communities would receive the same treatment as the majority communities. Did the leaders of these Dominions make such declaration to please world opinion or was it their intention to prove that there was no difference between their

¹ Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani for 35 minutes. The speech was recorded and relayed by All India Radio at 10 p. m. the same day.

words and deeds and that they would be ready to lay down their lives in order to fulfil their promises? If that is so, I would like to ask why were the Hindus, Sikhs and the proud *Amils*, and their friends forced to leave Pakistan? What has happened in Quetta, Nawab Shah and Karachi? The reports of tragic events in the West Punjab are heart-rending. The leaders of the Indian Union and Pakistan cannot fling their hands in despair and say that it is all the doing of the goondas. It is the duty of the Dominions to accept full responsibility for the actions of its people—their duty is “not to reason why” but “to do and die”. Now they are not forced to do anything against their will under the crushing burden of Imperialism. Today they can do anything they choose. But if they wish to face the world with honesty, freedom should not mean that there need be no rule of law in both the Dominions. Would the Union Ministers declare their bankruptcy and shamelessly say that the people of Delhi and the refugees who are staying there do not, of their own free will wish to abide by the law of the land? As for me, I would expect the Ministers to stake their own lives in fighting this madness rather than submitting to it.

Even at the house where I am staying, fruits or vegetables are not available. Is it not shameful that the Subzi Mandi has stopped receiving any supplies of vegetables because some Muslims have fired some shots? During my rounds in the city I heard complaints that the refugees do not get their ration. And whatever is being supplied to them is not fit for human consumption. If the responsibility for this lies with the Government, it equally lies with the refugees who have brought to a standstill even the essential services. Why do they not realize that they are harming their own interests by resorting to such action? Had they trusted the Government for the solution of all their problems and behaved like law-abiding citizens, I know and they should know it, too, that most of their problems would have been solved.

I visited the camp of the Meos near the Humayun’s Tomb. I was told that they had been turned out from the States of Alwar and Bharatpur. They said they had nothing to eat except what the Muslim friends had sent to them. I know that the Meos are an easily excitable community and can create a lot of trouble. But the remedy does not lie in driving them out to Pakistan against their wishes. The real

remedy lies in treating them as human beings and their weaknesses should be treated as any other illness.

Then I went to the Jamia Millia. I had lent a big hand in building up that institution. Dr. Zakir Husain is a dear friend of mine. He narrated his experiences with great anguish. But he had no bitterness in his heart. Recently he had to visit Jullunder. Had a Sikh Captain and a Hindu railway official not come to his help in time, the Sikhs in their mad fury would have killed him for being a Muslim. Dr. Zakir Husain thanked those people as he narrated his experiences to me. Just imagine, the national institution where many Hindus have been educated, is now afraid that angry refugees and the people who instigate them may attack it. I met the refugees who have been somehow accommodated in the compound of the Jamia Millia. When I heard their tragic tales I hung my head in shame. Then I went to the refugees camps at Diwan Hall, Wavell Canteen and Kingsway. I met the Sikh and Hindu refugees there. They had not yet forgotten my past services to the Punjab. But I noticed some angry faces in all those camps. Those people can be forgiven. they talked to me in sharp tones for being harsh to the Hindus. They said that I had not undergone the hardships that they did, and not lost my kith and kin. they said I had not been compelled to beg at every door. They asked me how I could comfort them by saying that I had been staying at Delhi to do my utmost to establish peace in the capital of the country. True I cannot bring back the dead. But death is a gift of God to all living things — human beings, animals. The difference is only of time and manner. Hence right conduct is the royal path to be followed, which makes life beautiful and worth living. Today a Sikh friend told me that he is a Sikh by birth but could not claim to be a true Sikh in the light of the Granth Saheb. I asked him if he knew any true Sikh. He could not point out even one. Then I politely told him that I claimed to be such a Sikh. I said I was trying to live like a true Sikh according to the Granth Saheb. There was a time when in Nankana Saheb I was described as a true friend of the Sikhs. Guru Nanak made no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. For him the whole world was one. Such is also my sanatana dharma. Being a true Hindu I also claim to be a true Muslim. I always recite the great Muslim prayer in which it is proclaimed that God is one and He protects the whole world by day

and night.

I would like to tell the refugees that they should live truthfully and without fear. They should not entertain any thoughts of revenge or hatred. They should not act rashly out of anger and impulse and thus throw away the golden apple of freedom won at a great cost.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 294-8

475. TAKE CARE

Unless the Governments and their Secretariats take care, the English language is likely to usurp the place of Hindustani. This must do infinite harm to the millions of India who would never be able to understand English. Surely, it must be quite easy for the provincial Governments to have a staff which would carry on all transactions in the provincial languages and the interprovincial language, which, in my opinion, can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script.

Every day lost in making this necessary change is so much cultural loss to the nation. The first and foremost thing is to revive the rich provincial languages with which India is blessed. It is nothing short of mental sluggishness to plead that in our courts, in our schools and even in the secretariats, some time, probably a few years, must lapse before the change is made. No doubt a little difficulty will be felt in multi-lingual provinces, as in Bombay and Madras, until redistribution of provinces takes place on a linguistic basis. Provincial Governments can devise a method in order to enable the people in those provinces to feel that they have come into their own. Nor need the provinces wait for the Union for solving the question, whether for interprovincial speech it shall be Hindustani written in either Nagari or Urdu script or mere Hindi written in Nagari. This should not detain them in making the desired reforms. It is a wholly unnecessary controversy likely to be the door through which English may enter to the eternal disgrace of India. If the first step, that is, revival of provincial speech in all public departments, takes place immediately, that of inter-provincial speech will follow in quick succession. The provinces will have to deal with the Centre. They dare not do so through English, if the Centre is wise enough quickly to realize that they must not tax the nation culturally for the sake of a handful of

Indians who are too lazy to pick up the speech which can be easily common to the whole of India without offending any party or section. My plea is for banishing English as a cultural usurper as we successfully banished the political rule of the English usurper. The rich English language will ever retain its natural place as the international speech of commerce and diplomacy.

NEW DELHI, September 11, 1947

Harijan, 21-9-1947

476. INTERVIEW TO SIKH DEPUTATION¹

[September 11, 1947]²

But I do not see religion anywhere in evidence today. And if it is a religious symbol, the restriction as regards its size should not matter.

Gandhiji told them that it was wholly irrelevant and even improper to cite legal precedents to break healthy restraints under which alone society could grow in a state of liberty. The *kirpan*, which the Sikh religion enjoined upon its votaries, was a symbol of purity and self-restraint. It was a weapon for the defence of innocent women and children and old or disabled persons against tyranny in the face of overwhelming odds; never a weapon of offence or to be used in retaliation against defenceless women and children. Even during the war against the Muslims, the code was to tend the wounded on both sides. The *kirpan* had of late been used for totally indefensible purposes and he who used it wrongly forfeited the right to carry it.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 438-9

¹ On grounds of security the Government had prohibited the carrying of *kirpans* more than nine inches long. A deputation of Sikhs complained that such a restriction was an interference with their religion and cited an old judgment of the Privy Council which interpreted the *kirpan* “as a sword of any size.”

² From reference to the visit of “Sikh friends” in “Statement to the Press”; *vide* the following item.

477. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,

September 11, 1947

During the day, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur took me and Dr. Sushila Nayyar to the Irwin Hospital which devotes its energies only to the treatment of injured persons, irrespective of caste or creed. Among the patients was a child, hardly five years old, who had received a bullet wound. The doctors and nurses were working under great stress. The majority of patients were Muslims, as the Hindus and Sikhs were transferred to other hospitals.

I understand from Rajkumari that it was well-nigh impossible to supply refugee camps with Bhangis for attending to the cleaning of the latrines and general sanitation. Any infectious disease like cholera might break out. I have no doubt whatsoever that the refugees should look after sanitation, including latrine cleaning in their own camps and should do some useful work with the approval of the camp superintendent. There can be no exception to this rule, save for persons who are incapable of physical exertion. All camps should be models of cleanliness, simplicity and industry.

During the day I had a visit from the Pakistan High Commissioner, who is an enthusiastic believer in communal peace and friendship. I had a visit too from Sikh friends¹ twice during the day. They were sore about the *kirpan* order of the Government of India. They have promised to give me their requirement in writing before I speak to the Government. They further said that allegations made against them were highly coloured. They said they could have no quarrel with the Muslims or any other communities living in the Union. they were anxious to be law-abiding citizens of the State.

Harijan, 21-9-1947

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

478. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
September 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The very first thing I want to tell you is that I have received disturbing news¹ from the Frontier Province. I am, of course deeply pained to hear it. I have spent considerable time in the Frontier Province. Badshah Khan was with me. I stayed with Dr. Khan Saheb. I used to have friendly meetings with members of the Muslim League. And now I am amazed that the Hindus and Sikhs cannot live there in peace. There used to be a considerable population of Hindus and Sikhs there but their number was small compared to that of the Muslims. However, it is not the number that matters. Even an innocent child should be able to live there in safety.

What I think to myself I may as well convey to you, that is, we should not get angry. We can, of course, feel the the pain. We ought to feel sympathy and concern for our brothers who are in trouble. It is natural to feel, 'why not kill the Muslims because our brothers have been killed.' But I for one cannot kill even the actual murderers of my brothers. Should I then prepare myself to kill other innocent people? I do not believe in meeting evil with evil. He who indulges in evil words and deeds turns brutal; he becomes senseless. Let me narrate an incident of my childhood days. I think I was about ten years at that time. My elder brother had fallen ill. He had almost become mad. But everyone took pity on him. We sent for several doctors but not for a jailor, and we did not send him to jail. We did not send for soldiers because he had gone mad. My father was in a position to do anything he wanted to do. But why did he refrain from doing any such thing? After all he was his son. And how could my father kill his own son? So all these people are like my own sons, like my own brothers. I would like to request you not to regard the Muslims as your enemies. I can point out any number of Muslims who are my friends. Just because the country has been divided into India and Pakistan, it does not befit us to slaughter the Muslims who have

¹ A telegram has been received from Girdhari Lal Puri, an ex-Minister, saying that he and his wife, should be rescued at once from Muslim fury.

stayed behind. The Government of Pakistan has forgotten its duty. I shall appeal to the Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah who is the Governor-General of Pakistan to desist from such policies. If the Press reports are correct, I would tell him that the Hindus and Sikhs have remained in Pakistan to serve him. Why are the Hindus and the Sikhs scared now? Because they are afraid that they and their wives would have to die and that their wives would be abducted. They are in danger and so they are fleeing. Why is it so under that Government? I want to tell my people that they should not become so barbaric. If the Hindus and the Sikhs say that they would take revenge on the local Muslims because the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan are in trouble, they have been destroyed there and have fled leaving their property worth millions, it will be sheer bar-barism. I have seen the terrible plight of the Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan. I have lived in Lahore. Do you think I am not pained? I claim that my pain is no less than that of any Punjabi. If any Hindu or Sikh from the Punjab comes and tells me that his anguish is greater than mine because he has lost his brother or daughter or father, I would say that his brother is my brother, his mother is my mother, and I have the same anguish in my heart as he has. I am also a human being and feel enraged but I swallow my anger. That gives me strength. What revenge can I take with that strength? How should I take revenge so that they feel repentant for their crimes and admit that they have committed grave crimes? You all know what the Muslims have done in West Punjab. What can we do if Muslims are destroying religion? What are we going to do about it? Should I say that the Hindus and Sikhs of Delhi and those who have come from outside should become barbarians because Muslims are becoming barbarians?

I had gone to the Jama Masjid today. I met the residents of that area. I also met their womenfolk. Some of the women wept before me and some brought their children to indicate their sad plight. Should I narrate to them the plight of the Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab and in the Frontier Province? Will it mitigate the sorrow of the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab in any way? The people of Pakistan resorted to ways of barbarism, and so did the Hindus and Sikhs. And so, how could one barbarian find fault with another barbarian? That is why I would like to appeal to all of you to save Hinduism and Sikhism, save India and Pakistan and thus save the whole country. If we remain good to the end, the Muslims of Pakistan would have to be good too. That is the law of the world. No one can change it. This old man, who had made a considerable study of religion and tried to serve

everybody, is telling you this. I have had enough experience in my 78-79 years. I have stayed outside India for twenty years. I lived in South Africa, the land of the Negroes, but never gave up Ramanama. I can say in the light of my own experience that it is not for us to avenge anybody's wrongs. He who does good to one who has been good to him is a mere Bania and a pseudo-Bania at that. I say that I am a Bania myself; and I am a true Bania. May you not become pseudo-Banias. True human being is he who does a good turn for evil. I learnt this in my childhood. I still believe in the rightness of this. I would like you to return evil with good.

Those people were lying in the mosque in a sad state. They did not gather in such large numbers on Friday for fun. They had heard that I had done something for the Muslims in Calcutta and Bihar and something for the Hindus in Noakhali. They thought it was good that I had gone to meet them. They wanted to know what I could do for them as one who called himself a sanatani Hindu and on that account claimed to be a Muslim, Sikh, Parsi and Christian. A mother said her child was dead and she did not know what to do. I told her: "What can I tell you, dear lady? Think of God. He would be kind to you. What if your child is dead? What if everybody is dead? You would be going that way yourself—if not by knife, may be of cholera. You are not going to live forever, are you? Hence, think of God. What are you going to gain by crying over it?"

Let us know our own dharma. In the light of our dharma I would tell the people that our greatest duty is to see that the Hindus do not act in frenzy, nor the Sikhs indulge in acts of madness. I wish to tell you that all those Muslims who have left their places should be sent back. I do not have the courage to send them back right now. But we must keep it in mind that they have got to be sent back. Till the Muslims are able to return to the places from which they have fled, we cannot have peace of mind. There is of course one point to consider. Today people tell me that the Muslims keep arms in their houses, they keep ammunition, machine-guns, and sten-guns which I have not even seen. For instance, this is the case in Subzi Mandi. I am prepared to believe everything. But why should we be afraid of this? I would tell the Muslims and I am telling everybody in Delhi that they should declare with God as witness, that there is no reason for them to be killed for the crimes committed in Pakistan. We are your friends and we all belong and shall ever belong to India. Delhi is no small place. It is the capital of the country. Here we have the grand Jama Masjid and

also the fort. You have not built these nor have I built them. They have been built by the Mughals who ruled over us. They had become part of India. By telling the Muslims today to leave the country do you mean to say that you going to take possession of the Jama Masjid? And if that is your intention, do you know the implication? Just think about it. Are we going to stay in the Jama Masjid? I cannot agree to any such proposal. The Muslims must have the right to visit that place. It belongs to them. We are also proud of it. It is full of great artistic beauty. Shall we raze it to the ground? That can never be.

I appeal to the Muslims that they should open-heartedly declare that they belong to India and are loyal to the Union. If they are true to God and wish to live in the Indian Union, they just cannot be enemies of the Hindus. And I want the Muslims here to tell the Muslims in Pakistan who have become the enemies of the Hindus, not to go mad: 'If you are going to indulge in such madness, we cannot co-operate with you. We will remain faithful to the Union, and salute the tricolour. We have to follow the order of the Government.' These Muslims themselves should tell all the other Muslims to surrender all their arms. It is the duty of the Government not to punish anyone for having possessed the arms. This is exactly what I did in Calcutta. People surrendered big stock of arms to me there. Most of these people were Hindus. Here if the Muslims possess arms, do the Hindus not possess anything? I am telling the Hindus that they should not possess any arms at all. If they wish to possess arms they should get the licence. It is said that in the Punjab everybody has been given the right to possess arms. It is not going to do any good to the Punjab. If everybody possesses arms, people will fight among themselves and kill each other. The Government needs arms, what has the citizen got to do with them? None of the city people should possess arms. I would like the Muslims to surrender all the arms in their possession to the Government. The Hindus too should surrender all their arms. There should be no mutual fear. We should tell them that whatever happens outside, we in Delhi would live like brothers. The same thing happened in Calcutta and the Hindus and the Muslims have started living like brothers. The Hindus in Bihar have adopted the same attitude. You must soon create such a situation in Delhi that I can immediately go to the Punjab and tell the people there that the Muslims of Delhi are living in peace. I would ask for its reward there. I would ask for that reward from the Nawab of Mamdot. I would go to East Punjab as well. Since I belong to all religions I have a right and

would say to all that they should not give in to madness.

The Muslims wanted Pakistan and they have got it. Why are they fighting now and with whom are they fighting? Because they have taken Pakistan, do they want the whole of India too? That will never happen. Why are they killing the weak Hindus and the Sikhs? I want to tell them all these things. I am alone. You have got the whole Government. Let both the Governments come to a mutual agreement that they have protect the minorities in their respective countries. We have to protect the minority here. Otherwise how can Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel say that they are protecting the minorities and there is no Muslim child anyone can harm or frighten by his blood-shot eyes? If there is any Muslim who has gone mad and who secretly keeps machine-guns in his house, we would punish him. But no one can touch the Muslims who are loyal to the country. You must create such conditions here so that Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel should be able to say Delhi had lost its senses for a few days but now it has become sane.

I would like to tell my Muslim friends that they must issue a proper statement. They must thoroughly cleanse their hearts. The Sikhs have issued some statement. So have the Hindus. If the minds and hearts are purified we can live together in amity. After all, so much of business of Delhi, such wonderful buildings this culture of Delhi belong to both the Hindus and the Muslims and not exclusively to either.¹

In conclusion, Gandhiji referred to his and Dr. Dinshaw Mehta's talk with the Guru² of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He [Gandhiji] had been told that the hands of this organization too were steeped in blood. The Guruji assured him that this was untrue. Their organization was enemy to no man. It did not stand for the killing of Muslims. All it wanted to do was to protect Hindustan to the best of its ability. It stood for peace and he had asked Gandhiji to make his views public.³

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 298-305

¹ What follows is from *Harijan*, 21-9-1947.

