THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LIV
(1933)

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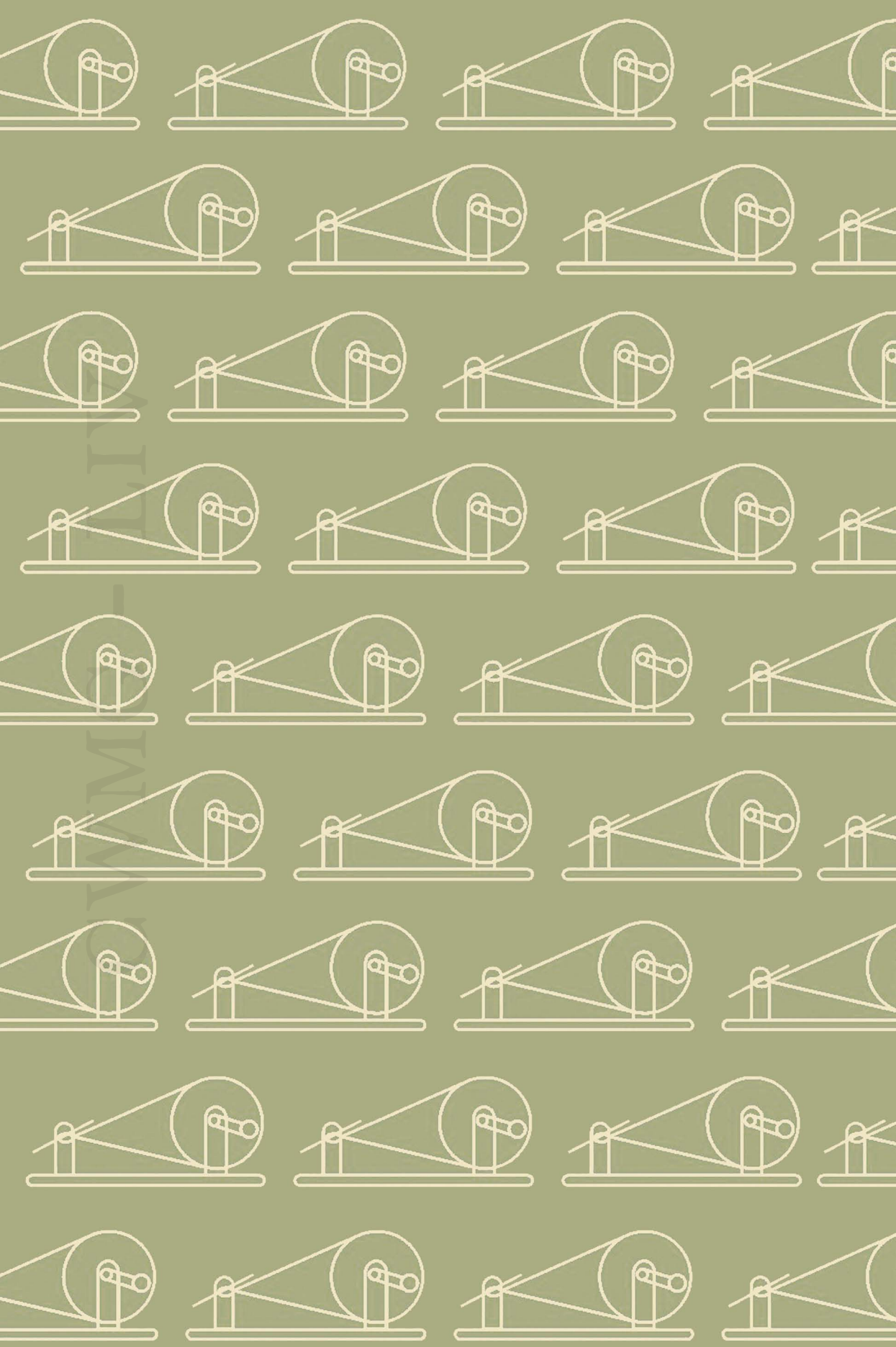
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PREFACE

Though outwardly uneventful, the period of one and a half months (March 5 to April 22, 1933) covered in this volume was evidently a time of mounting mental stress for Gandhiji. While the first flush of popular enthusiasm following the fast of September 1932 was waning, the Harijans were showing impatience with the slow pace of the reform movement and the sanatanists had begun to organize their opposition to the temple-entry programme. Going through the correspondence and the interviews with friends and critics, Gandhiji felt himself in the midst of a raging fire (p. 48). The affairs of the Ashram also, combined with the problem of a young American lady for whose moral welfare Gandhiji had come to develop "a mother's anxiety" (p. 365), caused him much concern. "As soon as I have solved one moral problem, I am faced with another" (p. 139), he told Narandas Gandhi. In consequence, though Gandhiji claimed that he was enjoying inner peace in spite of the storm on all sides (p. 99), a crisis seems to have been building up in his mind and relief from it came only with a decision, on the night of April 30, to undertake a three weeks' self-purificatory fast.

Gandhiji discovered to his sorrow that the effects of the fast of September 1932, which he had previously described as "a modern miracle" (*vide* Vol. LI), were temporary. "Hindus had become delirious and done acts which, when they became sober, they undid". In Bengal there was even an agitation for the revision of the Yeravda Pact which was arrived at as a result of that fast (p. 414). The failure of his dialogue with the orthodox was a great disappointment to Gandhiji, for he deeply cherished the basic values for which Hinduism stood and he did not want to see it perish, as he was convinced it certainly would if untouchability lived.

He continued to defend, for instance, varnashrama and temple worship against attacks by radical reformers and criticism from Christian sympathizers. The varna system, Gandhiji claimed, "emphasizes the curbing of material greed so that it can leave greater scope for spiritual development" (p. 349). He maintained that the aim of life was not "rising in the social scale" but service to one's fellow-men and that, therefore, conscious recognition of the law of varna resulted in "contentment and consequent freeing of human energy for the moral uplift". "Its disregard", he added,

"spells unhealthy discontent, greed, cut-throat competition and moral stagnation ending in spiritual suicide" (p. 46). He realized, however, that for the revival of varna dharma in the present age "all must voluntarily accept Shudra dharma" and "earn their bread by their own efforts and through body labour. . . " (pp. 132 and 203). And by this he meant that all should "live by their labour and all become entitled therefore to nothing more than simple maintenance" (p. 25); one should earn one's livelihood through physical labour, and use mental and intellectual ability exclusively for the service of society (pp. 44 and 62).

On the value of temple-worship, Gandhiji fully shared the long-standing, widespread and firmly-held faith of most Hindus. Though himself "a follower of the Advaita doctrine", Gandhiji rightly argued that "that doctrine does not reject belief in temples" (p. 165). If one continues to experience duality, while intellectually grasping *advaita*, one should not worry because it would be in accordance with the truth as one sees it (p. 419). Nor did he see any conflict between *karma* and *bhakti*. "The function of *darshan* is to enable the deed to be done, to steady and purify the soul. Thus, *darshan* is not a substitute for right doing. It is an encouragement for it" (p. 111). Replying to an American critic who had argued that Gandhiji had lost his universal appeal by defending "the faith of temple Hinduism" (p. 49), Gandhiji pointed out that no religion or sect could do "without its house of God". Citing his mother's daily visit to the temple, Gandhiji asserted that "probably her faith was far greater than mine, though I do not visit temples" (p. 50). Temples, mosques and churches are, he explained in another article, "what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen." Temple-worship, he said, "is a beautiful exercise of faith" and, though it admitted of reform, "will live as long as man lives". "It may be", he gave his personal testimony, "the association of childhood, it may be the fascination that Tulsidas has wrought on me. But the potent fact is there, and as I write these lines, my memory revives the scenes of my childhood when I used daily to visit the Ramji Mandir adjacent to my ancestral home. My Rama then resided there. He saved me from many fears and sins. . . . What was and is true of me is true of millions of Hindus" (p. 112).

Justifying the semantic liberties he took, Gandhiji explained: "One has to think in the search for Truth. The narrow meaning does not satisfy. With contemplation the same meanings of the same words are found satisfying. . . . Tulsidas says that Rama himself is *Om*, Rama himself is the Vedas. . . . He alone is, all else

is illusion." Quoting Tulsidas's own words, "My Rama may be Dasharatha's son but He is also much more: He is *Sachchidananda Purnabrahma*", Gandhiji stressed the essential ambiguity of myth and symbol. "There is no contradiction in this at all. It is the broadening of an idea, expansion of a meaning" (pp. 352-3). Gandhiji thus welcomed and cherished the unesoteric mysticism of sanatana dharma, the growth of awareness from wholeness to wholeness in wholeness, from *satya* to *satya* within *Sat*, the natural piety preserved in the unforgotten language of metaphor and allegory which binds the generations together and makes the child the father of the Man.

Gandhiji also shared the common Hindu faith in fasting as a form of penance and its use as a weapon against the weaknesses of one's own people. He says, "Hindu religious literature is replete with instances of fasting, and thousands of Hindus fast even today on the slightest pretext. It is the one thing that does the least harm. . . . One cannot forbear to do good because sometimes evil is done under its cover" (p. 414).

Accepting thus the basic values and attitudes of Hinduism with its dynamic faith in the *upasana* of names and forms, and the efficacy of myths and human affection in developing the moral sense, Gandhiji claimed that he was not separate from the sanatanists (p. 427) and, therefore, while he would not presume "to pronounce any judgment on Christianity, or for that matter any religion other than my own" (p. 238), he was unsparing in his criticism of what was wrong in the current customs and conduct of his own people. Thus, though he extolled the ideal of Brahminism, he had no hesitation in admitting that "Brahmins . . . are not all true representatives of Brahminism", and he declared that for him "the infallible test of the revival of Brahminism, that is, Hinduism, is the root-and-branch removal of untouchability" (pp. 186-7), which he described as "a great lie" (p. 68) and "a monstrous wrong" (p. 492). And if untouchability remained in spite of all his efforts, it would only prove, Gandhiji said in effect, that it was God's will "that the so-called high-caste Hindus should harden their hearts, that they should refuse to listen to the dictates of reason and justice and that Hinduism should become an extinct religion" (p. 492). These were strong words for Gandhiji, but the passion behind them sprang from his soul's agony. "To live while untouchability lives is like a cup of poison to me", he said, in an article addressed specially to Gujaratis, and added, hinting at the possibility of another fast by him: "I must either helplessly lie on my deathbed or employ whatever strength I have to subjugate the demon

of untouchability'' (p. 64). In this difficult and anxious task of the purification of Hinduism, he appealed for world sympathy, for it was ''in a way purification of the whole human family'' (p. 413).

Gandhiji agreed with an ''impatient worker'' that ''most drastic steps are required to wipe off untouchability'', but asserted that ''these steps have to be taken against ourselves'', that the conversion of the orthodox could be brought about only by the workers' ''prayers, fasting and other suffering in their own persons, in other words, by their ever-increasing purity'' (p. 417). Admitting the difficulties against which workers engaged in Harijan service had to contend, Gandhiji asked them to have faith in themselves and the cause. An ideal worker who would ''satisfy both the Harijans and the sanatanists'' must have, Gandhiji insisted, ''the highest character, deep humility and great charity''. He must have faith that ''Truth is life and it propagates itself the moment it has got a habitation in some human personality'' (p. 48). Out of such faith ''must spring tremendous energy'' which would be proof against despair (p. 425).

After nearly four months of intensive propaganda for educating public opinion against the evil of untouchability, Gandhiji now asked the workers to pay more attention to constructive work for the economic, social and educational progress of the Harijans. The most effective propaganda, he said, lay in pure constructive work (p. 207), for the orthodox ''cannot but be touched by the silent, effective and dignified selfless work of caste-Hindu volunteers and the consequent rise of the Harijans in the social scale'' (p. 264). An all-India body named the Harijan Sevak Sangh (Servants of Untouchables Society), with G. D. Birla as President and with branches in all the provinces, had been established for organizing such work and Gandhiji kept up a regular correspondence with its dedicated secretary, A. V. Thakkar, making detailed suggestions for economical and efficient working of the Sangh. He took interest even in drawing up its constitution and substantially revised a draft prepared by Mahadev Desai (pp. 17-22 and 87-8). Among constructive activities, Gandhiji attached special importance to educational work among Harijans by dedicated teachers and explained in an article in *Harijan* what he expected of such teachers. The test, he admitted, was exacting, but ''none too exacting for a willing worker'' (p. 187) and went on to describe at some length the experiment he had ''tried . . . with complete success, while it lasted'' (p. 187) in Champaran in 1917 (*vide* Vol. XIII).

Gandhiji seems to have been considerably exercised over the affairs of the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati during this period.

The Ashram was, as Gandhiji said in a letter to Mirabehn, a novel experiment in the cultivation of truth "in the midst of men and women of different temperaments and subtle temptations" (p. 311), and its daily routine was based on the maxim "to labour is to pray". Gandhiji knew that many followed the routine "mechanically and, therefore, slavishly", but he did not "grumble over the mechanical following" because he was not "without hope that even those who are mechanically following the routine will some day detect the spirit and the beauty behind it" (p. 9). But any failure in the observance of truth pained him deeply. One particular lapse on the part of a young man and a woman who, according to Gandhiji, fell because "they suppressed truth" (p. 311), upset him so much that the incident made him feel his own "spiritual poverty". "Unknown to me", he confessed to Narandas Gandhi, "falsehood, violence, and passion are lurking in me", for falsehood "cannot hide itself from one who scrupulously follows truth, non-violence and *brahmacharya*" (p. 159). Though the work for the removal of untouchability helped Gandhiji to forget all his sorrows, whenever he thought of this particular incident "the wound revives and reminds me that it has not healed" (p. 199). Writing to Mirabehn, Gandhiji said: "I know the language of detachment, I am not practising the art." But he was certain that the tempest in his heart would soon subside, for his life was dedicated to Truth and his faith remained unshaken that "Truth will stand even if the Ashram is reduced to ashes and all my idols are broken to pieces" (p. 175).

Gandhiji found it easier to deal with the friction caused by temperamental differences among the Ashram workers. His numerous letters to them illustrate his commitment to his co-workers as individuals, to whom he conveyed constructive criticism as well as warm regard without compromising his concern for truth. "If I admonish you rather harshly," he assured Premabehn Kantak, "it is because I regard you as my daughter and want to see you perfect" (pp. 387-8). While appealing to Narahari Parikh not to regard himself "as an outsider and disclaim responsibility" (p. 105) for the Ashram, Gandhiji advised Narandas Gandhi to disregard the harsh language of the former's criticism of him and consider his suggestions on merit. This, he said, was the way of non-violence, the swan's manner of accepting the milk of virtues and leaving the water of defects (p. 355). This was the secret of the loyalty which Gandhiji commanded from co-workers of varying temperaments and abilities and of his success in getting out of each the best that he or she could give.

For the lapses in the Ashram Gandhiji accepted responsibility as he, their foot-rule, was "so imperfect and untrue". But he never lost hope, for he was convinced that "we know the fundamental truth we want to reach, we know also the way. . . . we are but very humble instruments. . . . we shall reach the Absolute Truth, if we will faithfully and steadfastly work out the relative truth as each one of us knows it" (p. 372). In private as in public life, in religion as in politics, Gandhiji was a *satyayugakari*, not a *satyayuga-vadi*; he would not use the theoretical best in some possible future to destroy or postpone the concrete good of the actual present.

On truth in translation and relevancy in comment, his advice to Viyogi Hari offers valuable guidance to all journalists: "For purity, simplicity and restraint our translation should read like original writing. . . . All the articles, in short, must be written with a view to solving the current and immediate problems" (p. 4).

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NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the January 1969 edition.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to documents, M.M.U. to the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S.G. to the photostats of the Sevagram Collection available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi, C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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1. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

March 6, 1933

BOYS AND GIRLS,

I got your letter. It is violence to tear sheets from a notebook and use them for writing letters. Do you understand this? Don't do it again.

If the secretary or the other office-bearers show themselves unfit or if the members harass them, in either case our progress will be arrested. When you grow up you will behave as you now do. What you do not learn now you will never learn later. I hope you do understand that. Just as mangoes cannot grow on a babul tree, you are not likely to change suddenly after ten years if you cannot work unitedly or behave with self-restraint. You should, therefore, learn to manage your body in a proper manner.

BAPU

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

2. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

YERAVDA MANDIR,[1]
March 6, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I am starting on this letter at five sharp (Silence Day). Yours was the last letter I read from the Ashram post.

I have not been able to go beyond 75 counts with the slivers which you sent. Yarn of 75 counts should be regarded as very much below the mark. I have calculated the count on the basis of the figure you give for weight. The scales here are not good enough for weighing with any minute accuracy. I do believe, however, that if my hand was all right I would be able to go up to 100 counts.

What you write to me regarding Sushila is simply incomprehensible to me. I am not aware of having ignored her in the

[1] Literally, 'Yeravda Temple', that is, Yeravda Central Prison, where Gandhiji was imprisoned from January 4, 1932 to May 8, 1933. This place-line is not reproduced in subsequent letters.

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least. She herself made me feel that there was no need to inquire after her or advise her. So I did not ask her any detailed questions. Tell her this. How could I know that like you she also craved for a show of love and for compliments? I ought to have known that your friend would be like you. Isn't that what you suggest? But probably Sushila herself will not admit this. Isn't one Prema enough for me? There are other Premas, of course, but they are all different from one another and from you. However, I will be more careful in future.

How old is Vijaya? How does she behave?

Train Lakshmi thoroughly.

I also suspect something from the fact that Durga's boils cannot still be cured. She used to write to me regularly, but she never writes now. From that, too, I suspect that she is hiding something. Inquire and find out if she is suffering from some other disease.

A diet of raw vegetables and dates is bound to help you to reduce your weight. You should also include in it two and a half ounces of unboiled milk. Among raw vegetables, you may eat tomatoes, radishes, carrots, lettuce, etc. You should exclude salt. You should take two or three lemons with water or with dates. Probably it will be better to take it with water. If, however, it sours your teeth you may not take it. You can also mix soda bicarb with it.

I cannot discuss the question asked by Rajaji and others. That would be violating truth. It can be done when a suitable opportunity arises. My writings, however, contain a reply to every doubt.

I will admit all the shortcomings of the Ashram which you may point out. But you will help me better if you also suggest suitable remedies at the same time. Even if, however, you cannot do that, I must have your criticism. I use my brain as much as I can. I know this: the Ashram's shortcomings are not its own, but mine. If the potter makes an ill-shaped pot, is that the fault of the pot or of the potter? I literally believe what I have said, and the shortcomings of the Ashram, therefore, are a measure of my ignorance. But notwithstanding its shortcomings, I like the Ashram, for I am not ready to say positively that I do not like myself. I like myself in the measure that I do not feel the sense of "I", and ceaselessly strive to overcome what still remains of that sense.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10329. Also C.W. 6768. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

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3. LETTER TO CHHOTUBHAI PATEL

March 6, 1933

BHAI CHHOTUBHAI,

I got your letter. Indulgence in moderation is less harmful, but *brahmacharya* is the best. The *atman* is not a body and can exist without the body, as God does. That which is bodiless can have no need for sex-gratification, and, therefore, one who has awakened from the state of ignorance also can have none. If it is one's dharma to shed ignorance, sex-gratification is contrary to dharma and, therefore, harmful.

The earth is certainly ever alive, but man who is of earth is not. He must perish.

I cannot say whether at present people are rising or falling. It seems to me to be a futile question.

It is certainly true that we have no strength of our own except what God gives us and we must, therefore, admit it.

He who has real humility has risen far above the man who is proud, for humility is truth and pride is falsehood.

One should not brush the teeth with a babul stick after a meal, but one must clean them with a finger and gargle well.

The future will show what relations you will maintain with the Ashram after your marriage. It is needless to think of it just now.

I cannot say that I immediately recognized you on reading your letter. I cannot say that with regard to anybody.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10476

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4. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

March 6, 1933

CHI. VIDYA,

The fact that you have been putting on weight in the Ashram shows that the Ashram has suited you. As one's health improves, one's heart and mind too gain strength.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9638. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

5. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

March 6, 1933

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

Your letter. This issue[1] is better though there is still room for improvement. It is not necessary to take everything from English nor is it necessary to translate in full all that is taken. Some article may deserve full translation, another only a summary, yet another may be rejected; in brief, the Hindi readers should get all that is worth giving. Items published in other journals too should be screened. But sometimes those translations may be faulty. For purity, simplicity and restraint our translation should read like original writing. As for the translated items appearing in newspapers, they need not be included in Hindi *Harijan* if the translations are accurate. I am arranging to send English articles in advance. Satisbabu wants them and so does Ganesan. I shall see what can be done. Why do you not include articles by Hindi writers? But they should not be mere essays. They should contain either the views or arguments of some sanatanists and answers to them or a discussion of problems faced by the workers or an account of the hardships suffered by Harijans. All the articles, in short, must be written with a view to solving the current and immediate problems. An abstract of the activities in Provinces should be a must every time.

[1] Of *Harijan Sevak*, the Hindi edition of *Harijan*

From now on I shall send everything care of *The Hindustan Times*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1075

6. *LETTER TO K. R. CHHAPKHANE*

March 7, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 26th ultimo and now your letter of the 3rd instant. Owing to pressure of work in connection with the *Harijan* I have not been able to acknowledge your first letter earlier.

I have no ground whatsoever to dispute the facts which you seem to remember so well. Have you any recollection of the subscribers to the fund?[1] If you have, and if you can send me their statements also, it completes for me the chain of evidence. My only interest just now is to secure as much money as I can legitimately for Harijan work, and when I was told by Sjt. Joshi that I had control over the money in question I was naturally pleased. You may depend upon it however that if I could by any chance persuade you to let me have a say in the disposal of a purse that was supposed to be presented to me, it won't be Sjt. Joshi who would have the fund. I could not even write to you this letter if there was the slightest political motive behind my investigation of the fund.

I thank you for reminding me that I had the honour of being your guest at the time of my visit[2] to Sangli and that the alleged presentation was only formal and was made under your roof.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. R. CHHAPKHANE
PLEADER, SANGLI

From a microfilm : S.N. 20486

[1] The reference is to the allegation against the addressee and one Athavale that they misappropriated a public fund raised during Gandhiji's visit to Sangli in 1920. Chhapkhane had claimed that the fund in question was raised from selected contributors for starting a movement for uplift of "States' subjects", that the matter had been discussed with Gandhiji at the time and that he had asked the addressee to start the said movement and keep the money on his (addressee's) responsibility. *Vide* also "Letter to Vithal K. Joshi", p. 26.

[2] In November 1920

7. LETTER TO BUDHI RAM DHYAN

March 7, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your postcard. I favour khaddar because everything I spend on it goes directly into the hands of the poor.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. BUDHI RAM DHYAN
CLASS XII-A
D. A. V. COLLEGE
DEHRA DUN

From a microfilm: S.N. 20487

8. LETTER TO KESHAV

March 7, 1933

DEAR BROTHER KESHAV,

I have your letter and copy of your appeal. As I take up your letter, Kakasaheb[1] is sitting by me and so I have asked him to see you, understand from you the scheme, see the brother who has had his training in the Ashram, and he would then advise me, after which I shall form my opinion and let you know. As you know, Kakasaheb is a founder-member and so he knows the evolution of spinning and weaving from the beginning.

Yours sincerely,

BROTHER KESHAV
CHRISTIE SEVA SANGHAM
AUNDH (NEAR POONA)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20484

[1] D. B. Kalelkar

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9. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA[1]

March 7, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I thank you for your exhaustive letter of the 4th instant. I had entirely forgotten your stay at the Ashram. Your letter is quite helpful. N.[2] . . left Poona on Saturday, the 4th instant. Your presence is now quite unnecessary. Perhaps by this time I know more about her than you do. She has been much worse than you have described her to be. She has led for years an utterly immoral and extravagant life and has been an utter stranger to truth. She has made that confession to me and has also definitely promised that she would make that confession publicly before the world and she has also promised to turn over a new leaf and lead henceforth a truthful, chaste life, and to that end she would retire from all public activity and live a beggar's life in Harijan quarters in the poorest possible style, living on charity, unknown to the world. Whether she has the strength to carry out this promise or not I do not know. Let's hope that she has. She thinks that she has that strength. If she is sincerely desirous of leading this life, you will render her what help you can. You are at liberty to show this letter to her and you will please tell me all about her from time to time. From her talks with me she led me to understand that she had great regard for you, but that regard has very little value because she was leading an altogether false life when she entertained this regard for you. Even here truth had not dawned upon her when she came, but if it has really come to her, it dawned slowly and unperceivably. That of course is all the better. Some of the young men at least who have surrounded her do not seem to have behaved well. But of that perhaps some other time if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20481

[1] Joint-Secretary of the Mysore Board of Servants of Untouchables Society
[2] The name has been omitted.

10. LETTER TO V. N. SOMASUNDARAM[1]

March 7, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which I thank you. The only thing I can advise is that you should on the one hand persuade the temple trustees and on the other cultivate public opinion among the present temple-goers.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. V. N. SOMASUNDARAM
43 SALGADO ST.
MUTWAL
COLOMBO

From a microfilm: S.N. 20485

11. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

March 7, 1933

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL[2],

I have your letter. For the present you should give up the idea of starting a school of the Sangh in Surat. If we can manage well what we have already undertaken, we shall later think about Surat.

I understand about Sarupbehn[3].

We are thinking of starting a Gujarati edition of the *Harijan* to be published from here.[4] The idea of publishing a leaflet is not bad.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3994

[1] Hon. Secretary, Mutwal Young Men's Hindu Association
[2] Secretary of the Gujarat Board of Servants of Untouchables Society
[3] Vijayalakshmi Pandit; *vide* Vol. LIII, p. 313.
[4] The first issue of *Harijanbandhu* came out on March 12, 1933.

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12. *LETTER TO F. MARY BARR AND DUNCAN GREENLEES*

March 8, 1933

CHI. MARY AND DUNCAN,

I like your letter very much indeed. Before I argue to the contrary, let me say what I have told Narandas and I think I made clear to both of you, that you should not be treated as the other learners who come to the Ashram, that you should take only such part in the Ashram work as you like and can digest and that you should use your time as may seem most profitable to you from your own standpoint.

Now for my own opinion. The Ashram is a place where the idea is to enforce literally the maxim 'to labour is to pray'. This labour was interpreted by Thoreau and Tolstoy to mean physical labour and Tolstoy adopted Bondaref's maxim of bread labour being God's law for all mankind. I read the same thing in the third chapter of the *Gita*. I have tested the truth of the interpretation in my own life and in the lives of many companions and I have felt that our lives have been incomplete and unsatisfying exactly to the extent that we have failed to carry out the interpretation in practice. Therefore I would say that, so long as the routine of the Ashram appears to be a slavish following of it, the spirit of the Ashram is not imbibed. I confess unhesitatingly that so few have imbibed the spirit. Many follow the routine mechanically and, therefore, slavishly. I do not grumble over the mechanical following, because even that is better than people idling away their time and I am not without hope that even those who are mechanically following the routine will some day detect the spirit and the beauty behind it. So many Englishmen and women, especially missionaries, make, in my opinion, the tremendous mistake of directing the activity of others without themselves taking a direct part in it. They, therefore, remain untouched by the activity itself and often become blind guides. As I am dictating this, illustrations from life crowd in upon my mind. I would, therefore, say that if you can appreciate and understand the spirit of my remarks and feel the truth of them, then follow the routine patiently, intelligently, whole-heartedly, till it becomes a part of your nature, lies light upon your mind and seems to

speak to you its message. Then, but not till then, are you really able to write anything serious for public service. Not even every good thought is worth giving to the world unless it is repeatedly tested on the anvil of experience. All true labour is both contagious and infectious. I wonder if I have driven my meaning home. If I have not, you must reject all my argument without the slightest hesitation and do exactly as you feel you should, so as to get the best out of your experience of the Ashram.

With loving blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5996. Also C.W. 3321. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

13. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

March 8, 1933

MY DEAR MARY,

I had your two letters. You are not going to put an undue strain on your body. By all means try your utmost to live the Ashram life but not at the cost of your health. And don't hesitate to tell me all about the Ashram drawbacks. I would like you to show my long letter[1] to Narandas.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5997. Also C.W. 3322. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

14. LETTER TO Y. R. DATE

March 8, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

This is my message for the Gaekwar Birthday Commemoration[2] Volume:

"There can be no doubt that His Highness the Maharajah Saheb Gaekwar of Baroda deserves the warmest congratulations

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.
[2] The photostat source does not have this word.

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of us all for his treatment of Harijans and his withdrawing all State recognition of untouchability.''

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. Y. R. DATE
C/O SJT. HARIBHAU PHATAK

From a photostat: S.N. 20497; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 127

15. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

March 8, 1933

MY DEAR LELE[1],

I have your letter, being your answer to "As They See Us"[2]. It is a very good reply, if my assumption is correct that the whole of the balance after deducting overhead charges has gone into the pockets of the Harijans. Your letter is going in this week, but I would like you to let me have the details showing how the disbursements were made.

As to the reply received by you from the Government regarding the supply of *Harijan* to prisoners, I must not deal with it through the *Harijan.* You too may regard the matter as closed.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. R. LELE
31 MURZBAN ROAD
FORT, BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20496

16. LETTER TO P. RAMAMURTI[3]

March 8, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and I am glad you have written to me. I wish you would care to read all the numbers of the *Harijan* and I think that most of your doubts will be solved. You

[1] Acting Secretary of the Bombay Board of Servants of Untouchables Society

[2] Published in *Harijan*, 4-3-1933; *vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 457-9.

[3] A Harijan teacher and member of the Andhra University Senate; Vice-President, Board of Servants of Untouchables Society, East Godavari District

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will find in them that I have unhesitatingly said that all that is bad about varnashrama and caste should be wholly removed. Temple-entry is certainly coming much sooner than you expect. It is the centre of reform because it would be a visible sign to the millions that untouchability is gone. Therefore we must prosecute the reform whether the vast mass of caste Hindus come round or not.

Anti-untouchability leagues are, I think, working satisfactorily. A great deal is being done by them for the educational advancement and you should study the columns of the *Harijan* to note the progress in that direction. I think that you are not doing justice to Sjt. Nageswar Rao when you say that nothing but platform lectures are being given in Andhradesa. But I am writing for fuller particulars.

If you were to start the leagues and the Birla Committee[1] were to furnish the funds, you won't call that self-reliance. As a matter of fact, what you need is not money but men who having received education would take it to the humbler Harijans. My advice to the Harijan youths, therefore, is to take up the reform energetically among the poorest.

I do not know the effect of the Madras Services Commission. You will perhaps enlighten me on the point, but Harijan graduates and other highly educated Harijans have limitless scope for serving fellow-Harijans.

If there is no Telugu newspaper specially devoted to Harijans, I suppose it is because there are very few literate Harijans. Before, therefore, you think of starting a paper, all the educated Harijans should spread themselves among the illiterate Harijans and impart instruction to them. Every educated Harijan should, therefore, become a walking newspaper, and this you can supplement by issuing leaflets from time to time as they may be demanded.

Please keep yourself in touch with me.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. RAMAMURTI, B.A.
P. R. COLLEGIATE SCHOOL
COCANADA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20495

[1] Officially named "Harijan Sevak Sangh"

17. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 8, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your big packet of mail.

My views about the teaching of English, it may be said, have changed to a certain extent. I feel that the older women in the Ashram should be permitted to learn what they wish to. They feel their deficiency at every step, and particularly, in our circumstances, their ignorance of English. They don't mind being ignorant of arithmetic nor do they mind their indifferent Gujarati, but they feel unhappy that they don't know English. Our connections with Englishmen will continue, ought to continue, and, therefore, we shall also continue to use the English language. Hence the women feel that if they know a little English, they will be able to use it every now and then. This argument is not altogether tenable, but there is enough truth in it to make them wish to learn English. It is certainly not immoral to learn English. I think that, if the women do not feel interested in any other subject, it would be good to teach them even English to make them study-minded. It is desirable that the older women should become interested in study, no matter how. It is also desirable that they should increase their knowledge. I, therefore, think that we should provide whatever facility we can to any older woman who may wish to learn English. Please point out to me any weakness that you may see in this reasoning. I will try to explain again.

I see from Kikabhai's letter that a large crowd of Harijans will be attending Lakshmi's wedding. I think that Jamna and you are the right persons to give away the bride. I hope Jamna does not harbour the prejudice of untouchability in her heart. Don't make the Harijans who may attend sit apart from the others. Since their proportion will be large enough for the gathering, serve them some fruit as refreshment, as I have suggested. I suggest copra and raisins. If possible, I will write something to be read out to the assembled guests and enclose it with this letter.[1] You will have to give some dresses to Lakshmi as a gift from the Ashram. Think over this. If you can, see Ba and ask her

[1] *Vide* the following item.

advice. I should be happy if she gives one of her saris, a new one or an almost new one. If she has preserved any jewellery, she may give some of it too. Tell the Superintendent that you wish to see her specially for this reason. If he permits you, well and good, if he does not, don't mind. Discuss with the women this question of what to give to Lakshmi. See that we omit to do nothing which would be proper on such an occasion. I will write to you again if I think of anything more. You can ignore any of my suggestions which you don't think appropriate.

I have replied to Parachure Shastri. Everything will depend on your wire.

I have received Kellogg's book. Gangabehn and Sharda have arrived here. They have not seen me yet. Gangabehn will not be able to do so. Sharda will see me on Saturday if she is here on that day.

You did the right thing in keeping Lakshmi's younger sister with Anasuyabehn. I see that Dudabhai[1] has stayed on. Dhanibehn[2] should be welcomed if she comes. You did right in agreeing to pay her the expenses of her journey.

For the present, at any rate, Anandi seems to be completely free from danger. I will give her some work every day. She lives on milk and fruit. For some time she must remain here. You may ask Lakshmidas about the remedies which are being tried for her. They will be useful to others, too. It cannot be said, though, that they will agree with everyone. But they will certainly do no harm.

I have no fear about your health so long as your diet includes milk and curds. But I should certainly like you to exclude gram from it. It makes the mental work you are doing more difficult. The best food for mental workers is milk and fruit. If you eat uncooked cabbage, it should be tender. But this is not necessary if you eat it boiled. It would be better if you drink milk without boiling it.

Jamna should take sun-bath, get her body massaged with oil, do *pranayama* systematically and, for food, drink milk and eat *papaya*, raisins and, if she wishes, some vegetable. I believe she will be all right if she restricts her diet to these things.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8328. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1&2] Lakshmi's parents. The family joined the Ashram in 1915; *vide* Vol. XIII, p. 127.

18. MESSAGE ON WEDDING OF LAKSHMI AND MARUTI

March 8, 1933

I feel a little unhappy that neither Ba nor I will be present in the Ashram on the occasion of the wedding of Lakshmi and Maruti[1], but I think that is ignorant love. One should feel happy wherever devotion to dharma may make it necessary for one to be. Since one who follows dharma should never wish that things should be otherwise than they are, he can have no cause to feel unhappy.

Moreover, when so many elders and friends, men and women, will be assembling to give their blessings, Ba's presence or mine should not be considered at all essential.

Lakshmi was of course eager that Ba and I should be present at her wedding. So was Chi. Maruti. I could understand their desire. But all of us felt that the marriage should take place without delay, and hence I advised both the bride and the bridegroom to have the wedding as soon as possible and they accepted my advice. Lakshmi has been brought up in the Ashram since her childhood. But we have not been able to educate and train her as well as the Ashram and I would have liked to do. We did not, therefore, think it desirable to keep a girl in the bloom of youth unmarried for very long after betrothal. The fact that Chi. Lakshmi is getting married does not mean that her education will stop. I regard Maruti as a very worthy young man. He is a man of self-control. He has received training at the hands of Bhai Lakshmidas and Velabehn. He realizes the responsibility he is undertaking. He will not only be a husband to Lakshmi, but will also be a friend and teacher to her. There can be no doubt that, if this marriage is successful, it will benefit both Harijans and Hinduism a great deal. Looked at from this point of view, this marriage is of great importance and makes the responsibility of both correspondingly greater.

Chi. Maruti and Chi. Lakshmi were betrothed some years ago. It was a big problem for the Ashram to whom Lakshmi should

[1] A South Indian orphan boy, brought up by Velabehn and Lakshmidas Asar

be married. We thought that, having regard to the training she had received in the Ashram, she would be happy only if she got a partner who had received a similar training. The Ashram believes in the principle of varnashrama and tries to follow it as well as it can. I cannot speak for all, but I have often stated that I myself believe that in the present age all Hindus can, and do, belong to one varna only. If we wish to revive the varnashrama system, we shall have to start with a clean slate. This being my view, it was my duty to find a suitable husband for Lakshmi. Velabehn came to my help and suggested Maruti's name. Lakshmidas also liked the idea. I put the suggestion to Lakshmi, and she, too, accepted it. Her father also gave his consent and the two were betrothed. In my opinion all that we did was in conformity with dharma. I regard marriage too as a protective hedge for dharma, and we should hope that the bride and the bridegroom also will regard it in the same light.

This marriage has no connection with the present movement. Mixed marriages like this one are in no way a part of the movement for the removal of untouchability. This marriage is a recognition of the point of view of one who believes in all the various ideals of the Ashram. I hope that no one will misunderstand its significance because it is taking place at the present time when the movement for removal of untouchability is going on and because it is inspired by one who is the chief leader of that movement. I do not hold up this marriage as an example for anybody to follow. I regard marriage as a matter of the parents' and their children's free will. I believe that there is ample support for this view in Hinduism. However, it has no connection with the problem of the removal of untouchability. The question belongs to another field of reform in Hinduism.

[*Vandemataram*] *from*
MOHANDAS

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8329. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

CWMG IIV

19. *DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH*

[*March 9, 1933*][1]

The following resolution was adopted on behalf of what are known as caste Hindus by a meeting of their representatives from all India held at Bombay under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on 25th September, 1932.[2]

> This Conference resolves that henceforth, amongst Hindus, no one shall be regarded as an untouchable by reason of his birth and those who have been so regarded hitherto will have the same rights as the other Hindus in regard to the use of public wells, public roads and other public institutions. This right shall have statutory recognition at the first opportunity and shall be one of the earliest acts of the swaraj Parliament, if it shall not have received such recognition before that time.
>
> It is further agreed that it shall be the duty of all Hindu leaders to secure, by every legitimate and peaceful means, an early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called untouchable classes including the bar in respect of admission to temples.

This was followed up by a public meeting convened by the Hindu leaders from all parts of the country and held in Bombay on the 30th September, under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, at which following resolution among others was passed:

> This public meeting of the Hindus resolves that an All-India Anti-untouchability League, with its headquarters at Delhi and branches in different provincial centres, be established for the purpose of carrying on propaganda against untouchability and that for this purpose the following steps should be immediately taken :
>
> (a) All public wells, dharmsalas, roads, schools, crematoriums, burning-ghats, etc., be declared open to depressed classes.

[1] This is presumably the draft mentioned in "Letter to Amritlal V. Thakkar", 14-3-1933. The Sunday previous to March 14 was March 9. The constitution was finally adopted with minor changes on January 2, 1935. Gandhiji says in the above letter that the draft was prepared by Mahadev Desai. The portions of the original draft left after Gandhiji had revised it are underlined.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LI, p. 139.

CWMG - IIV

(b) All public temples be opened to members of depressed classes.

Provided that no compulsion or force shall be used with regard to (a) and (b), but peaceful persuasion will be adopted as the only means.

This public meeting of Hindus appeals to the Hindu community to collect as large an amount as possible to be used for the removal of untouchability and cognate objects and for this purpose authorizes the President and [the] Secretary to take all necessary steps.

In pursuance of the said resolutions a society, named the All-India Anti-untouchability League subsequently named as Harijan Sevak Sangh was duly formed and a constitution was adopted by it at [Delhi] on 26th [October, 1932].

It was then considered advisable to frame a fuller constitution and the following was finally adopted at a meeting of the central board of All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh held at Delhi on . . . superseding the previous constitution.

The Constitution of the Harijan Sevak Sangh

Reference to Present Rules

1. The name of the Society will be Harijan Sevak Sangh.

2. The object of the Sangh shall be the eradication by truthful and non-violent means of untouchability in Hindu Society with all its incidental evils and disabilities, suffered by the so-called untouchables hereinafter described as Harijans in all walks of life and to secure for them absolute equality of status with the rest of the Hindus.

3. In furtherance of its objects the H. S. S. will seek to establish contact with caste Hindus throughout India and show them that untouchability as it is practised in Hindu society is repugnant to the Shastras and to the best instinct of humanity, and it will also seek to serve Harijans so as to promote their moral, social and material welfare.

4. The affairs of the Sangh shall be managed by a Central Board constituted as hereinafter provided.

5. The Central Board shall consist of the following members and (2) the Presidents of the Provincial Boards of the Sangh with power to the President to co-opt not more than five members.

The organizing members are:

1. Sjt. Ghanshyamdas Birla, President
2. Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Bombay

3. Sir Lalubhai Samaldas, Bombay
4. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Bombay
5. Seth Ambalal Sarabhai, Ahmedabad
6. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Calcutta
7. Lala Lachmandas, Delhi
8. Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, Madras
9. Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, Madras
10. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, Trichinopoly
11. Sjt. A. V. Thakkar, General Secretary
12. Mr. Baloo P. Palwankar, Bombay
13. Mr. J. P. Mandelia, Treasurer, Delhi
14. Mr. D. P. Khaitan, Calcutta
15. Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, Lahore.

6. The Central Board may co-opt members from time to time either for life or for a fixed period. The organizing and the co-opted members together shall at no time exceed the number of ex-officio members.

7. The President shall subject to re-election retire every three years and be elected by the then existing Board.

8. The President shall have the power to remove [the] Secretary or [the] Secretaries and [the] Treasurer and appoint others in their stead provided that there shall never be more than three Secretaries or more than two Treasurers.

9. The Sangh shall have as many branches in provincial centres as the President of the Central Board may deem necessary.

10. The President of the Central Board shall select the President of each Provincial Board who, in his turn, will select as many members for his Board as he may think fit not, however, more than ten.

11. The President of a Provincial Board shall appoint a working Secretary for his Board from among its members, subject to the approval of the President of the Central Board.

12. Each Provincial Board may form as many committees or agencies as may be found necessary in the interest of the Harijan cause.

13. The Presidents of the Central and Provincial Boards and their committees shall all be honorary.

14. The office-bearers and members of the Central Board, he Provincial Boards and committees and agents shall (1) sign

the pledge hereto annexed, (2) pay annual subscription in advance of Rs. 6.00 payable at his will in two half-yearly instalments subject to special exemption by a President within his jurisdiction, (3) perform some definite Harijan service named by him and approved by one half of the Board, (4) send a diary to competent authority from month to month containing a record of such services.

15. It shall be competent for the Sangh to acquire and hold immovable properties. Such properties shall vest in a permanent Trustee or Trustees appointed by the President of the Central Board. The Trustee or Trustees shall be entitled to deal with them only in accordance with the resolutions of the Central Board.

16. The funds of the Central Board of the Sangh shall be deposited in a bank or banks in the name of the Sangh and the account shall be operated upon by the President or his nominee or nominees.

17. The funds of the Provincial Boards and their committees shall similarly be deposited in banks as far as possible and the accounts shall be operated upon by the respective Presidents or their nominees.

18. The Central Board shall meet in any convenient place in India at least once in a year. The quorum for its meeting shall be ten.

19. It shall be competent for the Central Board to frame bye-laws for preparing and passing of the central and provincial budgets, for the custody, disposal and audit of the funds of the Sangh and for otherwise regulating its work.

20. The Central Board may function in Indian States in which there is no prohibition against its activities.

21. No member or agent of the Central Board or Provincial Boards or committees shall while holding such position in any way engage in any campaign of civil disobedience.

22. A member of any Board or agent who fails without just cause to attend three consecutive meetings of Boards to which they belong shall be deemed to have vacated office.

23. Any member of a board when required thereto fails to carry out instructions duly issued to him by a competent authority may be relieved of his office at the discretion of the Central or the Provincial Boards.

24. Any person who subscribes to the object of the Sangh and will help the Sangh by paying and collecting contributions to

the Sangh and otherwise further its object can become an associate of the Sangh and shall be kept informed of the proceedings of the Sangh from time to time and shall be entitled and invited to attend the meetings of the Central Board or of the Board of his Province without however the right of voting.

25. The Central Board, the Provincial Boards and the committees shall establish contact with Harijan organizations throughout the country and invite them to send lists of advisers who will be kept informed of the activities of the Sangh and who will be invited to attend the meetings of Boards or committees and to take part in their deliberations, without however exercising the right to vote.

26. Every Board or committee shall have as many Harijan members as it is possible to secure consistently with its maximum provided that the pledge to be signed by them shall be as per form B hereby attached and that they will be exempt from other conditions laid down in sub-clauses 2, 3 and 4 of clause 14 hereof.

27. For the better administration of the affairs of the Sangh the President shall select from among the members of the Central Board executive committee of seven members including himself as Chairman and two Secretaries.

28. The E. C. shall meet every three months and oftener when necessary and have all the power exercisable by the Central Board subject however to revision of its work by the Central Board in so far as such revision is possible. The four members besides the President and Secretaries will subject to re-selection retire every year.

29. All the acts performed hitherto and transactions undertaken under the superseded constitution are hereby ratified.

30. Consistently with the foregoing, the old constitution is hereby repealed—not inconsistently with the object of the Sangh, Central Board shall have the power to revise this Constitution from time to time.

31. During the transition stage the existing organizations shall function till changes in consonance with this Constitution are completed.

32. This Constitution shall come into effect as from . . .

Appendix A

I, name, age, occupation, residence believe in the complete eradication of untouchability as it is practised today in Hindu society and hereby subscribe to the constitution of H. S. S. I

do not consider any human being as inferior to me in status, shall pay in advance every half year commencing from 1st January 1935 the sum of . . . .

I further undertake to perform personal service of Harijans in the following manner:

(State)

I shall regularly send every month a diary of personal service to Harijans.

Date Signature

Place

APPENDIX B

I, full name, age, occupation, residence

I believe in the mission of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and subscribe to its constitution.

I shall carry out all the instructions that may be issued from time to time by the Central Board or its branches.

From a photostat: G.N. 8733; also from *Constitution of the Harijan Sevak Sangh*

20. LETTER TO ABHYANKAR

March 9, 1933

MY DEAR ABHYANKAR,

Here is copy of my further correspondence with Sjt. Chhapkhane.[1] I suggest your seeking him and fixing up whatever is possible. He is so definite about what happened during my visit to Sangli that it is difficult to contradict him without unimpeachable evidence or to believe that he is guilty of saying what is not true.

Sjt. Joshi will perhaps show my letter[2] to you.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20512

[1] *Vide* p. 5.
[2] *Vide* p. 26.

21. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 9, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

The English *Harijan* has become self-supporting already. The subscriptions received to date from street sales and annual subscribers leave a balance without the aid of the Rs. 1044 from the Central Board[1]. This money can, therefore, now be refunded. Will you kindly tell me how you would want this money to be sent to you? I understand that you have to pay something to the Maharashtra Board. My enquiry as to the method of refunding the money is merely with a view to saving commission on money order, draft or cheque.

Arrangements have been made to issue a Gujarati *Harijan* also. It is being issued from Poona. The Bombay Board has guaranteed the cost for three months in the event of any loss being incurred, but I have no such fear.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

[PS.]

Your letter written from Benares has arrived. You have been postponing the operation, which I do not like.[2]

From a copy: C.W. 7930. Courtesy: G. D. Birla. Also *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, pp. 106-7

22. LETTER TO BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION

March 9, 1933

THE JOINT HON. SECRETARIES
BRITISH INDIAN ASSOCIATION
18 BRITISH INDIAN STREET, CALCUTTA

DEAR FRIENDS,

I thank you for your letter of 23rd ultimo enclosing a memorandum on the Poona Pact on behalf of the British Indian Asso-

[1] Servants of Untouchables Society

[2] The postscript appears only *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, according to which source it was written in Hindi.

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ciation.[1] I have been carrying on private correspondence with friends in this matter to ascertain Bengal opinion. My own position is quite clear. I was wholly uninterested in the number of seats reserved for untouchables or depressed classes. Once the principle of reservation was conceded, my own position was that the more they got the better it was for them and for Hinduism and, therefore, for the whole of India from every point of view. If untouchables are a part of ourselves, what can be grander than that we reserve seats for them without any reservation. That to my mind would be the very best method of killing the spirit of difference. I wholly dissent from the view that the principle of separation is left intact in the Yeravda Pact[2]. On the contrary, the principle of joint election has been the main feature of the Yeravda Pact so far as the political side is concerned. That the candidates for joint election have to be selected by Harijan electors in the first instance is surely no drawback, if we have faith in ourselves and in our regard for them, and if all the four candidates selected happen to be anti-Hindu reactionaries it would be to me proof positive that during the period of grace we had failed to command their affection or esteem and we would have to thank our stars if we have to elect from among reactionary candidates. I do not in any way share your fear that depressed class members will not do justice to the Hindu or the national cause. Nor have I any fear that they will not be able to discharge their proper function as representatives of the people. Should it prove otherwise it will mean that we are not fit for swaraj.

All things considered, therefore, I fear that I can be no party to the revision of the Pact, and in any case I am only one of the parties concerned, and my opinion will be valueless if all the other parties consent to or desire revision of the Pact in the direction suggested by the British Indian Association.

[1] The memorandum was prepared by a subcommittee, with Sir Bepin Bihary Ghose as its president, appointed by the All-Parties Bengali Hindu Conference held on the January 11, 1933, in the hall of the British Indian Association. The memorandum *inter alia* said: "It will thus be seen that the caste Hindus of Bengal are already smarting under a sense of injustice; and the Prime Minister's acceptance of the Poona Pact comes as a sensible addition to their grievances. Upon the basis of the facts set forth above, it is submitted that the Poona Pact did not fulfil the conditions for a substituted agreement laid down in the Prime Minister's Award, and that, therefore, the Prime Minister has ample justification for re-considering his assent to the same" (S.N. 20341).

[2] For the full text of the Pact, *vide* Vol. LI, Appendix II.

As I do not wish to compromise your position in any way, I have not entered into a public discussion of your position nor will I do so now unless you wish me to. The very first person I wrote to was, I think, Dr. Bidhan Roy, and he told me that he was seeing all the interested parties and that he would write to me. I have not heard from him since. I am now in your hands.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20511. Also C.W. 7931. Courtesy : G. D. Birla

23. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 9, 1933

DEAR SATISBABOO,

I have your letter giving me the contents of the two issues of the Bengali *Harijan.* You will see the note[1] that is to appear in the ensuing number of the *Harijan.*

I note what you say about smallpox. I do not know however whether it is a useful thing for us to have statistics about the distribution of smallpox among different castes.

I am glad you are keeping in touch with sanatanists. That they will not listen to the other things until we give up temple-entry is well known. My suggestion is before them that they should start their own organizations and take up the other items. If they don't, it shows the hypocrisy of the whole thing.

As to varnashrama, I do mean that today if we must classify the whole of Hindus according to varna, there is only one varna possible, and that is Shudra. Acceptance of the fourth varna by all will represent not only the true state of Hindu society, but it will at one stroke level down all distinctions of high and low. That does not prevent anybody from attaining divine or any other knowledge, but it does mean that all live by their labour and all become entitled therefore to nothing more than simple maintenance. That in my opinion is varnadharma in a nutshell. That Hinduism has never lived up to it perfectly is true, but in my opinion it is equally true that Hinduism has in its purest period consciously lived up to it with success.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20507

[1] *Vide* p. 47.