² M. S. Golwalkar

³ *Vide* "Speech at R. S. S. Rally", 16-9-1947.

479. MY STATUE¹

There is a talk in Bombay of spending ten lacs of rupees on erecting my statue on a public site. I have received several letters criticizing, some even firecely, the proposal as if I were guilty of making any such extravagant proposal! It is perhaps human nature to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Only the wise sift the grain from the chaff. In the present case there seems to be a foundation for the criticism. I must say that I have dislike even for being photographed; nevertheless, photographs have been taken of me. I have let artists make models more than once. Notwithstanding this inconsistency, I must dissent emphatically from any proposal to spend any money on preparing a statue of me, more especially at a time when people do not have enough food and clothing. In Bombay the beautiful, insanitation reigns. There is so much overcrowding that poor people ae packed like sardines. Wise use of ten lacs of rupees will consist in its being spent on some public utility. That would be the best statue. Money thus wisely spent will make an adequate return. Imagine how many hungry mouths would be filled if the amount was spent on growing more food crops!

NEW DELHI, September 13, 1947

Harijan, 21-9-1947

480. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

September 13, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

Principal Thadani is among the regular visitors. He has, at my suggestion, sent you a long letter by registered post giving his interpretation of the *Mahabharata*. That was quite some time ago. Please reply to him if you have received it. My cart has got stuck in a wood.

Blessings from
BAPU

PROF. V. G. DESAI
14 GANESH WADI
POONA-4

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7504. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

¹ This appeared under "Notes". The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 21-9-1947.

481. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
September 13, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Long ago, perhaps in 1915, when I came to Delhi I had met Hakim Saheb¹ and Dr. Ansari. I was told that Delhi was ruled not by the British but by Hakim Saheb. Dr. Ansari was as an elderly man and a great surgeon and physician. He also knew Hakim Saheb and greatly respected him. Hakim Saheb was also a Muslim and a very great scholar and Hakim. He was a Unani Hakim but had made considerable study of the Ayurvedic system. Thousands of Muslims and thousands of poor Hindus used to come to him for treatment. Well-to-do Muslims and Hindus also came to him. They used to give a thousand rupees per day. As far as I knew Hakim Saheb, he did not care for the money. His interest was the service of everybody who was in need of it. And he was like a king. His forefathers lived in China. They were Muslims of China and were thorough gentlemen. I enquired of all the Hindus who came to visit me as to who was their leader in the city. [Was it] Shraddhanandji²? Shraddhanandji used to work a lot among them. But no, their leader was Hakim Saheb. Why? Because he had served both the Hindus and the Muslims. Well, I have referred to the situation as it was in 1915. But later on my relations with him grew closer and I came to know him more intimately. I also came to know Dr. Ansari better. I stayed with Dr. Ansari for a long time. I know his daughter Zohra and his son-in-law Shaukat Khan³. They are all nice people and are still here in Delhi. But what pains me is that they are now scared that some Hindu might kill them as well. They are not staying in their own house. They have gone to live in a hotel. It was sheer coincidence that they were spared. Their watchman was a Hindu. He drove away the rioters. Why should the Hindus and the Sikhs get into such frenzy that the Muslims are scared? You can turn round and tell me, many Hindus tell me in anger fixing their blood-shot eyes on me: 'You were away in Bengal and Bihar. Just come to the Punjab and see the plight of the Hindus and the Sikhs and see the state of the girls

¹ Ajmal Khan

² Mahatma Munshiram, who was known by this name

³ Dr. Shaukatullah Khan

there.' It is not as if I do not understand these things. But I want to keep both these things on the same level. Atrocities are committed there in any case. But if one of my brothers gets into a mad fury and starts killing people, should I also go mad with rage like him? How is it possible? I claim to be a true Hindu and a *sanatani* Hindu at that. That is exactly why I am also a Muslim, a Parsi, a Christian and a Jew. For me all these are the branches of the same tree. Which of these branches should I keep and which should I discard? From which branch should I pick the leaves and which should I ignore? For me all are the same. That is how I am made. How can I help it? There would be absolute peace if everybody starts thinking like me.

I went to the Purana Quila today. I saw thousands of Muslims there. Other trucks loaded with Muslims were proceeding towards the Quila. All of them were Muslim refugees. Why did they have to live in the fort? Of whom were they frightened? Were they afraid of you, of me? I know that I do not frighten anyone, but my brothers, who consider themselves Hindus and Sikhs, are frightening them. But if they have frightened them it means that I have frightened them, you have frightened them. Thus I cannot bear to see them escaping to Pakistan out of panic. It is not as if there is heaven in Pakistan and hell here. Why do we find ourselves in such hell? I know that neither Pakistan nor India is hell. If we wish we can turn either into heaven or by our own deeds into hell. And if both the countries become hell, an independent man has no place there. After that we are only doomed to slavery. This thought is gnawing at my heart. My heart trembles and I wonder how I will make any Hindu, Sikh or Muslim understand all this. Quite a few Muslims in the fort were enraged, but others stopped them. There was love in their hearts. They persuaded their enraged brethren saying: 'This old man has come to serve us, to wipe our tears. We are hungry and he has come to see if he can find bread for us somewhere. We are without any water, he has come to see if he can get us water from somewhere.' I do not know whether they get food and water there. Some of them told me there was no food, no water for them. I had gone there to find out. Some of them talked to me with great affection. I felt happy. No one would ever want to leave behind his house and property. The Hindu refugees are in the same situation. They have left behind their homes and properties. Some of them died; this is not a happy situation. It is a matter of shame for everybody. I was trying to convince them also. Through you I want to speak to everyone who cares to listen to me. It is said that in the *Mahabharata*

period the Pandavas used to stay in this Purana Quila. Whether you call it Indraprastha or Delhi, the Hindus and the Muslims have grown here together. It was the capital of the Mughals. Now it is the capital of India. There is no survivor of the Mughal dynasty. The Mughals came from outside. They identified themselves with the manners and customs of Delhi. From among them some happened to be Ansari Sahebs, Hakim Sahebs and some became Hindus too. The Hindus also joined their services. In such a Delhi of yours the Hindus and the Muslims used to live together peacefully. They did fight occasionally. But they would fight for a short while and then be united again. On one occasion, some fanatic made a murderous attack on Shraddhanandji. But earlier the Muslims with great affection, had taken Shraddhanandji to Jama Masjid where he addressed them. This is your Delhi.

But what is happening today? The Sardar always used to walk with his head high, but I tell you today he walks with his head bent. And Jawaharlal, that brave and courageous Jawaharlal who used to fly in the air, is today sitting helpless. Why has he become helpless? We have made him helpless. If there is one individual acting mad, he can be cured. But who would treat whom when all start behaving that way? Jawaharlal is no God after all. Nor is the Sardar any God. And their other Ministers have no divine powers either. Nor do they have any outside help.

I am telling the same thing to everybody. Many Hindus and Muslims came to me. I have had many discussions with them. But ultimately my voice turns to God. I pray to Him that He should take me away from the world, or bring sanity to the people of Delhi. Let there be no angry thought for the Muslims in the heart of any Hindu or Sikh. People tell me that the Muslims are supposed to be Fifth Columnists, that is, they are traitors, disloyal to the present Government. There are $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims in India. If $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore people are traitors, who would be the loser? They themselves will be the losers. They would be burying Islam that way. But they cannot do harm to the Hindus and the Sikhs. But you should not harass those $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims. It is not proper to tell them that they should be either ready to die or go to Pakistan. Why should they go? And under whose protection? I tell you that they are under your protection, and under my protection. At least I am not prepared to see that sight. I would rather pray to God that He should take me away before that. He has

kept me alive long enough. A life of 78-79 years is not a short one. I am fully satisfied. I have served to the best of my capacity. If God wishes to keep me alive, let Him take from me the work that will satisfy my heart. Let both the communities tell me that I am their friend, that is why they listen to me and would continue to do so. I meet quite a few Muslims. How can I say they are traitors and are betraying me? I tell you that even if they are betraying, it is not going to help them in any way. I admit that the Muslims have lots of arms with them. I have taken some of their arms and some are still with them. But what would they do with the arms they have? Would they kill me? Would they kill you? If they do that the Government is there to look into it. I tell you that if we become good and behave well the Government will see that justice is done to us. Let the Governments fight each other; but we would not quarrel among ourselves. We would remain friends. Let us not be afraid that they would kill us. However powerful the person who wants to kill us is, he cannot kill us so long as God protects us. That is why I am telling both the Hindus and the Muslims that they should abandon fear. I did not like the statement made by the Qaid-e-Azam. He says that the Muslims are being taken to Pakistan because they have been harassed in the Indian Union. He says there should be food for them and land to settle them. Pakistan, he says, is a poor country, and so, those who have money should send it there.¹ I have nothing to complain about it. But along with that, why does he not mention what happened to the Hindus in West Punjab? If Bihar indulged in evil acts they repented it. In Calcutta the Hindus came to me and repented before me. It would be a noble thing if the Muslims do the same and admit that they have done wrong things. I have seen the things and how can I close my eyes to them? Nor can I cover up the crimes committed by the Hindus. I want to be faithful to all religions. I can betray neither God nor men. I wish to be loyal to all.

I said yesterday² that it is the duty of the Muslims that leading men among them should proclaim that not all are so worthless. They should say that they are and will remain loyal to India, and will fight the whole world for the sake of India. Then only are they true Muslims. If they do not do this they become bad Muslims. It is my

¹ For an official account of the interview with Lord Mountbatten covering this and other points, *vide* Appendix "Interview with Lord Mountbatten", 14&16-9-1947.

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 12-9-1947.

hope that in India we do not have such bad Muslims. And if there are, in order to make them good we have to be good ourselves, not bad.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 305-10

482. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,

September 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Just as I did yesterday, today also I went to see our Muslim refugees. I have not seen anywhere the like of the squalor I found in that camp. I went to the camps of the Hindus as well as to those of the Muslims. The camp for the Hindu [refugees] is at a different place. There is so much stench in the Muslim camps; I wonder why they are not cleaning the place. If I were to be in charge of the camp, I would never tolerate this. I have lived in camps and I have seen many camps. Our camps should not be kept so dirty. I was very much pained. There is so much police and military arrangement and why do they tolerate such stink and stench? They would say cleaning the place is not their job, and that they have only orders to shoot, if necessary and to maintain peace and order in the camps. They say that if the refugees quarrel among themselves, they brush them away with their guns. They have orders only to do this much and they cannot go beyond what they have been ordered to do. That is all right. But they are now our soldiers and our police. In my view they must have a pickaxe and also a spade. They must clear the dirt wherever they find it. Their primary function should be to keep the places clean. To keep the camps in good condition both the Hindu and Muslim friends themselves have to clean them. We become their enemies if we do not tell them this. If we are their friends and servants we must make it plain to them that because they have come here, they should not live like helpless creatures. If Hindu refugees come from Pakistan should we push them into wells? Should we not keep them here and look after them? We must tell them that we would give them food and water but not sweepers. I am a very hard-hearted man.

I had worked with pickaxe during the Kumbh Mela at Hardwar. We used to be in charge of all the jobs concerning the camp sanitation. Everybody was trained for that type of work. So I would

say that whoever may be in charge of these camps, I am not bothered if he is a Muslim or a Hindu, his first and foremost job is to keep his camp absolutely clean. This involves no expenditure. If there are no shovels in the camps, it is the duty of the Government to provide them. If the Government does not provide them with shovels, if it is so busy that it has no time to spare, then the camp commander has to provide the shovels. Just as it is the duty of the Government to reach food to the camps, it is also its duty to make arrangements for sanitation, drinking water and water for washing purposes. Because there is no proper sewage arrangement, cholera spreads. Camp sanitation should never be imperfect. I must admit that I have learnt this thing from the British. I did not know how camp sanitation had to be looked after. I did not know how thousands and millions lived together and how they could be entrusted with jobs so that they would work for sanitation, or any work they may be asked to do. Military people are able to do all this. In minutes a whole city comes up and tents are put up. The first job in the camp is that the party which reaches there first must find out the water arrangements and see how water is to be used. The next party has to dig the trenches, so that urine and the latrine dirt do not flow out. With such an arrangement there can be no cholera and dysentery. People can all stay with ease. I want to leave out other things.

Here people are living in chaos. They are all lying helter-skelter. Nobody bothers to keep the camp clean. Whom can I blame? The commander of the Muslim camp is a Muslim. He can tell his people and make them understand what they should do. He has to be persuasive. They must be told that they would all die if they continued to live in filth, that their children can't remain unclean. So it is much better that they keep the camp clean. We can do a lot there if we train those people in sanitation. If you see the camp of the Hindus, you will find filth there too. But there is still some difference. I can never walk barefoot in that place. There was no water at all in the lake. It was absolutely dry. There was no sewage arrangement. After all, neither the Muslims nor the Hindus are animals. But today we have turned into beasts. Why did the Hindus and the Sikhs flee from Pakistan in panic? Even if the Hindus have behaved very badly here, they have not done anything there. If there is anyone who has committed a crime, let him be punished. That is the responsibility of the Government. Similarly I would ask why should anyone have to run away from here? If they are Muslims, are they to be blamed for being

Muslims? Even the Muslims belong to us and are under our Government. If they are refugees, it is very clear that it is a matter of shame for Delhi. The Muslims who are here have not come from outside. Almost all of them have come from different localities of Delhi. A few of them may have come from outside. We have driven them out of Delhi. Let me tell you as I told you yesterday that it is a matter of great shame for us. It is failure of the Government of Pakistan that the minorities has to run away from there. It must tell those people that they have got to stay in Pakistan. But today the situation in Pakistan is such that even good people are running away. Lahore is almost empty. It is the city built up by the Hindus where I saw the big mansions of the Hindus and so many educational institutions—where else do you find so many colleges? I always appreciate every good thing. Today who is in possession of those colleges? All this hurts me. And I feel ashamed that the Government of Pakistan can be so mean. And then I feel all the more ashamed when I see the situation here. How can the situation go wrong in Delhi in spite of our Government, in spite of Jawaharlal who is like a lion and with a Home Minister like Sardar Patel? Why should his authority not be accepted? If he sends out an order that a child has to be protected here, that child must be protected. We could then carry on our Government. But now he has military and police through which he is trying to establish peace. But whose Government is it after all? It is your own Government. You have made it.

If everyone would abide by the authority of his own Government, everything can be done. Otherwise the world will ridicule Delhi for its present state of affairs. And then the European powers, be it Russia, France or Britain, as well as America will laugh at us and say that we are not capable of preserving our freedom. We are only capable of being slaves. This should not happen. That is why I would like to tell the Muslims that they should surrender all their arms of their own accord. They should surrender their arms not out of fear, but because they are living in India. They should do this if they want to live like brothers. Then they should prove their loyalty to India and show that they can never betray the country. Whether Hindus or Muslims, all of them belong to India. I also want to tell the Muslims that if the Muslims in West Punjab, the Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Sind go crazy and the Hindus and the Sikhs cannot live in peace there, then the situation becomes difficult for us here. After all, we are all human beings. So let them understand humanity. How long can we

go on persuading? Man can go crazy and he can also be good. Let him stay here peacefully if he can live properly. If there is some man who goes so crazy that he becomes a brute, then I would tell the Hindus of Delhi that they should be on their guard and be brave, not cowards. It is cowardice to be frightened by the arms the Muslims may be having in their possession. What do we care if there are some Muslims somewhere having arms with them? It is the duty of the Government to disarm them. It is the duty of the military to deprive them of their arms. If they want to be good and truly belong to India and want to live with the Hindus in amity, let them surrender their arms. And let the Muslims admit their mistakes. Let them say that they had wished to conquer Delhi and turn the whole of India into Pakistan but now they have realized that it is not possible to turn India into Pakistan. They must be content that they are already having Pakistan. They must say that they can save the Hindus in Pakistan and keep them happy. Then it would so happen that both India and Pakistan would compete with each other in being good and more sincere in their humanity. Whether we look towards Mecca or towards the East, truthfulness lies in our own hearts, and what matters is that our hearts should be clean. If we compete with each other in being good, we can all rise high and work together.

I told you that since I had come here I would also wish to die here. If we go on indulging in acts of frenzy and become overcome by rage and kill the Muslims, I can have nothing to do with it. I do not wish to be a witness to such a thing. If the Muslims think that the Hindus and the Sikhs are at fault and the Hindus and the Sikhs think that the Muslims are at fault, they are both wrong. They are all the same to me. In my eyes the Hindus and the Muslims are all one. Only the true among them are recognized by God. Who are you to punish the wicked for their wrong deeds ? They are going to be punished themselves. I have no doubt about it. This is the essence I have drawn from all religions. That is why I would say that whatever wrong the Muslims may do , you have got to be good. If your really want to avenge the evil deeds it can only be through the deeds of goodness. I want to see that at least you do it. If we do this much, we can deep our own Government in India in good shape. If not, we are going to lose everything.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 311-6

483. LETTER TO GORUR RAMASWAMI IYENGAR

NEW DELHI,

[After September 14, 1947]¹

DEAR RAMASWAMI,

Your son has become a martyr.² Brave boy! Do not grieve. Such sacrifices are inevitable in our country. Let us emulate him. He only saves his life who loses it. Console your wife.

Yes, I remember you very well.