24. LETTER TO VITHAL K. JOSHI

March 9, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I have heard from Sjt. Chhapkhane.[1] He gives a categorical reply confirming Sjt. Athavale's and he also suggests that you should have gone to Sjt. Chhapkhane to have the matter cleared up. I suggest your doing it. Copies of the balance of correspondence are being forwarded to Sjt. Abhyankar. Of course there is no question of a court case. I can only plead with those who hold the money, but it is difficult for me to believe that a man like Sjt. Chhapkhane could be guilty of giving a false version of what happened during my visit to Sangli. No theory can be built upon Sjt. Gangadhar Rao's recollection. He does not say anything with confidence and it is not possible for anyone to recollect events that happened so many years ago. Therefore, unless there is unimpeachable evidence to the contrary, Sjt. Chhapkhane's word must be taken, and in that event I can only plead with him to use some part of the money at least in connection with Harijan work.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. VITHAL K. JOSHI
NEW PETH
SANGLI

From a microfilm: S.N. 20514

25. LETTER TO N.

March 9, 1933

MY DEAR N.[2],

I had hoped to hear from you today. I had your note scribbled on the back of the telegram that was received by you. You were right in refusing the Rs. 25. I did not like the subscription to your note. "Your son" looks unnatural and theatrical.

[1] For Gandhiji's reply to him, *vide* p. 5.

[2] An American women who later stayed at the Sabarmati Ashram for some time; the name in this and the subsequent relevant items, however, has been omitted.

If the truth has really dawned on you, you must realize the enormity of the past wrong and you ought to shed all hysteria and unnaturalness. You can only become my daughter if you would be good as you have promised to me.

I had letters from S.[1] and Sir M.[2] I am therefore writing to Sir M. a letter[3] giving him the purport of your confession and your promise, naturally withholding the names you have given me and I am sending a similar letter to S. That is right, is it not? S. adds in his letter that he would be delighted if you came under my guidance and utilized your services.

May God bless you and give you strength to keep your promise.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20504

26. LETTER TO M.[4]

March 9, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter about N. She was with me for a few days and I regret to have to report to you that her record is not what you describe. Bit by bit she made her confession and it made a ghastly story. She seems to have led a most extravagant and immoral life, even from tender years. She was open to the advances of practically any person, and she was no better after her acceptance of Hindu religion. She has debts amounting to nearly Rs. 10,000 spread over Europe and India. She has travelled under a false name. The only thing I am able to say in her favour is that she has been quite frank with me in her recital of her recklessnesses, though, as I have said, they came bit by bit in answer to my cross-examination. She has professed penitence and made me a definite promise to say good-bye to her past life. I have told her that I could not take her on trust but that if she proved true to her promise I would not hesitate to defend her and to guide her. I do not know what capacity she has still left for controlling herself and keeping her promises.

[1], [2] & [4] The names have been omitted.
[3] *Vide* the following item.

CWMG INDIA

In giving you this painful story of her confession I am betraying no confidence, for, she was to have published a confession much like this immediately on her reaching Bangalore. She was also to give up the boarding house and with her son become a beggar relying purely upon a forgiving world's charity and was to live in a corner in Harijan quarters the simplest possible life giving up the governess and letting her baby son share the privilege of her penitent life.

There are some further details, some other particulars of her life, which I may not disclose, nor, so far as I am aware, will she.

Her confession has made me sad. I have had many boys and girls making their confessions to me, but it has never been my misfortune to come across a case like N.'s. But I have no right to judge her. Judgment is in the hands of God. Being myself in need of pity from the world I only pity her and love to help her to the extent of my ability. I felt drawn to her when she wrote to me announcing her decision to fast with me if I had commenced the fast in the beginning of the year. I had warned her against it and the correspondence became lengthened. I had hoped that she would become an excellent member of the army of Harijan servants and her letters gave all that promise.

I thank you for your personal wishes for me and kind thoughts about me.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat : S.N. 20502

27. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

March 9, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

Here is a letter which I would like you to read and hand it to N.

I would like you also to give me the full name and address of R. of the Engineering College. I understand that he has been her chief companion in connection with the scavenging work.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20503

28. LETTER TO R. RAMAMOORTHY

March 9, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 10th February, reminding me of a quotation from "Santi Parva".

Yours sincerely,

SJT. R. RAMAMOORTHY
C/O SJT. RAMACHANDRA RAO
1 RAVANA IYER ST.
P. T. MADRAS

From a microfilm : S.N. 20508

29. LETTER TO PANCHANAN TARKARATNA

March 9, 1933

DEAR PANDITJI,

I was amazed to receive your undated letter.

So far as your son's visit is concerned, he was to come to me not as one of the *Shastri* disputants but as one desirous of answering my questions, enlightening me and to this end seeing me from day to day for 10 days or longer if necessary, and he was to come to me as your representative even as you had come[1] without imposing any conditions on me.

It surprises me that now you should describe his coming to me as one of the disputants in the nature of fulfilment of your promise.

Secondly, from the very commencement of the discussions, untouchability as it is practised today was the subject-matter of discussion[2], and I have a letter written by Pandits on the very date that they came to the effect that that was the common ground between them and me. You, your son or anybody can see the original document in my possession. But the Pandits had imposed

[1] *Vide* Vol. LII, p. 308 and Vol. LIII, pp. 337-8.
[2] With sanatanist *Shastris*, on January 12; *vide* Vol. LIII, p. 37.

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another condition which they thought I would never accept, but in order not to miss the discussion with them when they had come as far as the jail gate, I waived my objection and accepted their condition retaining the words "as at present practised". Still they would not come. I cannot help saying that this was unreasonable, discourteous and unworthy of learned men. Of all the painful episodes that I have had the misfortune to face in my contact with *Shastris*, this was the most painful.

Of the other parts of your letter I desire to say nothing beyond this that I am unable to endorse your interpretation of the Shastras as being repugnant to common sense, universal morals and contrary to the interpretation of the Shastras by Pandits having no less learning and authority than the opposite school and in the presence of such a conflict of interpretation you will not blame me if I accept that which is more consistent with my moral sense.

As to your proposed fast, whilst I should deplore it if you ever came to undertake it, such fasts are an everyday occurrence in Hinduism and have always to be welcomed when they come from the purity of one's heart and without anger or malice.

You would not write as you have done about the two Bills now pending before the Legislature if you had carefully studied the contents and application of these Bills.[1] In my opinion they constitute no interference with anyone's religion or conscience. One Bill takes untouchability out of the domain of civil law which is what you and I and everybody else should desire, and the other ensures the free exercise of conscience by all, whereas today the conscience of a growing number of people is constrained.

Yours sincerely,

PANDIT PANCHANAN TARKARATNA
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm : S.N. 20509 a

[1] These were unofficial Bills relating to the abolition of untouchability: one to be sponsored in the Central Legislative Assembly by Ranga Iyer and the other in the Madras Legislative Council by Dr. Subbaroyan. Ranga Iyer's Bill was to come up for introduction first on February 27 and then again on March 24. On both occasions "protracted discussions on other non-official Bills by members who were hostile or indifferent to the anti-untouchability movement" vitiated the attempt. —*India in 1932-33*

30. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

March 9, 1933

DEAR MOTIBABOO,

You have asked me to send my reply to Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna directly. Unfortunately, you have not given me his address and he has omitted to give it in his letter. I therefore send my reply[1] to you. You may, if you like, put it in an envelope and post it from there. You should read the letter before posting. I patiently await your letter promised in your postcard.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20509

31. LETTER TO DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARI

March 9, 1933

DEAR SIR DEVA PRASAD,

I thank you for your letter of 3rd March and was grateful to learn that Abdul Alim of Tipperah had already been admitted to the institution[2] and that you were having him examined by a doctor and making arrangements for special attention being paid to him.

Let us hope that he will prove worthy of all the kindness that is being shown to him.

Yours sincerely,

SIR DEVA PRASAD SARVADHIKARI
125 BOW BAZAR ST.
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm : S.N. 20506

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Named "The Refuge"; this was a home for the "homeless, helpless and hopeless" of which the addressee was the President.

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32. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 9, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I send with this my reply[1] to the question asked by Mary and Duncan. Read and think over it and then pass it on to them. I wrote to you[2] yesterday regarding Lakshmi and also sent a message for the occasion. Most probably Devdas will arrive there on Sunday.

I am becoming convinced that the source of asthma also is in the stomach. If, therefore, Chimanlal and Jamna cling to the experiment of milk diet with determination, their asthma is bound to be cured. And they need not also think that they must drink a certain quantity of milk. I think that they will be able to digest only a very small quantity. Milk is drunk for the sake of the proteins, the ghee and the vitamins which it contains. If proteins give strength, they also diminish it if there is the slightest excess of them. Weak people, therefore, can build up strength by drinking milk in a very small quantity. The chief food of such people should be vegetables and juicy fruits. Without trying other remedies, therefore, if they eat *bhaji* and juicy fruits in plenty and drink a very small quantity of milk for strength, they are bound to get all right. And if this regimen does not help them, I will not mind their concluding that nothing else will and doing nothing. They should drink the milk unboiled and mixed with some fruit or green vegetable. In doing so, they would be eating milk instead of drinking it, and it will then be much easier to digest. They should also regularly do *pranayamas*, slowly and moderately, on an empty stomach. Besides, they should take sun-bath. In this season, hip-bath also is bound to be beneficial.

I have looked into Radha's accounts. I am returning them. I think in the present circumstances we are helpless in this matter. Expenses on food alone come to Rs. 30. Rs. 55 account for rent, railway fare and other expenses during the journey, and Rs. 25 for the doctor's fees, maid servant, postage, repair of watch, etc., and playing cards for bezique. There may be room for criticism

[1] *Vide* pp. 9-10.
[2] *Vide* pp. 13-4.

in regard to this item of Rs. 25, but there can be no criticism in regard to the Rs. 30 for food, if the amount is for one month. The whole question of Ashram expenses, that is, of our way of living, is a complicated one. If we carefully watch ourselves daily and introduce greater and greater simplicity in the Ashram, we shall learn to rely more and more on God in our misfortunes in the shape of illness and accidents. Our work then will shine better. We shall feel happy with ourselves and will be safe in all circumstances. It will then be easy for us to control, without criticizing them, those others who spend too much. "We" here means most of the inmates of the Ashram who are seekers after truth and have dedicated themselves to its pursuit. Personally I feel that a time is coming when we shall have to live like sannyasis confined to the Ashram. That is, we shall have to be content with whatever treatment we can get in the Ashram itself for any illness. Almora was intended, is still intended, to supplement the Ashram. But I think it would be desirable to renounce even that. But we can do all these things only by cultivating such a climate of opinion in the Ashram. In doing so, nobody should look to what the other inmates do. Anybody who feels that he ought to practise such sannyasa should start doing so. In other words, he will not go anywhere outside the Ashram for treatment of illness or for his personal work. Just now, this is only an aspiration. I have merely taken this opportunity to put the suggestion before you so that you may think over it at leisure and discuss it with other senior inmates.

Sitla Sahai has attacked me too. But I have thrown the responsibility for the whole thing on you. He also has complained that I have shifted the responsibility. I will put up with that charge. Ask Purushottam to write a detailed letter to me. The doctor's remarks in regard to Kanu seem justified to me. If he has carefully learnt how to do the massage, if he gives complete rest to the affected part and if it is gently massaged every day, it will certainly be cured. The improvement will of course take time.

Parashuram seems to have joined the Ashram to test your capacity for endurance. But you are strong enough and so we need not worry. You may give him divorce when you can bear it no longer. Personally, I am now ready to accept this reform in Hindu marriage. Millions of poor Hindus do have the custom of divorce. Their lives would become unbearable without it. I see no dharma in people regarding themselves as belonging to the twice-born class and forcing women to accept their ideal. Spiritual bonds must be indissoluble. But when the ideal is forced upon

people through law, it ceases to be dharma. I was discussing the question of marriage with the Ashram, but I digressed and discussed the problem of ordinary marriage. Those who join the Ashram marry it, and say so. The Ashram is the wife and the person who joins it is the husband. When, however, the bond becomes unbearable to the poor wife, she has every right to ask for divorce. You may use this right whenever you wish to.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati : M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8330. Courtesy : Narandas Gandhi

33. LETTER TO K. S. RAMABHADRA AYYAR

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 22nd ultimo. I do not encourage your advances because your letters create no favourable impression on me. They seem to be unbalanced and if what you write creates a bad impression on me your visit is not likely to improve matters, hence I do not like the idea of your wasting your money in travelling here and then wasting your time and mine. I assure you that I have not a single minute to spare.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. S. RAMABHADRA AYYAR
ADVOCATE, HIGH COURT
LUZ MYLAPURE, MADRAS

From a microfilm : S.N. 20532

34. LETTER TO SURENDRA MOHAN BHATTACHARYA

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which I thank you.

You remind me of slave-owners of old who used to recount their services to their slaves in that they gave them food and shelter somewhat after the style in which they gave both to their cattle, only the treatment of the slaves was in many respects worse than that of their cattle and in no respect better, and it is quite evident

to me that you do not even take the trouble of knowing what educated and religiously-minded Hindus have done and are doing for Harijans whom they do not consider in any shape or form lower than themselves but regard them as their own kith and kin.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. SURENDRA MOHAN BHATTACHARYA
VEDANTA SHASTRI
VILLAGE ALGI
P.O. MADHABOLI
DT. DACCA

From a microfilm : S.N. 20521

35. LETTER TO L. N. HARDAS

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I am sorry that being preoccupied I have not been able to reach your letter of the 10th February earlier than now. Even if I had reached your letter earlier I could not have sent you anything, but you are at liberty to copy anything you like from my writings in the *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. L. N. HARDAS
C/O THE "MAHARATTA"
KAMPTEE (C.P.)

From a microfilm : S.N. 20536

36. LETTER TO M. A. GOPALASWAMI IYENGAR

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have not been able to deal with your letter of 23rd February earlier. Please excuse me.

I think that you are quite right in your contention that if the Untouchability Abolition Bill is passed, Temple-entry Bill is unnecessary. If you can therefore get the Abolition Bill passed in the Mysore Assembly, it would be unnecessary to press for the passage of the Temple-entry Bill so far as Mysore is concerned. But you will see to it that the interpretation of the Abolition Bill is

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accepted by the sanatanists. If that is achieved the rest may be left to the ripening of public opinion.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. M. A. GOPALASWAMI IYENGAR
ADVOCATE
BANGALORE CITY

From a microfilm : S.N. 20535

37. LETTER TO E. LINDSAY

March 10, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I was delighted to have your letter and to have the beautiful anecdote about the social worker. I have just glanced through the lines you have sent me. Did I never tell you that I was very stupid at judging poetry? I shall therefore need to read your lines half a dozen times before their beauty and message will dawn upon me. Mahadev is a poet and he has no difficulty about making up his mind when he sees a piece of beautiful poetry. I shall therefore seek his assistance. He is doing his work only within a few feet of me, but we are so immersed in our tasks that we have hardly time to talk about so many common things and interests apart from the task in front of us.

Yours sincerely,

MADAM E. LINDSAY
BALLIOL COLLEGE
OXFORD

From a photostat : S.N. 20529

38. LETTER TO MICHAEL LINDSAY

March 10, 1933

MY DEAR MICHAEL,

I was so glad you sent your little note with Mother's letter. We have often thought of you.

The two sayings you have sent me of Confucius are very beautiful and very seasonable for me.[1]

[1] Confucius, when asked by a ruler what he ought to do, is said to have replied, "Be in advance of the people and work for them." Asked for further advice, he is said to have said, "Do not get tired of doing this."

Please remember us to Father, and accept Mahadev's and my regards for yourself.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL LINDSAY, ESQ.

From a microfilm : S.N. 20531

39. LETTER TO THE MANAGER, "MILAP"

March 10, 1933

THE MANAGER
THE "MILAP"
LAHORE

DEAR FRIEND,

It was not possible to send you any message in reply to your telegram. I am therefore returning the voucher received by me so as to enable you to collect the rupee.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20527

40. LETTER TO USHAKANTA MUKHOPADHYA

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your interesting letter which I have read carefully. There is no difficulty about understanding your letter. The prescription that you have suggested is being followed in all the parts of the country. Sanskrit literature has been translated in the vernaculars and is accessible to even the illiterate masses.

As far as the law is concerned, there is no question of compelling anybody to regard any other as untouchable. The object of the Bill is to withdraw the sanction of the law to a custom which cannot be defended by any ordinary rule of morality. The law is simply meant to give the reformer the scope of bringing the message to those who will listen to it.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. USHAKANTA MUKHOPADHYA
12 MUKHERJIPARA LANE
KALIGHAT, CALCUTTA

From a microfilm : S.N. 20526

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41. LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, YOUNG MEN'S BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

March 10, 1933

THE PRESIDENT
YOUNG MEN'S BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION
MAHA BODHI ASHRAM
PERAMBUR, MADRAS

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I wish that it was in my power to help you.[1] Whatever was possible for me to do I did some years ago.[2]

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20537

42. LETTER TO SAMANERA SANGHARATNA

March 10, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which I thank you. I have in my own way tried to do whatever was possible in connection with Buddha Gaya Temple.[3] More is not possible at the present moment.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. SAMANERA SANGHARATNA
MULAGANDHA KUTI VIHARA
SARNATH, BENARES

From a microfilm: S.N. 20523

[1] The addressee had enclosed a resolution of the Young Men's Buddhist Association which sought Gandhiji's help in gaining control of Buddha Gaya Temple from a non-Buddhist *mahant*.

[2] & [3] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 544-5 and Vol. XXXV, pp. 243-4.

43. LETTER TO SATCOURIPATI RAI

March 10, 1933

DEAR SATCOURIBABU,

I was glad to have your letter and report of the work in January last. Your report was too late for the ensuing issue. Please send everything so as to reach me on Wednesdays at the latest. By all means send anything you wish to write for the *Harijan*. I would love to have fresh and suitable ideas.

In your report I see you say that the Kali Temple was opened. I have heard reports to the contrary, namely, that the Kali Temple was always open to Harijans in a way and that even now it is open only in a way. You will therefore please enquire about this and let me know. I have had reports from other places also about the opening of temples and then the information was challenged.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20534

44. LETTER TO LEONARD N. SCHIFF

March 10, 1933

MY DEAR LEONARD,

I have another charming letter from you. Your letters are always inside the line. Verrier is quite free from malaria now and his work seems to be steadily going forward. I suppose you know all about his intended marriage with Mary Gillett and their joint decision afterwards not to marry each other but for each to be married to the service to which they have dedicated their lives. It must have been a very bitter cup for them to drink, but they have drunk it courageously. I have not been able quite to follow the latest developments arising out of the Oxford Union resolution on the Pacifism debate.[1]

I hope you are getting your copy of the *Harijan* regularly.

[1] At a Union debate the University had decided that "on no account would the House ever again fight for King and Country" (S.N. 20238).

With love from us all.

Yours sincerely,

LEONARD N. SCHIFF, ESQ.
9 GT. WILSON ST.
LEEDS 11

From a photostat: S.N. 20522

45. LETTER TO S. V. SONAVANE

March 10, 1933

MY DEAR SONAVANE[1],

I have your letter. I would like you to see Jajuji at Sheth Jamnalalji's residence in Wardha and let him investigate your case and report to me. Show him this letter. You will give him all the particulars about yourself, your age, the members of your family and any other information that he may need.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. S. V. SONAVANE
PULFILE
WARDHA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20520

46. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 10, 1933

MY DEAR MARGARETE[2],

I receive your letters regularly and I have now your notes from your pupils' papers. They make very interesting reading. What worries me is the time you have spent over the translation and copying. Is it not stealing time from your pupils? I hope you have had my letters that I have been sending you not quite every week but fairly regularly. I hope you are now satisfied that the work you may be doing there is also my work inasmuch

[1] A Harijan student. He had failed in the Intermediate examination and was unable to continue his studies owing to poverty. He had appealed to Gandhiji to "support" him or get him a "supporter" (S.N. 20343).

[2] A German follower of Gandhiji whom he later gave the Indian name Amala.

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as you are observing the rules of the Ashram and doing your work purely from a spirit of service, and I have no doubt that so long as your mother lives your duty is to be by her side.

Mahadev has all your letters. You don't expect him to reply to all of them. Do you? He can write but once a month, but he will deal with your letters as soon as he is released in a couple of months.[1]

Yours sincerely,

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

47. LETTER TO SOPHIA WADIA

March 10, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I thank you very much for your letter and a typed copy of your lecture given on the 2nd instant at the Cowasji Jehangir Hall.

Yes, I was looking forward to your visit, and whenever you have the time, do please both of you come, and I shall be delighted to see you and know more fully your ideas on untouchability and caste than I can from your interesting lecture.

Yours sincerely,

MADAM SOPHIA WADIA
HILL CREST
PEDDER ROAD
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20524

48. LETTER TO NRISINHPRASAD K. BHATT

March 10, 1933

If the Hindus of Bhavnagar pass a resolution by an overwhelming majority asserting that there are no classes among Hindus who are descendants of the original Shudras or who should be regarded as untouchable, I would see no moral objection to the admission of *Antyajas* despite the particular clause in the agreement being against their being admitted. For, if such a resolution were

[1] This paragraph is in Mahadev Desai's hand.

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passed, there would be no community which could be described as *Antyajas*.

We often find contradictory rules being followed in the different branches of the same institution. Since the prohibition applies to residence, I see no moral objection to the admission of *Antyajas* to the school. On the contrary, it would show disregard for dharma to deny admission to them.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: S.N. 20533

49. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

March 10, 1933

CHI. NARAHARI,

I could read your letter of the 4th only today. Your question is good. One who is convinced that there is no other way but *brahmacharya* should know that the right thing for him is to strive exclusively to discover the means of perfecting it and should continue his experiments to that end in the faith that large numbers of people will adopt it one day. He should also be convinced at the same time that artificial means of birth-control are dangerous from every point of view and are bound to loosen morals. Even if we assume that people will have to suffer during the interval before *brahmacharya* comes to be widely accepted, I see nothing wrong in that. Like an individual, a society also will reap as it sows. But God is merciful. There is mercy even in those of His acts which we regard as punishment. When the birth-rate is high, the death-rate also will be proportionately high. Mankind, therefore, will live on. It is true that such life will not be happy, and it is best that it should be so. This knowledge also will persuade people to adopt *brahmacharya*, for even a little experience of it will show that, when it has become habitual, it is a source of much greater happiness than indulgence can give. In order that the world may go on satisfactorily, isn't it also necessary to obey the other laws of God? One such law is that nobody has a right to take more than the minimum he needs for his physical maintenance. If everyone obeyed this law, there would be no starvation even if *brahmacharya* was not observed by large numbers. Physical labour is not confined to work in the fields. Every farmer ought to use his hands and feet fully, especially the hands. In a country where the farmers have no subsidiary industry, they become al-

most like animals. If the company of animals is necessary, the experience of using tools is equally necessary. If all men cultivated manual skill, then even if the population went on increasing, within limits, everybody would have enough food to eat, cloth to cover his or her body with and protection against heat and cold in a home. Remember the meaning of varnadharma which I have been explaining these days.

I think I have answered all your questions, but write to me again if I have not.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9056

50. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 10, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I enclose with this letters for Narahari, Moolchand and Champa. I just received your wire about Parachure Shastri. I had been waiting for it before asking him to go there. In reply to a letter which I had written to him, he wrote me a beautiful letter. I am enclosing it. Preserve it there. I have, however, informed him that, if you consent he must go to the Ashram but that he should see his wife, and if she and the children are fit and are willing to stay in the Ashram, all of them should go. I will now let you know what he decides as soon as he informs me. Parachure Shastri also will keep you informed. The final decision will be based wholly on considerations of dharma. All of us, therefore, may rest assured that it will be for our good. I hope you got my previous letters in which I wrote to you about Lakshmi. I wrote one yesterday and one the day before.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8331. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

CWMG INSTITUTE

51. LETTER TO CHHOTUBHAI K. MEHTA

March 10, 1933

CHI. NAPOLEON,

I got your letter after a long time. A letter from me is as good as one from Sardar. You do not improve your handwriting. The letters should be like pearls. It was you that paid a visit to Visapur. Write to me from time to time. Try and do some Harijan work there also.

Blessings from

CHI. NAPOLEON
C/O DR. NATHABHAI PATEL

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2697

52. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGRAWAL

March 10, 1933

BHAI MOOLCHAND,

Your query has already been answered in *Harijan*.[1]

The exercise of the tongue and the pen cannot be regarded physical activity. In this context it means only labour by hands and feet.

If people do not labour on the land and then starve, what can the brain do? At that time whosoever cultivates even a little will be the saviour. What is the use of a speech when the house is on fire? You will need water to fight the fire, and so on. It does not mean that brain work has no utility. It only means that ideas of those alone will bear fruit who appreciate the significance of manual labour and themselves undertake it. Both types of work should proceed side by side and the best principle is to earn one's bread from manual labour and to employ the intellect for service only. That will secure a perfect balance. You may take it that the Ashram was founded with the same objective. You have to grasp this fact if you wish to benefit from a stay in the Ashram.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 770

[1] Perhaps Gandhiji meant *Harijan Sevak* as no answer is identified in *Harijan*.

53. NOTES

What They Teach

The reader should study the tell-tale figures, collected by the Editor and published in another column, of the 'depressed classes', otherwise called the 'exterior castes' of the Madras Presidency. They have eighty-six sub-divisions among them. The sanatanists would claim that they are all untouchables by birth!!! What were they before they were so classified in the census? It is interesting, too, to note that the criterion of untouchability has not been the same for all the Provinces, nor the same in every part of the same Province, nor is the untouchable of Madras necessarily untouchable in Bombay or Bengal. The more one studies these figures, the stronger will grow the conviction that this untouchability is purely man-made. The census superintendents have been the sole judges. The reader will note also that the various Governments have differed in their views as to the classification. If the untouchables are God-made, why all these differences? The time is coming when there will be a bid on the part of caste Hindus for being classified as 'untouchables'. Signs have already begun to appear on the horizon. If untouchables were God-made, we should be able unfailingly to distinguish them without effort from the rest, as we distinguish one species from another.