Yours,

BAPU

From a copy: C. W. 10580. Courtesy: Gorur Ramaswami Iyengar

484. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

NEW DELHI,

September 15, 1947

During the night as I heard what should have been the soothing sound of gentle life-giving rain, my mind went out to the thousands of refugees lying about in the open camps at Delhi. I was sleeping snugly in a verandah protecting me on all sides. But for the cruel hand of man against his brother, these thousands of men, women and children would not be shelterless and in many cases foodless. In some places they could not but be in knee-deep water. They have no other choice.⁴ Was it all inevitable? The answer from within was an emphatic 'No.' Was this the first fruit of freedom, just a month-old baby? These thoughts have haunted me throughout these last twenty hours. My silence has been a blessing. It has made me enquire within. Have the citizens of Delhi gone mad? Have they no humanity left in them? Have love of the country and its freedom no appeal for them? I must be pardoned for putting the blame first on the Hindus and Sikhs.

¹ On September 14, Ramachandra, a seventeen-year old student, had died in police firing at Tumkur while leading a students' procession organized by the Mysore Congress which was agitating for responsible government in the State.

² *ibid*

³ As Gandhiji was observing silence this was read out at the meeting.

⁴ These sentences are translated from *Prarthana Pravachan*—I, p. 316.

Could they not be men enough to stem the tide of hatred? I would urge the Muslims of Delhi to shed all fear, trust God and disclose all the arms in their possession which the Hindus and the Sikhs fear they have. Not that the former too do not have any. The question is one of degree. Some may have more, some less.¹ Either the minority rely upon God and His creature man to do the right thing or rely upon their fire-arms to defend themselves against those whom they must not trust.

My advice is precise and firm. Its soundness is manifest. Trust your Government to defend every citizen against wrongdoers, however well-armed they may be. Further trust it to demand and get damages for every member of the minority wrongfully dispossessed. All that neither Government can do is to resurrect the dead. The people of Delhi will make it difficult to demand justice from the Pakistan Government. Those who seek justice must do justice, must have clean hands. Let the Hindus and the Sikhs take the right step and invite the Muslims who have been driven out of their homes to return. If they can take this courageous step, worthy from every point of view, they immediately reduce the refugee problem to its simplest terms. They will command recognition from Pakistan, nay from the whole world. They will save Delhi and India from disgrace and ruin. For me, transfer of millions of the Hindus and the Sikhs and the Muslims is unthinkable. It is wrong. The wrong of Pakistan will be undone by the right of a resolute non-transfer of population. I hope I shall have the courage to stand by it, even though mine may be the solitary voice in its favour.

Harijan, 28-9-1947

¹ As Gandhiji was observing silence this was read out at the meeting.

485. *NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR*¹

[On or after *September 15, 1947*]²

विद्वद्भिः सेवितः सद्भिः नित्यमद्वेषरागिभिः

हृदयेनाभ्यनुज्ञातो यो धर्मस्तं निबोधत।

Know that to be true religion which the wise and the good and those who are ever free from passion and hate follow and which appeals to the heart.

From the original: C. W. 3710. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6519

486. *LETTER TO S. A. BRELVI*

DELHI,

September 16, 1947

BHAI BRELVI³,

I have your letter and the cutting. What you say is right. I will mention it in the prayer meeting also.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original: S. A. Brelvi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

487. *LETTER TO ZAHID HUSSAIN*

September 16, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. How wicked of you to fall ill when every ounce of your energy is wanted at your post of duty.⁴ May God restore you quickly.

¹ In Amrit Kaur papers this is placed after the letter dated August 29, 1947, *vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 29-8-1947. The addressee was at New Delhi and did not meet Gandhiji at Calcutta. Gandhiji reached New Delhi on September 9, silence day following which was September 15.

² *ibid*

³ Syed Abdullah Brelvi (1891-1949); Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*, from 1924 till his death in January 1949

⁴ The addressee was High Commissioner for Pakistan in India.

As promised I made the appeal the very evening. But nothing had happened in response.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

ZAHID HUSSAIN SAHEB

CAMP: KARACHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

488. LETTER TO DR. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

NEW DELHI,

September 16, 1947

DEAR DR. HOLMES,

Devdas has handed me your kind letter.

I do not remember having received Mr. Ordning's invitation. In any event I should be at sea serving on the committee. My way seems to be different. We must discuss this when we meet and if you and I find the time for it.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10970. Courtesy: Roger W. Holmes. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

489. LETTER TO DORA

NEW DELHI,

September 16, 1947

DEAR DORA,

I am sorry the climate disagrees with you. I am a plain man. The only shelter I could afford I provided. Now you must shift for yourselves. Himalayas is not India, they are in India. I see that the Ashram way is not your way. Now you should do as seems to you best. Consult the manager and suit him. I am sorry.

Yours,

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

490. *LETTER TO CHOITHRAM GIDWANI*

NEW DELHI,
September 16, 1947

BHAI CHOITHRAM,

What is this that you are doing? If people must flee why must they all flock to Bombay? There is a way of fighting too. Why are you ruining the case of Sind? Ponder well. The time is extremely delicate. 'Do or die' is not a mere slogan to be spoken but to be acted upon.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

491. *LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA*

September 16, 1947

BHAI SRI PRAKASA¹,

I am sending two letters herewith. Your task is very difficult, it means action, not merely talking.

Your task is not to hope for the best but to work for the good unto death. All non-Muslims should look up to you.

Two letters are enclosed.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Journalist and educationist; member, A. I. C. C., 1918-45; India's High Commissioner in Pakistan, 1947-49

492. SPEECH AT R. S. S. RALLY¹

NEW DELHI,
September 16, 1947

Gandhiji said that he had visited the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh camp years ago at Wardha, when the founder Shri Hedgewar was alive. The late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj had taken him to the camp and he (Gandhiji) had been very well impressed by their discipline, complete absence of untouchability and rigorous simplicity. Since then the Sangh had grown. Gandhiji was convinced that any organization which was inspired by the ideal of service and self-sacrifice was bound to grow in strength. But in order to be truly useful, self-sacrifice had to be combined with purity of motive and true knowledge. Sacrifice without these two had been known to prove ruinous to society.

The prayer that was recited at the beginning was in praise of Mother India, Hindu culture and Hindu religion. He claimed to be a *sanatani* Hindu. He took the root meaning of the word *sanatana*. No one knew accurately the origin of the word Hindu. The name was given to us and we had characteristically adopted it. Hinduism had absorbed the best of all the faiths of the world and in that sense it was not an exclusive religion. Hence it could have no quarrel with Islam or its followers as unfortunately was the case today. When the poison of untouchability entered Hinduism, the decline began. One thing was certain, and he had been proclaiming it from house-tops, that if untouchability lived, Hinduism must die. Similarly, if the Hindus felt that in India there was no place for anyone else except the Hindus and if non-Hindus, especially Muslims, wished to live here, they had to live as the slaves of the Hindus, they would kill Hinduism. Similarly if Pakistan believed that in Pakistan only the Muslims had a rightful place and the non-Muslims had to live there on sufferance and as their slaves, it would be the death-knell of Islam in India.

It was an unfortunate fact that India had been divided into two parts. If one part went mad and did ugly deeds, was the other part to follow suit? There was no gain in returning evil for evil. Religion taught us to return good for evil.

He had seen their Gurujī a few days ago. He had mentioned to him the various complaints about the Sangh that he had received in Calcutta and Delhi. The Gurujī had assured him that though he could not vouch- safe for the correct behaviour of every member of the Sangh, the policy of the Sangh was purely service of the Hindus and Hinduism and that too not at the cost of anyone else. The Sangh did not believe in

¹ Held in the sweepers' colony

aggression. It did not believe in ahimsa. It taught the art of self-defence. It never taught retaliation.¹

Today the ship of India was passing through troubled waters. The leaders in charge of the Government were the best that India possessed. Some people were dissatisfied with them. He would ask them to produce better men if they could and he would advise the old guards to hand over the reins to their betters. After all the Sardar was an old man and Pandit Jawaharlal, though not old in years, looked old and haggard under the burden he was carrying. They were doing their utmost to serve the people, but they could only act according to their lights. If the vast bulk of the Hindus wanted to go in a particular direction, even though it might be wrong, no one could prevent them from doing so. But even a single individual had the right to raise his voice against it and give them the warning. That is what Gandhiji was doing. He was told that he was the friend of the Muslims and the enemy of the Hindus and the Sikhs. It was true that he was a friend of the Muslims, as he was of the Parsis and others. In this respect he was the same today as he had been since the age of twelve. But those who called him the enemy of the Hindus and the Sikhs did not know him. He could be enemy of none, much less of the Hindus and Sikhs.

If Pakistan persisted in wrongdoing, there was bound to be war between India and Pakistan. If he had his way, he would have no military; not even police. But all this was tall talk. He was not the Government. Why did not Pakistan plead with the Hindus and the Sikhs and ask them not to leave their homes and ensure their safety in every way? Why could not they in the Indian Union ensure the safety of every Muslim? Today both the parties appeared to have gone crazy. The result could be nothing but destruction and misery.

The Sangh was a well-organized, well-disciplined body. Its strength could be used in the interest of India or against it. He did not know whether there was any truth in the allegations made against the Sangh. It was for the Sangh to show by their uniform behaviour that the allegations were baseless.

At the conclusion of the speech, Gandhiji invited questions. One person asked if Hinduism permitted killing of an evil-doer.² If not how did he explain the exhortation by Lord Krishna in the second chapter of the *Gita* to destroy the Kauravas.

The reply to the first question, said Gandhiji, was both yes and no. One had to be an infallible judge as to who was the evil-doer before the question of killing could arise. In other words one had to be completely faultless before such a right could accrue to one. How could a sinner claim the right to judge or execute another sinner?

¹ *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 12-9-1947.

² What follows is reproduced from *The Last Phase*.

As for the second question, granting that the right to punish the evildoer was recognized by the *Gita*, it could be exercised by the properly constituted Government only.

Both the Sardar and Pandit Nehru will be rendered powerless if you become judge and executioner in one. They are tried servants of the nation. Give them a chance to serve you. Do not sabotage their efforts by taking the law into your own hands.

Harijan, 28-9-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 441

493. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO PYARELAL

September 17, 1947

My coming to Noakhali is uncertain. The work here is most difficult. But it is only in the midst of difficulties that one is really tested. . . .

It is always well with those who put themselves completely in God's hands. Let it be as He wills.¹

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 528

494. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 17, 1947

After my experience of last evening² I have decided not to hold the prayers till every man present in the audience is ready for it. I have never imposed anything on anybody, then how can I impose a highly spiritual thing like prayer? The prompting to pray or not to pray should come from within. There is no question at all of pleasing me.

¹ In a letter to the addressee Sushila Nayyar *inter alia* wrote: "Bapu is going to have a hard time of it here. Yesterday he was saying that he would not be surprised if some of us might have to go the way of the leaders of the French Revolution. The exchange of population is actually taking place however much we may dislike it. Will there be a mass exodus of Hindus from East Pakistan after the manner of West Pakistan? Bapu says it would be a catastrophe."

² At the prayer meeting on September 16, as soon as the recitation from the Koran had commenced, someone in the gathering shouted: "To the recitation of these verses, our mothers and sisters were dishonoured, our dear ones killed. We will not let you recite these verses here." Some shouted: "Gandhi *murdabad*" (death to Gandhi). All efforts to restore order having failed, the prayer was abandoned.

My prayer meetings have become really popular. It appears that millions of people have been benefited from these meetings. But in these times of mutual tension I very well understand the anger of the people who have undergone great hardships. My only condition for holding the prayer is that I should not be expected to omit that particular portion to which there may be some objection. Either the prayer should be heartily accepted as a whole or it should be rejected. For me the recitation from the Koran is that part of the prayer which cannot be discontinued.

I can understand your resentment and the impatience it generates. But if you wish to qualify yourselves to deserve your freedom, you will have to curb your anger and will have to depend on your Government to get the fullest justice done to you. I am not proposing to you my method of non-violence, much as I would like to, for I know that today no one is going to listen to my talk about non-violence. That is why I have suggested that you should adopt the ways followed by all democratic countries. In democracy, every individual has to abide by the wishes of the people, that is, the Government, and has to direct his own wishes in that light. If every man takes the law into his own hands the State cannot function. It would mean anarchy, which means end of social order. That is, the State would not exist. That is the way to lose our independence. I believe that if you would let the Government carry out its tasks, there is no doubt that every Hindu and Sikh refugee would return home with honour and respect. But you cannot expect these things to happen if you want your Muslim compatriots to be driven out of India. I find any such thing dreadful. You cannot secure justice by doing injustice to the Muslims. Apart from that, if it is true that the minorities, that is, the Hindus and the Sikhs have been treated very badly in Pakistan, it is also true that in East Punjab the minority people, that is the Muslims, have been badly treated. For both the countries the right way to arrive at a proper agreement is that both sides should acknowledge their mistakes with clean hearts and arrive at a mutual settlement. If it is not possible to come to a settlement they must resort to arbitration and accept the arbitrator's decision. Another way is the uncivilized way of war. I hate the very idea of war. But there would be no alternative to war in the absence of mutual settlement or decision by an arbitrator. I therefore hope that in such circumstances people will give up their madness and come to their senses and reassure

their Muslim neighbours who have chosen not to go to Pakistan, and persuade them to return to their hearths by promising safety and protection to them. This thing cannot be accomplished with the help of the army. It can be achieved only when people come to their senses. I have decided not to live to witness the country being ruined by fratricide. I am constantly praying to God that He should take me away before any calamity befalls this sacred and beautiful land of ours. I request you all to join me in this prayer.

I am grateful to the Hindu and Muslim workers¹ for working together in amity. If you would work with perfect unity, you would provide a worthy example to the country. The working class should not allow communalism to come anywhere near them. Have I not said that if only you knew your own power and continued to do constructive work with understanding, you would become true owners and rulers and your employers would be your trustees and friends to help you in the times of difficulty? That happy moment can come only when they realize that rather than gold and silver which only the workers bring out from the earth, the workers themselves are the true wealth.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 318-20

495. LETTER TO S. A. BRELVI

NEW DELHI,
September 18, 1947

BHAI BRELVI,

I have your telegram. This is the complete English report. There is no time to write more. It is difficult to say what will ultimately happen in Delhi. If the Pakistan Government can bring about some improvement, the people here can return to sanity. For my part I am pledged to do or die.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Gandhiji had earlier attended a large gathering of workers of the Delhi Cloth Mills.

496. *SPEECH TO MUSLIMS*¹

NEW DELHI,
September 18, 1947

Addressing them Gandhiji said that they had to be brave and declare firmly that they would not leave their homes whatever might happen. They should look to none but God for their safety and protection. He was there to do whatever he could. He had pledged himself to do or die in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta and now in Delhi. He would not ask those who had left their homes to come back till there was real peace and the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims agreed to live as brothers without the help of the police and the military.

He was the friend and servant of the Muslims as of the Hindus and others. He would not rest till every Muslim in the Union, who wished to live as a loyal citizen of the Union, was back in his home living in peace and security and the Hindus and the Sikhs returned likewise to their homes. He had served the Muslims for a long time in South Africa and in India. He could never forget the unity of the Khilafat days. It did not last, but it demonstrated the possibilities of lasting friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims. That was what he lived for and worked for. He was on his way to the Punjab to see that all the Hindus and the Sikhs who had been turned out of Pakistan should be able to return to their homes and live there in safety and honour. But on his way he was held up at Delhi and he would not leave it till real peace returned to the capital. Even if he was the only one to say it, he would never advise the Muslims to leave their homes. If they lived as law-abiding, honest and loyal citizens of India, no one could touch them. He was not the Government, but he had influence with those in the Government. He had long talks with them. They did not believe that in India the Muslims had no place or that if the Muslims wished to stay here they had to do so as slaves of the Hindus. Some people had said that Sardar Patel encouraged the idea of Muslims going away to Pakistan. The Sardar was indignant at the suggestion. But he told him (Gandhiji) that he had reasons to suspect that the vast majority of the Muslims in India were not loyal to India. For such people it was better to go to Pakistan. But the Sardar did not let his suspicion colour his actions. Gandhiji was convinced that for the Muslims who wished to be citizens of the Indian Union, loyalty to the Union must come before everything else and they should be prepared to fight against the whole world for their country. Those who wished to go to Pakistan

¹ The meeting was held in Daryaganj mosque. Some Muslims had asked Gandhiji to visit Muslim localities in the city so that those Muslims who were still there might not leave their homes out of panic. Gandhiji readily agreed and began by visiting the Daryaganj area.

were free to do so. Only he did not wish a single Muslim to leave the Union out of fear of the Hindus or the Sikhs. Muslims in Delhi had assured him by their written declaration that they were loyal citizens of the Union. He would believe their word as he wished others to believe his. As such it was the duty of the Government to protect them. He for one would not like to live if he could not achieve that. The wrong had to be undone wherever it was. Abducted women had to be returned, forcible conversions considered null and void. The Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan and the Muslims of East Punjab had to be reinstalled in their own homes. In Pakistan and the Union they should produce conditions that not even a little girl, whatever her religion, should feel insecure. He was glad to have read the statement of Khaliqz-zaman Saheb and of the Muslims of Muzaffarnagar. But before he proceeded to Pakistan he had to help to quench the fire in Delhi. If India and Pakistan were to be perpetual enemies and go to war against each other, it would ruin both the dominions and their hard-won freedom would be soon lost. He did not wish to live to see that day.

Concluding, Gandhiji further advised them that, as a token of their loyalty to the Indian Union, they should issue a public statement that all Hindu women abducted by the Muslims in Pakistan should be restored to their families. They should unequivocally condemn the Pakistan Government where it had departed from the civilized conduct and demand that all those Hindus and Sikhs who had to leave their homes in Pakistan should be invited to return with full guarantee of their safety and self-respect.¹

Harijan, 28-9-1947

497. DISCUSSION WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[September 18, 1947]²

Shaheed took upon himself the mission of bringing about a *rapprochement* between the two Dominions. Gandhiji tried to impress upon him that the crux of the problem was that both Governments should make a clean breast of their mistakes and failures. They should honestly and sincerely strive to bring about conditions, each in its own Dominion, that would enable all the refugees to go back to their original homes with a guarantee of safety and equal treatment. What was actually happening in either Dominion was for cible evacuation of the minorities without compensation or any of the guarantees that go with a planned transfer of populations on a reciprocal basis. As a result the refugees had begun to take the law into their own hands and to squeeze out the minorities from the respective Dominions. Pressure was being put upon the Union Government to apply reciprocity to the Indian Muslims. This could

¹ This paragraph is from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 451.

² From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*

easily lead to a war between the two countries as the Pakistan Government had already declared that they would permit refugees from East Punjab to come over but would resist the entry into Pakistan of Muslims from other parts of India.

Due to his old associations with the Pakistan leaders, Shaheed possessed a certain initial advantage which he could turn to good account, if he set about the business in the right spirit and in the right way. Gandhiji told him that he should go to Karachi only if his own heart was free of all prejudice. His usefulness would depend upon his ability courageously to get his old colleague Qaid-e-Azam to face up to his own declarations respecting the minorities which were being honoured more in the breach than the observance. If Shaheed himself lacked the conviction or if his own mind was clouded, his visit would do more harm than good.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 478-9

498. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,

September 18, 1947

Today we have all lost our senses, we have become stupid. It is not that only the Sikhs have gone mad, or only the Hindus or the Muslims have gone crazy. I am told that the whole thing was started by the Muslims. It is true. I think there is no doubt that the trouble started from their side. But what is the point in harping on it all the time? I have to see what needs to be done today. India is today in the plight of the elephant king.¹ I want to rescue it if I can. What should I do? I must seek God's help. I would be happy if my efforts produced some results. But I am just skin and bones. What can such a man do? Whom can he convince? But God can do everything. Hence, night and day, I turn to Him. I say: "O God, come. Gajaraja is sinking—India is sinking—save her."

It cannot be that no one but Hindus should live in India and if the Muslims want to live here they can do so only as slaves. Just listen to what Jawaharlal says: "We are in great difficulty. We cannot attend to our other work. We are busy only with this problem." What if everybody in Pakistan is depraved? I would say, let our India be the sea in which all the inflowing dirt may be washed away. We cannot do bad things because others do them. I went to Daryaganj today. Some

¹ Gandhiji was alluding to the legend of *Gajendra Moksha*, which was recited earlier during the prayer.

Muslim friends also come to me. I talk to them, give them affection and tell them that they should not panic. They should be strong. I tell them to stick to their homes. They cannot do any mischief here. That is why I wish that all Hindus should become sane, all Sikhs should become good. Let the Hindus and the Sikhs tell those Muslims who do not wish to go to Pakistan that they should stick to their homes. We have got the Jama Masjid which is the largest mosque in the world. What will happen to that mosque if we kill most of the Muslims or they go away to Pakistan? Will you transfer that mosque to Pakistan? Or will you destroy that mosque or turn it into a Shiva temple? Suppose some Hindu in his pride wants to turn it into a Shiva temple, or a Sikh wants to turn it into a gurdwara—I would say that it would be an attempt to bury Hinduism and Sikhism. No religion can be built up in this manner.

Those who wish to go to Pakistan should go there. But why should the fear of the Hindus scare them into hiding in the Purana Quila or in Humayun's Tomb? I told them that those Muslims who are still in their houses should stick on there. I also would get killed for their sake. They felt a little reassured and they said they would die in their places but would not run away. They have been living there since ages. Shall we drive them out today? But that cannot be done. What should we do about those who have already left? I told them that we shall not bring them back immediately. Surely we are not going to bring them back with the help of the police and the military. We shall bring them back only when the Hindus and the Sikhs assure them that they are their friends and that they should return to their homes. They must tell those Muslims that there is no need to engage any police or military for them, rather they will be their police, their military and they will all live like brothers. If we do this in Delhi, I assure you that our way in Pakistan will be absolutely cleared. And that will be the beginning of a new life. When I go to Pakistan I will not spare them. I shall die for the Hindus and the Sikhs there. I shall be really glad to die there. I shall be glad to die here too. If I cannot do what I want to do here, I have got to die. I too feel angry. But human beings should control their anger. I have heard that many women who did not want to lose their honour chose to die. Many men killed their own wives. I think that is really great, because I know that such things make India brave. After all, life and death is a transitory game. Whoever might have died are dead and gone; but at least they have gone with courage. They have not sold away their honour. Not that their lives

were not dear to them, but they felt it was better to die with courage rather than be forcibly converted to Islam by the Muslims and allow them to assault their bodies. And so those women died. They were not just a handful, but quite a few. When I hear all these things, I dance with joy that there are such brave women in India. But where is the place for those who have already fled? They must return and return with honour. Let there be justice at least on our side. Let us keep our hearts and hands clean. Then we can ask for justice before the whole world. I have already said that the Muslims who possess arms should surrender their arms. As I said the day before yesterday, let everyone hand over the arms. I think this process will take some time but now that it has started, arms have got to be given up. We cannot protect ourselves with arms.

Another big complaint I have been receiving is that our police and military which includes the Hindus, Sikhs and also Christians and Gorkhas, who are all supposed to be protectors, have themselves become destroyers. I do not know how far this is true. But I want to address myself to the police and request them to behave. I have heard that in some places the police themselves started the looting. I have heard that there was some trouble at Connaught Place today and the soldiers and the police started looting and plundering. Maybe the reports are false. But if there is the slightest truth in them then I will tell the police and the military that the days of the British are over. In those days they could do what they liked. But now they belong to India. They should not behave as if they were enemies of the Muslims. When they are ordered to protect them, they have got to protect them.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 321-3

499. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

NEW DELHI,

September 19, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI,

I got both your letters. You are sure to render service wherever you are. But I see that your mind continues to be unsteady. You are not satisfied with the Ashram. I think you are certainly being useful to the Ashram. Your boarding at the Ashram therefore is no less than

*charity*¹. Even in the village you will certainly be fed by the people. Thus as in the immortal words of Akha Bhagat: “Live as you may, but know God anyhow.”

Blessings from

BAPU

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

500. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

September 19, 1947

CHI. RAMESHWARI,

I got your letter yesterday.

This much is clear that if nothing can be done here, I shall not be able to do anything there either. Do what you can surrendering everything to God. All will turn out right.

Jawaharlal told me that you would be coming here. Bapa² also said the same. My view is that you should do what you can there with the utmost peace of mind. It is another matter if you can do nothing and can have no peace of mind. In the end, follow the promptings of your heart. Keep well both of you.

The task here is a difficult one. Suhrawardy came yesterday. He is staying with me.

I feel happy whenever I hear that Brijlal³ helps you a great deal. This is as it should be. I have his letters. I showed them to Jawaharlal. I am not writing separately to him.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8012. Also C. W. 3112. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

¹ The Gujarati word is “madhukari”, the practice of supplying free meals to poor students once a week from one household.

² A. V. Thakkar

³ Addressee’s husband

501. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
September 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have received a note. It first went to Sardar. The note says that the Hindus would not keep quiet if they were to live with the Muslims. The Hindus had to flee from Pakistan. In Koocha Tara Chand they are surrounded by Muslims and are afraid of being shot by them. Hence it would be better if all the Muslims went away from there. Many of them have already gone, but quite a few are still left behind. I have told you that when I went to them yesterday I told them the opposite thing. So there is no question of migration of those who are here. I would ask the people who have gone away to come back. It is not forcing them to return. Surely we cannot resort to force in the Panchayati Raj that we are having. We must persuade people, train them. Why should we be so frightened of them? Have the Muslims with whom we have been living for years become so bad that they cannot be allowed to stay here? I do not say that they cannot become bad. But if those who were good can become bad, they can again become good also. We may all be good. But it is not enough to be good. We must also be brave and at the same time have wisdom. Then from association with us even the bad people will become good. This is not my law, it is the law of the world. As I told you yesterday, I have learnt this from my childhood. I would not be able to learn any new lesson now. And how long am I going to live? You are telling me all this, but I say that I cannot bear it. Not that I would kill somebody; it is possible that I will die myself.

I have another note. Someone gave it to me on the way. Whatever notes I receive on the way, I try to read them in the car. In that note I have been asked why I do not come to my senses even after such atrocities in West Punjab. There is yet another note bearing no name or signature. It is addressed to the members of the Muslim League. It is full of accusations of filthy things. It is difficult to know what will happen to Pakistan and India if the followers of the League behave in that manner. Should we also resort to filthy means? That is not the correct thing, according to me.

Muslims are living around there. Some Muslim workers have

chosen to live there. They want to serve the Muslims. Let somebody come and kill them if he wishes. They are living there because they are brave. They approached me. There are quite a few such Muslims. They say that a large number of Muslims have left their homes. But even after that I found that Muslims were in a pretty large number. There were very few Hindus. I told those Hindus, who have escaped, that I have learnt only one thing since my childhood. I have believed even before entering politics that Hindus and Muslims have to live in amity. That is how India is made and that is how India should remain. A man who has been doing the same work from the age of twelve cannot speak anything different today. I would like every man to stand firm in his place and die there. This is what I tell Muslims as well as Hindus.

The Hindus say that Muslims are having arms; if they do not surrender them, how can they be sure that they will not strike them from behind? I would tell the Hindus that we should not bother about this. It is the job of the Government. If they have no license, they cannot possess arms, even for self-defence. But how are they going to defend themselves with arms? If there are five Muslims there are five hundred Hindus and Sikhs. Where is the comparison? Let them continue to live here even if the Hindus and the Sikhs slaughter them. These five who let themselves be killed, and depart with the name of God on their lips rather than use the arms, would be really brave. They should say that the Hindus and the Sikhs are their brothers and may kill them if they choose to. I give the same advice to all. Today a large number of Hindus from Pakistan came to see me and narrated to me their woes. Some narrated their tales smilingly while some women broke down. I told them and through you I wish to tell everybody that we should not be cowards. Just because the Muslims of Pakistan have committed atrocities, let us not be frightened by the Muslims living here. Let us not frighten them either. There are also some Muslims who just cannot live in Pakistan.

So the note which I have received says that since the non-Muslims are not going to live in Pakistan, why should the Muslims live in India? But I say that if there is one man doing something wrong let us not imitate and do similar things ourselves. Pakistan or Islam cannot mean that non-Muslims cannot live there. The Muslim empire has spread far and wide; but nowhere was it laid down that non-Muslims cannot live there. Non-Muslims used to live there and lived in peace. They also possessed money. Is Islam now coming to India as a

new phenomenon? Islam has lived on for the last 1,300 years. There have been great renunciations and sacrifices for its sake. If any other type of Islam emerges, it would not be genuine and acceptable to all Muslims as good. Think over this. It means that true India is not that in which none but the Hindus can live. True Christianity is not that which does not accept in its fold anyone who is not a Christian. That is not religion but irreligion. The world has not followed that path, is not following it at present nor will follow it in future. Why should we then, try to write a new history? Let us not ruin India and allow Pakistan to be ruined. There are $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims in India. Where can all of them go? And should they take the Jama Masjid, the Aligarh University and all those Muslim tombs to Pakistan? And should all the gurdwaras in West Punjab be brought to East Punjab? If the Hindus cannot live in Pakistan, their temples will then have to be brought here. This means that everybody wants to ruin himself and destroy religion. I have no desire to be a witness to it. Let God take me away before that. And I would say that all those young men should die doing their duty. Let not India be ruined while they are alive. I do not want to see the country ruined. If anything, I only want to see that we all die in the attempt to remove the evils in the country.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 324-7

502. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
September 20, 1947

Respected Balvantsinhaji,

Bapu had your letter but he is not able to reply as he has not a minute to spare.

I am writing as instructed by Bapu :

You should not feel hurt about the *goshala*.¹ Le bygones be bygones. What does the *Ishavasya* verse say? There is nothing [in this world] we can call ours; everything belongs to God. You should not give up drinking cow's milk. If we switch over to goat's milk in place of cow's it is not serving the cow. It is good you are getting cow's milk from a village. Serve the cow in the villages and try to increase the milk yield. See how you can increase the number of cows in the neighbourhood

¹ Since the *goshala* had been handed over to the Talimi Sangh and it had become difficult to get milk the addressee was thinking of giving up milk.

and what fodder and concentrates should be given to them so that we get better milk. This is the true service.

You are not to go elsewhere. If anything should happen to you, die at your post. Do what you can there. There is plenty of work to be done.

Regards from

MANU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1984

503. TALK WITH AN ADVOCATE

NEW DELHI,

September 20, 1947

ADVOCATE: You should publicly state that so long as the Muslims do not surrender their weapons they cannot be resettled.

GANDHIJI: You do not seem to be aware that I have already stated this publicly.

You should also say that the refugees fleeing to India are being murdered.

I cannot state this because both the communities are in the same plight. I have said that any man who is not loyal to India may be shot. Surely it is not your argument that all the Muslims are bad and all the Hindus are good or that all of them are goondas. You do not suggest that even those not proved guilty should be shot. Yes, the British did that. But now we are dealing with our own brethren. Everybody says that Suhrawardy is a goonda. And yet what was achieved in Calcutta could not have been achieved if I had been all alone and his help had not been forthcoming. If people drink, does that mean we should also drink? Therefore we must either purify Hinduism or die in the attempt. But if we do with others as others do with us, then we might as well become Muslims. Let us be upholders of Hinduism, not its destroyers. If we become destroyers of Hinduism then certainly I do not wish to be a witness to it. I would rather die before that. All Hindus should make their hearts pure. I commend the action of the sisters who threw themselves into wells. What was done in Bihar was no trifling matter. But Biharis are simple people. They admitted their guilt. What has happened in Pakistan is certainly terrible from all accounts.

Do you think four-and-a-half crores of Muslims will not get out of hand some day?

It is my firm conviction that that will not happen, provided, of course, that Hindus do what I say. And if they do that, Muslims will respect them.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, 34

504. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You must pray to God and have faith in Him. Everyone is not convinced of this. People ask: ‘Where is God?’ They ask why they should be in so much trouble if God exists. If the Muslims are in trouble, they question the truth of Allah and the Koran. A large number of people talk in these terms, but they are all mistaken. This is the time to remember Khuda, Allah, Ishwar and Rama. He helps us without fail. Surely He is not going to ask us if we have recognized Him. We cannot hold Him in our hands nor see Him with our eyes, or hear Him with our ears. That is why it is said that He is beyond our physical senses. He is real; all else is unreal. We are all unreal. We may ask how we can be unreal when we are alive. I am alive today. But no one can tell me if I shall be alive tomorrow. I have thus passed 78 years wondering about tomorrow. I may live for a few days more or I may live for another year. But how can we know—how can I say—that the man who is alive now will be living the next minute? No one can say that. That is why I say that we are all unreal and we can never be sure what may happen to us at any moment. We cannot survive for ever. He alone can be real. The word *hasti* is derived from the Sanskrit word *asti*, which means ‘to be’, it was, it is and it will remain forever. What lives for ever is this Reality (God) that has created us and can destroy us and that takes us away from the world. In my view He never destroys us; He only helps us. If today we suspect that He cannot be realized and therefore get angry, it would be foolish. But He exists and is capable of doing everything. He is *Rahim*¹ and all are equal in his eyes. He would never harm anyone, nor kill or curse anyone. That is His law.

¹ Merciful

Muslims also come to me. They narrate to me their plight here. They say that they have been living in Delhi but now they find it impossible to do so. I tell them that they should continue to live here as long as I am alive. During the Khilafat days Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, all used to be together. I have gone to gurdwaras accompanied by Muslims. During that famous Nankana incident¹ Maulana Saheb and the Ali Brothers were with me. There was a general feeling of fellowship, whether they were Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. What happened at Jallianwala Bagh? People cried at the top of their voices that the blood of all communities had mingled there. Who could separate them? How is it that they have now been separated? I am really perplexed. If I am still here, alive, it is only in the belief that the blood of these three communities is one. I would do everything possible to prove this. I would cry myself hoarse and shed tears before God in order to attain this. I do not shed tears before man, but I can do so before God. I can plead with Him, because I am His slave. Everybody should be His slave. Then there would be no need for man to be anybody's slave. I say that I would wish to be alive if I can do this. If not, I would wish that God takes me away.

My head bows in shame, I feel ashamed that the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, who till recently looked upon one another as brothers have now become enemies. Let at least some people come forward and say that they cannot be enemies. Four or five persons who came to me said that $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims would become traitors when the time came. For, after all, they are Muslims, and there are Muslims in Pakistan too. Supposing there was a war between India and Pakistan, or some similar conditions arose, would they not, in that event, secretly help Pakistan? I told these people that some [Muslims] might very well help Pakistan, but all of them would not do so. I told those people that if they would remain good, if we would remain good, if all Hindus in large number here and all the Sikhs would remain good and not consider any Muslim their enemy, then I could claim at the top of my voice that none of these $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims would turn disloyal. We must be brave. Being in the majority we should not be cowards. There are $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims in India but the total population of the country is 40 crores. Should they become such cowards as to be afraid of $4\frac{1}{2}$

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Sikh Conference at Shri", 25-2-1921 and "Speech at Nankana Saheb", 3-3-1921.

crore Muslims? I say that if those $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims betray the country, they would be betraying Islam, and they would be destroying Islam. But if we also behave that way, and become cowards and traitors and do not trust them at all and do not allow a single Muslim to live here, let me tell you that the Hindus alone would not be able to eat a morsel here. Their food would become poison.