And who will answer for these sub-divisions if not caste Hindus? If they will give up untouchability, there is every hope of untouchables giving up the sub-untouchability among themselves.

A Graduate's Difficulty

A graduate correspondent wants to know why I say that the practice of untouchability is common to all mankind and religions and that it is a necessary institution.

When we perform natural functions involving uncleanness or have unclean diseases, we are untouchable till we have become clean. The extent of untouchability and the methods of becoming clean no doubt vary among the nations, but the practice of such untouchability, be its extent ever so small, is common to all, including the so-called savage nations. It is a sound hygienic rule when it is intelligently observed. But it was reserved to modern

Hinduism to brand a person as untouchable by birth and call him an offspring of sin. It is a most tragic spectacle that a religion which boasts that ahimsa is the highest thing in life should carry vindictiveness into the other world. It is against this insane untouchability that I have invited all Hindus who are proud of their faith and jealous of its purity to wage relentless war.

The same correspondent further asks, "Does not your varnadharma deprive people of all chances of rise in the social scale? Should not everyone have the permission to follow what occupation he likes?"

According to my conception of varna, all inequality is ruled out of life. Inequality of intellect or in material possessions ought not to mean inequality of social status. I do most emphatically maintain that man is not made to choose his occupation for 'rising in the social scale'. He is made to serve his fellow-men and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. And since the primary wants of all are the same, all labour should carry the same value.

This law Hinduism discovered and called the law of varna, and carried it out in practice more or less perfectly with amazing success. What we see today in Hinduism is its caricature. It is my certain conviction that obedience to that law alone can save the perishing world. Its conscious recognition means contentment and consequent freeing of human energy for the moral uplift. Its disregard spells unhealthy discontent, greed, cut-throat competition and moral stagnation ending in spiritual suicide. This law, as I understand it, is not and never has been a mere ceremonial rule regulating the restrictions on eating and marrying.

What Is Spiritual Progress?

"When you write about the spirit, the spiritual progress of Harijans, what do you mean? And why is such progress of the world retarded because that of Harijans is? Why is the spiritual progress of Harijans retarded if they are not admitted to temples?" — asks a persistent correspondent who has many other questions which need not engage us just now.

Spirit is that moral being which informs the human body and which is imperishable. Spiritual progress is that which promotes the realization of that imperishable essence. What retards the progress of my neighbour must retard mine. India is a big neighbour of other parts of the world. India's spiritual progress cannot but be retarded if that of forty million Harijans and, therefore, of the two hundred and thirty million Hindus is.

As to temples, I have discussed elsewhere[1] in this issue what a large part they play in the life of mankind. Spirit itself is capable of intellectual dissection only up to a point. It transcends reason, hence it is a matter of faith. Even so are places of worship matters of faith in the last resort.

The Bengali "Harijan"

Two issues of the Bengali *Harijan* are already out. It is published in the form of a magazine with an attractive cover with a Harijan woman carrying a basket of refuse on her head. It is published under the auspices of the Khadi Pratishthan, College Square, Calcutta, and the annual subscription is Rs. 4 including postage, and Rs. 3 without.

The first and second issues contain either full translations or substance of all the articles that have hitherto appeared in the English edition. It contains also translations of some of my previous writings on Hindu religion and editorials or editorial notes from Satisbabu's pen, such as, "Result of Neglect", "Solution of Some Problems of Untouchability", "The Sanatanists' Prayer", "Responsibility of Municipality", "Depressed Classes and Untouchability".

It came out with 2,000 copies the first week, all of which were sold out. It came out with 3,000 the second week. I hope that it will receive generous support from the Bengali public.

Harijan, 11-3-1933

54. A TRUE SERVANT

Experience that is being daily gained shows that the service of Harijans is perhaps the hardest of all services. There are to my knowledge many girls and grown-up women performing daily personal service. One of them gives a graphic account of her experience in scavengers' quarters. It was with the greatest difficulty that she could restrain herself from vomiting when she first went to these quarters. I am glad women are taking their due share in the movement.

How are the Harijans living in hideous filth to be served? They have no will to be served. They curse those who go to their quarters. Some even stone workers out of their streets. Still they must be served, if we will serve ourselves. They must be raised out of this state, if we will raise ourselves. We have pressed them down

[1] *Vide* pp. 49-51.

and in so doing we have gone down ourselves. Not everyone can perform this high service. Let me sum up the qualities that I have found to be indispensable in a Harijan servant:

He must have true love for Harijans as if they were members of his own family.

He must have great patience and courage to bear physical injury and insults.

He must have a character above suspicion and reproach.

He must be prepared to live on the barest possible sustenance.

To go through all my correspondence and to have interviews with Harijans, sanatanists and workers is to pass through a raging fire. Harijans who have at all become vocal are naturally suspicious and often exacting. They are impatient. The sanatanists think that the Hinduism of their belief is in danger. They have money which they are using freely. New organs are daily coming into being. They impute motives, make the wildest statements about the reformers and distort the whole movement. The workers are not all an ideal team. I have seen how one worker can poison the whole atmosphere around him unless he is thoroughly trustworthy and is pure in mind and body.

If the worker is to satisfy both the Harijans and the sanatanists, he will do so only by showing the highest character, deep humility and great charity. In other words, he will have to be a man of religion. This is a movement for the purification of religion. No religion has ever been purified by brag and bluster or by men with a loose character.

Workers will have to be most circumspect. Sanatanists are reported to be resorting to goondaism and not to hesitate to resort to force to break up meetings. This is no wonder. Evil has its own vested interests. These are undoubtedly in danger. And they will put up a fight for existence. Where, therefore, there is any danger of disturbance, the workers must avoid it, even if they have to give up public meetings and the like. In such cases they must take the message of deliverance from house to house. They must not engage in vain disputations or interpretation of Shastras. They must rely upon the unfailing ability of Truth to protect itself. Truth is life and it propagates itself the moment it has got a habitation in some human personality. Mute conduct is often the most effective speech. Workers, therefore, need to have a living faith in themselves and the cause. But they know that by themselves they are nothing. Therefore, faith in themselves means faith in God. Those who empty themselves of all pride and all egotism have the greatest help from God.

Hinduism will be purified of the evil of untouchability only by the willing sacrifice of thousands of such true servants.

Harijan, 11-3-1933

55. ARE TEMPLES NECESSARY?

An American correspondent[1] writes:[2]

> . . . The great religious truths which the prophets of religion have apprehended and proclaimed have always been lost when their disciples have tried to localize them in priestcraft and temples. Truth is too universal to be confined and made sectarian. Therefore, I consider temples, mosques and churches to be a prostitution of religion. . . . When religion is made a monopoly by the priesthood and temples become vested interests, the great mass of mankind becomes isolated from truth. . . .
>
> Therefore, I can see no advantage in gaining permission for the Harijans to enter the temples. I know that justice demands that they shall have the liberty even to do wrong. But if they are to learn the lessons of self-respect which will enable them to take an equal place with caste people in the development of the future of our civilization, I think they must learn an independence of all priests and temples. . . . When you spoke in Europe that you "formerly considered that God is Truth but now you realized that Truth is God", you struck a responsive chord in the hearts of all of us, whatever our traditions may have been. But when you become a defender of the faith of temple Hinduism, even though it be a purified type, we feel that you have lost your universal appeal, an appeal which I consider you to have made not as a Hindu, but as one of that large body of spiritual-minded Hindus who do not look to the temples for the spiritual sustenance of their lives. I do not believe that such men are outside the best traditions of Hinduism but are rather in the line of the creators of the religious spirit which has made the spirituality of India her greatest contribution to humanity.
>
> Nor do I believe that this higher Hinduism is too high for the Harijans, whose spiritual intuitions have never been dulled by our modern type of education. Buddha, Chaitanya and Kabir all made a large appeal to this class, and the teachings of Jesus were most appreciated, not by the high and mighty, but by publicans and fishermen, who were outside the pale of respectable society. . . .

[1] Presumably Boyd Tucker; *vide* "Letter to Boyd Tucker", 23-3-1933.
[2] Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

This considered opinion representing a large body of people throughout the world deserves respectful consideration. Such an opinion, however, does not appear before me for the first time. I have had the privilege and opportunity of discussing this subject with many friends in the light it is presented. I can appreciate much of the argument, but I venture to think that it is inconclusive, because it has omitted material facts. Some priests are bad. Temples, churches and mosques very often show corruption, more often deterioration. Nevertheless, it would be impossible to prove that all priests are bad or have been bad and that all churches, temples and mosques are hotbeds of corruption and superstition. Nor does the argument take note of this fundamental fact that no faith has done without a habitation; and I go further that in the very nature of things it cannot exist, so long as man remains as he is constituted. His very body has been rightly called the temple of the Holy Ghost, though innumerable such temples belie the fact and are hotbeds of corruption, used for dissoluteness. And I presume that it will be accepted as a conclusive answer to a sweeping suggestion that all bodies should be destroyed for the corruption of many, if it can be shown, as it can be, that there are some bodies which are proper temples of the Holy Ghost. The cause for the corruption of many bodies will have to be sought elsewhere. Temples of stone and mortar are nothing else than a natural extension of these human temples and though they were in their conception undoubtedly habitations of God like human temples, they have been subject to the same law of decay as the latter.

I know of no religion or sect that has done or is doing without its house of God, variously described as a temple, mosque, church, synagogue or *agiari*[1]. Nor is it certain that any of the great reformers including Jesus destroyed or discarded temples altogether. All of them sought to banish corruption from temples as well as from society. Some of them, if not all, appear to have preached from temples. I have ceased to visit temples for years, but I do not regard myself on that account as a better person than before. My mother never missed going to the temple when she was in a fit state to go there. Probably her faith was far greater than mine, though I do not visit temples. There are millions whose faith is sustained through these temples, churches and mosques. They are not all blind followers of a superstition, nor are they fanatics. Superstition and fanaticism are not their monopoly. These vices have their root in our hearts and minds.

My advocacy of temple-entry I hold to be perfectly consistent with the declaration which I often made in Europe that Truth

[1] Parsi fire-temple

is God. It is that belief which makes it possible, at the risk of losing friendships, popularity and prestige, to advocate temple-entry for Harijans. The Truth that I know or I feel I know demands that advocacy from me. Hinduism loses its right to make a universal appeal if it closes its temples to the Harijans.

That temples and temple-worship are in need of radical reform must be admitted. But all reform without temple-entry will be to tamper with the disease. I am aware that the American friend's objection is not based upon the corruption or impurity of the temples. His objection is much more radical. He does not believe in them at all. I have endeavoured to show that his position is untenable in the light of facts which can be verified from everyday experience. To reject the necessity of temples is to reject the necessity of God, religion and earthly existence.

Harijan, 11-3-1933

56. WHY NOT SIMPLE 'HINDU'?

In the course of a letter a caste Hindu correspondent writes:

> If these depressed classes are finally to be merged in the Hindus, was it not better that instead of 'Harijans' they should have been given the name 'Hindus' which would have applied to both the caste Hindus and the depressed classes? It is still time that the word 'Harijan' is given up in favour of the 'Hindu', so that the caste Hindus and the Hindu depressed classes are known in common parley as well as in Government papers as only Hindus.

The correspondent is too late with his suggestion. If a separate register of untouchable classes had not come to stay, at least for the time being, the common name might have answered the purpose. But the separate register makes it absolutely necessary to know the untouchable classes by some name, and if such is the case, why not give them a name that truly befits them and has no ill-flavour about it. I regard 'Harijan' as a fitting name, because the caste Hindus cannot be properly considered God's children, but the untouchables certainly can.

I have suggested the real method of abolishing the distinction between caste Hindus and Harijans, namely, by caste Hindus performing the purification ceremony of ridding themselves of untouchability and becoming Harijans themselves. And if it was open to anyone to be classified as untouchables in the register for untouchables, I should most decidedly advise caste Hindus to de-

clare themselves as such and to live also as such. That will be a substantial and organic method of amalgamating the two into one body.

This is the proper place for referring to the same suggestion made by a Harijan friend but from a different standpoint. He says that the best way of getting rid of untouchability is to advise Harijans to adopt names that will never signify an untouchable and to declare themselves also as mere Hindus or as Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas. This suggestion was made to me even as early as 1915 when I began the crusade against untouchability. This Harijan had his own experiences and told me that he had travelled from one end of India to the other, that he had freely entered all the principal places of pilgrimage without let or hindrance and that he had taken with him a party.

When he was introduced to me, I saw no mark about him of being a Harijan. He was dressed like a Brahmin, had a *tilak* on his forehead, a *mala* of *tulsi* or *rudraksh*—I forget which—and his speech was that of an ordinary Gujarati. He and his party took up their abode in dharmsalas and never had the slightest difficulty, having unhesitatingly proclaimed themselves as belonging to one varna or the other.

My visitor told me that this practice of untouchables hiding their identity was quite a common thing amongst them and that it was growing. He unfortunately received no encouragement from me. I told him that that practice might be convenient for him and the few who could afford the means and had sufficient training to be able to shed some of the habits which marked out an untouchable from the rest, but that the practice of a few, apart from its being dishonest and, therefore, tending to deterioration of manhood, would make no impression upon the tens of thousands of untouchables who could not even stir out of their villages.

The reply that I then gave applies with equal force even today. The straightest and the quickest method, therefore, is to conduct the movement openly, to know the untouchables as such and yet for caste Hindus to treat them on terms of absolute equality with themselves; and as the movement has begun on a very large scale and the declaration was made on behalf of caste Hindus in September last that untouchability was gone, it surely became necessary to know untouchables by an inoffensive name whilst the process of amalgamation was going on. 'Harijan' in my opinion was the best name to know them by.

Harijan, 11-3-1933

57. A GROUNDLESS FEAR

A sanatanist correspondent writes:

> Suppose a sanatanist builds a new temple and appoints trustees for its management; suppose he throws it open to all Hindus of the four castes, but not to untouchables. According to the Anti-untouchability Bill, the disqualification of the untouchables will be inoperative. According to the Temple-entry Bill, if the reformers are in the majority, they will be able to secure the admission of untouchables. Thus, although the person who dedicates the temple may be of opinion that the temple will be polluted by the admission of untouchables, although he may be of opinion that he, and persons who are of his way of thinking, cannot worship properly if untouchables are admitted, yet untouchables will be allowed inside the temple and his express desire will be violated.
>
> If, however, a sanatanist builds such a temple in, say, Tibet or China or Afghanistan, his desire will no doubt be respected, as there is no Anti-untouchability Law or Temple-entry Law in any of those countries. Thus a sanatanist cannot worship as he likes in a temple built by him in India if he desires that his brother sanatanists of the higher castes should have the right of entry into that temple. But he will enjoy this privilege if he builds the temple in any other country except India.
>
> Do you think that this position is satisfactory?

If I was a believer in untouchability, I should not dread the Bills as my correspondent does. So far as the supposed greater freedom in Tibet, China or Afghanistan is concerned, the correspondent forgets that there is no such thing as untouchability in these three countries, so far as I am aware, and he certainly will not be able there, as he is in this country, to prevent the entry of a single person merely on the ground of untouchability. But even when untouchability ceases to be recognized by the law, that fact will not necessarily entitle the untouchables to enter any temple they choose. Thus, a sanatanist who builds a temple for certain persons exclusively builds a private temple and he will have the perfect right to exclude any person he likes, whether untouchable or touchable. All he will not be able to do is to exclude a person purely on the ground of untouchability and secure the assistance of the law in order to compass his purpose. And even public temples will successfully prevent the entry of untouchables if pub-

lic opinion is against their entry. All that the first Bill does is to refuse legal sanction to the cult of untouchability. No Hindu temple will, however, be opened to the Harijans till caste Hindus have been converted. Under the second Bill, private temples are uninterfered with and public temples can only be regulated according to public usage, which is always subject to change from time to time. And when a sanatanist builds a public temple for the four varnas, it is only by implication that untouchables are excluded; but if untouchables are merged in the four varnas, surely there is no violence to the sanatanist's will, because he could not regulate the religious belief of posterity nor stop its growth.

The only objection of the correspondent, therefore, that needs consideration is the right of the minority under the second Bill. I have ventured to suggest a compromise which jealously guards the rights of a minority even of one. For, I have no desire personally to interfere with the religious right of a single individual.

But what the correspondent hopelessly fails to do is to recognize the right of the reformers which he insists upon their recognizing in respect of himself and his co-sanatanists.

Harijan, 11-3-1933

58. TELEGRAM TO BACHHRAJ

March 11, 1933

BACHHRAJ
WARDHA

JAJUJI SHOULD SEE POONAMCHAND[1] DISSUADE FROM FAST MY BEHALF.

GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I. G. P. File No. 20-X

[1] Poonamchand Ranka had been fasting from March 4 for the removal of jail classification of political prisoners, for more facilities for them regarding food, clothes, books, etc., and for removal of intervening bars during the interviews.

CWMG - IIV

59. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 11, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

It is 3.15 a.m., 11th, Saturday now. The day of my writing to you has become upset owing to the uncertainty of the arrival of your weekly letter. This week I had two from you. Last week's was received only on Tuesday and this week's on Wednesday. But yesterday morning I thought I had still to hear from you and I devoted the morning to writing other important letters. And then when it dawned upon me that there was nothing more to come from you, I would not write to you during what you may call office hours. I love to write this letter and such others in the early morning.

I see that you are once more enjoying the company of birds and animals. Frogs have somehow or other appeared to me helpless creatures. They can't run, they can't fly and thus become an easy prey to the wily cat. And they seem to look at you so appealingly in their helplessness. The monkey on the other hand never excites my pity. He is a most resourceful and mischievous fellow and takes delight in overreaching you. He has no such thing as thankfulness in him. And yet I suppose all this is imagination or ignorance! If we thrive on knowledge, we seem somehow to do so on ignorance and imagination too. 'It is folly to be wise when ignorance is bliss.' And the shortest and the oldest Upanishad[1] says, "He overcomes death through ignorance and mounts to immortality through knowledge." The original words are अविद्या and विद्या, meaning also respectively activity and inactivity, body and spirit, attachment and detachment. They can be made to mean several other things without doing violence to the text. It is a very simple and lofty Upanishad and is also abstruse. It is an epitome of all knowledge like the *Gita*. The latter is perhaps a commentary on the former. An old commentator or rather the devotee of the *Gita* compares the Upanishads to cows, the *Gita* to milk and Krishna to the cowboy who milks them.[2] But no more of this now.

[1] *Ishopanishad*, 11

[2] सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

I hope your progress continues and will not be interrupted by the hot weather which is on us now. Make use of the earth bandage on the forehead or a mere wet rag. It has a wonderfully cooling effect. What cools the head cools the whole body. I came across a potent sentence yesterday in an American book on the eyesight, a book received from Gregg. It says that a lie heats the body and injures the eyesight. It is true if you would give an extended meaning to 'lie'. Any departure conscious or unconscious from the laws of nature is a lie. A conscious departure from the known laws is a lie that hurts our moral fibre, not so, or not to the same extent an unconscious departure. But the body is injured in every case. Writers on *pranayama* claim that the ability to regulate and control breath, enables one to defy changes of climate. The *Gita* seems to lend support to the belief. This is a field that needs reinvestigation in the light of modern knowledge. Kuvalayananda of Lonavala is doing it. Form your lips as you would when whistling and slowly breathe the outside air and you will have an immediate sensation of cooling. When lying flat on the back, remember that the muscles of the back do not expand. Hence your breathing must be extra gentle. It is intended to create a soothing effect on the system and relax it and rest it. There is nothing apart from sleep to relieve tension of the mind and body. Therefore the deep breathing should be taken whilst sitting cross-legged with the body erect like a straight board. All these exercises have to be gentle, deliberate and rhythmic, always on an empty stomach.

Here the writing was interrupted for prayer and is now resumed after a break of 25 minutes at 4.35.

I have always found Arnold's to be on the whole a more helpful translation than any other. "Abstemious" is a wrong word. "Spare diet" is a good expression. अल्प means less than enough. What is enough is a matter of conjecture, therefore our own mental picture. The man of truth knowing that man is always indulgent to the body, said, in order to counteract the indulgence, that he should take less food than what he would think was enough; then there was likelihood of his taking what in fact was enough. So what we often think is spare or meagre is likely even to be more than enough. More people are weak through overfeeding or wrong feeding than through underfeeding. It is wonderful, if we chose the right diet, what an extraordinarily small quantity would suffice.

I am glad Ba is prospering with you and learns Hindi and makes you sing *bhajans*. Does Mridula sing? She ought to if she

does not. She must shed her shyness if she has any still left. How otherwise does she pass the day? She should now be Ba's secretary or letter-writer.

My weight now registers at 104. The food still remains fruit and milk (raw). I am taking just now less than one lb. of milk. It is the fruit that keeps up my weight. The elbows remain as they are. No cause for anxiety. I have reduced the spinning to a minimum—no fixed quantity. The count just now is anything round 55 and 60. This from *devakapas* carded on Keshu's little invention.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6266. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9732

60. LETTER TO ABDUL ALIM

March 11, 1933

MY DEAR ABDUL ALIM,

I was delighted to see your postcard telling me that you had safely arrived in Calcutta and housed in "The Refuge".[1]

I had a letter from Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikari also.

You should not feel homesick. You are a wise young man. You should therefore cultivate a brotherly spirit with all the helpless inmates there and by your exemplary conduct endear yourself to the officials. And if you will only believe that God is our constant companion, guard and protector, you will not feel destitute or lonely.

I hope you have got some paper to read.

I am writing[2] to some friends to see you now and then.

Do keep me informed of how you are faring there.

Yours sincerely,

MR. ABDUL ALIM
THE REFUGE
125 BOW BAZAR
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm : S.N. 20548

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Deva Prasad Sarvadhikari", p. 31.
[2] *Vide* the following item.

61. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 11, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

You will remember my having talked to you about Abdul Alim. He is now safely lodged in "The Refuge" I talked to you about. "The Refuge" is situated in 125, Bow Bazar St. Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikari is the President. You should tell some young men to go and see Abdul Alim and just let him feel that he is not utterly neglected. I enclose herewith his card to give you an idea of how he feels. He may be supplied with some books if he needs them. You might also be able to interest some Mohammedan to visit him.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20545

62. LETTER TO BALMUKUND

March 11, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I hope that your Conference will devote itself to internal reforms, such as the observance of the rule of hygiene, giving up of carrion-eating if it is prevalent amongst the Harijans in the Punjab at all, total abstinence from drink, etc.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. BALMUKUND
GENERAL SECRETARY
THE BALMIK ACHHUT MANDAL
LAHORE CITY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20547

CWMG - LIV

63. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN

March 11, 1933

MY DEAR VERRIER,

This time too there was unavoidable delay in replying to your two letters. As if this was all God's design, Alla came in yesterday to change the scope of my letter. I wanted this to be a mere thanksgiving letter. But Alla's talk has not made it quite possible. She said she had a copy of your letter to me. But she was not satisfied. She insisted that there was a promise made by you. She does not want the marriage now but she does not want to be the liar. She wants you to be the liar! I gently suggested that neither need be one and that in matters of love making mistakes was the most common thing in life and that whilst you had never meant marriage, she who wanted it might easily have interpreted every word and gesture of yours to mean marriage. She would not have it that way at all and yet was loath to accuse you of untruthfulness. I told her that you were incapable of lying and that if there was the slightest suspicion of your having meant marriage you would make the admission. You will now tax your memory and if there is anything to correct in the light of what Alla has to say, you will do her the reparation. I think that she ought not to go there yet for some time. Though you and Mary have taken the sacred and most momentous resolution[1], it must have been a terrific strain on your nerves. Mary does not even seem to have recovered from the shock. Though your first letter to me is joint, Mary does not seem to have quite assimilated the truth of the dissolution of the intended tie. My whole heart goes out to her. I have no doubt that such things mean much more to woman than to man. But M. must realize that before God there is no sex or we are all women, His brides married to Him in an indissoluble tie. If she has realized the beauty of this immortal marriage, she must dance with joy that she is free from the bondage of the human marriage. The human marriage is good and necessary if the flesh is weak but if the flesh is strong it surely is hindrance for the servant of humanity that M. has become. Let

[1] "Not to marry each other but for each to be married to the service to which they have dedicated their lives"; *vide* p. 39.

her remember too, all sacrifice to be true must bring inner peace and joy. She must not therefore brood over what was to be and what was a concession to the flesh. Let her sing out the praise of God for enabling you both to triumph over the flesh. And since she has chosen to be my daughter she has got to write to me without reserve and pour out her heart to me.

But till you are both composed and have tested yourselves Alla must not go there and must not be induced to do so. She herself does not want to go until the so-called promise matter is cleared up.

And now I know that my whole heart is with you. My spirit is watching you, praying for all the strength you need. These months must have been terrible for you. May Truth, which is God, shine through your lives.

All my love to you and Mary.

BAPU

From a microfilm: S.N. 20541

64. LETTER TO MARY GILLETT

[*March 11, 1933*][1]

MY DEAR MARY,

I have just finished my letter to V. and have now but a few moments before the prayer begins. V. will share with you my letter or as much of it as he thinks you should see; whatever he withholds will be for your sake.

Since you are a new addition to the ever growing family I do not know the right word for you. But this I know and you may be sure of [it] that my whole heart is with you. My spirit follows you. My spirit follows you like that of a mother. And this quite selfishly. I do not want to feel lonely in the incessant search after knowing and seeing God as Truth and that only. V. is my son and you are my daughter because of that invincible bond. So far as I am concerned my letter to V. is as much for you as for him. But as I know you through him he must be the judge of how much of it you may see with profit, this is not from want of trust in you but from want of confidence in my ability to diagnose and prescribe. And has not a father to know his children's wants and prescribe for them? But I am

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

a blind father. The infallible Father of us all will surely guide you and give you the strength you need for fully carrying out your great resolve of full surrender without any reservation whatsoever.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20774

65. LETTER TO T. K. MENON

March 11, 1933

MY DEAR MENON,

I have had the relevant extracts in the *Mathrubhumi*[1] sent by you translated for me.

Whilst there are one or two passages to which some objection might reasonably be taken, I see nothing in the articles to warrant the sweeping condemnation that you pronounced. In leading their argument, journalists will write spicy things which one may not resent except when all bounds of decency have been crossed. However, if ever you find anything highly offensive, you should send the cuttings and I shall write to the editor. He has promised to be very careful about his language.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. T. K. MENON
C/O SJT. CHAMPAKLAL DEVIDAS
26 DALAL STREET FORT
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20543

66. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

March 11, 1933

Why do you worry about Harilal? He will not write. If God suffers his drunkenness, what can we do? God will reform him when He wills.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 185

[1] A Malayalam daily

CWMG - LIV

67. LETTER TO MULCHAND PAREKH

March 11, 1933

Only labour with one's hands and feet is physical labour and one must earn one's livelihood with such labour. Mental and intellectual ability should be used exclusively for the service of society. If we do not use our hands and feet, will we do agricultural work with our intellect? If there is a fire raging, will we try to put it out by composing a poem?

The maxim "Yoga is skill in work"[1] is true. There should be perfect combination of physical and mental work. Mussolini was a blacksmith's son who did hard labour in his home and who, in his youth, worked as a labourer in a factory carrying bricks to the second floor of the building 120 times a day and went to jail eleven times. But this hard life gave him valuable training. His mind was not slumbering when he did all this labour. If it had been slumbering, why, there have been millions and millions of labourers who have carried bricks and farmers who have worked in the fields but have left behind them no mark in the world.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 184

68. TO GUJARATIS

Harijanbandhu is the Gujarati edition of the English *Harijan*. That the Gujarati *Harijan* could not be published simultaneously with the English edition is a matter of shame both to you and to me. To you because the Bombay branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh did not have confidence that enough subscribers would be found to make *Harijanbandhu* self-supporting. A Gujarati gentleman had agreed to make good the loss that would be incurred. But the Gujarati edition cannot at all be conducted at a loss. Moreover, I had insisted that if there was any loss in the beginning, that should be borne either by the Bombay or Gujarat

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 50. The correspondent had asked : "Is a labourer only a person who does physical work? Can one who does mental and intellectual work not be called so?"

branch. Ultimately Bombay has undertaken to make an experiment for three months and has launched *Harijanbandhu*.[1] I hope that the Gujaratis will in the very first week reassure the Bombay branch on this point.

However, the object in publishing *Harijanbandhu* is not to take from you one anna for a copy or four rupees annually and thereby to provide maintenance for two, four or more persons. Your subscription will be a token of your desire either to do away with untouchability or to know, if you are an orthodox Hindu, what the reformers have to say. I shall take it that the subscribers to *Harijanbandhu* pay a fee in order to gather information about the movement to abolish untouchability. If you wish to remove the blot of untouchability from Hinduism, you ought to know what the movement is, how and by whom it is being conducted, what the Shastras have to say on the subject, what the world thinks of it, what part you can play in it and the rest. And *Harijanbandhu* will give you all this information.

I hope that your one anna will not be spent in vain. Do not buy *Harijanbandhu* to please me. I am afraid that a number of people will take *Harijanbandhu* out of blind love for me even though they may not feel the need. I do not want this.

I am not at all eager to publish *Harijanbandhu* merely for the sake of publishing it. I do not have that much time. Do not get upset by the fact that it will mostly contain translations from the English. You will find novelty in these translations. I shall have to write at least something addressed to Gujaratis only. I shall have to bear some burden therefore. To me *Harijanbandhu* is a special atonement. I have been pouring my soul into this movement. Removal of untouchability is not for me a recent activity, it dates back to the days before my entry into politics, to my childhood.

But as a result of the Yeravda Pact, that activity has become the subject of a pledge. My fast was a death-bed to me. In accepting the Pact, the British Cabinet honoured it in the letter. But the observance of the pledge taken by the Hindu representatives in the name of the followers of Hinduism constituted and constitutes the spirit. I had explained this to the leaders at that very time. I gave up my fast in the confidence that the pledge would be observed every moment. For that observance my body was the hostage, and it is that even today. The moment I feel

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", p. 23.

that those who have taken the pledge have weakened, I must again take to my death-bed.

But I am not eager to die. I am eager to live and commit untouchability to the flames. And if I have to die in order to see that glorious hour, I am ready to die. The *mantra* of my life consists in making preparations for it. To live while untouchability lives is like a cup of poison to me.

Now perhaps you will have understood more clearly why my expiation lies in conducting the *Harijan* in English and the national and provincial languages. I must either helplessly lie on my death-bed or employ whatever strength I have to subjugate the demon of untouchability. The *Harijan* and other activities are there to put off death. Thereby it is my object to caution the Hindus. There may well be a greater responsibility on me for the observance of the pledge, but it rests also, to a greater or lesser extent, on every Hindu who regards untouchability as a sin. *Harijanbandhu* will help to show how that responsibility can be discharged.

Even an orthodox Hindu can, if he tries, learn a lot from this. Those who today have become our foes were yesterday our friends. *Harijanbandhu* will prove to the patient orthodox Hindus that there was no need for this to happen. There is no place here for bitter criticism. Here all the discussion will be conducted from a religious point of view. According to me, removal of untouchability is simply a religious activity. It may well have many other results, some of which may well be political even. To my mind these are mere sham if they do not have a religious foundation. Instead of enjoying the peace of imprisonment, I would never for the sake of a sham take up the burden of conducting a big movement outside. God has given me the capacity to observe limits. Hence I am able to draw inspiration from whatever circumstances I may be placed in. There may be disadvantages in being a prisoner, but for the wise it certainly offers the peace that comes from looking into one's own soul. But at the moment I see that I can get this glimpse into my soul in conducting this huge movement while being a prisoner behind the bars. It is precisely for that reason that I have exchanged my sleep for wakefulness. And *Harijanbandhu* will every week call upon every Gujarati Hindu to immolate himself in this *yajna* to purify the Hindu religion.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 12-3-1933

69. *DISPOSAL OF CARCASSES*[1]

[*March 12, 1933*]

There are several sections among Harijans, e.g., the Chakkiliyans and Madigas in South India and Chamars in Gujarat, who remove and dispose of dead cattle and eat their flesh. Disposal of dead cattle is a sacred obligation and occupation. But the eating of carrion is a most filthy habit, regarded as one of the heinous sins in Hindu scriptures, and it is essential that at this hour of self-purification our Harijan brethren should be helped to get rid of this habit. But they plead their inability to do so for various reasons. "It is a habit to which we have been accustomed for ages", they say, "and now it is a positive delicacy which we cannot forgo any more than you can do without your finest delicacies. You should also know that removal of dead cattle is an obligation imposed upon us and we may not shirk it without risking the wrath of the *Mahajans*; you know, perhaps, that carrion is part of the remuneration for the removal. We are thus tied down to carrion-eating for three reasons."

The argument deserves consideration. Written and spoken appeals will be of no avail; we must show them the way out. We should first acquaint ourselves with the conditions obtaining in various parts of the country regarding the removal of dead cattle, and have them altered as circumstances may require; we should supervise the actual skinning and other attendant processes and see to the proper disposal of the remains. The removal must be made conditional on a promise not to eat the carrion, and no one should be compelled to remove dead cattle.

This work demands a fair number of volunteers. They must learn the art of skinning dead cattle in a clean manner and teach it to the Harijans who are doing it today in the old fashion. The carcasses should not be dragged as at present, as it damages the hide and decreases its value. They should be lifted and removed in an expeditious and efficient manner. The hide-curers will willingly adopt the new method, but not until the so-called high caste people have mastered it.

[1] This is a translation of a Gujarati item which was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 12-3-1933.

The way in which dead cattle are disposed of today is most uneconomical and entails a loss of crores of rupees to the country. Every bit of the carcass must be made proper use of. Much of it is wasted today. The hide, the bones, the entrails and the flesh are all useful and ought to be properly utilized. The hide is being put to use of a sort. The bones are mostly wasted. They should be carefully collected and turned scientifically into manure. The entrails are utilized for gut, etc., but there is room enough for improvement. The flesh should be saved from the filthy use it is turned to and must be made to yield fat, which will be valuable for manufacturing grease for factories. The remains should finally be converted into manure or buried deep. If volunteers make a point of remaining present throughout all these processes, the men will easily take to the new departure and will stop eating carrion.

There is nowhere any room for compulsion. Where the hide-curers are not ready for the change, they must be left undisturbed. They are no more bound to remove the dead cattle than the caste organizations are bound to get them removed by them. It should be a matter of mutual adjustment.

But the beginning must be made by the volunteers supervising the processes, wherever, of course, the supervision is not resented. The supervision need not be delayed until the volunteers have first mastered the processes. Actual work will be a training in itself.

Municipalities and local bodies and States can immediately undertake the work of training volunteers in scientific skinning and hide-curing. This does need a little expense on buildings and experts. They should really have a training school for this purpose and invite philanthropic experts and veterinary surgeons for co-operation, suggestions and help.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

70. TRUTH THE ONLY WAY[1]

[*March 12, 1933*][2]

I have already summed up in an article in the last issue of *Harijan* the qualities regarded as indispensable in a servant of the Harijans.[3] If this movement is essentially religious and has for its object the purification and protection of Hinduism, it can be car-

[1] The article was first published in *Harijan Sevak*, 17-3-1933.
[2] Gandhiji says he wrote it on this date.
[3] *Vide* "A True Servant", p. 48.

ried on only by truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Truth is the very foundation of religion. If Truth is God, there can be no room for untruth in religion. Let every Harijan Sevak inscribe this fundamental principle on the tablet of his heart.

I am being inundated with sanatanist literature. New weeklies and leaflets are coming in daily. Sanatanists have loosened their purse-strings. I like the awakening. How I wish it was on the right lines! The writings I see contain palpable falsehoods. Their sole object is to stop the anti-untouchability movement somehow or other. How can one answer such propaganda?

Most certainly not by untruth. Truth can be the only answer. I have indeed had complaints against reformers from sanatanists to the effect that the former are resorting to untruth and rowdyism. These complaints have been unsupported by evidence. I have requested the correspondents to supply me with it. Only in one case has an attempt been made to furnish evidence. And I have forwarded the complaints to the proper quarters for investigation. I do not wish to suggest that refusal to furnish me with evidence is proof positive that the reformers are all above reproach. These lines are being written in order to warn them against any departure from truth and non-violence.

My attempt is to know no distinction between the sanatanist and the reformer. I ask for truthfulness from both. But as the sanatanists refuse to regard me as one of their own—some even look upon me as their foe—I am afraid my appeal will have no weight with them. I should be satisfied if the reformers will listen to my appeal. For, their truth will overcome the opponents' untruth, even as light overcomes darkness. If, therefore, the Harijan Sevak will pursue every one of his activities with truth as the guiding principle, he is sure in the end to convert the sanatanists.[1]

I shall certainly declare that no one can destroy the Hindu religion or any other religion by aggression. This is a self-evident truth. That which can be destroyed by any external force is not religion. It may well be a form of social behaviour. Religion can be destroyed only by internal corruption. Untouchability is one such corruption in the Hindu religion. If that is not eradicated, Hindu religion is bound to be destroyed. Untouchability is a monstrous untruth. It can be overcome by contact. Untouchability exists in our hearts. It is a great sin to think, 'This man belongs to the untouchable caste; so I will not touch him.' This thought

[1] The paragraph that follows has been translated from *Harijan Sevak*, 17-3-1933.

is filled with hatred, with pride, with the notion of superiority and inferiority. All this is irreligion, it is untruth. I know that untruth cannot be supported by truth, hatred cannot be supported by love, pride cannot be supported by humility. This is the reason why I see today the sanatanist newspapers full of hatred, pride and untruth. The sanatanist will ask me, 'Do you not expose your own truth, hatred and pride in saying so?' Perhaps it is so. I can only assert that to my knowledge I have no such thoughts. When I see them I shall eschew them, then and there. In order to perceive my own faults, I receive the critics with respect, and listen to them; what they write I read as much as I can. The harder I tried, the more the faults I found in those critics. I do not wish to write about this sad experience here.

But let the workers know that exaggeration is also a species of untruth. I receive reports about opening of temples and wells to Harijans. But sometimes it has been discovered that all the temples and wells referred to have not been opened and that the information supplied to me has been based on insufficient data. The Dhulia Anti-untouchability Committee has published a small pamphlet containing a list of temples and wells opened all over India. It is an imposing list, but I am not inclined to accept it at its face value, not because the Committee has been careless in its compilation, but because it had no opportunity of testing the accuracy of the information supplied from all-India sources. Very often workers gain their information from newspapers, instead of being themselves suppliers of information to newspapers. Statements received from Anti-untouchability Committee cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence, if they are based upon untested reports published in the daily Press. And then there is the great temptation to swell the list of temples and wells opened, for fear of my fast being precipitated. It is a disheartening thought for me and it betrays a poor opinion of the great movement. My fast was not designed to coerce people in any shape or form. It was designed merely to make Hindus think and to spur them to action. Truth is made of sterner stuff, and it must be held superior to any life or lives, be they ever so precious. It must live even if a million lives had to be sacrificed. In a big, religious movement like the drive against untouchability, which many believe to be an integral part of Hindu religion, nothing but unadulterated truth and unconquerable faith in the cause will avail. The reformers hold untouchability to be itself the biggest blot on Hinduism, a great lie. If it is, it can be defeated only by truth and gentleness.

Harijan Sevak, 17-3-1933 and *Harijan*, 18-3-1933

CWMG-IIY

71. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

March 12, 1933

CHI. KUSUM (DESAI),

You must have been released by now. How is it that still I have had no letter from you? Did you, on your release, take a vow not to write to me?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1848

72. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 12, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got the mail you posted on the 9th. I am dispatching this hoping that you will get it on Tuesday.

I had a postcard from Ramabehn. She says that you have not called on her yet. About helping her to learn English, you may discuss the matter further with me, but my understanding of the letter in which I advised you to go and see her is that the suggestion was not open to discussion. Ramabehn had told me, and that is also what she indirectly suggests in her letter, that you would never take the initiative to call on her. I had told her that that could not be so. You should prove that I was right.

Is it true that Babla[1] escaped drowning in the Magan tank? How and when did the accident occur?

I had received your wire about Parachure Shastri on Friday. If all of you came to the decision independently, it is to be highly welcomed. Kaka has conveyed it to Parachure Shastri. He has gone to his place just now. I will let you know what he decides. I hope Lakshmi's wedding went off well. The bride and the bridegroom may come and see me if they wish. I think Maruti does.

I hope you got the letters posted yesterday. They contained one for Lakshmidas in which I wrote to him about Anandi.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8333. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Narayan Desai, Mahadev Desai's son

CWMG-LIV

73. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

March 12, 1933

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM[1],

I have your letter. I had been waiting for it. You are right when you say that many of the books in the Ashram collection are useless. If any book of Macfadden's[2] is not there in the library and you cannot get a copy from elsewhere, you should buy it. Glance through other books also. Take the fullest advantage of Gaurishankar's experience. By all means try your experiments on Jamna[3] and Chimanlal[4]. There is no risk at all in doing so. Complete the experiment on yourself patiently. You will learn from the experiment itself.

Write to me from time to time. If you send me a list of the books there, I shall be able to tell you which of them are worth reading.

Blessings from

From Gujarati: C.W. 909. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

74. LETTER TO GULAB A. SHAH

March 12, 1933

CHI. GULAB,

Normally it is not proper to wear a shirt and trousers and change over to half-length sari and skirt whenever you feel like doing so. I suppose by trousers you mean only shorts. It will be better if you keep to one dress. If your pronunciation has improved, you can try to memorize the *Gita* verses while working in the field. You cannot keep a book with you unless your teacher permits.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1735

[1] Son of Narandas Gandhi
[2] Bernarr Macfadden; American author and advocate of milk-diet
[3] Addressee's mother
[4] An Ashram inmate

CWMG - LIV

75. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

March 12, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

I have your postcard. Do not lose your peace of mind. Narandas will certainly come and see you. It is my duty to ask him to go and it is his duty to go. Your duty is not to ask him to come and, if he wishes to come, to tell him that he need not do so. This is how sweetness is preserved in social relations. But now you may take that further step only after you have tested him. Meanwhile, you should not worry. I hope your arm is all right now.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5343

76. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 12, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

Your argument is worthy of an M.A. "If someone can hang himself upside down, why can I not play music?" Many other questions like this can be framed. The only reply is that no reason can be given why you may not. If one person can do one thing, why may another person not do something else?

But it is certainly possible that someone who hangs himself upside down may be able to give a valid reason even for such an action, while a person like me who then starts playing music may not be able to give a convincing reason for doing so. But let that pass. You should now put your proposal before the other inmates of the Ashram and, if a majority supports it, by all means go ahead and make the necessary preparations. Being a prisoner, I myself will not be able to join that marriage procession. And a prisoner has no vote either, so you need not consult me. Q.E.D.

I will patiently wait for Dhurandhar's letter.

Whether you reply to my question or not, I will keep on inquiring about your health. Tell me, therefore, is it all right? Is

CWMG - IIV

the throat all right and can you speak? How is the backache? Is your weight increasing?

When the time comes for giving away the yarn which I am spinning with the slivers sent by you, I will certainly give it to you if you continue to deserve it even then. I hope you will be satisfied with this answer. The count of the yarn will not exceed 75. There are fairly numerous rough particles in the slivers. It is possible that even Keshu's machine is not good enough for *devkapas*. I hope you know that this variety of cotton cannot be carded with the ordinary bow.

I don't know anything about Mahadev having been offended. Nor did I know that he had written to anybody about the matter. I knew something from Narandas's letter. I knew about disrespect only from your letter. Mahadev has told me nothing. Nor did I know, when I asked him to spin [with your slivers], that he found himself in a moral dilemma.[1] In this matter your case seems to be perfectly correct. I did not feel disrespect to anybody in your remark or your request. I don't know why Mahadev felt it. I am observing silence just now, otherwise I would have asked him. I did feel, however, that your request sprang from ignorant attachment. Why should you have such attachment for me? One should eschew attachment for a person who cannot belong to any one individual but daily strives to belong to all. Such attachment can avail nothing. But this is one thing. To deduce from it a dislike for others is a different thing.

Sardar, I believe, was only joking, as is his wont.

And now see how I valued your love. Surely you will agree that I should make what I believe to be the best use of the slivers sent by you. Wouldn't that be the best way of showing how I valued your love? If a vaid, out of his great love for me, sends me gold *bhasma*[2], would it not be right to give it to my neighbour to whom it might be more useful than to me? Or, if somebody sends me a carriage to drive and if my neighbour can drive it more safely than I can, would I not show better appreciation of the donor's love by letting that neighbour drive it for me? The same argument applies to slivers. Among us here, Mahadev can make the best use of such fine slivers, and so I gave half the quantity to him. This will test his skill and increase national wealth

[1] The addressee had inscribed on a gift parcel of slivers to Gandhiji: "To revered dear Mahatmaji". Mahadev Desai, therefore, had felt that it would not be proper for him to spin them.

[2] Gold oxide used as medicine in Ayurveda, the Hindu system of medicine

and I also will feel happier. You should, therefore, change your nature which makes you wish that your gift should be used only by the person to whom it is given. If you make a gift, you should do so unconditionally. Sushila's description of you was correct. If Kisan was not likely to get in time the fruit which were brought for her, you would have served both Sushila and Kisan by eating it yourself. It was foolish of you to have let them rot. Q.E.D. again.

I am sorry I cannot reply to your last question.

I hope you have had long talks with Lakshmi.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10340. Also C.W. 6769. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

77. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN N. KHARE

March 12, 1933

CHI. LAKSHMIBEHN,

I was really very happy to get your letter. Who can find fault with your handwriting? It is much better than mine. Do, therefore, write to me from time to time. Your letter this time seems to have been written merely to please me.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 282. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

78. LETTER TO MAITRI GIRI

March 12, 1933

CHI. MAITRI[1],

I have your letter. Have you tried a purgative for constipation? If constipation persists even after taking a purgative, then try to live on milk and green vegetables cooked without oil. Milk should be taken unboiled.

[1] Daughter of Khadag Bahadur Giri, a Congress worker of Nepal

CWMG - LIV

Why has Durga[1] stopped writing to me? Mahavir[2] also has not written recently.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6238

79. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

March 12, 1933

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

You are very well occupied. I hope you will not give up this work. Do not lose faith. Mix with the Harijan families. When you have won their love, teach them not to eat left-overs. Learn from them the names and addresses of the families where they work, so that you can explain to those families also not to give them left-overs. Keep on writing to me about your experiences. You must have seen that I have made use of your first letter in the English *Harijan*.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 353. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

80. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

March 12, 1933

CHI. VIDYA,

You may certainly try to learn the *Gita* verses by heart while working in the field, but you must not do so if your pronunciation is bad. Pronunciation can be learned only from the teachers.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9364. Courtesy : Ravindra R. Patel

[1] Addressee's sister
[2] Addressee's brother

CWMG - IIV

81. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

March 12, 1933

CHI. GANGABEHN (VAIDYA),

I have your beautiful letter. We did what was right in not meeting, and we should always feel happy in doing what is right.

Your experience this time was splendid. You read well and also kept good health. Mirabehn did write about you. Let me have your impressions of her.

In all jails there is the same story about letters. I do not expect much improvement in that state of affairs just now. Wouldn't we submit even if they did not permit us to write any letters? We should, therefore, feel satisfied with whatever freedom we are allowed. A prisoner means a person over whose body the imprisoning authority assumes complete control. Those who court such imprisonment voluntarily should know that it would be their duty to remain contented even if they were given nothing to eat. That is the secret of living which the *Gita* teaches.

I hope you got my previous letter. I will eagerly wait for your letters.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne. Also C.W. 8798. Courtesy : Gangabehn Vaidya

82. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 12, 1933

I wrote one letter this morning and posted it. It must be on the way. I need not, therefore, write more in this. I hope you have been to see Ramabehn.

Devdas will have arrived there.

BAPU

In all, there are 16 letters, stitched together.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8332. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

83. TELEGRAM TO MANEKBAI MEHTA

March 13, 1933

MANEKBAI[1]
121 MOGAL STREET
RANGOON

YOUR WIRE. PRAY HAVE PATIENCE. AM TRYING BEST.[2]

GANDHI

Government of Bombay, Home Department, I. G. P. File No. 20-X

84. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

March 13, 1933

MY DEAR MARY,

I must dictate this. I have your letter describing Babla's exploits. He is in many ways a precocious child and therefore you will find him having picked up all kinds of odds and ends, many of them quite correctly, and if you were to ask him where he picked them up he might not even be able to tell you, because in things one picks up there is no conscious effort.

I am glad you are sleeping out. After years of experience I can say that there is nothing like sleeping directly under the sky to soothe one, so much so that even the roof of a mosquito-net has proved a hindrance for me as if there was an obstacle to the direct contact with the heavens. That of course does not mean that you should hesitate to adopt the net if mosquitoes worry you even when you are right under the sky. You must have the net if at all you are disturbed by the mosquitoes. I don't want you to have malaria in the Ashram through mosquito bites.

You are quite right and wise in not making for speed till you have got control over the strength and evenness of your yarn. When you have both, the speed will come for the trying.

I am wholly unconscious of any danger or difficulty surrounding me, and don't you give way to any forebodings. One step enough for me is the command we may not break.

[1] Widow of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

[2] About the division of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's property. *Vide* "Letter to Nanalal K. Jasani", 27-3-1933.

I have not yet got your Hindi written at Parashuram's dictation. When I get it I shall examine it and let you know the result of my examination.

I hope you duly got my letter[1] addressed to you jointly with Duncan in reply to your joint letter.

Love.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5999. Also C.W. 3324. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

85. LETTER TO GAURISHANKAR BHARGAVA

March 13, 1933

MY DEAR GAURISHANKAR,

I have your letter together with resolution of the Rajasthan Oppressed Classes Conference. I fancy that I missed the *Times of India* report.[2] Anyway, I have no recollection of it. Nevertheless, I am glad you have drawn my attention to it as also to the feelings of the Harijan friends there. I wish you would explain to them the origin of the word 'Harijan' as it is given in the earliest issue of the *Harijan*.[3] The word has had a mixed reception. The majority of those who have written to me rather like the name. After all, it was adopted at the suggestion of some Harijans themselves, and those who suggested the name were themselves representatives.

So far as the suggestion that the whole movement should be "left in the hands of the depressed classes" and that the Board or Boards should only assist them by their guidance, [is concerned], it is not practicable in that the penance has got to be done by caste Hindus, therefore, it is they who have to prove their sincerity by conducting the movement. No doubt it should meet with the approval of Harijans if it is at all possible to secure it. But the penance has naturally to be done by the penitent himself and not by deputy. I can well understand a parallel movement of reform by Harijans and it should be there. It must also

[1] *Vide* pp. 9-10.

[2] The report, published in the *Times of India* of March 2, had said that the Conference had been critical of Gandhiji. This, according to the addressee, was a misrepresentation of the proceedings of the Conference.

[3] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 266-7.

be the natural consequence of sincere penitence by caste Hindus.

As to the third suggestion, I do not know whether Sjt. Sarda is a proper representative of the Board or not. As to that, you should write to the Central Board.

Lastly and fourthly, the programme of the anti-untouchability movement is in no way confined to the temple-entry, but it is designed to improve the economic, social and educational conditions of these classes. Temple-entry is a part of the programme, and it is contended that it not only ensures for Harijans religious equality but it conduces to the acceleration of the pace of economic, social and educational programme. You will please explain this to all the Harijan friends and others whose misgivings you have expressed in your letter. You were quite right in bringing to my attention the various points.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20562

86. LETTER TO N.

March 13, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I dictate this letter to save time, and you have nothing to hide from anybody.

I was glad to have your letter though later than I had expected. I wrote to you the other day a letter care of Ramachandra, and I am sending this also under his care till you advise me to the contrary.