If there is aggression from the Muslims outside India or from any other power or from Pakistan, I say that these $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims here will have to be loyal to the country. The law says that if they are not loyal to the country, they should be shot. My law is however different. I have explained it to you. But who is going to accept it? According to the law of the world the only punishment for a traitor, a fifth columnist, anyone indulging in subversive activities against his own country, is death. I say that in such a vast country, all the $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims cannot be traitors. Who has seen all these $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims? They are in our seven lakh villages. A few are in the cities. They are in U.P., in Bihar, scattered in the villages. I have lived in the villages and I know them all. They can never be traitors. There are Muslims in Sevagram too. They are working there. They would be loyal to Sevagram, they would lay down their lives for it. What do they know what the Muslims in other places may be doing? And why should we be afraid of traitors? I am not afraid of them. If, living in India, they become traitors, I would say that they are keen on dying and on destroying Islam.

Real kafirs are those who eat our bread, serve in our posts but act as our enemies and cut our throats. There are such Hindus too; and also Sikhs and Muslims. There are all kinds of people in this world. But it would be cowardice to believe that all the $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims living here would become such traitors. It shows that we are not true Hindus, nor true Sikhs. Our goodness and the goodness of all the officials, the goodness and courage of the Hindus and the Sikhs lies in telling the Muslims not to leave. They must be persuaded and convinced that no one would be allowed to touch them. They should be asked to forget our wrongful deeds and assured that such deeds will not be repeated. We should ask them why they want to leave, and whether they know what will happen to them in Pakistan. They must be reminded that they have their homes and everything else here. If we kept them back with such affection the Muslim Afridis in the

Frontier Province and Dera-Ismail Khan would tell our people that they should not run away. This is the effect of good behaviour. If you maintain peace in Delhi, and that not because you are afraid or because Gandhi says it, but because that is the honest desire in your heart, I can promise you that no Muslim will do you any harm. And if he does, there is God above. He is all-powerful, and all must answer Him. He will protect us, and I have no doubt about it at all in my heart.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 327-31

505. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI¹

September 21, 1947

My eyes were closed; but I was so pained that I felt like weeping. . . .² A *bhajan* is not an exercise in singing; it should make us one with God. It was like making fun of God. If [Abha]³ and you do not believe in God, better give up praying. I depend upon [you two] and if you behave like hired singers, it is as good as killing me. I expected this the least from you. A particle of blemish in you appears like a mountain. I will not tolerate even a single shortcoming in you.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 42

¹ The addressee and Abha Gandhi had burst into laughter because they had found themselves out of tune while singing a *bhajan* during the evening prayer. *Vide* also "Letter to Manu Gandhi", 22-9-1947.

² Omissions as in the source

³ *ibid*

506. LETTER TO JETHALAL

NEW DELHI,
September 21, 1947

CHI. JETHALAL,

I saw your article only today. I read it. But I could not get much out of it. It need not be printed. If you implement somewhere the scheme that you have conceived and make a success of it, I might get something out of it; also others. In Bijolia you are where you were. How successful were you? Did you learn anything new, or were your old ideas confirmed? Think over this and send me a brief reply. In the meanwhile I am preserving your article. Write to me about khadi, cow, paper-making and other village industries. How many of you are there?

Know that I didn't have the time to write even this much. I have stolen time from other schedule.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

507. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

September 21, 1947

CHI. SATISBABU,

I have your telegram. When Hemprabhaddevi sent for me, I had to go to Calcutta. She has written to Bisen. I learnt from her letter that Babua is still not well and now Kshitish Babu¹ is ill. Who will look after Sodepur in these circumstances? We have to think of all this.

How is your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9287

¹ Addressee's brother

508. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 21, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims cannot continue to live the way they are living now. It pains me very much and I shall do everything humanly possible to remedy the situation. Let me tell you that if I cannot do what my heart desires, I shall not feel happy to remain alive.¹ It is well and good if God takes that work out of me. But if that is not to happen, I will believe that my work is over. It is not that I would like to die by committing suicide. It is true that for those who wish to spend their lives in serving others, there can be no other test. Let them not be disturbed if they find their efforts bearing no fruit. But when one's efforts do not bring forth results, one must dry up like a tree which does not bear fruits. And he does dry up. That is the law of nature. According to Hindu philosophy, the soul is immortal. It does not die. A body which has outlived itself is of no use and must perish. A new body takes its place. But the soul is immortal and assumes evernew physical forms in order to attain *mukti*² through service.

Today I went to a place where a large number of Hindus on the one side and Muslims on the other were living together. They raised the slogan "Mahatma Gandhi Zindabad". What did it mean? What purpose would it serve if Hindus and Muslims were not one at heart and could not live together in peace? So I found that cry somewhat harsh. I asked those Muslims why they should be in panic. We have to die ultimately, and so we shall. If we are killed, it will be at the hands of none else but our own brothers. I appealed to them not to be angry with Hindus, nor try to kill them. I said they might die, but should not run away from their place in panic. But I also heard people saying that the Mahatma was a bad man wanting to bring back the Muslims to the

¹ As one person in the audience objected to the *Al Fateha* being recited, prayers were not held on Birla House lawn. Gandhiji, however, addressed the audience and said that he was going to argue with the objector. According to *The Hindustan Times*, 22-9-1947, Gandhiji held the prayer in his room after the meeting.

² Liberation

houses from where they had been driven out. It is indeed true that I want to bring them back. But how do I want to bring them back? Those who wish to go to Pakistan out of their own choice should not be prevented in any way. But it would pain me very much if they wanted to go because they were afraid, because they felt that the Government was not able to protect them and the Hindus and the Sikhs would not protect them in any case. To those who do not want to go to Pakistan and want to live here, I shall say that they should not go from here. I told them that those who have gone away from here could and should come back only when the Hindus and the Sikhs would gladly permit them to do so. I do not approve of bringing them back with the help of the police and the army. I tell them to give up the idea of police and military help. We shall do ourselves what we want to do. We shall die if we are destined to die. But if one person is bent upon killing, if he has lost his senses, why should I retaliate by losing my senses in turn? I would prefer to die at his hands. I am not speaking on behalf of the Government. The Government is not in my hands. You know the way I am made. If somebody goes crazy and indulges in evil acts, I cannot do the same. Later on, that man will learn from me how to be good. There are 40 crore Hindus and Muslims in India. A few lakh Muslims have gone to Pakistan. But there are still $4\frac{1}{2}$ crore Muslims in India. The rest are all Hindus. There is a small proportion of Parsi, Christian and Jewish population. But that is hardly significant. Thus if they want to perish by fighting each other, let them do so, but life is not worth living if one has to survive with the help of the police and the army. What should the Government do in the face of such fighting by Hindus, and Muslims among themselves? Let the Government declare that it can act only in that manner or it is ready to resign. Then let those who want only the Hindus in India because there are only Muslims in Pakistan form the Government. Does it mean that we should act in frenzy because the people in Pakistan are doing so? We can do so if we so wish. Suppose there is a friend whom I abuse and he abuses me still more in turn. It is all right. But if I hear his abuses in silence, how long will he go on abusing? If he beats me, I submit to that too. I do not raise my fist against his fist. Do you know what would happen in that case? I have seen that if a man swings his fist in the air, he injures his own hand. Even a boxer boxes against a big stiff cushion. He enjoys the game only when he strikes against some tangible object. But if the boxer does not keep something in front of him he becomes helpless and is

able to do nothing. What I have told you is an eternal truth. I am the only one steadfastly clinging to it. People are not following that path these days. God alone knows if I will be able to stand by that truth till the end. I am making a simple point today. Let the Muslims who have left their homes remain where they are, but they have got to be fed. We cannot starve them and then ask them to go to Pakistan. We are preparing the ground for war by doing so. The Congress Government is really for the service of the country and not for money, not for power; and it is meant not for one community or two but for all communities. If people are angry and are not satisfied with its service and do not allow it to serve, it should step down. And then let there be a government of those who want to keep only the Hindus in India. But that would lead to the ruin of Hinduism and Hindustan also. Let us forget Pakistan. Let it do whatever it wants. Let us think only about India. Then the whole world will admire us and be with us. Otherwise, the world which has been looking towards India all this time will start ignoring it. The countries of the world regarded India as a great country inhabited by good people who could not be corrupted. That faith would then be destroyed. You may behave as you like. But I shall continue to warn you, so long as I am alive, that such behaviour would bring no good to any one.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 331-4

509. SILENCE-DAY NOTE¹

[After *September 21, 1947*]²

These are not old days. Now there are wheels within wheels. You can't do any useful service by seeing these military men except as friendly faces who will give you a warm welcome but nothing more. That is my reaction. The thing is beyond me except in my own way which has no vogue today.

From the original: C. W. 5483. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9482

¹ Addressed presumably to Mirabehn, this was written on the back of a Gujarati letter dated September 21, 1947.

² *ibid*

510. MY DUTY¹

This heading has reference only to my duty about the conducting of the *Harijan* papers. A fair number of replies have been received in answer to my query². The majority of the readers with a few exceptions want the papers to be continued. The purport of these letters is that the readers desire my views on present-day topics. This means that probably after my death these will no longer be required.

My death can take place in three ways :

1. The usual dissolution of the body.
2. Only the eyes move but the mind no longer works.
3. The body and mind may work but I may withdraw from all public activity.

The first kind overtakes everybody—some die today, others tomorrow. It demands no consideration.

The second variety is to be wished by or for nobody. I for one do not wish for any such imbecile state. It is a burden on earth.

The third variety does demand serious consideration. Some readers suggest that the period of my active life should be over now. A new age for India began on 15th August last. There is no place for me in that age. I detect anger in this advice as it is worded. It therefore carries little weight with me. Such counsellors are few. I have come to an independent conclusion. The *Harijan* papers are being conducted and published under the Navajivan Trust. The trustees can stop publication whenever they choose. They have full powers. They do not desire any such stoppage. My life-line is cast in active public service. I have not attained the state which is known as “action in inaction”.³ My activity, therefore, seems at present to be destined to continue till the last breath. Nor is it capable of being divided into water-tight compartments. The root of all lies in Truth otherwise

¹ The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-9-1947.

² Vide “Is *Harijan* Wanted?”, 24-8-1947.

³ Vide also “Action in Inaction”, 16-10-1947.

known to me as non-violence. Hence the papers must continue as they are. "One step enough for me."

September 22, 1947

Harijan, 28-9-1947

511. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

September 22, 1947

You asked me a question but did not wait for a reply.¹ I sent for you but gave up when . . .² could not understand. I am not angry; I am unhappy. I am helpless if you do not understand my unhappiness.³

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 43

512. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

September 22, 1947

CHI. MANUDI,

There are two ways in which you can cure my unhappiness.⁴ One is immediately to write down a confession and read it out this very day. The other is henceforth to make your life one with God. Then there can be no frivolous laughter. . . .⁵ Read out the confession at the public prayer meeting. That will cleanse the heart. The confession should not be forced, nor should it be made out of shame. A public confession is my own innovation. . . .⁶ cannot understand its

¹ The addressee had asked Gandhiji whether he was still angry with her because of the incident at the prayer the previous day; *vide* "Note to Manu Gandhi", 21-9-1947. Gandhiji nodded. The addressee did not grasp his meaning and got busy with her duties. Gandhiji then sent her this note.

² Omission as in the source

³ In reply to this the addressee expressed her deep regret for her lapse the previous evening, and asked Gandhiji what she could do to remove his unhappiness. For Gandhiji's reply, *vide* the following item.

⁴ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁵ Omissions as in the source

⁶ *ibid*

significance. It is my suggestion. Stick to your resolve sincerely. Then only will you rise.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 43-4

513. DRAFT OF A CONFESSION¹

September 22, 1947

We two girls were guilty of a grievous error during the prayer yesterday. We wish to purify ourselves by confessing it before all of you. The error consisted in our bursting into laughter when we went out of tune. We knew that it was wrong to laugh but we could not control ourselves. This shows that we are not absorbed in prayer. We thus insulted our Maker. Bapu has repeatedly told us that a prayer is effective only when we are thinking of God. We knew that even though his eyes were closed Bapu would know and would be much hurt, and that is what happened. We sought his forgiveness and he has forgiven us. But the pain has persisted. It persists even now. We hope that our public confession will relieve it to some extent. Only our future conduct can wholly eliminate it. We entreat the public to bless us that God may make and keep the two of us pure.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 44-5

514. LETTER TO JIVANJID. DESAI

September 22, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have revised the accompanying in great hurry. All helpers are new and inexperienced and I have, therefore, to put up with considerable inconvenience. But I will live as He wills.

The original English by Valjibhai is also enclosed. Check the

¹ This was drafted by Gandhiji for Manu and Abha Gandhi. It was read out by Manu at the Prayer meeting the same day. *Vide* also the preceding two items.

translation carefully with it. I think it would be better to ask Valjibhai himself to supply the Gujarati translation of his English articles.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 6958. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

515. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

NEW DELHI,

September 22, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

I saw your three articles yesterday and revised them the same day. Today I have sent them to *Harijan*. I liked all three of them. Who will render them into Gujarati? If you send [the translation] soon it can reach by this week. It would be better if hereafter you send versions in all the three languages. I shall be able to do but little. I hope you are keeping well.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

516. LETTER TO MANGALDAS

NEW DELHI,

September 22, 1947

BHAI MANGALDAS,

I got the demand draft as usual and it will be used strictly as desired by you. For the present I am held up here. I shall regard it as a new birth if I can get away from here.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* the following item.

517. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

NEW DELHI,

September 22, 1947

Though I believe that I was wise in having yielded to a solitary objector and refrained from holding public prayer,² it is not improper to examine the incident a little more fully. The prayer was public only in the sense that no member of the public was debarred from attending it. It was on private premises. Propriety required that those only should attend who believed whole-heartedly in the prayer including verses from the Koran. Indeed the rule should be applicable to prayer held even on public grounds. A prayer meeting is not a debating assembly. It is possible to conceive prayer meetings of many communities on the same plot of land. Decency requires that those who are opposed to particular prayers shall abstain from attending the meetings they object to. The reverse would make any meeting impossible without disturbance. Freedom of worship, even of public speech, would become a farce if interference became the order of the day. In decent society the exercise of this elementary right should not need the protection of the bayonet. It should command universal acceptance.

I have noticed with great joy at the annual sessions of the Congress on its exhibition grounds several meetings held by religious sects or political parties holding their gatherings, expressing divergent and often diametrically opposite views without molestation and without any assistance from the police. There have been departures from this fundamental rule and they have excited public condemnation. Where has that spirit of healthy toleration gone now? Is it because having gained our political freedom, we are testing it by abusing it? Let us hope it is only a passing phase in the nation's life.

Let me not be told, as I have often been, that it is all due to the misdeeds of the Muslim League. Assuming the truth of the remark, is our toleration made of such poor stuff that it must yield under some uncommon strain? Decency and toleration to be of value must be

¹ As Gandhiji was observing silence his written speech in Hindustani was read out at the meeting.

² Gandhiji was referring to the incident of the previous day; *vide* 1st footnote to "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-9-1947.

capable of standing the severest strain. If they cannot, it will be a sad day for India. Let us not make it easy for our critics (we have many) to say that we did not deserve liberty. Many arguments come to my mind in answer to such critics. But they give poor comfort. It hurts my pride as a lover of India, of the teeming millions, that our tolerant and combined culture should not be self-evident.

If India fails, Asia dies. It has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India be and remain the hope of all the exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of the world.

This brings me to the bugbear of unlicensed, hidden arms. Some have undoubtedly been found. Dribblets have been coming to me voluntarily. Let them be unearthed by all means. So far as I know, the haul made up-to-date is not much to speak of for Delhi. Hidden arms used to be possessed even during the British regime. No one worried then. By all means explode all the hidden magazines, when you have made sure beyond doubt that they are hidden in a particular place. Let there be no repetition of much cry and little wool. Nor let us apply one code to the British and set up another for ourselves when we profess to be politically free. Let us not call a dog a bad name in order to beat him. After all is said and done, to be worthy of the liberty we have won after sixty years of toil, let us bravely face all the difficulties that confront us, however hard they may be. Facing them squarely will make us fitter and nobler.

Surely it is cowardly on the part of the majority to kill or banish the minority for fear that they will all be traitors. Scrupulous regard for the rights of minorities well becomes a majority. Disregard of them makes of a majority a laughing-stock. Robust faith in oneself and brave trust of the opponent, so-called or real, is the best safeguard. Therefore I plead with all the earnestness at my command that all the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims in Delhi should meet together in friendly embrace and set a noble example to the rest India, shall I say, to the world? Delhi should forget what other parts of India have done or are doing. Then only will it claim the proud privilege of having broken the vicious circle of private revenge and retaliation. They belong, if they ever do, to the State, never to the citizens as individuals.

Harijan, 5-10-1947

518. A LETTER

DELHI,
September 23, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

Your letter received last night. I showed it to Sardar who was first with me. Then came Jawaharlal Nehru. The former said, he could do nothing. The latter said, work was there but he did not know what you could do.