I am glad you have moved to Harijan quarters and that you were able to fix up everything with the landlady. You should give me your detailed programme from day to day. Avoid all conversation save such as may be absolutely necessary, and you should interest S.[1] also in all acts of service. That will be the truest education for him if you will let him understand what he is doing and why. You will also naturally give him such literary education that you are capable of giving.

Tell me what food you are getting and how and what arrangements are there for bathing, washing clothes, etc., and whether you are doing the washing yourself. I want you to get cent per

[1] The name has been omitted.

cent marks in the test you have put yourself to. We often talk of you and think of you. My prayers are ever with you.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20571

87. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

March 13, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I have your letter. I am glad you are keeping me informed of the happenings there. If N. cannot stay in the Cantonment, she should shift at once. If she cannot remain in Bangalore anywhere, she should stay in Poona. I cannot send her anywhere else till she has gone through the ordeal.

I do not know what can be done for the landlady. Of course N. is primarily responsible, but so is the landlady herself. She ought to have insisted upon advance payment and if she did not want to do so, she should at least have insisted upon weekly payments. The only thing I can now suggest is that those young men who hovered round N. should collect subscriptions from amongst themselves and for very shame discharge the whole or part of the debt due to the landlady.

Enclosed is a letter for N. You may share this too with her if you like.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20570

88. LETTER TO S. NAGASUNDARAM

March 13, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of 10th instant enclosing copy of a printed appeal to the Government and the Legislatures.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. S. NAGASUNDARAM
FIRST FLOOR, LUXMI NIVAS
NEAR KING'S CIRCLE
MATUNGA, BOMBAY 19

From a microfilm: S.N. 20565

CWMG - LIV

89. LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

March 13, 1933

DEAR DR. BIDHAN,

I thank you for your letter. I have handed the management the names of the 12 subscribers. Probably the money will have been received there. I have also given instructions that Satcowribaboo should have 100 copies sent to him every week at the address given by you. Payments are all expected in advance. You will please therefore give strict instructions that the money should be sent for the 100 copies regularly from week to week and that when they do not need them they will send a wire.

Yours sincerely,

DR. BIDHAN ROY
36 WELLINGTON ST.
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20569

90. LETTER TO SATYAMURTHI

March 13, 1933

MY DEAR SATYAMURTHI,

I was delighted to have your letter enclosing little Kamala's letter addressed to me in Hindi. She thinks that she is too young to be my daughter and therefore she has become granddaughter. You ought to learn Hindi if only in order to appreciate the joke and with all your talents I promise you will learn enough Hindi in one month's time to understand the joke and you have now an army of Hindi teachers in the South. Meanwhile, I must let Kamala interpret the joke to you as you hand the enclosed letter to her, and you must take away the gold pendant from her if she cannot explain the joke to you. Sardarsaheb says it is high time you got quite well and strong again. We are all keeping well and pretty busy as you can imagine.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20568

91. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

March 13, 1933

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I got your letter. I would be content to accept from you as much as you can give. I must, therefore, make my request and leave the matter to your discretion. In relation to you, I am in the same position as Ramabehn. If she does not get something from you, will she complain about that to me?

You seem to believe that you are immortal and that, therefore, the people are safe. But the truth is that in matters in which action by the Ruler is essential, he must act. "Ruler" here may mean, if you wish, his Executive Council or the Assembly. Responsibility must vest with some individual or body so that a tradition may be maintained. When I analyse even your method, I discover the same thing, namely, that power is being exercised, though secretly. You may deceive yourself and the people that things go on by themselves, but the truth is that nothing goes on by itself. Hence in regard to such problems as removal of carrion, admission to schools, etc., about which something ought to be done and about which public opinion also is favourable, legislation is essential. Where there are no laws, there can be no government but only anarchy or misrule. Even Mussolini pretends to run a government. Nobody should object to a declaration that the Durbar, that is, Bhavnagar State, does not recognize untouchability. Sanatanists may, if they wish, continue to follow the practice and enforce it by social sanctions. You follow many principles in your own family, but try and see if you can enforce them in your immediate circle in which you have influence. You will not succeed. You can declare, without hurting anybody, that for the Ruler all subjects are equal. Having done that, don't mind if no child from the so-called untouchable communities can attend your schools. I have written a note in the Gujarati *Harijan* about the problem of carcasses.[1] Find some time and read it. Some of what I have said there is addressed to you, though no particulars of name or place are mentioned.

[1] *Vide* pp. 65-6.

CWMG - IIY

Though both of us are old, we are greedy. We have even the courage to do service. We give away all the money we may have. But you have to run a State, and your hair has become grey under the burden. You should also cultivate the company of persons like me. You have accepted a difficult job. Superficially it might seem that your path and mine are different. Both of us have the same aim and pursue the same goal. Must you, then, insist every time that you will follow your own method? Well, have it your own way. I am concerned with the result, and leave niceties of methods to politicians. I will be happy if you can satisfy the Harijans somehow.

I am afraid I have not expressed myself very well, but I hope you will generously overlook the insufficiency of the letter.

Take care of your health. I have received much from you, and wish to have much more still.

With good wishes for the welfare of Harijans from,

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5980. Also C.W. 3242. Courtesy: Mahesh P. Pattani

92. LETTER TO RANCHHODDAS PATWARI

March 13, 1933

RESPECTED BHAI,

I have your letter. I will not give up hope of you, nor should you give up hope of me. Many have been able to get along together in this way. It has also happened that some were not able to do so. I shall not dismiss our case as belonging to the latter category. It is in God's hands. However, I shall go on trying.

All reformers are not pure. Nobody is pure. But many struggle to be pure, many love dharma. They believe that untouchability is really an inner matter and that it has no external sign. We must all keep away from such untouchability. No one is born an untouchable. If there is anything in Hinduism which is not to be found in any other religion, which promotes dharma, it should be amenable to rational proof. And its result should be manifest to the eye. The theory of untouchability by birth neither appeals to reason nor has it any visible beneficial effect. If you say that *Antyajas* should be helped except in the matter of admission to temples, why should you not regard it

your dharma to give such help? If you don't wish to give such help through me, you may give it independently.

You also see the continual degradation of dharma. But do you think it can be prevented by laying exclusive stress on external cleanliness? I am not averse to such cleanliness. I think I observe all rules of cleanliness which I know, but I don't believe that their observance purifies me spiritually. They help me to preserve physical cleanliness. For preserving spiritual purity, it seems to me that what is necessary is observance of rules of internal cleanliness. These we have forgotten altogether. The result is that, though we have forsaken dharma, lost our spiritual strength and remain absorbed in worldly pursuits, we believe that our dharma is safe and, if somebody like me comes forward to wipe out the blot of untouchability, a loud cry of dharma being in danger is raised and lies are spread against that person. (I do wish that people like you should not lend your support to such activities and that is why I plead with you). On matters on which we differ, we should try to understand each other's point of view and, in regard to other things about which we have no differences between us, we may work separately but with the same aim. If all of us do this, the waste of energy that is taking place at present would stop.

Read this letter when your mind is free from other worries. I am sure you will be able to get some time in Adhoi.

Pranams from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 20564

93. LETTER TO SWARUP RANI NEHRU

March 13, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I got your letter. I was looking forward to it.

I have a letter from Jawaharlal in which he has given an account of your health and stated that you have lost much weight. Poona should be the place for you as soon as you can come. I shall try this time to arrange for you a different accommodation. Jawahar too has written about it.

As for Calcutta you should follow your own inclination. I have no opinion in this respect, I do not even have the right to hold any.

Kamala must be by now leaving for Dehra [Dun]. In a few days Sarup will be here. Her Kathiawar tour was satisfactory. Indu[1] and Chand[2] visited me on Saturday. They were fine. Tara[3] of course has hardly any time left from playing to come to me. Jamnalal's Kamalnayan and Ramakrishna are also at the same school.

Do inform me in advance of your coming.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[From Hindi]

Gandhi–Indira Gandhi Correspondence File. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

94. LETTER TO GIRDHARILAL

March 14, 1933

MY DEAR GIRDHARILAL,

I was glad to receive your weekly report and to notice that the progress was maintained, though still slow. May it keep steady and result in permanent cure is the wish and prayer of us all.

Yours sincerely,

LALA GIRDHARILAL
109-A MAHENDRA MANSIONS
ESPLANADE ROAD, FORT
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20580

95. LETTER TO MIAN MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE

March 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I am obliged to you for your letter and your book of poems about myself. I wish I had the time I would love to give to your work so that I may know myself through your eyes and add to my knowledge of Urdu, but *Harijan* just now absorbs the whole of my time and I do not know when I shall be able to

[1] Indira Gandhi
[2] & [3] Chandralekha and Nayantara, Vijayalakshmi Pandit's daughters

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reach your poem. I cast hungry eyes on it even as I received it and I saw that I should find it difficult to understand your classical Urdu.

Yours sincerely,

MIAN MOHD. RAFIQUE, ESQ.
BAGHBANPURA
LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20578

96. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

March 14, 1933

THE SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

DEAR SIR,

With reference to my application for permission to Drs. Ramnathan and Desai of the Meteorological Department to come to the Yeravda Central Prison in the evening just after dark to show me the use of an astronomical telescope, the Superintendent has just informed me that the Government cannot see their way to grant the permission for reasons stated in the order. I cannot help saying that I was wholly unprepared for this decision. I have known both Yeravda Central Prison and Ahmedabad Central Prison to be opened at night. My application was for the admission not of strangers, but of Government officials, on a day convenient to the authorities only for half an hour for innocent instruction. As I would not like to think that the Government would reject such a simple request, I renew my application. But should the Government refuse to reconsider, would they allow the above mentioned officials to give me such instruction as may be possible just before the prison gates are closed?[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3880; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(4), Pt. II, p. 159

[1] The meteorologists were finally given permission to visit the jail during day-time and they arrived on April 3.

CWMG - LIV

97. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

March 14, 1933

DEAR DR. SHARMA,

I have your letter[1] today and I reply at once before deciphering Amtussalaam's. What I would like you to do is to go over to the Ashram, see the patients who are still there and will be for some time, and see whether they can be treated there without being removed to a cooler climate. After all, it is not quite so hot in Ahmedabad as one may think till April. The nights are perfectly cool and I have not found even the summer to be trying. I have not hesitated to take my own cure in the Ashram more than once, even though I was advised by some doctors to go to a hill station or at least to a seaside place. But you shall judge for yourself, and then if you find it to be necessary I shall endeavour to select a cooler place. Your going to the Ashram will serve a double purpose. You will know the place and surroundings and you will have your first experience of it. You will also be able to deal with cases of obstinate constipation which are common enough in the Ashram. There are two patients there who are chronic asthmatics and who do not generally go to watering places and try to keep as much as possible in the Ashram itself. You can go to the Ashram whenever you like, and if you want to take Amtussalaam with you, you can do that also.

I am glad your daughter was cured of smallpox through natural treatment.

If you propose to go to the Ashram, you have simply to send a telegram or a letter telling them when you will reach there. I will send a copy of this letter to the Manager.

Yours sincerely,

DR. H. L. SHARMA
SUNRAY HOSPITAL
KAROL BAGH
DELHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 20579; also *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, pp. 19-20

[1] The addressee, a naturopath, had decided to go to the Ashram for some time and had asked Gandhiji what his duties there would be.

98. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 14, 1933

DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

I have been very slow in sending you the draft constitution[1]. Now I have your telegram. I was ready with it only last Sunday and then it awaited the dictating of this letter when your telegram was received. You will see what labour has been put into it. The draft as it comes to you is the 3rd draft prepared by Mahadev. I was simply supervising and suggesting. I think I told you that I read it first and found that it required a lot of re-drafting and thinking out. It was then handed to Shastri[2]. Shastri went through it carefully and made suggestions. Then Mahadev tackled it. So, you may say that it is the result of the joint labours of three persons. Before it is printed, it should be passed by the Committee of the Society. I feel that Hariji[3] should apply his legal mind to it and, as a lawyer, make what amendments and additions he may think necessary before it is considered by the Committee. If he cannot give it the necessary time, it should be put in the hands of some lawyer who is experienced in drafting constitutions for societies such as ours. No labour now given to it will be a waste of time and effort if the Society is to grow into a big and efficient organization. Constitution alone will not do it, I know, it will be the workers who will perform the trick. Nevertheless, without a good workable constitution we will not be able to bind together the different units composing the organization and its branches. After you have the final draft for passing, if there is any time, I would like you to send me a copy of that draft, for, you should know that I have not examined the enclosed draft in all its details.

I am anxious to receive your impressions in detail of your Punjab tour, your experience of the Harijan leaders. Swatmanandji[4] appears to me to be an able man. He is a polished Hindi writer and seems to have original ideas. He tells me that

[1] *Vide* pp. 17-22.
[2] R. V. Shastri, editor of *Harijan*
[3] Hridaya Nath Kunzru
[4] Swatmadas; *vide* "Letter to Amritlal V. Thakkar", pp. 93-4.

he met you. He has sent me a copy of the representation that was submitted to you by his Society. As you have seen from his report which I have sent you he has no faith in the chief caste Hindus working the different anti-untouchability organizations. We have to give him as much satisfaction as is possible, and if there is nothing whatsoever in his charges, we should be able to tell him so and support our statement with convincing evidence.

I know I have deprived you of the only secretary who was giving you the fullest satisfaction. If you had pleaded your inability to part with Shastri, I should have managed somehow. I have not the courage now to say, "You can have Shastri if you wish". At the same time I know that you must not remain without an efficient secretary. Would you like me to make a search? If you will, let me know your exact requirements and what you are prepared to pay.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: G.N. 1113; also S.N. 20576

99. LETTER TO PREMLILA THACKERSEY

March 14, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

Your letter gave us great relief. We had been eagerly waiting for news[1], but the note was handed over only in the morning and not at night though we waited for it. After all a prisoner is a prisoner, and so I don't complain.

It was very good that you and Lilabehn both remained present at the time. Do attend by turns now, and also keep me informed.

As your note says, you will go to the hospital at 12 o'clock. I am, therefore, enclosing a note for Anandi. Please read it out to her, and convey to me her message. I am putting you to much trouble. But I am helpless. One has to incur debts against one's wishes. God will repay them. I have of course received a telegram from Lakshmidas[2].

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

[1] About Anandi Asar, who was operated upon on the previous day for appendicitis in the Sasoon Hospital, Poona

[2] Lakshmidas Asar, Anandi's father

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PS.

Do not send any oranges or *musambis* for the present. I have received a large supply from Wardha.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4828. Courtesy: Premlila Thackersey. Also G.N. 74

100. LETTER TO BADRINATH SHARMA

March 14, 1933

BHAI BADRINATH SHARMA,

I have your letter. I have not seen any cutting of the article. The Prayag resolutions are unsatisfactory.[1]

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI BADRINATH SHARMA
KETAKI DEV
GAYA
BIHAR

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9556

101. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 15, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

Kakasaheb has removed Anandi today to Prof. Trivedi's house. Since the facilities in the hospital were not very satisfactory and since both the operation and the post-operation dressing were quite simple, the doctor himself suggested that she should be removed to some private hospital or house where she could be properly nursed. The doctor will visit Prof. Trivedi's place every morning and evening to dress the wound. And there is no dearth of nurses—women volunteers. Two or three Parsi ladies who do Harijan work and a daughter of Lilavati Munshi take turns. Premlilabehn and Lilabehn, Lakshmidas's sister, are with Anandi all the time. She gets a little temperature during daytime, but the doctor says that is common. She drinks fruit juice and

[1] The reference is perhaps to the resolutions passed on March 5, 1933 expressing dissatisfaction with the proposals for Indian Constitutional Reforms.

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milk and is quite happy and cheerful. There is no cause for worry at all. But she was saying that she would be happy if Velabehn was with her. Premlilabehn, therefore, seems to have sent a wire. If Velabehn cannot resist her desire, she may certainly come. She may have even started yesterday. Or she will arrive tomorrow morning with Devdas.

Blessings from[1]
BAPU

SHRI NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a microfilm: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8334. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

102. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 16, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am able only today to reach your letter of 8th March.

What I meant about a Selection Board was this. You should appoint a small and efficient committee consisting of, say, a man like Thadani and someone from St. Stephen's College and another person as Secretary with you and Thakkar Bapa as members ex-officio. This Committee would invite applicants for the David Scheme Scholarships.[2] It will examine the applications and recommend them to the Board. The Board will, if it accepts the recommendations, grant the scholarships. This Committee will also be invited to frame a scheme giving conditions under which scholarships should be given describing the qualifications of the candidates and it will be under these conditions that applications would be invited. I would suggest the Committee keeping in touch with Mr. David in so far as he may be willing to assist the Committee with his informal guidance and advice. So much about the Selection Board.

With reference to the donations, I am not satisfied with what you say. I had the fear that there might not be an adequate response to an appeal for such donations. I had said as much to

[1] This was signed for Gandhiji by Mahadev Desai.

[2] The scheme was to collect a fund from "caste Hindus for the higher education of a select number of Harijan boys and girls". *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 392-4.

Mr. David when I told him why even though I liked his scheme I was reluctant to back it publicly. I advised him therefore to consult you and to consult the Bombay Board which he did, and both of you warmly took it up. You even advertised it in the draft constitution. I therefore felt encouraged after having waited for a long time to bless the scheme in the *Harijan*. I do feel that there must be some earmarked donations apart from the general collections. I do not like the idea of setting apart sums from the general collections already made. We must draw, if we at all can, some sanatanists among the donors. Anyway, that's my idea, and that's also Jamnalalji's, Sardar Vallabhbhai's and of all of us. I have already approached Janaki Devi to give the scheme Rs. 2,500/- and I am presently going to write to others. I would like to include your name among the donors and publish it.

Before writing anything in the *Harijan*, I shall await your considered reply to this.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20592. Also C.W. 7932. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

103. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 16, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

I have your letter. I am making use of the translation[1] you have sent me, and of the same thing in Bengali Mahadev has given a translation for Gujarati *Harijan*. I had already seen the translation of your article in the Hindi *Harijan*. What you say about the imperfection of the latter has been before me also and I have drawn the Editor's pointed attention to it. He is a willing worker and accepts all suggestions with good grace. You will therefore notice a steady improvement in it.

I shall continue to send you the English articles as they get ready. My writing or dictating them has got to be finished by Thursday morning. Nothing begins before Monday. The bulk is finished between Tuesday and Wednesday.

Your analysis of the 48 columns is interesting. No wonder you are commanding an ever-increasing circulation.[2] All this is work after your heart and it is a good thing. There is no rea-

[1] "Kabuli Zulam", published in *Harijan*, 1-4-1933

[2] Of the Bengali *Harijan* which was published under the auspices of the Khadi Pratishthan, Calcutta, and of which the addressee was the Editor

son why you should not command a circulation of 10,000 or even more. I hope you have a good staff of workers. You must not break under the strain. I should love to learn Bengali, if only to read your articles, but, for the time being, that must remain only a dream.

I see you have already sent me the first form of your Hindi introduction to the *Ramayana*. I am keeping it by me to read it as soon as I find the time.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20594

104. LETTER TO G. K. DEVDHAR

March 16, 1933

MY DEAR DEVDHAR[1],

I have your letter about Prof. Purandare[2]. The thing is this. He had delivered some addresses in Poona. He was brought to me by Haribhau. Haribhau told me that his addresses were well received, and so in order to begin the propaganda and in order to help Purandare I suggested that his speeches should be published in book form. He was quite agreeable. He told me that his wants were very few and that he would gladly dedicate himself to the cause, I asked him to tell me what he would require for his labour in collecting the speeches, perhaps even rewriting them, examining proofs, etc. He would not name the sum although I pressed him hard. But he told me that he would be entirely satisfied with whatever I named and got from the Central Board. When the book was finished and the time came for payment I hesitated to name the sum. I therefore referred the matter to Haribhau. He suggested Rs. 125. I immediately accepted the amount and had the cheque prepared, when, lo and behold, Prof. Purandare declined to accept the money and wanted "Rs. 1000, if not Rs. 3,000".

Since then the story is one of my receiving angry letters of abuse and nothing else. That, however, is not a matter of much moment. I told him that he could have the book against payment of the printing charges. He disputed the reasonableness of the

[1] President of the Servants of India Society and the Maharashtra Divisional Board of the All-India Anti-untouchability League

[2] N. H. Purandare

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printing bill saying that it was exorbitant. I said I would accept any sum that might be fixed by an independent arbitrator. He would not accept that. There is much more that I could write, but I think this is enough.

Now, I am acting as a Trustee for the Central Board. How can I possibly ask the Central Board, without the slightest justification, to pay more? The translation rights, etc., he can have. There is not much demand even for the books that we have. I would gladly say that if there is any surplus left after discharging the printers' bill, he should have it. What more is it possible to offer?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20591

105. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 16, 1933

MY DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

I promised to write to you at length in reply to your complaint of the 11th instant.[1] You have done well in writing as freely as you have done. That enables me to explain what I have done. Perhaps your letter was dictated without your having seen the *Harijan*. I dealt with Swatmadas's letter without mentioning his name, or the Province, or the organizations and purposely gave it a general colouring, so that even Swatmadas could not make out that I had built my article[2] on his letter, and you will be agreeably surprised to know that Lele thought that it had reference to Bombay. This is the way I have successfully dealt with so many things for over a generation. But at the same time I did not want to wait till you had dealt with the report yourself and were able to send me your observations. That would have been a long drawn out agony, whereas what I wanted to do was to drive a lesson home as early as possible. The particular Province and the particular complaints about particular organizations were left

[1] The addressee had generally complained against Swatmadas, calling him a "young enthusiast" "without any work behind him" and, in answer to Gandhiji's suggestion that Swatmadas's report containing strictures against various anti-untouchability bodies be circulated among them, had said that it would not be courteous to do so.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 458-60.

untouched and awaited treatment till after you had examined the whole question. Do you see anything wrong in this method? Have the Punjab organizations been compromised in any manner or Swatmadas given undeserved credit? In the hypothetical article in the *Harijan* I have not even said that the writer's complaints were true. I simply called for self-introspection on the part of the uplift organizations throughout India. And let me tell you that that article is serving its purpose. It is still open to you, and I want you to investigate all the complaints of Swatmadas and give me your reply so that I can deal with them. I know that the Punjab organizations mentioned by Swatmadas are not all affiliated to the central organization. That should not matter. Nor need these organizations take it amiss if we made courteous enquiries of them. Their reception of your enquiry would naturally depend upon the manner of it. You, I know, would always write in a courteous tone and a perfectly friendly manner, and make your intention perfectly clear that you wanted to help them as a friend and not approach them in an inquisitorial manner. However, that is really my suggestion. You will do whatever you think is proper, and if you think that no enquiry is necessary you will say so and I shall be quite satisfied. My purpose is served if I have made it clear to you that there was nothing improper in my having dealt with the subject anonymously and in a perfectly general manner.

As to Swatmadas himself, I was not at all unprepared for your description of him. But we have to deal with and come in contact with such young men. It is inevitable. We are responsible for what they are and it serves us right. Therefore we have to deal with them in the gentlest manner possible, listen to them most patiently, and try to take what service it may be possible to take from them. I think this covers all the points raised in your letter.

I hope you had my letter sent you on the 14th, and the draft constitution went to you yesterday by registered post. I sent you a telegram[1] also advising you of its despatch.

Your description of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act makes bad reading. Can nothing be done to correct the mischief? I would like you to send me a copy of that Act.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1114

[1] This is not traceable.

106. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 16, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter of the 11th. What you say is perfectly correct. This seems to be the last ordeal. I should like to sacrifice everything in it. However, if we could always to do what we liked, all of us would be kings.

I have already informed you that Parachure Shastri has gone to his place. My previous letters may have helped you to arrive at your decision, but it was my duty to leave the decision to you which in my impatience I failed to do.

From whom has Parashuram borrowed? The news has perturbed me. Who has been lending him? Give me all details. Let me know Parashuram's weaknesses. We should tolerate much, but please remember that there is a limit even to that.

Co-operation and non-co-operation either may be one's duty.

A pair of brass pots, a *thali* and a *tapeli*—I hope Lakshmi will not get crushed under the weight of all these things. Even these are marks of love, however, but I am glad that you refused to be a party. I am also glad that Velabehn and others decided to give something. I cannot judge from here where the limit should have been put. Didn't I myself wish to give Lakshmi a string of beads, when I was reluctant to give anything to Rami? Love shows itself in such contradictory forms. I do not doubt your sincerity in the least [in refusing to join]. It is the wisdom of giving a pair of pots which should be doubted.

You will read the copy of my letter to Dr. Sharma which I am enclosing. I will not therefore write more on the subject. Do you agree with what I have written to him? A letter for Marybehn[1] also is enclosed.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8385. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] F. Mary Barr

107. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 16, 1933

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I have your letter. I have already written to Dr. Sharma.[1] He should leave for the Ashram and take you too. I will not write in detail as you will see that letter. It is not at all correct to say that the Ashram is the hotbed of phthisis. The fact is that there is hardly any phthisis in the Ashram.

Who was treating Kudsia[2]?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 279

108. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 17, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

This is Friday morning 3.15. Your letter came in due time.

I must be brief today as I have many other important letters to write. I have no doubt whatsoever that your progress will continue if I have succeeded in explaining my instructions about deep breathing and gentle breathing whilst lying flat on your back. With plenty of good *bhaji*[3] constipation must yield. Whilst you have to avoid bread, paupau should be taken if available.

I suspended my saltless last week without making any change in the diet. I simply began taking salt with the fruit—not more than 30 grains altogether during the day. The only change I can report is that the weight went up yesterday to 105. There has been no increase in milk or fruit. But I am not able to say whether the increase is due to salt. We shall see.

Verrier seems to have calmed down now and definitely off the marriage. Whether they will ever accept the restriction as

[1] *Vide* p. 86.
[2] The addressee's niece who had lived in the Ashram for a few months.
[3] Leafy vegetable

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to intermarriage between members of the same Ashram, it is difficult to say. I am going to make the suggestion in your name.

About Laxmi and Anandi in Ba's letter which goes with this. Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6267. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9733

109. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 17, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

While waiting for the others to arrive for the morning prayer, I wrote out a letter to Mirabehn and one to Ba. I made them brief and started this. I read Narahari's letter and your two letters. I have discussed these only briefly. Where is the time? I however put down the thoughts which occur to me.

You should invite Narahari to see you and try to understand his point of view. I know his temperament very well. He is one of the few sincere workers who have come together in the Ashram. They should all learn to become one as milk with sugar. If they cannot do this, the Ashram is bound to perish. Naturally, it is the responsibility of the secretary to see that different parts of an organization work in harmony. It is my duty to explain this clearly to you. The secretary is the centre of an organization. Those who do not feel the pull of his attraction are outsiders in that organization. The secretary should either free them or give them a proper place in the organization and keep them in it. You cannot regard Narahari as an outsider. We look upon certain persons as the limbs of the body that is the Ashram. We can never imagine the Ashram without them. If we can imagine it without them, we can imagine it without ourselves too, which would mean the end of the Ashram.

I have only stated the principle. You may draw from it what lesson you can.

Narahari should be regarded as an expert in the field of education. In that field, therefore, we should subordinate our views to his. If in consequence we find that mistakes are being made, we should let them be made and draw the expert's attention to them afterwards. There is no other way, and there can be none. If anybody tries to point out my mistake in my own field, I would not readily admit it. I must, therefore, taste the bitterness of failure. This holds true of all other fields. In this, too, I have stated only the general principle.

All persons of the category of Maganbhai should have free access to the books. If as a result some books are spoiled or lost, we should write them off rather than create unpleasantness. The rules for using the books should be pasted on the walls at numerous places. In big libraries, even ordinary members are permitted to take them out of the shelves. If they do not put them back in their places after they have done with them, they leave them on the table, and at the end of the day the librarian puts them back in the shelves. The inmates of the Ashram should have free access to the books. They can have the keys whenever they wish. If you cannot decide who should be treated as inmates of the Ashram, you may draw up a list of selected names of persons who should be permitted to take out books and ask for the keys.

If the children go to bed at 8.15 p.m., they should be permitted to sleep from 8.30 p.m. to 4.30 a.m. without fear. In addition, they should also get one full hour during day-time for sleeping. You will have to consider who may be described as children. You may respect the parents' wishes in this matter.

A teacher should get time to prepare himself. I cannot accept Chimanlal's excuse that he gets no time. If one undertakes a job, one must do it well, otherwise one ought not to undertake it. To undertake a job and not to do it well is a form of untruth. If a person who is driving a car does not drive it carefully, he will be committing a crime. Similarly, if a person who has undertaken to teach something does not do it well, he will commit a greater crime than that driver. Nobody should undertake anything which is beyond his capacity.

We should faithfully obey Kuvalayanandji's instructions regarding exercise.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that all of you should sit with Narahari, discuss the problem frankly and do what you think best.

However, do only as much from this as you can easily do. I am far away from there. After all it is you who have to decide and act. It is you who have to run the Ashram and will have to accept the responsibility. I may, therefore, make suggestions to you but you should have complete freedom to accept or reject them. You should assume that you have that freedom.

Prema also is involved in all this. She should learn to control her tongue and restrain her obstinacy. She behaves in such a manner as to wipe out all that she does. Try to persuade her as much as you can. If you wish to free her from any responsibility, you may do so. If her working the whole day does not let her have peace

of mind, she should reduce her work. If she has such peace, she should be able to listen to criticism from anybody.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8336. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

110. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

We are all so glad that your brother is getting better.

The *Harijan* tells you all about the activities in connection with untouchability. Though the storm is raging on all sides, somehow or other I am enjoying perfect peace. This temple-entry question is indirectly solving many spiritual problems. It has given and is still giving the movement its real religious background. Many thought, and some still think, that the question is purely political and economic. It is now being recognized that everything else depends upon the religious conversion of caste Hindus. For, that is the significance of temple-entry. It may be that the religious conversion may not come at all in our time. It may turn out that I had underrated the strength of the superstition. Nevertheless, the issue is becoming clear day by day. Untouchability will not have gone without temple-entry and all it signifies—temple-entry not at the point of the bayonet but at the will of the people. I have not yet succeeded in showing the sanatanists that the two Bills do not seek to interfere with Hindu conscience in any shape or form. They are simply meant to remove the legal obstacle to the freest exercise of Hindu conscience. It has been a matter of great grief to me that Government have not seen this very clear intention of the two Bills. But I have purposely refrained from dwelling on that aspect in the *Harijan*. I have simply remained satisfied with having written[1] to the Viceroy.

Love from us all to all.

Yours sincerely,
MOHAN

C. F. ANDREWS
WOODBROOKE, SELLY OAK
BIRMINGHAM

From a photostat: S.N. 981

[1] Gandhiji did this on February 1 and 19; *vide* Vol. LIII.

111. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have your letter. I thought that I had sent you a parcel containing 10 copies of the *Harijan*. Anyway, copies are being sent to all those friends who were helping during my visit, but if you want more copies, you should tell me.

Love.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

MISS AGATHA HARRISON
119 GOWER STREET, W.C. 1

From a photostat: G.N. 1463

112. LETTER TO H. L. HUBBARD

March 17, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter containing your good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

REV. H. L. HUBBARD
ALL SAINTS' VICARAGE
MARGATE
ENGLAND

From a microfilm: S.N. 20605

113. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR KELAPPAN,

What is this dictatorship? Do please keep me informed of the progress of the movement. It is strange that I have not heard from you for all these days.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20600

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114. LETTER TO K. MADHAVAN NAIR

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR MADHAVAN,

I have your letter advising me that Sjt. Kelappan has been appointed the sole dictator and that the provisional committee has been dissolved. I hope that the change will justify itself. I have not been quite able to understand it.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20599

115. LETTER TO J. S. M. JOSEPH AND HELEN KONARD

March 17, 1933

DEAR FRIENDS,

I thank you for your letter and the book accompanying it.

You will be glad to hear that I had already read it and that was with much interest and profit. This was years ago.

Yours sincerely,

DR. J. S. M. JOSEPH & HELEN KONARD
158 HARRISON STREET
PASSAIC, N.J. (U.S.A.)

From a photostat: S.N. 20601

116. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

I have your three letters. I must confess that I am not satisfied with your two previous letters. The letter I have published[1] was surely composed as if it was meant for publication and meant also to show that the balance had gone into the Harijan pockets. You may not have meant it for publication, but then

[1] In *Harijan*, 11-3-1933

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there was no meaning in writing that letter. You are not a mere publishing department so that you can boast that your overhead charges were only 10% of the cost of your publishing activity. If you will read the resolution which brought into being these committees, my meaning will be clear to you.

I note you do not want me to publish the figures that you have sent me.

I thank you for the two cuttings accompanying your letter of the 15th instant.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. R. LELE
31 MURZBAN ROAD
FORT, BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20595

117. LETTER TO N.

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your letter. I had intended to write this letter in my own hand, but that could not be done. An unexpected visitor came on the scene and I became helpless.

My spirit hovers about you as a mother's about her lost child. I would love to own you as a child, but I have not got that trust in you yet. It may be no fault of yours, but there it is. You should know the whole of my mind. That is the only way I can guide you and the only way in which I can ever own you as a daughter.

I do feel that you are again in a trap. There is only one spiritual husband, companion and friend to all, both men and women, and that is God, whom I know more fully as Truth. Before God alone there is no sex. He alone is pure spirit. All other marriage, however lofty-minded both parties may be, is more or less carnal. For a person who has dedicated himself or herself to the service of humanity there is no such thing as exclusive relationship.

If, therefore, you will take my word, you will not travel from error to error, as you seem to me to be doing just now. Your promise is to have no exclusive or secret or private companionship. You are simply wedded to your work and nothing else.

You should write regularly.

May Truth, which is God, be your sole guide, friend, companion and rock of ages.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20603

118. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I have your postcard. Here is a letter for N.

Though as a vegetarian I do not like the idea of poultry-farming and chicken egg-selling, I am unable to say that no Harijan Seva Organization should do so, and if you feel like introducing that industry, you should unhesitatingly do so. Is this ordinary hatching of eggs or is it the new innocent method of the laying of sterile eggs?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20598

119. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 17, 1933

MY DEAR MARGARETE,

Why do you want to come here for three days or at the most a fortnight? If you have at all imbibed the central truth of the *Gita*, it will tell you that this kind of wish has got to be subjugated and sublimated into pure action, which for you consists in doing your duty there. You should hold on to your savings, and if you cannot restrain yourself from spending them somehow, you should send them here for the Harijan cause.

I do hope you got all my previous letters, as also the *Harijan* which is being posted to you every week.

Love from us both.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also S.N. 20602

120. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

March 17, 1933

CHI. NARAHARI,

Why did you tear up your letter to Mahadev? Just think how much anger and violence there was in your action. Narandas put the pieces together, reconstructed the whole letter and sent it here. It was not right for you to tear up the letter, no matter how much at fault Narandas was. I have gone through your letter and also the brief reply Narandas has sent to Mahadev. I have conveyed to Narandas in short the impression which was produced on me, and have suggested that he should show you that letter.

It is true that my trust in Narandas is as complete as you have heard it is. That is my nature. It is not that I have such trust in him alone. I have similar trust in you, Panditji, Kaka and others whose names you yourself can supply. I would never believe anything against any of them unless I had direct evidence. Hence, there was—should have been—nothing surprising in what you heard. Apart from it, this is what I believe regarding Narandas. He has in him the qualities of efficiency, patience, power of discrimination, balance of mind, impartiality and firmness, of the highest order. They have cast a spell on me. I therefore wish that you and other co-workers should appreciate his qualities and take full advantage of his services. However, he cannot have these merits, nor can others see them in him, simply because I attribute them to him. How can you help if you fail to see them? And it is clear that if you fail to see them, you cannot avail yourself of his services even as much as you may wish. So much about my faith in Narandas. Apart from that, however, I liked your letter very much. It is not necessary, and I have not the time, to analyse the letter in detail or point out your errors that it shows. I think I have drawn from it the necessary lesson. You will see this from the suggestions which I have made to Narandas.

What I expect you to do is that you should see Narandas, have a quiet discussion with him and persuade him to make the changes which seem necessary to you. Do not press the points which Narandas finds unacceptable. I don't think that you wish, or believe it desirable, that the charge of the Ashram should be en-

trusted to somebody else. Do tell me if that is what you wish or think. But if that is not so, your duty is to persuade Narandas as much as you can. You are responsible for the welfare of the Ashram quite as much as I or Narandas or others. We are what we are, and it is we who will make the Ashram what it will be. You cannot, therefore, regard yourself as an outsider and disclaim responsibility for it, since the bond among the inmates of the Ashram is an indissoluble one as that in a Hindu marriage. The Gower Bill has not still been passed into a law; but even when it has, those who wish to adhere to the present form of indissoluble marriage will certainly do so. The Gower Bill has for its subject matter forced marriages and ill-matched pairs. I am sure you will not regard our marriage as of that type. It is a marriage of choice. You should bear this in mind and know that you have no choice but to endure what is inevitable and act accordingly. I have read your letter in some haste. If there is anything in it about which I should do something but which has escaped my attention please do let me know.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9057

121. LETTER TO PROF. SOARES

March 17/18, 1933

DEAR PROF. SOARES,

I was delighted to meet you yesterday and have the interesting information that caste is observed among Goan Christians and that it was confined to the restriction upon inter-caste marriages.

If you can give me comparative statistics about the population of Harijans and other Hindus and the occupations of Harijans in Goa or rather Portuguese India, I shall be obliged.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20597

122. NOTES

EVILS A RESULT

In the Telugu districts as well as the adjoining Tamil districts, Madigas and Malas, both of whom are at presents untouchables, kill cows and buffaloes for purposes of sacrifice to Matamma, Mariyamma and Ganga-

mma. There is no doubt that a certain number of caste people also take vows before these goddesses in times of emergency and calamity, but the actual sacrifice is done by the so-called outcastes. The untouchables not only sacrifice animals in public but eat the beef. They also eat carrion. Caste Hindus do not, but they do freely eat pork. I would request you, therefore, to advise the untouchables to give up this sacrifice and carrion-eating. The latter is responsible for their physical degeneration. Could you not also send a message for us who are working in the cause of anti-untouchability?

This is a condensed extract from a long letter from the Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Ryots' Association. There is no doubt that this habit of carrion-eating, and especially beef-eating, has a great deal to do with the prevalent prejudice, but in no other thing is the weakness of Hinduism, or rather of caste Hindus, betrayed so forcibly as in regarding a portion of fellow-Hindus to be untouchable and neglecting them in the cruellest manner possible. We have, therefore, only ourselves to thank that the untouchables are what they are. But it is not yet too late to mend. The Harijans should realize that untouchability is dead and gone. Its evil effect will persist for a long time to come. The duration will be the measure of our joint neglect. Greater by far is the responsibility of the caste Hindus. If they will do their duty and work whole-heartedly, they will certainly succeed in stopping these sacrifices and the habit of carrion-eating. Nothing but the spread of enlightenment is required to rid the community of evil superstition and evil habits. But I cannot too often remind the reformers and caste Hindus in general that they will not purify Harijans of any single one of the evil habits, if they will make the reform the condition of the removal of untouchability. Rather let us realize that the evils are a result, and not a cause, of untouchability, anyway most decidedly not at the present moment.

So far as carrion-eating is concerned, the reader will find concrete suggestions which I have made in the Gujarati columns of *Harijanbandhu* and which have been translated for these columns.[1]

Christian Harijans

'Christian Harijans' should be a contradiction in terms. For, untouchability that is sought to be driven out of India is the special curse (according to the reformers) or the privilege (according to the sanatanists) of Hinduism. But the Hindu contact

[1] *Vide* pp. 65-6.

has so infected the Christian that at least in Malabar it seems to show itself among Christians almost in the same form as among Hindus. Thus writes a Malabar Christian to Sjt. Amritlal Thakkar:[1]

> From the days of the famous Vaikom Satyagraha, the real condition of the Travancore Harijans . . . has been brought to light to a very great extent, but it is not yet suspected or detected, . . . that the Christian Harijan in Travancore is not [*sic*], in matter of civic or social rights and in abject poverty, absolutely the same as his Hindu Harijan brother. Pulayas or Cherumas, Parayas or Sambhavas with Ignaoas or Ina Pulayas and some other minor communities number about 6,00,000 according to the last year's census report and are considered the lowest strata of the outcaste societies of Travancore.
>
> Converted (Christian) Pulayas or Parayas as a whole are as good, or as bad, as the others of the communities, except in a few cities like Trivandrum, where the difference, if there is any, exists more in pretension of the converted, though hardly any in reality, and where a handful of them may be a little more literate or a little better employed than those of the others.
>
> Public institutions, roads, inns, rest houses, temples, churches, court houses, business houses, shops, streets and even taverns that are unapproachable by the one are exactly to the same extent unapproachable by the other. To both, caste men like Nambudiris are unseeable to this day.
>
> Prosperous Christian communities like Nadars in the South and Syrians in the North . . . are to us what no-change sanatanists are to our Hindu Harijan brother. Hundreds of churches unapproachable by us (Harijans, either Christian or Hindu) will explain why Christian Harijans of the bottom ranks have to make common cause with their fellow outcaste brothers. . . .
>
> Allow us to add that we, being agricultural serfs mostly, have been and are dependent on the caste Hindu and Christian masters and that, owing to increasing poverty and fragmentation of land, we are day by day reduced to greater and greater economic plight, ...

This state of things is no doubt a disgrace to Hinduism but it is no less so to Christianity, if not more so. The present movement is automatically helping the Christian Harijans, but I should be surprised if advantage is not being taken of the movement to drive out untouchability from the church. I hope too that the numerous educated Nadars and Ezhavas are putting forth their best effort to abolish the distinctions among Harijans themselves.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

123. WHAT HARIJANS THINK

The reader must have read and digested what Thakkar Bapa, as he is endearingly called in Gujarat, especially by Harijans, said in the telegraphic account of his tour in the Punjab, published in the last issue of *Harijan*. Harijan deputations that waited on him have sent me copies of the addresses they presented to him. The one from the Ad Dharma Mandal of Jullundur City and Balmic Ad Dharma Mandal of Lahore City contains these observations :

> The high-class proud Hindus of the Punjab Province have degraded and lowered our position in the society to an *unbreakable* extent. They think themselves to be polluted if we happen to touch them. Our entry at the public places and getting water from the public wells and tanks is thought objectionable. Hindu washermen and barbers are not prepared to serve us in their respective occupations. We are not allowed to dine at Hindu hotels. We are not *privileged* to use bands, palanquins on the occasions of our marriage celebrations. We are forced to carry the palanquins of Hindu brides at their marriage. If we happen to put on good clothes, they irritate them. The depressed classes of the Punjab Province are faced by many troubles. High-class Hindus have pressed and degraded them from all sides. Caste question has proved very troublesome. Even the houses in which they live are not considered their property. In the villages and towns their economic condition is very much degraded, and for their uplift a vigorous campaign of propaganda is required.

If the condition is as bad as this in the advanced Punjab, what must it be in the other Provinces of India? And as would be clear from Thakkar Bapa's wire, law seems to have conspired with the caste Hindus in depriving the Harijans of even the right of owning agricultural land. Let us hope that the numerous uplift associations of the Punjab will make a united effort to remove at once some of the numerous disabilities enumerated above.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

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124. EVEN UNTO THESE LAST

For the heading of this article I have dared to steal from Ruskin a classical phrase stolen by him in his turn from the Bible. I have added 'even' to the original and changed 'this' into 'these' to bring out the whole sense of what I want to say. Among the Harijans the poor scavenger or the Bhangi seems to stand last in the list, though he is perhaps the most important and indispensable member of society, as indispensable to it as a mother is to her children in one respect. The Bhangi attends to the sanitation of society as a mother to that of her children. If the caste men had to do the scavenging for themselves, some of the methods that the Bhangi has to submit to for doing his work would have been swept away long ago. I copy the following from a letter of the Anti-untouchability Board of Muttra to its Municipal Board:[1]

> . . . He must be a heartless fellow who has remained unmoved at the pathetic sight of a slender, aged and emaciated woman carrying, and being crushed under, the weight of a basket full of night-soil over her head every morning from the city lanes to the trenching ground or the flushing pit. The practice, though old, is inhuman, cruel and a relic of barbaric days. It is most unhygienic. . . . The solution is simple. Just purchase hand-driven trolleys and let these speechless servants of yours use the trolley as a carrier rather than the head. Another matter for your consideration. Every privy should be provided with metal or earthen basins, so that the process of removal of night-soil may be rendered less uncleanly.

Let not the reader laugh at the somewhat high-flown language of the writer. What he has said is God's truth. The Bhangis have hitherto done their work uncomplainingly, and therefore the caste men have not cared to know how these have served society for centuries. If we had not regarded these servants of society as untouchables, we would not have shut our eyes upon them or their work. Having chosen to do so and having confined them to infernos, we ourselves daily descend to these infernos called privies and do not care to look at the dirt about us or to notice the stink that pervades these places. What is true of the Bhangis and the municipality of Muttra is true more or less of all the

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

Bhangis and all the municipalities of India. The reform suggested by the Anti-untouchability Board of muttra is most desirable and can be undertaken without much cost by every municipality.

I read the other day a notice in the *Leader* of Allahabad of the scavenging work, inaugurated by a zamindar, in the Allahabad streets, and hardly had the work gone on for two days, when the enthusiastic young men who had undertaken this glorious service thought of replacing the baskets by a better arrangement. Let me again quote, this time from the *Leader* dated February 27:

> An effort is being made by the anti-untouchability workers to replace the baskets at present in use by the sweepers for the disposal of rubbish from private latrines with light iron hand-carts fitted with detachable buckets. According to the proposed scheme, the cost of such carts would be borne by the employers of the sweepers. It is understood the Manager of the Allahabad Law Journal Co., has generously undertaken to have a model baby filth removal cart constructed at his own expense for propaganda work. According to the scheme, every private latrine would have to be provided with two receptacles. An anonymous donation has been received from a high caste Brahmin woman for the construction of a public bath-room at or near Kalimaika Asthan. This work would be undertaken as soon as proper drainage and water-supply arrangements are made by the municipal authorities in the locality in question.

I hope that the enthusiasm has not died down during the weeks that have intervened between the date of the report and now. Some earnest workers have simply to persist and the much-needed reform can be inaugurated in every town and city.

If the report that a Brahmin lady has generously come forward with her donation for the construction of a public bath-room is true, it would delight the heart of Sjt. Hiralal Shah, who has been energetically pursuing his proposal for bath and change of clothes for sweepers after they have performed their daily task.[1]

There are thus three reforms which can be with a little forethought and very little extra cost inaugurated throughout India, resulting in comfort and cleanliness for Harijans and promotion of the health of society in general. All that is required is that we should behave 'even unto these last' members of society as we would unto ourselves.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

[1] *Vide* "A Worthwhile Scheme", pp. 124-5.

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125. POSERS

An iconoclast schoolmaster asks the following three questions:

> 1. Is it necessary for a Hindu, following the life of Shri Ramachandra, also to go and see his image in the temple? Is *darshan* better than action?
>
> 2. If we bow our head or join our hands before a living person, he replies in return, but the image does not. Then what is the use of doing it? What is the use of writing letters to one who never replies?
>
> 3. The person, whose image a Hindu adores, might have committed some wrongs in his lifetime. Will not the adorer be harmed by copying those wrongs, which he is likely to copy if he worships his image?

Questions like these have been asked and answered often enough before now. But the temple-entry question has revived them and they torment honest doubters like the correspondent, as if they had never been raised and answered before. I must do the best I can, though I doubt if doubters like the correspondent will be satisfied.

It is not necessary for any Hindu to go to a temple to worship (the image of) Ramachandra. But it is for him who cannot contemplate his Rama without looking at his image in a temple. It may be unfortunate, but it is true that his Rama resides in that temple as nowhere else. I would not disturb that simple faith.

The sub-question in the first question is badly put. There is no question of comparison between the *darshan* and the deed. If there was, I would unhesitatingly say that the deed is better. But the function of *darshan* is to enable the deed to be done, to steady and purify the soul. Thus, *darshan* is not a substitute for right doing. It is an encouragement for it.

In asking the second question, the schoolmaster has missed the whole point of temple-worship. When I bow to a living person and he returns it, it is a mutual exchange of courtesy and there is no particular merit about it. It may be a sign of good breeding. Temple-going is for the purification of the soul. The worshipper draws the best out of himself. In greeting a living being, he may draw the best out of the person greeted, if the greeting is selfless. A living being is more or less fallible like oneself. But in the temple, one worships the living God, perfect beyond ima-

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gination. Letters written to living persons often end in heart-breaking, even when they are answered, and there is no guarantee of their being always answered. Letters to God, who, according to the devotee's imagination, resides in temples, require neither pen nor ink nor paper, not even speech. Mere mute worship constitutes the letter which brings its own unfailing answer. The whole function is a beautiful exercise of faith. Here there is no waste of effort, no heart-breaking, no danger of being misunderstood. The writer must try to understand the simple philosophy lying behind the worship in temples or mosques or churches. He will understand my meaning better if he will realize that I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen.

The third question shows, perhaps, that the correspondent has not taken the trouble of understanding the Hindu theory of incarnations. For the faithful Hindu, his incarnation is without blemish. Krishna of the Hindu devotee is a perfect being. He is unconcerned with the harsh judgment of the critics. Millions of devotees of Krishna and Rama have had their lives transformed through their contemplation of God by these names. How this phenomenon happens I do not know. It is a mystery. I have not attempted to prove it. Though my reason and heart long ago realized the highest attribute and name of God as Truth, I recognize Truth by the name of Rama. In the darkest hour of my trial, that one name has saved me and is still saving me. It may be the association of childhood, it may be the fascination that Tulsidas has wrought on me. But the potent fact is there, and as I write these lines, my memory revives the scenes of my childhood when I used daily to visit the Ramji Mandir adjacent to my ancestral home. My Rama then resided there. He saved me from many fears and sins. It was no superstition for me. The custodian of the idol may have been a bad man. I know nothing against him. Misdeeds might have gone on in the temple. Again I know nothing of them. Therefore, they would not affect me. What was and is true of me is true of millions of Hindus. I want my Harijan brother, if he wishes, to share this temple-worship with the millions of his co-religionists, the so-called caste men. It is the latter's duty to throw open their temples to their Harijan brethren. Temple-worship supplies the felt spiritual want of the human race. It admits of reform. But it will live as long as man lives.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

126. THE DANGER OF IMITATION

I am a humble student of philosophy and so I thoroughly appreciate the movement for the removal of untouchability which has hindered the progress of a large portion of mankind. I can also appreciate the way of penance by fast, but there is one difficulty in my way. You know that the *Bhagavad Gita* has said, "What the great ones do, the others follow", and if a great soul like you set the example of fasting, is there no danger of others blindly imitating you, and quoting your example in support? Then again, you talk of the inner voice, and everybody will claim to speak in the name of the inner voice, and it will be held responsible for mixed marriages, mixed dinners, and consequent disruption of society. And when such reckless indiscipline takes place in the name of the inner voice, how would you propose to raise the level of the ordinary men, especially of untouchables?

I must confess that I have considerably abridged the original which is fairly long. But I am sure that the substance of the correspondent's argument has not in any way been lost in the abridgment. My answer is simple. I accept the teaching of the *Gita* verse that the correspondent has quoted. Surely, it was meant to warn leaders against conduct that might, if copied, result in harm to society. It cannot possibly apply to conduct whose intelligent imitation can do no harm. For if it did, it would mean an end to all progress and the setting of good examples. There is no such thing in human affairs as insurance against all danger. There is always danger of even the most irreproachable conduct being misinterpreted and misapplied, but the right thing has got to be, and has always been, done, in spite of the risk of misinterpretation and misapplication. I hold my fast to have been wholly good and obligatory on me. If the whole of mankind imitated the fast subject to all its conditions, no harm could result. A fast that was calculated to affect a big movement for the better could not be given up because of the fear of some people abusing it. Penitential fasting is admittedly a good institution.