Dr. Gopichand is the deciding party. I am not in touch with him. So my advice is, act directly.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

519. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

September 23, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

This statement seems all right. May your desire be fulfilled. It should however, be remembered that this *yajna*¹ must not be felt as a hardship by anybody. Its importance lies in the largest number joining it. But till that time comes, all those who join it at present should put all their strength behind it, provided of course that nobody works so hard that he or she gets exhausted by the effort.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 8645. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ *Rentia Yajna*, or *Rentia Baras*, which was observed with non-stop sacrificial spinning on *Bhadra Pad Vad* 12, Gandhiji's birthday according to Vikram Calendar

520. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It has been said that prayer is no ordinary thing. It is something noble. In the course of our lives we talk all kinds of things, we talk quite a bit in 24 hours, we commit crimes and run madly after money; so let us at least offer some prayer. It would be a great thing if we pray together. If 40 crores pray in their own languages in the belief that God is one, it would be a great thing. And then we should not mind if there are some stanzas from the Koran in the prayer. Those who protest against recitation from the Koran, do so in anger.¹ But, because the Muslims are harassing the Hindus and Sikhs and killing them, should we get angry over the Koran? What the Muslims have done is not good, but what harm has the Koran done? If one devotee of God commits a sin, shall we stop repeating His name? God is only one. If the devotees of God say that what the Hindus have done is bad, does it also mean that the *Gita* is bad? If the Sikhs have done bad things, should we stop reading the Granth Saheb? What harm has the Granth Saheb done? What if the Sikhs go crazy, if the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis go crazy? Their religions and all the sacrifices made in the name of those religions will remain for ever. Some people who came to me from Rawalpindi were strong, sturdy, and brave, and were big business magnates. Rawalpindi was built by the Hindus and the Sikhs. So also was Lahore. And, was the whole of Pakistan built solely by the Muslims? What is Pakistan today was built by the common efforts of all, not only of one community. It would not be proper to say that India was built by the Hindus since their number is much larger. It has been built by the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs, by the Parsis and the Christians. All have contributed to making India what it is today. I told these friends that they should keep calm, and that after all, there was God to take care of everything. There is no place where there is no God. Pray to God and repeat His name, and then all will be well. They asked me what we should do

¹ According to *The Hindustan Times*, 24-9-1947, before beginning the prayer Gandhiji asked the audience whether anybody had any objection to the recitation from Koran; there was none.

about those who are in Pakistan. But I in turn asked them why they came here instead of laying down their lives there. I am firm in my belief that in spite of atrocities being committed we should remain where we are and die. If people come to kill us, let us die. But let us die with courage, repeating the name of God. I have taught the same thing to the girls. I have told them to learn the art of dying with the name of God on their lips. There may be a wicked man who refuses to see the reality—he may be a Hindu, a Sikh, a Parsi or anyone else—but they can at least refuse to be cowed down by him. If he offers money, he should be told that he may kill right at that moment instead of five minutes later, but it should be made clear to him that they will not submit to him. They should not be taken in just because of the money. I will give the same advice to the girls as long as I am alive. I cannot give them any other advice. I do not wish to forget God. That is why I am telling all that the greatest courage and understanding lie in learning the art of dying. Then alone can they live. If they do not learn the art of dying, they will die before their time. I do not wish that anybody should die before his time. I also told the Muslims that they should not leave their homes. Rather, they should die where they were. I told the same thing to the people from Rawalpindi. I will plead with the Government to do whatever they can. I told them that since they had come here, they should visit the camps and work there. I said they were strong people and should not lose heart. I told them they should not plead helplessness and be worried about lack of accommodation. I told them there was accommodation all right—Mother Earth is our house and we have the sky overhead. The Muslims who have gone away in panic have left behind their houses and their lands. Should I tell them that they should occupy the houses of those Muslims? I cannot say anything of the kind. Those houses still belong to their Muslim owners as they did in the past. They have run away in fear. If they have gone away of their own accord and if they feel that they will be happy in Pakistan, let them be happy there. Do not harm them. Let them go in peace. They should take their property and jewellery with them. The houses they leave will be in the possession of the Government and it can do whatever it chooses about them. It would not be proper if our refugees go and occupy them on their own. One thing I know for certain is that you should be strong and do as I tell you so that you can let me go from here. I want to go to the Punjab. I want to go to Lahore. I do not want to go with any police or military escort. I want to go alone, depending only on God. I want to go with

faith and trust in the Muslims there. Let them kill me if they want. I would die smiling, and silently pray that God should be kind to them. And how can God be kind to them? By making them good. With God, the only way of making them good is by purifying their hearts. God will listen to me if I do not have a feeling of animosity even for one who regards me as his enemy. Then that man would ask himself what he would have gained by killing me. He would wonder what harm I had done him. If they kill me they have a right to do so. That is why I want to go to Lahore. I want to go to Rawalpindi. Let the Government stop me if they will. But how can the Government stop me? They will have to kill me if they want to stop me. If they kill me, my death will leave a lesson for you. It will make me very happy. What will be that lesson? It will be that you may have to die but you will not wish evil to anybody.

Dhruva was a mere child. He prayed to God. What about Prahlad? He was a boy of twelve. he also did the same. And we are all their descendants. Those who are familiar with the Granth Saheb must be knowing that Guru Nanak Saheb taught that we should not have evil thoughts for anyone, nor use the sword against anyone. The greatest bravery lies in having the courage to die. If our people have to die in this manner, let us not be angry with anybody. You must admire those people for dying and pray to God that He grant a similar opportunity to all of us. Let this be our sincere prayer. I would tell you what I told those people from Rawalpindi. I told them that they should go there and meet the Hindus and Sikh refugees. They should request them to return on their own, not under police or military protection. If you avoid fighting in Delhi I will take it that God has granted my prayer. Then with the grace of God, I will go to the Punjab. Let me tell you that once peace descends on Delhi, I shall not stay here even a day longer. I have not stayed here for pleasure. I have stayed on for rendering service. I have remained here to do all that a man can do to extinguish the fire raging here. So I wish to tell you and those friends who have come from Rawalpindi how you should live and what you should do so that the fragrance of your lives spreads over the whole of India and the world.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 337-40

521. A LETTER

September 24, 1947

DEAR SISTER,¹

Brijkrishna handed me your letter just after morning prayer.

The past I do not remember. I do not know the context. The present I do know even if I am alone. I must not be party to exclusive Hindu mentality nor to killing and banishing. Undisciplined instinct may lead one to savagery.

Wait, watch and pray.

Blessings from²

BAPU

[PS.]

I wrote a note yesterday.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

522. LETTER TO DANIEL THOMAS

NEW DELHI,

September 24, 1947

DEAR DANIEL,

Of course it is good you are making eight more districts dry. There can be no rest until the whole province is dry. Are you following up the law³ by doing the constructive and educative work I pointed out⁴ the other day in the columns of *Harijan*?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

THE MINISTER OF PROHIBITION

MADRAS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *The Hindu*, 11-10-1947

¹ The superscription and subscription are in Hindi.

² *ibid*

³ Prohibition Act

⁴ *Vide* "Prohibition of Intoxicants", 8-9-1947.

523. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

September 24, 1947

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

You have given Rs. 1,000 in connection with the Dharmanand [Kosambi] Memorial but a sum of Rs. 25,000 is required to run it properly. You should collect the amount. Write to me if you can do it.

Father¹ had undertaken to shoulder all the responsibility for the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha]. That too you ought to take up. Talk it over with Kakasaheb and then write to me.

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

524. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI²

NEW DELHI,

September 24, 1947

Now tell me the final amount and I will arrange it. I don't know how long I shall be alive. After my death all the responsibility will rest on you people. And you will have to discharge it properly.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10815

525. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

September 24, 1947

CHI. KAKA,

Please go on with your work regarding the Dharmanand [Kosambi] Memorial. I will collect Rs. 25,000. Just now I am writing³ to Kamalnayan about it as also about the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha]. I had a letter from Amritlal also regarding the Hindustani Prachar and have asked Bisen to reply⁴ to it.

I don't follow what you mean by your reference to the

¹ Jamnalal Bajaj

² This is an extract from a letter from Bisen to the addressee; *vide* also the following item.

³ *Vide* "Letter to Kamalnayan Bajaj", 24-9-1947.

⁴ *Vide* the preceding item.

misunderstanding in connection with Dharmanand. I don't have the slightest idea that what I am saying on the subject now is different from what I said before. I certainly don't wish to back out. I have not transferred, and do not wish to transfer, the responsibility of collecting the money to you. I do feel, of course, that I would not have undertaken that responsibility, if you had not shown interest in the scheme. But I see no inconsistency in that. Please explain to me again. If there has been any error on my part. I will admit it. I have often confessed that my memory is not what it used to be. As I have admitted my shortcoming, the question of reminding me of it again does not arise.

It is no doubt worthy of you that you should work as the chairman, secretary and peon all rolled into one in regard to this scheme. But it would certainly be better if we could get Bala Saheb¹, or Cousins², or Rukminibehn or Sophia Wadia. Do what you think proper.

I have no doubt at all that we should ask for no grants from the Central Government for Hindustani propaganda work. Let Sunderlal or the Urdu Anjuman get them. We do not wish to follow their example.

I agree with what you write about the Muslims. If possible, I will write³ on the subject in the very next issue.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10991. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

526. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

September 24, 1947

CHI. RAMESHWARI,

All the letters you sent recently have been received. The long one too I read with close attention. My heart is with you but until the fire here dies down I shall be useless there.

I got all the letters of Brijlal too. I also showed them to Jawaharlal.

¹ B. G. Kher

² Dr. James H. Cousins

³ Vide "Hindustani", 27-9-1947.

If your services are not required there, you may certainly come here after meeting your mother. Here too there is plenty of work. It would be best to live at Harijan. Niwas; a refugee camp is situated nearby.

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

527. TALK WITH JAMSAHEB OF NAWANAGAR

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,

September 24, 1947

GANDHIJI: If war comes to Kathiawar it would be the fault of the rulers.

JAMSAHEB: But where do we have the arms? Before the 15th we were treated as step sons.

If the ruler has the subjects with him, what can a single Junagadh¹ do? If even one ruler decides that he will function as a trustee of his subjects, he can rule for ever. The rulers express their willingness, readily enough, but I doubt whether they do so from the heart. If you can win the hearts of your people, rest assured Junagadh will be with you. If a man is pure he can have nothing secret. In India the Princes are the weakest part. But through the skill of Sardar all the Princes have now been brought in. However, the rulers of Kathiawar should be united. That is why I have been talking of the unity of Kathiawar these last so many years. The railways of Kathiawar are in a bad shape. Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Morvi, Porbundar, have all their separate railways. In the third class there are not even lights. That is why these trains were called Babu's trains.² When I used to be a student of Shamaldas College the state of affairs was the same. This is merely an example. If there is one administration, one currency and if the people are united the Sardar will not say no. Kathiawar has much potential strength.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 48

¹ The reference is to its Nawab's decision to accede to Pakistan. The State, however, subsequently joined the Indian Union.

² In Kathiawar the ruler was addressed as Bapu.

528. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The *bhajan* which you heard today applies well to the present situation. We can all describe ourselves today as 'wrecked boats'. And then we pray to God that He may bring us to the shore, that is, without His grace our boat cannot reach the shore. This is the condition of our country today and I see it everyday. Somehow, a feeling of animosity has taken possession of us. There is so much anger in the hearts of both the Hindus and the Muslims, that we would not let the Muslims live in Delhi. The Hindus and the Sikhs have been driven out of Pakistan. I hear that even the minds of small children have been poisoned. It is true that all that is the propaganda of the Muslim League. I am a witness to the propaganda of the Muslim League that the Muslims would *take* Pakistan by force, not by negotiating for it, not by pleading their case with the Hindus and other non-Muslims. It was our misfortune that for years they went on clamouring that they would take Pakistan by force. But that will never do. What is the point in having it by force? In a way we can say that they have not taken Pakistan by force. Rather we have granted it, the Congress has granted it. There would have been no Pakistan without the British agreeing to the demand. However much the Congress might have agreed to it, the ultimate power was in the hands of the British. They had to give up that power. Why? Because they could not have ruled here any longer. We did not fight against them with the sword. Ours was a war without weapons. We say that ours was a non-violent struggle. That is how India has won freedom. India was partitioned. The Congress agreed to the division. The Congress felt that there was no point in brothers going on fighting. The better thing would be to grant them what they wanted. But some of them feel that they have not got Pakistan in full. But they have accepted what was granted, leaving the rest of it for the future. So, we did get our freedom but we could not digest it with all the poison everywhere. And the dispute between us did not end. The supporters of the Muslim League delivered poisonous speeches. Are all the people living in Pakistan Muslims? There are also the Hindus, the Parsis, the Sikhs and the Christians living there. Let them make all

in their country happy. Let them prove to them that all of them will have equal rights. The Government will be no doubt theirs because they are in the majority. That is all right, but the Government has to function with a sense of justice. They did say so, but it could not be carried out. Why should I go into the reasons as to why it could not be done? I know everything that has happened there. The Muslims went berserk. They thought that since they were now free they could kill and slaughter. It all started from there. And once it started, there were the Sikhs who are also warriors. How could they take it lying down? They also started killing and slaughtering. That is the story which is not yet over.

Thousands of people come to me and say that they cannot live there any longer. They say that they are being forced to embrace Islam and if they fail to do so they are threatened that they will be kept as slaves. How could they agree to such a condition? They have come here under compulsion. We can embrace Islam of our own free choice. But getting converted to Islam out of fear is another matter. One cannot abandon one's religion for the sake of earning one's livelihood. Abandoning religion under compulsion is not religion but irreligion. What is the value of mere survival of a man or woman who has lost his or her self-respect—and religion constitutes self-respect. Let me tell you that those who give up their religion for the sake of money, jewellery or employment, cannot be following any religion. They do not deserve to be called Hindus, nor can they be good Muslims. Do we become Muslims just by reciting the *Kalma* under compulsion? I do not recite here the *Kalma* but *fateha*. Both are remarkable. It is ordained in the *Kalma* that there is only one God and Hazrat Mohammed is His Prophet. The earlier prophets do not count before him. But it is clearly stated in the *fateha* that God is our Lord and Master. He can protect everyone; let Him protect us too. But even though *fateha* is wonderful, how can one be forced to recite it? If we recite it, it can be only of our own free will. But if somebody forces me to recite it under threat of gun, I would certainly not like to do it. I have just a handful of bones in my body. But my heart belongs to me. So do your hearts belong to you and the hearts of these girls belong to them. These girls can declare that they would never give up their dharma. But today we are all facing a challenge. In such a situation, what should India do? How should we act? That is a big problem before you. The trains coming from Pakistan these days do not bring the Muslims. The Hindus and the Sikhs are brought in those trains.

Some get killed in the train. And the people who go from here are Muslims who are killed on the way. I am told that I should count the figures. What figures should I count? I have no figures with me. And what will I do knowing the figures? I would only say that one may consume one bottle of liquor and get intoxicated. Someone else may drink two bottles and also get completely intoxicated. Both get intoxicated. But another man drinks something by which he cannot get intoxicated, such as clean water from a river. You may call it liquor but it cannot intoxicate anyone. Who would call that water alcohol? For alcohol is the thing that robs one of all one's senses and turns one crazy. The thing is we are all intoxicated at the moment. Now suppose the Muslim League does something crazy because something got into its head. And then we think that if they can behave like that let us also behave in the same manner. You may want to rule the whole of India and destroy Pakistan. But I tell you that we have agreed to the formation of Pakistan. Where then is the question of destroying it? We cannot destroy it. We cannot destroy it with our physical strength or with the help of the sword. If we try to destroy Pakistan, both the countries are going to sink. Ours is a wrecked ship. We are sinking today. If you imagine today that we should fight and win, I would say that even before you win some other world power is going to swallow you. It would swallow both the countries. If all my friends, who are sensible people and who have spent many years in such work, understand this much, we would be safe. But how could that happen when both are busy emptying whisky bottles and enjoy doing so? I would entreat them to discard the whisky bottle and throw it into the sea because it contains poison. We shall not harm the Muslims any more. If they wish to go on their own, we would let them go. But we shall not force them to leave. They are in their own houses. They are not in a majority. Why should we become cowards and harass them? We are free. The whole country is free. Why should they be under the impression that we are going to devour them? Are the Muslims such creatures that the Hindus can devour them if they are available? The Congress has made so much sacrifice. Year after year it has been making highest sacrifices which involved a large number of Hindus and Muslims. Have they all been possessed by some madness now after freedom? Shall we throw away in our intoxication that freedom which has come after so many sacrifices? How shameful it is! I would not tell you these things if you get excited after reading the news in the Press and think that they can never belong to you. I told you

yesterday that the whole trouble can be stopped. How can it be done? We must purify ourselves. Purifying ourselves means being courageous. A person who can be courageous would not indulge in such activities. You have the support of your Government. The Government looks after the administration of the country. Gone are the days of the British Government when we could not refer our problems to it. Today you have your own Government. We can tell the Government how it should go about settling these things. After all, there are only $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores Muslims in the country. Why should we be scared of them? Suppose you kill $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores Muslims, what would you do after that? And there are so many Muslims in Pakistan. Whom would you kill there? The Pakistanis would like to settle accounts with you for those $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores Muslims here. You would not be able to accept that challenge, because they would have the support of the whole world. That is why I say that we should remain pure. Let us keep our accounts clear. Let us not be in the position of debtors. If we are in the position of creditors, I tell you that your Government will have to give ultimatum to Pakistan. All the Hindus and Sikhs who have come from there have to go back and Pakistan would have to look after them. Pakistan has gone to the extent of saying that all the minority communities in Pakistan will enjoy the same rights as the Muslims. They will enjoy freedom of expression and worship, of visiting temples and gurdwaras. They will of course not enjoy and political power. I can very well understand that our mutual trust is shaken. But does the remedy lie in driving out the Muslims who are here with their properties, homes and children? That should not happen. It would be great cowardice. I want to tell you only this thing that we must abandon the idea of taking revenge on the Muslims. And we must so strengthen our hearts that the whole of Hindustan is convinced that nothing is going to happen in Delhi. But some things have happened in Delhi. The Muslims have been driven out. I do not say that those who have gone away should be brought back. But those who have stayed behind should be allowed to live in peace. Later on we can bring back the people who have gone away. If any Muslim misbehaves, report the matter to the Government. Those Muslims must accept the authority of the Government. If the Government permits you to kill them saying that it has no army, that Government has got to end. That means allowing goondaism to carry the day, which is not the function of a government. I want to tell you that you can influence

the Government as much as you can. But do not take the law into your hands, do not use your guns and do not kill anyone. If you do this much, victory will be ours, and our ship which is beginning to sink will be saved. God is always on the side of truth. God can never abandon us but if we give up God, if we forget Him and abandon the right path, what can God do?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 340-5

529. IMPLICATIONS OF FASTING¹

A friend writes :

It seems to me that to put your life in jeopardy has become the final and natural remedy for you. Be that as it may, I cannot help thinking that the remedy is akin to keeping a patient alive by administering injections or oxygen to him.

The above reflection proceeds from pain due to affection. Nevertheless, I must say that the writer has not given much thought to his criticism. Many other well-wishers probably entertain the same hasty opinion. Hence this public discussion.

The critic's simile is inapplicable. Administration of injections or oxygen are outward remedies, calculated merely to prolong bodily existence. Therefore, they are properly described as of momentary value. Nothing will be lost if those remedies were not applied. A physical body cannot be made immortal. All that medical skill can do is to prolong the existence for a while. This temporary prolongation confers no lasting benefit.

On the other hand, fasting is never intended to affect another's body. It must affect his heart. Hence it is related to the soul. And in this sense the effect, such as it is, cannot be described as temporary. It is of a permanent character. Whether the fasting person is spiritually fit for the task and whether he has properly applied the remedy is a different matter, irrelevant to the present purpose.

Of all the fasts of which I have recollection, of one² only it can be said that though there was no fault in the conception it was alloyed with external remedy with contraindication. Had this mistake not been made, I have no doubt that its natural, beneficial result would have

¹ The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 5-10-1947.

² From March 3 to 6, 1939.

flown from it as in the others. I refer to the fast I had undertaken in Rajkot against the late Thakore Saheb. I saw my mistake, retraced my step and averted a dangerous crisis. The last was in Calcutta in the current month of September.¹ Admittedly the result was as it should have been. Having reference to the spirit, I regard it as permanent. Time alone would show whether the effect was of a lasting character or not. It must depend upon the purity of the fasting person and the accuracy of his perception. That enquiry would be irrelevant here. Moreover, the fasting man is not competent to undertake the enquiry. It can only be done by a properly equipped impartial person and that too after my death.

NEW DELHI, September 25, 1947

Harijan, 5-10-1947

530. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

NEW DELHI,

September 25, 1947

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

There are many Harijans in Sind. They are in great distress and are faced with starvation. They should be transferred to Kathiawar. If, therefore, your Company sends over a ship or two to bring them over free of charge to some port in Kathiawar, their safety can be ensured. It is doubtful just now whether they will be able to preserve their religion or save the honour of their womenfolk. Bapa will see you with this letter. Please do this immediately, if possible. You may show this letter to Walchandbhai² or any others in your Company with whom you feel like sharing it. I am addressing a similar letter³ to Shoorjibhai.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4810. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

¹ From September 1 to 4

² Walchand Hirachand

³ *Vide* the following item.

531. LETTER TO SHOORJI VALLABHDAS

NEW DELHI,
September 25, 1947

BHAI SHOORJIBHAI,

There are many Harijans in Sind. They are completely ruined and have nothing to eat. They should be sent to Kathiawar. So if your Company sends over one or two steamers to bring them over free of charge to some port in Kathiawar they will reach here safely. At the moment it is doubtful whether they will be able to preserve their religion or the womenfolk their honour.

Bapa will bring this letter to you. If possible, do this immediately. I have written a similar letter¹ to Shanitkumar also.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4098

532. DISCUSSION WITH J. B. KRIPALANI²

Thursday, September 25, 1947

In reply to a question by Acharya Kripalani whether, in the circumstances, it would not be better to work for a planned exodus of non-Muslims from Sind instead of allowing them to be squeezed out and turned upon India as homeless destitutes, Gandhiji replied that his opposition to a permanent exchange of populations remained as strong as ever. After what the Acharya had told him, he said, he, in fact, felt all the more strongly that the place of Sind Congress leaders at that juncture was in Sind. They should go there, and, if necessary, die there and by their example teach the non-Muslims to meet with courage, faith and self-respect the crisis that faced

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² Towards the close of September, Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President, had met Jinnah at Karachi and drawn his attention to the rapidly deteriorating position of the minority community in Sind. In reply, he got only a long tirade against the Indian Government. The minority community in Sind, Jinnah maintained, had nothing to complain of. They had not taken kindly to the establishment of Pakistan, that the sooner they became reconciled to their changed status the better for them. The Pakistan Government, he said, had nothing to answer for; on the contrary, it was the innocent victim of wanton and malicious exaggeration by the Indian Press.

them.¹

My frank advice to one who is a Minister is not to come to the Working Committee. Profulla Babu cannot leave Calcutta even for a day in the present circumstances. But these who listens to me? Mine is a lone voice. Mathai Saheb² says that we shall have to take permission from the Pakistan Government to run more trains and they talk of stopping the trains altogether. I totally disapprove of the exchange of populations. Let us declare war. We shall fight and die fighting if we are destined to. They have abducted and molested 12-year-old girls. What does that indicate?

Go through Kunzru's statement³ of this very day. Whatever it be, my advice to all of you is not to bother about me. I am here in Delhi and shall do what I can. This is an open secret. Even in the prayers I have said that today I am alone [in my mission].

It is a sad state of affairs that Rajendra Babu⁴ has to look to Australia for food. I don't feel that we have won freedom. Should Hindustan known as the land of gold beg food from abroad? I feel very much pained about all this. If I had my way I would tell the people to die of hunger or else work hard [to produce food] but not a single grain should be imported from outside.

If peace is not established here, the whole of Hindustan will be on fire and I will not be able to do anything about it. I keep thinking where I stand in all this. I have come here and am doing something but I feel I have become useless now. Today power is in our hands but I would be the biggest fool if I thought that I alone am right. But I would like it if none of you bothered to see me, much less consult me. I shall be put on trial only if Ghanshyamdas asks me to quit. See if I can live in a hut. I work fully aware of my own limitations.

It is possible that someone might molest my girls. But if the girls are brave they will die but will not allow anyone to molest them. You can notify the Pakistan Government that if they persist in such anarchy you will take matters in your own hands. In the Boer War the Boers were just a handful but they were not afraid to die. I have spent

¹ This paragraph is from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 475.

² John Mathai, Minister for Railways

³ The statement criticizing officers of the British army appeared in *The Hindustan Times*, 25-9-1947. Vide also Appendix "Interview with Lord Mountbatten", 25-9-1947.

⁴ Rajendra Prasad, Union Minister for Food and Agriculture

20 years amongst those brave people. Shall we come to our senses only after the goondas usurp our place? I advise you and Choithram to go to Sind and die if need be.

I have become useless because I cannot make the Pakistan authorities do the right thing. But if normalcy is restored in Delhi I would like to go and die there. I am not being arrogant when I say that I know the art of dying but I have the courage to say it. But God alone knows if I will run away when I am being shot at or attacked with knives or will get angry with the attacker. If this happens then also there is no harm because the people will come to know that the man they looked upon as a Mahatma was not a true Mahatma. I too shall come to know where I stand. It is possible that I may still utter 'Rama Rama' when I am shot at or attacked. Let the outcome be either; ultimately it will be for good.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 50-2

533. TALK WITH REFUGEES¹

Thursday, September 25, 1947

GANDHIJI: I am doing my level best. And if you wish Delhi to prosper, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis should live as one. Even if you are sore, why should you take revenge upon your brothers? Whatever is to be done should be done by the Government. Ask me what you wish to. I am not going to make a speech.

A REFUGEE: I am an advocate from Montgomery. I saw more than two hundred women and children being surrounded by a [Muslim] mob. One of them killed an old man and then sat on his chest. I have come after witnessing such things there, and here too the condition is the same. I am a votary of non-violence. The pity is that Muslims cannot live with Hindus. This is not a new thing. It has been so for the last so many years. Now their goal is: "*Hanske liya Pakistan, larke lenge Hindustan.*"² It is high time the Hindus here took sides clearly. Will the Muslims remain loyal to Hindustan?

The question is apt. Many Hindu and Sikh brothers tell me the

¹ As a result of a wrong newspaper report about a public meeting, some eight hundred refugees turned up to attend it. About fifty of them were allowed to meet Gandhiji.

² Meaning: "Laughing we have taken Pakistan, fighting we shall take Hindustan."

same. There was a time when the Congress was popular. Today if it does not adhere to its policy it will be finished.

If the Muslims are not loyal Islam will disappear from the face of the earth. One who is prepared to die for the sake of his faith and dies when the time comes is a true man. Why shouldn't one die bravely rather than die a lingering death of sickness and paralysis? Suppose Maulana Saheb comes to me with a sword commanding me to read the *Kalma* or face death at his hands; I would prefer to die then. I would dance if such an occasion arose.

Every day Muslims come here to meet me. Many people have told me that they are traitors. But treachery does not pay. What will they gain by deceiving me? I don't have a single pie. Even if a few of the four-and-a-half crores have arms they can do nothing. How can we govern our country if we live in fear? The world will not tolerate your killing your brothers. Today the world has become small. There are atom bombs which can wipe out a city like London within five or six minutes. Hindus are a mere speck on the earth. If the Muslims turn traitors, the Government will shoot them down. It is sheer barbarity to stab them stealthily.

Last night I could not sleep at all. It was raining and I was thinking about the plight of the refugees. Indians are said to be mercy incarnate. Will they lose their name? Newspaper correspondents from abroad laugh at us and all of them report that India is utterly impoverished. There is nothing to eat and drink. It is time we took this warning and became human.

I have told you all that I wished to. Now you can do as you wish.

A SIKH: I have my business in Pakistan. I am coming from there. If even five per cent of the Hindus can return to and stay in Pakistan, then we shall somehow accommodate 95 per cent Muslims here.

I won't be satisfied with five per cent. I can rest in peace only after each and every one of them can stay fearlessly where they wish to. If you can make Delhi peaceful, I wish to go to Pakistan also. Of course I cannot revive the dead, but those who are left can certainly settle there once again. Can you see Punja Saheb turned into a mosque? I would much rather die. All is well with you if you learn the art of dying. Then all of you have to go back to your own places and I shall die here. If you wish to seek my advice, I can only say that all those Muslims who have left out of fear should come back and settle

here again. If Pakistan does not become pak¹, it will perish on its own. At the moment all of you are full of anger.

A REFUGEE: The Congress has already committed one blunder. Now it will commit another. Hindus and Muslims will never be able to stay together. Lakhs of our people are starving and naked. But nothing has been done for them. How many weapons have been surrendered up to now? How can we trust such people? We wish that the houses vacated by the Muslims should be given to us. There is an agreement between the two Governments that they should not make searches. Still the Pakistan Government continues to make them and our Government is doing nothing about it. The Pakistan Government is taking advantage of this situation. There the people are getting thousands of licences and arms and here we have been forced to surrender them. We are happy that Muslims can settle in Delhi. But if you come over to Pakistan with us and help us to get back our things, we do not wish to stay in Delhi even for a day. Nothing will be done till you decide to pay them back in their own coin. Today we are without a roof. The condition of women and children is terrible.

What you say is really pathetic. You are right in saying that you do not wish to stay here. Go to [Rawal]pindi. Here the Government is my friend. What can I do if I do not know the Pakistan Government? But you should understand that I am using all the strength and energy that I have. It is up to you to believe this. Here they are thinking of setting up a new city. But I am not a minister. I am doing as much as a human being can. I am just an ordinary man like you. It is a matter of shame for India to think of throwing out four-and-a-half crore Muslims. It is not practical to do so. I cannot say that all the arms have been surrendered to me. But that is not of much importance. Arms can never protect anyone. Try to understand this if you can. You will not hear anything besides this from me. I will only say 'die but do not kill' and I shall die saying this.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 52-6

¹ Pure

534. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
September 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

We are faced with a sudden calamity. Our freedom is not even on-and-a-half months old. What can a child of a month and 10 days do? But we are strong and have been fighting against British imperialism till today. Are we going to bow down in the face of difficulties? Let us talk only about the post-independence period. It is not that we were not prepared for it. We did become free. But our people started thinking that freedom meant freedom to do anything they chose. With that attitude we have rendered the task of the Government very difficult. If a man cannot keep his hands clean, how can he see clean things and how far can he appreciate such things? When we have rogues amongst us, who would blame whom for being rogues? If anyone is straight away branded a rogue, the question becomes all the more complicated. This is no true freedom. Nor is this the way to win it. That is why I say that we should tell our Government that as far as possible we shall help it. Supposing the Government does not get such help, would we then start doing what has been done and is being done in Pakistan? Would that teach them a lesson? I tell you that is not the way to teach them a lesson. That is not the way things go on in the world. If people fight among themselves the Government would ask them to stop fighting. They would be told to seek the help of the police. If the police did not listen to them, they could go to the residence of the magistrate and report their case there. Whatever could possibly be done would be done there. If there were only some stray cases of fighting the magistrate could settle the dispute. But in this case there is confrontation between two large communities. What can the Government do? It is not the Government of the British receiving orders from Britain. Now the Government is yours. This means that you can order the Government not to do a particular thing. You can throw out that Government. Such is your power. If you do not use that power in the proper manner, you will find yourselves in great trouble. And, let me tell you, today we are in great danger. Pakistan is no doubt facing danger. But so are we.

In reply to this¹ I would merely say that it is our Government and it is doing what needs to be done. If something still remains to be done, that too would be taken up. I have told you where your duty lies. I do not wish to say anything more. What is your duty? It is to live together in amity and not to regard the Muslims as your enemies. Wrongdoers would automatically meet their own end. But if we consider any one individual as our enemy and beat him and kill him, it is cowardice on our part, and it has a weakening effect on us. Those who have courage and strength should not quarrel with others. Because we fight only with those whom we do not trust. It is all futile. What is the point of fighting? God in them and in us is the same. I had told you that we were not the arbiters of our destiny. We are mere creatures in God's hand. Only if God helps us can we protect our honour. Otherwise not. Plead with Him, not with man. Plead with Him who brings redemption to the fallen. He is right in our midst. When He is there to protect us, why should we be angry with anyone or be afraid? Let the Muslims do what they want, let them keep any number of arms, let them behave like scoundrels and let them be traitors. If they are traitors the Government will deal with them. Everywhere in the world traitors are shot down as a rule. If anybody becomes a traitor, he commits a great crime against the State. It is a crime greater even than murder. That is why traitors are shot down. I can understand that they may have become traitors. But killing them on suspicion of treason does not behove man. It is the work of a coward.

I told you yesterday,² and I am telling you today, that ours is a wrecked boat. It is quite true that God alone can bring it to the shore. But we also must make efforts. If the boat has a hole somewhere we must try to stop water coming in with whatever may be available to us. But I have seen that if water starts flowing into the boat, they throw it out with the same speed. The boat then continues to sail in spite of the leak. But this can happen only if God helps. With God's grace it moves and reaches the shore, but if God does not help it sinks. That is why I would say that man should make effort and seek the help of God. There is a fire raging in Delhi. There is fire in other places too.

¹ Before the prayers started, someone passed on a slip to Gandhiji stating that the Pakistan Government was driving away Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan while Gandhiji advised the Indian Government to allow the Muslims to stay in the Indian Union as equal citizens. How could the Union Government bear this double burden?

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 24-9-1947.

Every place is burning. It is our duty to extinguish that fire, pour water over it, without which it cannot be put out. Our first task is to make the people understand [the situation]. I try to convince them as well as you in the same terms. I shall repeat the same thing to the whole world till my last breath. The glorious land that was India has become a cremation-ground today. It has become that barbarous.

I am saying out of experience that our police and the army have to be the servants of the people and should not behave like masters. The days of officialdom are over. It is my way to get things done through love. I am pained to hear it being said that we have a Hindu army or a Punjabi army and that the Hindu police will slaughter the Muslims. I am also amused. If this should be so, I think the police and the military together would crush India and India's ship would sink. Today we have our own army. I do not believe that the British people are all worthless. However, most of the British have already left. Only some officers are left behind. Granted that they are all worthless, though I do not believe they are. But if they are worthless, they have to go. Supposing the army in Pakistan does something wrong, should the army in India do the same thing? Because the police in Pakistan does evil things, should our police also do the same? I wish to tell you this and warn you of the consequences. If all start behaving that way, India will be destroyed and our freedom, which is one month and ten days old, will not even complete two months. Let us not create such a situation. What should we do to avoid this? We must be courageous. We should not be afraid of anyone. We should be afraid only of God. Let us pray to God that He may carry our boat to the shore. The condition we have to fulfil is: Whatever may happen in Pakistan, whatever other people may do, let us keep our hearts clean. We must remember that if we do not do this, we shall all become monsters. We have to keep our India pure and clean and we must be tolerant. The Muslims have got to be loyal to India. If they are not loyal they must be shot. Can we do that ourselves? That is not our job. The Muslims are our brothers. They have got their homes and everything here. Hence we must realize that those who are staying here should live here by all means. Let there be no mutual fear. I would appeal to you to have faith, for faith generates faith and suspicion gives rise to suspicion. Keep on strengthening your faith.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 345-9

535. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

NEW DELHI,

September 26, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. You have not fallen with Kanchan, you have both risen and fallen. If anybody is to be blamed, I am ready to take the blame on myself. I understand your attitude of mind. It remains the same as it was. Never mind if you have more children but be calm.

I have no doubt that you cannot stay in the house formerly occupied by Durgabehn¹. No matter what type of persons Nayakum and Ashadevi are, the members of the Ashram should not expect to have what they get.

Do only what appeals to you. Nothing is certain about me. Do nothing to please me.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7222. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

¹ Wife of Mahadev Desai

536. DISCUSSION WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[September 26, 1947]¹

GANDHIJI: Have you returned as the king of the forest or as a jackal?²

SUHRAWARDY: Sir, only as a mouse. The mouse is a very discreet creature.

GANDHIJI: Now, listen. Once there was a lion. He got caught in a hunter's net. A mouse pursued by an owl from above and a mongoose from below also ran into the net. "You give me protection, I shall set you free," the mouse proposed to the lion. The lion agreed. The bargain was struck. The mongoose scuttled away. But the round, shining eyes of the owl were still riveted on his prey. "When are you going to begin?", the lion impatiently asked the mouse. "Where is the hurry?", the cunning mouse replied, "I shall set you free when the hunter appears on the scene." And instead of setting the lion free, it crouched under his fur and had a quiet nap! The lion was furious, but what could he do? When the hunter appeared on the scene, the mouse unhurriedly gnawed at the net-strings and before the enraged lion could do anything, away the cunning creature scuttled for its own hole. . . . You know 'wily whiskers' is a very treacherous creature. It bites you unawares while you are asleep. It is only when the blood comes out that you know of its presence. Is that how you are going to act?

SUHRAWARDY: Sir, you know everything. So what can I say?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 479-80

537. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

What is going on is not Sikhism, nor Islam nor Hinduism. We are somewhat familiar with each of these. Can any religion which indulges in unworthy things survive? Sikhism started with Guru Nanak. What did Guru Nanak teach? He said that God is known by several names including Allah, Rahim, Khuda. This is so in all

¹ From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I

² Vide "Discussion with H. S. Suhrawardy", 18-9-1947.

religions. Nanak Saheb tried to bring together all religions. Kabir Saheb did the same thing. It is said that that age is gone.

Today a man—Guru Dutt¹—came to me. He is a big vaidya. As he narrated his tale he burst into tears. He agreed that in the light of the training he had received from me he should have laid down his life there. But he confessed he had not the courage to do so. He told me that he had always respected me and felt that what I said was the only right thing. But it was a different matter following truth in practice. He said the truth was that he was not able to carry it out in practice. He was prepared to go back if I said so. I told him that if we were convinced that we could never expect justice at the hands of the Pakistan Government and if they did not admit their mistakes then we had our own Cabinet which included Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and many other good men. If even they cannot stop the Pakistan Government from indulging in those things, then ultimately they would have to resort to war. Let us arrive at a mutual and friendly settlement. Why can we not do so? We Hindus and Muslims were friends till yesterday. Have we become such enemies today that we cannot trust one another? If you say that you are never going to trust them, then the two sides would have to fight. Speaking in terms of logic it may be asked what else would people do when they have army and police and are forced to depend on them? If they decide to kill two persons for every person killed in Pakistan, who would care for whom? If we want to have justice, let me tell you the matter does not lie with you or me. It is the function of the Government. Tell the Government, it is there to help us. We should not take the offensive. But we must be ready to fight, because when war comes it does not come after giving a warning. We should not take any initiative to fight, but if the other side takes the initiative, both the Governments face their doom. War is no joke. After all, how long can I go on stressing the point? But if there is no settlement between the two sides, there would be no alternative. In that event, if all the Hindus have to die fighting, I would not be sorry. But we have to choose the path of justice. I would not bother if all the Hindus and all the Muslims have to die following that path. And, then, if it is proved that all those $4\frac{1}{2}$

¹ Pandit Thakur Dutt of Lahore

crores Muslims are fifth-columnists, I have no doubt that they have to be shot down or executed. And like the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs living in Pakistan too should be treated in the same manner; if they betray that country, we cannot be partial in their case. If we regard all the Muslims as fifth-columnists, will not the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan be also considered fifth-columnists? That would not do. The Hindus and the Sikhs staying there can come here by all means if they do not wish to continue staying there. In that case, it is the first duty of the Indian Government to give them jobs and make their lives comfortable. But they cannot continue to stay there and become petty spies and work for us and not for Pakistan. Such a thing cannot be done and I would not be a party to it. I do not have any magic wand with me. Nor do I possess a sword. I have only one thing with me, and that is, to recite the name of God and work in the name of God. Everything is accomplished by following that path. It is not that I am the only one in possession of it. All of you, including that little girl standing there, possess it. God alone has the power to perform miracles. What do you think I can do without the grace of God? But this much I have realized. I have been a fighter for many many years, more than 60 years. But I fight not with the sword, but with the weapons of truth and non-violence. Those weapons are still with us. But it is not within my power alone to use them. I can do nothing without your support.

We are going to preserve our freedom with the strength with which we have won it. We defeated the British with that strength. We did not defeat them with the help of arms. Ours was the unarmed power with which we defeated them. Whoever wants to live in India, whether Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, will have to fight and die for India. If all the Indians would lay down their lives for the country, no power could defeat us or push us back, irrespective of the army we may or may not have. The Muslims have said they would be loyal to India. Let us trust them with all our heart. Let us remember that truth alone triumphs never untruth,—*Satyameva jayate nanritam*¹. This is a great saying. It contains the essence of our religion. Let us learn it by heart and always remember it. And then I would say and say with all

¹ *Mundakopanishad*, III. i. 6

the force at my command that we would stand firm even if the whole world was against us. No one can kill us. No one can destroy Hinduism. If it is destroyed, it would be at our own hands. Similarly if Islam is destroyed in India, it would be at the hands of the Muslims living in Pakistan. It cannot be destroyed by the Hindus.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 349-52

538. *LETTER TO RANGANATH PRADHAN*

[After *September 26, 1947*]¹

ASSISTANT DEWAN SAHEB,

Your letter of 26th September arrived here yesterday from the *Navajivan* Office. I am not in a position to give my views about *lathi* training. You may consult Sardar Patel. It is he who is in charge of the affairs dealing with the rulers and the subjects.

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

¹ This is a reply to a letter dated September 26, 1947 from Ranganath Pradhan, Narsingpur Durbar.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHI¹

July 9, 1947

I think and hope that I have satisfactorily cleared up the misunderstanding referred to in his letter of the 27/28th June, 1947. I told him that my sole object up to 15th August was to ensure a peaceful and efficient transfer of power to the two Dominions in accordance with the will of the people of India and their respective future Governments. He next raised with me the fear which he had expressed consistently in his recent post-prayer meetings that the British would leave a legacy of war, and that the partitioned armies would be left in a state in which there was every likelihood that they would be used for making war on each other.

2. I told him that of course I shared his view that nothing should be left undone which would ensure the removal of the threat of war between two neighbouring members of the British Commonwealth.

3. I told him in confidence that Lord Ismay was this day seeing the British Chiefs of Staff to discuss the future Commonwealth defence arrangements with particular reference to India. While I could not prophesy what would be the outcome of those discussions, I hoped that they would result in defence discussions between the United Kingdom, Pakistan and India taking place after the 15th August and before 31st March.

4. I pointed out that the institution of the Joint Defence Council, which would last until at least that date, would remove all risk of war before that date, and that this gave us eight months in which to arrange some form of agreement which would reduce the chances of the two countries fighting each other.

5. I pointed out that the greatest guarantee for the future peace of the Indian Sub-Continent lay in both nations remaining members of the British Commonwealth. He reproved me for using the word 'nations' and invited me to use States or Countries instead.

6. I further pointed out that so long as Pakistan and India remained within the Commonwealth, there was no reason why a Commonwealth Conference should not be called to Delhi since this was the most central capital in the whole Commonwealth, and at such a meeting arrangements could be discussed which would

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 9-7-1947.

ensure other members of the Commonwealth devising means to prevent Pakistan and India from making war on each other.

7. We next discussed the question of the Indian States. He asked me to do everything in my power to ensure that the British did not leave a legacy of Balkanization and disruption on the 15th August by encouraging the States to declare their independence, or by leaving the arrangements between the States and the Dominions of India and Pakistan in a state of chaos.

8. He further went on and said that H. E. H.'s decision about Berar returning to the Nizam was a crime.

9. I told him that I had already invited H. E. H.'s representatives to meet me on the 11th to discuss the questions of Berar and Secunderabad. I told him that on the 25th July all States including Hyderabad would send representatives to discuss the stand-still agreement, and I hoped also the terms under which they would join one or the other dominion.

10. I told him that since Pandit Nehru had authorized me to negotiate in the first instance alone with the States' representatives on the basis of their being granted full membership of the dominion on adhering only to the three Central subjects mentioned in the Cabinet Mission Plan, I felt very hopeful of being able to bring in almost every State including even Travancore.

11. I made it a condition however that no leaders must make any more threatening or provocative speeches.

12. I told Mr. Gandhi "You always talk about wooing people, and yet in the case of the States you threaten. Would you woo a girl you wanted to marry with a stick and expect her to accept?" He laughed and admitted the truth of this statement, and said he would make no statements that would embarrass my negotiations.

From a photostat: C. W. 11032. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust

APPENDIX II

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHI¹

July 29, 1947

I explained that I had called this meeting to consider Pandit Nehru's projected visit to Kashmir. I recalled the history of this affair from the time I arrived, and said

¹*Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 29-7-1947. Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel also were present.

that Pandit Nehru had from the very beginning repeatedly expressed to me his strong desire to visit Kashmir which I understood was based on the incidents that occurred there during the visit of the Cabinet Mission last year. I expressed sincere sympathy with Pandit Nehru's mental distress at having been unable to keep his promise to visit his friends in Kashmir and endeavour to effect the release of Sheikh Abdulla.

I reminded the meeting that it had been agreed that Mr. Gandhi should visit Kashmir in place of Pandit Nehru if this was generally thought to be a better solution : and I took the full blame for having delayed this visit by offering to go myself to Kashmir. I repeated my regret at having been unable to discuss the release of Sheikh Abdulla with the Maharaja on the last day of my visit owing to His Highness's indisposition. I admitted having asked Mr. Gandhi to wait until the arrival of the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Pandit Kak. But I said I was at a loss to understand how, consequent on Pandit Kak's visit to both Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Nehru to ask neither of them to go, the result should have been that Pandit Nehru wished to go instead of Mr. Gandhi.

Whatever Pandit Nehru's personal emotions might be, I felt I should be failing in my duty if I did not point out that this was hardly the time for the Vice-President of the Interim Government and the Prime Minister of the Dominion Government which was to take over power in 17 days, to leave the capital on what really amounted to almost private business; at all events on a visit which it would be extremely difficult to explain away to world opinion.

I also pointed out that a visit by any Congress leaders could not fail to be badly received in the world Press just at the time it was known that Kashmir had the choice of Pakistan or India before its Ruler; but that this effect would be somewhat mitigated if Mr. Gandhi went on account of the religious aura that surrounded him, whereas if Pandit Nehru went it would be regarded as a piece of straightforward political lobbying.

Mr. Gandhi agreed with what I had said, and stated that although at Mr. Kak's request he had agreed not to go, if I seriously regarded Pandit Nehru's proposed visit as objectionable, he would himself be prepared once more to take his place.

Sardar Patel gave it as his view that neither of them should go, but that in view of Pandit Nehru's great mental distress if his mission in Kashmir were to remain unfulfilled, he agreed that one of them must go. He very bluntly remarked : "It is a choice between two evils and I consider that Gandhiji's visit would be the lesser evil."

Pandit Nehru held forth at some length about his mental distress and defended

his visit on the grounds that (A) nothing would be more natural than that Congress should send a high-level emissary to lay before the Government of Kashmir the advantages of joining the Dominion of India, and (B) that it was well known that he was over-worked, that he would like to go away for three or four days' rest somewhere in any case, and that Kashmir would be a delightful place in which to have a brief holiday. The fact that he might be engaged on local work would be a sufficient change of occupation to give him the necessary rest.

The rest of us each argued in turn with Pandit Nehru and finally Mr. Gandhi specifically renewed his offer to go provided Pandit Nehru would accept that offer, which he urged him to do since Sardar Patel and I, who were the two "outside" members of the party, were so strongly in favour of Gandhi's going.

Finally it was agreed that Mr. Gandhi should leave on the following night train *via* Rawalpindi and that I would send telegrams to the Resident in Kashmir and the Governor of the Punjab.¹

From a photostat : C. W. 11033. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy : Broadlands Archives Trust.

APPENDIX III

*INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN*²

NEW DELHI,

September 14 and 16, 1947

I spoke to him about the increasing tendency of responsible leaders and Ministers to become communal in outlook. He agreed that his was so.

I told him that I thought that only the Prime Minister himself was completely free from the taint of communalism. Maulana Azad, for a Muslim, was of course remarkably free of bias; though it must be remembered that he was in a peculiar situation. I did not know whether Kidwai could be regarded as quite free, though he had shown no signs of communalism. Matthai and Rajkumari still seemed fairly free; but Bhabha was a disappointment since he had been selected specially as Chairman of the Delhi Emergency Committee not only for his business efficiency and strong personality, but because as a Parsee he should be non-communal. I was informed, however, that in the last two days he appeared to have gone completely communal.

¹ The note signed "M. of B." bears a marginal noting against the last paragraph which reads : "Necessary action already taken".

² As recorded by Lord Mountbatten; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 13-9-1947.

I told Mr. Gandhi that it was not a bit of good preaching to the people unless he had converted the leaders; and I urged him to devote his full energy towards keeping the leaders, and particularly the Deputy Prime Minister, as straight as possible.

Mr. Gandhi said he entirely agreed with every word I had spoken; that he already knew it, and that he was interested to see that I had summed up the position so correctly.

He promised to do his very best, and offered never to mention my name in this matter or that we had these conversations.

He complained bitterly about the wording of Mr. Jinnah's appeal for money, since it was apparently intended only to help Muslims wherever they might be and not the people of Pakistan. He asked me if I could take this up with Mr. Jinnah personally, and I told him I did not feel I should be right in doing this, but I would ask Lord Ismay to take it up the next time he visited Karachi.

From a photostat : C. W. 11034. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy : Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN¹

NEW DELHI,
September 25, 1947

Mr. Gandhi broke in with a wise observation. He pointed out that the mere refutation of Pandit Kunzru's remarks², particularly by Nehru (who was now suspect for not being sufficiently communal on the Hindu/Sikh side) or by himself (whose remarks were becoming more and more obnoxious to the people of India), would not effect the main purpose we had in mind of checking the spread of this anti-British feeling among Indians.

He therefore considered it of overriding importance that Pandit Kunzru should be immediately recalled to Delhi; should be confronted with his statement; should be asked to substantiate it; and, on failing to do so, should be called upon to make an unqualified apology and unhesitating withdrawal. This would have a really profound effect as in the Gokhale case of 1896.

¹ As recorded by Lord Mountbatten; *vide* "Interview with J. B. Kripalani", 25-9-1947.

² Criticizing British officers

Mr. Gandhi suggested that Gen. Thimayya should either see Pandit Kunzru, in view of their friendship and the unique position he was in to convince him of the truth; or at the very least should leave a full personal letter behind for him to read.

Pandit Nehru here pointed out a complication, in that Pandit Kunzru was really attacking the whole of the present Government and not merely the British; and that it might be difficult to separate the two. I, however, urged that the British case was the more pressing and that it should be grappled with strength at this moment.

Mr. Gandhi went on to say that he was perfectly prepared to support this line at the proper moment by elaborating it in his post-prayer meeting discussions. He also offered to see Mr. Birla (his present host), who owned *The Hindustan Times*, and to talk to his son, Devdas Gandhi, the editor, to try and ensure that in the mean while the right line was taken up in this newspaper. I urged that he should also invite his son to use his influence with the editor of the *Indian News Chronicle*. Mr. Gandhi said that he thought Sahni had left, but no doubt his son would be able to make contact with the new editor.

The rest of the party then left, and I remained alone with Mr. Gandhi. He told me that the time had come when I must consider what action

I should take to help in the present position if I did not wish to bury my own reputation and even the reputation of the British here in India where at present it stood so high.

So far as I could make out his idea was that I should telegraph to Mr. Attlee in my personal capacity as an Englishman and say that the British Commonwealth should not hesitate to expel any member of that Commonwealth which could be proved guilty of sharp practice and which intended to make war on another member.

He was not saying this against Pakistan, for the rest of the Commonwealth might come to the conclusion that it was India, though he himself felt certain that they would not.

He did not see how the rest of the Commonwealth could support two members in their midst which were drifting towards a stage that sooner or later might mean war.

For instance, he considered that it was most unfortunate that Sir Francis Mudie, Sir George Cunningham and Sir Frederick Bourne should be Governors of Pakistan provinces at this time.

I asked him whether he believed Nishtar, Ghazanfar Ali and Chundrigar would prove a greater deterrent to war if they had been Governors.

To my surprise Mr. Gandhi replied that he would prefer to see them as Governors now, for then the full duplicity and hostile intent of Pakistan would stand

revealed in all its nakedness, whereas now they were covering up their intentions behind a facade of honourable British Governors.

I said I assumed that Mr. Gandhi quite understood that in the event of a war between the Dominions, British officers would be withdrawn from both Dominions immediately, since they could hardly be expected to fight each other. I further pointed out that this sanction acted 90 per cent against Pakistan, for it was they who were short of senior officers and administrators and it was they who would be crippled by the removal of the British; whereas in India, though in my opinion they would lose great efficiency, they would not be crippled in the same way. Mr. Gandhi agreed.

I told Mr. Gandhi I could not possibly communicate with Mr. Attlee behind Pandit Nehru's back and I would require to show him what I proposed to send and would need his full approval.

"Ah!", said Mr. Gandhi, "I am afraid you may have difficulty there; for though I agree you must do that, he has already refused to accept my suggestion of including this proposal in his reply to the Prime Minister on the question of the Pakistan telegrams to the Commonwealth."

I now felt we were in such deep water, and the point was so very unclear, and as the time was now past 2 p. m., that it was better to let him go and ask him to put up his proposals in writing to me, which he promised to do.

From a copy : India Office Library and Records