And lastly, fasting is its own safeguard against abuse. Not many people would be willing to fast, and much fewer still would be able to do so, even though they might be willing.

Much the same may be said about the inner voice. Nobody has to my knowledge questioned the possibility of the inner voice speaking to some, and it is a gain to the world even if one per-

son's claim to speak under the authority of the inner voice can be really sustained. Many may make the claim, but not all will be able to substantiate it. But it cannot and ought not to be suppressed for the sake of preventing false claimants. There is no danger whatsoever if many people could truthfully represent the inner voice. But, unfortunately, there is no remedy against hypocrisy. Virtue must not be suppressed because many will feign it. Men have always been found throughout the world claiming to speak for the inner voice. But no harm has yet overtaken the world through their short-lived activities. Before one is able to listen to that voice, one has to go through a long and fairly severe course of training, and when it is the inner voice that speaks it is unmistakable. The world cannot be successfully fooled for all time. There is, therefore, no danger of anarchy setting in because a humble man like me will not be suppressed and will dare to claim the authority of the inner voice, when he believes that he has heard it. Unbridled licence is undoubtedly in the air. Everywhere one sees unrest, whether in the religious field or any other. The spirit of independence is abroad. Youth has always been found to be most impressionable and, therefore, it has naturally fallen a prey to this spirit; and in its haste to realize independence it has missed the central fact that independence can only come out of interdependence and that it is a fruit of long training in self-restraint. It has forgotten that independence is never synonymous with indulgence. The blame for the wildnesses of youth lies, therefore, at the door of the spirit of the times. It would be wrong to impute it to the assertion of sterling independence based upon a conscious practice of self-restraint and an ever-increasing effort implicitly to obey the will of God speaking within and then known as the inner voice.

It is now, perhaps, easy enough to answer the third question of the humble philosopher. The only way to raise the level of Harijans is for the Harijan servants to raise their own level by prayer and penitential fasting and by so training their acoustic faculty as to listen to the inner voice.

Harijan, 18-3-1933

127. LETTER TO DR. MOHAMMAD ALAM

March 18, 1933

DEAR DR. ALAM,

You have certainly supplied me with sufficient material to precipitate a quarrel in the family, but as I am a votary of ahimsa, you are quite safe. But whatever Begum Alam might have to say about your betrayal, you have certainly done me a good turn. For you have given me in Anwar one more charming correspondent in Urdu. Even for selfish reasons also, therefore, I shall avoid being a cause of quarrel between you and Begum Alam.

I am glad you are getting better and that you will be soon going to Calcutta for finishing the course of treatment. Let us hope that will be the last. You will be glad to know that we are all keeping well, often thinking of so many of our mutual friends.

Yours sincerely,

DR. SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ALAM
3 BAHAWALPUR ROAD
LAHORE

From a photostat: G.N. 30

128. LETTER TO T. AMRITHALINGAM

March 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1]. You should read what I have written about varnadharma and you will see that if my interpretation and my suggestion are accepted, there is no room whatsoever for high and low.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. T. AMRITHALINGAM
DINDIGAL

From a microfilm: S.N. 20613

[1] Of March 9. The addressee had suggested abolition of caste system, calling it ungodly.

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129. LETTER TO NARGIS CAPTAIN

March 18, 1933

MRS. NARGIS CAPTAIN,

I have your letter. What a frail body God has given you! We have to be thankful to Him that your mind remains as fresh as ever, though the body so often fails you.

I hope you will see me on your way back to Bombay.

I take it that you will pass the hot months in Panchgani. Like the poor, Harijans are with you wherever you go, therefore, even in Panchgani you will have some Harijans to move amongst and care for. That's what Khambhatta is going to do during the two months that he wants to pass in Mahabaleshwar.

I enclose herewith a returned letter[1] which I had sent to you at Kumbhakonam.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20162

130. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 18, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

I did not like your telegram to the *Harijan*. It was published by Shastri as he did not know all the implications and had no time to refer it to me and so used his own discretion and published it. If it had come to me, I would have withheld it. My own view you will learn from the copy I am sending you herewith of my reply[2] to the British Indian Association. As you will see, that letter too is not for publication. I think until there is any danger we should try to affect the opinion of pro-changers by arguing with them but not engaging in a public controversy which instead of easing the position, will only aggravate it. If the controversy forced itself upon our attention, we should not hesitate to take it up. So much for our conduct.

Now, for the quality of your argument. You cannot say that untouchability is a greater curse in Bengal than in Madras. That

[1] This is not available.

[2] *Vide* pp. 23-5.

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means that it is of a more virulent type in Bengal than in Madras, which is certainly not the truth. In fact, there is no pollution by touch or sight or shadow in Bengal as in Madras. Bengal untouchability is peculiar and confined to the restriction upon the handling of water. Bad as even this is, it is wholly different from the unthinkable atrocities of the Madras type. What you want to say is that the number of untouchables according to the Bengal definition is much larger in Bengal than in Madras. If you had put the argument that way, it would not have lost its force. All therefore that was necessary was to remove the offensive sentence: "I repeat . . . Madras." And, are you right in saying that the Government definition is identical with the definition of S.U.S.[1]? Then you cannot omit the fact that some of those who are classed as untouchables by the Bengal Government themselves resent the inclusion. You also seem to think that the councillors want to repudiate the Pact wholly and restore the original.[2] I have not understood their demand in that light. If it was so, it would be most regrettable. I think that all that they want is to reduce the number of seats allotted to Harijans in Bengal. It will be time enough to act when they approach the parties interested in the Pact. I think that our profession of ahimsa should also guard us against rushing to print till we have tried every means of conciliation outside publication in the Press.

This is how I feel, but it may be that you had ample justification for sending the wire and wording it as strongly as you have done.

I read the Hindi translation of your preface to the Bengali *Ramayana*. It is a very good thing indeed, full of the devotional spirit. I look forward to the balance of proof sheets.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20618

131. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA

March 18, 1933

DEAR DR. GOPICHAND,

I have your letter for which I thank you. I hope you are strong and well. I appreciate all you say about the organization

[1] Servants of Untouchables Society

[2] On March 14, the Bengal Legislative Council had passed a motion against the Poona Pact.

of weaving in Hissar and I know that you will do the best that is possible.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20610

132. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

March 18, 1933

THE HOME SECRETARY TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

DEAR SIR,

I was grieved to hear yesterday from Major Bhandari that my telegram[1] to Seth Jajuji of Wardha advising Seth Poonamchand Ranka, a prisoner in Seoni Jail, C. P., to abandon his reported fast was withheld by Government. A similar telegram to the Home Member, C. P. Government, was also withheld. I thought I could understand the reason for it. But the reason for withholding the telegram to Seth Jajuji I have failed to understand. Ever since 1922[2] the Government have recognized that they should allow me freely to do humanitarian services[3] for which Nature has qualified me and to which among other things my life is dedicated. This telegram was along those lines. Seth Poonamchand is a co-worker. He has often been guided by me. I am sure that the Government would prize the lives of prisoners as much as the public, and therefore, would not shut out any help that might be legitimately tendered for saving them. I have no knowledge as to how Seth Poonamchand is doing. But I respectfully urge the Government to reconsider their decision and allow my telegram to go. As time is of essence, I request earliest answer.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3881; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3) A, p. 55

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Bachhraj", p. 54.
[2] This should be 1923.
[3] Gandhiji was permitted to see fellow-prisoners who were fasting in order to persuade them to give up the fast; *vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 170-1 and 183.

133. LETTER TO H. KHADER KHAN

March 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and a newspaper cutting from *The Light*.[1] My difficulty is more serious than you imagine. I do not criticize religions, because I look upon all the great faiths of the world with just as much respect as I entertain for Hinduism. I believe them all to be supplying the varying wants of humanity, and if we will realize this central fact, instead of wanting to compare religions with one another, study them, we shall find profitable things from them for ourselves. I myself approach all religions from a purely religious standpoint and therefore search them merely to find their beauties, and I would advise you to do likewise, and if you will do so, you will find sufficient in my writings to show you the way to approach the other religions of the world.

Yours sincerely,

H. KHADER KHAN, ESQ.
ARKALGOD P.O.
(S. INDIA)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20609

134. LETTER TO C. NARAYANA MENON

March 18, 1933

MY DEAR MENON,

I like your letter of the 9th instant. There is just one difficulty in accepting your argument, but it is a big difficulty. Your argument is as ancient as the hills. If it had held good, progress would have been impossible. Is not yours the argument of prescription? But prescription cannot run in favour of error. Therefore every practice must be tested on the anvil of universally accepted morals. Not even the so-called divine revelation can

[1] *The Light* had said Gandhiji wanted to keep the untouchables "at arms' length", that he was "not prepared to allow interdining and intermarriages with them nor to abolish caste."

avail against a practice or belief which runs contrary to fundamentals accepted as such by mankind, and I have seen as yet no argument whatsoever from this universal standpoint in defence of the practice of untouchability.

I need not combat your argument on the Temple-entry Bill, because I know that you are carefully following the pages of the *Harijan*. Nor need I worry you with my answer to the other paragraphs of your letter. I believe you to be a seeker and, therefore, I have little doubt that you will reach the truth sooner or later, and if I mistake not, sooner rather than later.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. C. NARAYANA MENON, M.A., PH.D.
BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY
BENARES

From a microfilm: S.N. 20614

135. LETTER TO DR. T. S. S. RAJAN

March 18, 1933

DEAR DR. RAJAN,

Sjt. Ganesan was talking to me the other day about the impending closing of a Theosophical Harijan school in Madras. It would be a pity if a school of such a long standing should be closed or pass out of the public hands. If therefore the facts about the school are as they have been stated to me, I think that every effort should be made to save that school. Sjt. Ganesan tells me you have already all the figures.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20619

136. LETTER TO K. KUNHI RAMAN

March 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1]. The origin of varnadharma that you have correctly quoted I interpret quite differently from you. Compar-

[1] Of 10-3-1933. According to the addressee Gandhiji had said that the true varnashrama was an integral part of Hinduism and that varnashrama of Dr. Ambedkar's conception was being practised today.

ing the four varnas to the four parts of the same body shows that all are equal though they have different functions. For, surely your contention is wholly wrong when you say that the head is superior to the arms, or the arms to the thighs, and all the three to the feet. In their own places they are all equally useful and each has to take care of the rest.

For further information, I must ask you, if you have the patience, to read the *Harijan* from week to week.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. KUNHI RAMAN
NARAYANA VILAS
EVANS ROAD
CALICUT

From a microfilm: S.N. 20608

137. LETTER TO R.[1]

March 18, 1933

MY DEAR R.,

I hope you will not resent this letter, nor my dictating it. The impression left on my mind by long conversations with N. is that you and other young men who have come under her influence have not really benefited by it and that you have contributed to your own and her fall. She happened to show me one of your letters. I did not like the unduly familiar style of address, nor the contents of your letter. I fear very much that you have taken liberties with her which, as young men of self-restraint, you and your associates should never have taken with a stranger. N. tells me that you are talking about spiritual marriages or spiritual friendships bordering on marital relations. This is nothing but playing with fire and an echo of very subtle sensuality. I therefore fervently urge you and the other young men not to play with fire, and not to be instrumental, consciously or unconsciously, in preventing the moral progress of N. who has only just begun to perceive the immorality of her past life. You should recognize that she has a pliable nature. She has hitherto not even understood that what she was doing was horribly untruthful and essentially immoral. I hope you will not misunderstand my letter. Probably, when I was convalescing in Bangalore some years ago, I saw all

[1] The name of the addressee has been omitted.

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of you young men, but whether I did or not, I have no other feeling towards you except that of a parent to his children, and it is under a sense of that self-chosen responsibility that I am writing this letter to you in the hope that you will put yourself right, if what I have said carries conviction to you, and by refraining from any familiarity with N. help her to outgrow her past life.

You can share this letter with your associates and I would like you to share it with N. I feel for her deeply because I believe that in spite of her untruthful and immoral past she has great capacity for sacrifice and service.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20624

138. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

March 18, 1933

MY DEAR SRI PRAKASA,

I have your letter and I am glad that with the recovery of body you are shedding the despondency that had overtaken you and I have no doubt that you will outgrow the whole of it if you will take sufficient rest and forget all about everything else. In this matter I think that the Englishmen beat us though we are supposed to be followers of the *Gita* dharma which enjoins upon us the obligation of having no cares about anything and leaving the result in the all-powerful hands of God. I remember the late Lord Asquith going for a cruise in the Mediterranean under medical advice when the War was at its height, leaving the cares of State in the hands of his successors.

Though I hold very strong views about the matter of classification[1], I must not discuss it as being outside the permitted topics of discussion.

I shall write to Babooji[2] asking him to take rest, but I know that his whole heart is in the battle against untouchability.

Yes, I get a weekly bulletin from Shivaprasad[3] which we all anxiously await every week. Jamnalalji is keeping fair health. He cannot altogether get rid of his eye-trouble. Sardar and Mahadev and Chhaganlal Joshi, whom perhaps you have not met though

[1] Of prisoners
[2] Dr. Bhagwandas, addressee's father
[3] Shivaprasad Gupta, Congress leader and philanthropist of Varanasi

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you must have seen him in the Ashram, join me in sending love to you.

Love.

Yours sincerely,

Sri Prakasa Papers, File No. G-2. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also S.N. 20623

139. LETTER TO G. SUBRAMANIAN

March 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I wholly disagree with you that there are no workers in the Harijan cause in the State of Mysore except yourself. My information is quite to the contrary.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. G. SUBRAMANIAN
PROPAGANDIST
SRINGERI POST

From a microfilm: S.N. 20617

140. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 18, 1933

DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

With reference to your letter marked 11th February —but I suppose it means 11th March—in connection with your visit to Hissar and the famine raging in that area, I have now had a letter from Dr. Gopichand also. I think that there is much substance in what Dr. Gopichand says. It is not possible to open weaving centres everywhere and expect weavers to weave indifferently spun yarn. Like every other industry, this hand industry too requires a high degree of technical skill, as a matter of fact in some respects higher than what is required in a spinning and weaving mill. Every branch in the latter is standardized. Nothing can be standardized to perfection in handicrafts, because each craftsman's manufacture has its own individuality and when it comes to handling the individual work of a thousand such persons, it baffles the most skilled organizer. Relief through spinning and weaving has, therefore, like everything else, its own limitations, if it has also

the largest potentiality of all relief works. If we had an agency commanding the knowledge of thousands of experts and enough pecuniary resources, we should be able to provide good remunerative work for everyone in need, and it will prove comparatively the most remunerative to the needy as also to the agency. But unfortunately we have not that army of expert workers nor sufficient pecuniary resources.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1115

141. LETTER TO D. VALISINHA

March 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and a copy of the *Maha Bodhi Journal*.[1]

My attempt is not to replace Hinduism by any other ism, but to reform Hinduism. My own belief is that Gautam Buddha himself did not desire to found a separate sect or religion but to rid Hinduism of what appeared to him to be evil. In any case, it is my conviction that there is no occasion whatsoever for Hindus to change their faith.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. D. VALISINHA
GENERAL SECRETARY
MAHA BODHI SOCIETY
4-A COLLEGE SQUARE
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20621

142. A WORTHWHILE SCHEME

The scheme published by Shri Hiralal Shah regarding the cleanliness of Bhangis is worthy of consideration. The aversion to the Bhangis is due to the kind of work they do. Here it is beyond doubt that the entire fault is that of the so-called high-caste Hindus. But I have not started writing this to blame anyone. We have to

[1] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's views on his article published in the *Maha Bodhi Journal* in which he had "endeavoured to show how Buddhism can solve the [untouchability] question to the satisfaction of all".

consider what our duty is at present and Shri Hiralal's scheme will help us in doing so. The scheme is this: They should wear a special dress when they carry filth and after they have done the cleaning they should be encouraged to take a bath and change their clothes. Right now they would do neither of their own accord. The object may be achieved only by persuasion and by giving them requisite facilities. Municipalities can take up this work on a large scale, but all the householders who utilize the Bhangis' service can do so in a small way. They should employ their own Bhangis, should suggest to them to bathe, should give them the facilities for bathing and should themselves provide them the separate dress. One Bhangi family serves many houses. One who is conscious of the value of cleanliness should find out the other employers of his Bhangi and should take their help in providing him with a dress; thus no one will find the expense too burdensome. If this kind of work continues for some time the Bhangis will develop the habit of remaining clean and untouchability, in so far as it stems from dislike, will be eradicated. No one should ignore this easily practicable suggestion by falling a prey to the age-old folly that everyone's work is no one's work. Whoever is in a position to do the work should make a beginning with it and draw other people behind him.

Along with this, there are two other reforms which can immediately be put into effect: the reform of latrines and in the mode of carrying filth. The so-called high-caste people have kept the Bhangis at a distance, so that their latrines are like the abyss of hell, and the Bhangis are compelled to carry filth in a very odd and cruel way. Improvements in latrines can be easily introduced. The main requirement is dry earth. The practice of carrying baskets of filth on the head should be done away with. This movement has already begun in Mathura and Prayag.[1] There the filth is carried in a hand-cart instead of on the head. It is possible that the cart cannot be taken everywhere. In such cases, the filth can be carried in a bucket hung on a rod. Where the bucket is not heavy, it can be lifted by hand. The practice of carrying the filth on the head is one which can be stopped immediately.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 19-3-1933

[1] *Vide* pp. 109-10.

143. ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

ADMIT AFTER SHUDDHI[1]

Requiring *shuddhi* for Harijans is to grant that they are not Hindus. But then our whole movement is based on the principle that the Harijan community is an important section of Hindu society. Therefore whatever is to be done in this matter has to be done only after abolishing untouchability. Moreover, who will perform the *shuddhi* and for whom? One should have *shuddhi* of the heart. Only a pure, i.e., a perfect man can perform for another the sacrament of *shuddhi*. So the very idea of going through *shuddhi* according to certain rites is unthinkable to me. In any case, this kind of *shuddhi* cannot be a condition for the removal of untouchability.

But I cannot prevent you or anyone else from implementing your proposals. It is clear that it will not have my support. But I will not oppose you if you can admit Harijans of your area to the Sringapatam Temple after performing the ritual of *shuddhi* as suggested by you.

EVERYTHING WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH PURITY[2]

Certainly, there is no end of difficulties. I am certain too that patience alone will solve them all. Our means ought to be absolutely pure. Untouchability has spread under the guise of religion. It won't be destroyed as long as it is not confronted with pure dharma. We are not forming a new sect but are endeavouring to cleanse an existing one. He who points out a fault in another ought himself to be free from it. That is to say the extent of our progress will depend on how pure we are. The sub-division of the untouchables into Dhed, Bhangi, etc., will disappear only when we have done away with untouchability. Work with the utmost perseverance and utmost love. Soften the wrath of the sanatanists with love. Take upon yourself only such work as you can cope with. But whatever you take up, see it through. Do not stretch your legs beyond the sheet.

[1] A correspondent had suggested that, if Gandhiji agreed to Harijans going through *shuddhi* (ceremonial purification) before seeking temple-entry, the Sringapatam Temple might be thrown open to them.

[2] This was written to a worker bewildered by difficulties.

WHY MODERN?[1]

I do not at all believe that untouchability is as old as or even in any way connected with sanatana dharma. Various forms of untouchability based on ideas of cleanliness are to be found, more or less, in every country and every civilization. But I do not at all believe that the decadent form of untouchability that we find today ever existed in ancient times. It is not to be found in any other religion. If this kind of untouchability were an integral part of sanatana dharma, that religion has no use for me. I am not foolish enough to lay down my life for this sanatana dharma.

I expound sanatana dharma as I understand it. If the entire people disowned me on that account my claim of being a sanatanist Hindu would have been rejected.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN TEMPLES?[2]

I am not talking of temple-entry for the first time. I have been doing so for years—in fact right from the time I started talking about the removal of untouchability. Even before I took a pledge in public to lay down my life for ending untouchability I had announced that temple-entry for Harijans was an important element in the removal of untouchability. I have myself performed the ceremony of throwing open a number of temples and encouraged Jamnalalji to do so. I make no distinction between a temple and a mosque or a church. Men everywhere worship images in some form or other. And through the image everyone worships God alone though their attitudes and methods may differ. Perhaps you are not aware that I have in my life visited temples on a thousand occasions if not more—sometimes out of politeness, but often with sincere devotion. I did not know you were so intolerant as to regard temples as a greater evil than untouchability. Imagine the terrible consequences of abolishing the institution, thereby depriving millions of people of the temples that are a solace to them. You equate temple-entry with going to hell! So you think—do you?—that Bharat Bhushan Malaviyaji who has a temple in his own house and who is a regular worshipper there descends into hell every day and is worse than you and I in the eyes

[1] A correspondent had asked why Gandhiji called untouchability 'modern'; the evil in his opinion was as old as sanatana dharma.

[2] A friend had expressed surprise at Gandhiji's movement for temple-entry for Harijans and asked if he actually believed in temple-worship which was worse than untouchability.

CWMG-DIGITAL

of God. Please delve deeper into the matter and decide for yourself.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 19-3-1933

144. WHAT DOES A HINDU TEMPLE MEAN?

A Harijan worker writes:[1]

This letter has been written with a pure and good intention and it reflects the views of some, though not of many youths; so I publish it.

To my mind there is nothing but excitement in this letter. The writer has no proof to justify what he has said about temples. Perhaps he has not visited Kashi Vishwanath, Puri and Guruvayur. Even if some malpractices are prevalent in these temples, the Hindu pilgrims and visitors are unaware of and untouched by them. One gets there what one goes in search of. A father will look upon a woman as his daughter, her husband as his wife, her son as his mother and a sensualist as his victim. Should the father, the husband and the son forsake that woman because of the sensualist? I have been to the temples at both Kashi Vishwanath and Puri. I must admit that I was not inspired by faith to visit them, but I had seen innumerable innocent souls going there with devotion. I did not pity them, but I fell in love with them and I could understand their devotion. These numerous devotees had no idea whatever of the malpractices prevalent in temples. One must bear in mind that wicked acts take place secretly and only a few people have knowledge of them. Devotees attribute perfection to God. The devotees' God is full of innocence, that of non-devotees full of faults. The Krishna of the innumerable Hindus is a perfect incarnation. To the critics Krishna is immoral, a gambler, a liar and so on. The mind alone is the cause of bondage and of deliverance. The young correspondent must know and understand this eternal truth. Just as human beings cannot think of the *atman* without the body, similarly they

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had argued that the activities for promoting the welfare of Harijans would do more harm than good to the Harijans, since the temples were not the dwelling places of God but breeding grounds for vice. The sanatanist Hindus, while ill-treating the Harijans, had done one good thing indirectly by keeping the Harijans out of these temples. Gandhiji, therefore, was ill-advised in seeking the help of law to win temple-entry for Harijans.

cannot think of religion without temples. The Hindu religion cannot survive without temples. There is corruption in the temples; it may be in some persons but not in all. An idol is a stone to one who merely goes through the ritual of worship, but to a true devotee it is all life. There is room for reform in the temples. It is not proper to demolish them. Demolish the temples and you destroy religion.

Moreover, the putrefaction that has set in is not to be found in all temples. It is not there in many temples in villages. The many superstitions prevalent among the villagers have no connection with the temples. Temples are veritable museums of the cultures of different religions. In old times, God dwelt in the temple and godliness too; it housed a school, a dharmasala; and it was the place where the leading people of the locality met together. Such temples are still to be found in many places. Harijans have set their hearts on temples to such an extent that they build their own temples of sorts. We discern their helplessness in these temples. As long as the Harijans cannot enter the temples of caste Hindus, their helplessness will never end, their Hinduism will remain incomplete; in spite of being the sixth finger of Hinduism, they will only remain uncared for. No Hindu should doubt that the first and all-comprehensive sign of their admission into Hinduism is temple-entry. It is the height of ignorance to believe that the Harijans have fared well by remaining outside the temple. By remaining outside the temples, they have remained outside everything. And even today the attempts made by the sanatanists to keep them out of the temples suggest that they want to perpetuate their exclusion.

The letter in question makes sad reading despite the noble views expressed in it. It depicts the pitiable condition of sophisticated modern youth. Young people may perhaps be angry at this statement and may believe that people like me deserve to be pitied. But my experience clearly shows how ignorant they are.

I have visited many temples in my childhood. That did not at all have any bad influence on me. Today I see many of my friends going to the temples. They know nothing of their shortcomings, but they are aware of the vices of the temple-goers. They are quite untouched by those vices. I do not consider it a mark of greatness that I do not visit temples. I feel no need to go to temples; hence I do not visit them. To secure temple-entry for the Harijans does not necessarily mean taking them into a temple. Those will visit it who wish to. Those who go there will not get a stigma and those who do not may possibly lose something.

Now a few words about the law. In the same heat of excitement in which the writer has condemned temples with little or no justification, he has here also exposed his ignorance. In spite of having some acquaintance with me, he did not ponder over the fact that, if I who depend the least on law believe in the necessity of it in respect of temples, there must be some potent reason for it. Now he may understand that reason. Today the law says that not a single temple is open to the Harijans and a trustee who opens it for them is liable to punishment. In the circumstances, if we do not demand a law to do away with such a state of affairs, the temples will never be thrown open to Harijans. The help of the law is indispensable. A bad law can only be abolished by a good law. There is no other way at all. Here we have not sought the interference of law but the doing away of such interference. Those who concede that a law is required even to nullify a bad law can understand that the movement is to get enacted for the Harijans a law of that type.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 19-3-1933

145. VARNADHARMA

A Harijan worker puts me the above question[1]. I am not understood because I do not believe in what we today regard as the varna system. Varnashrama as we see it today implies restrictions as regards untouchability and intermarriage and inter-dining among the varnas. I regard today's untouchability, in Akha's language, as an extraneous growth fit to be rejected. It is not the Shastras but only usage that supports the restriction on intermarriage and inter-dining as part of the varnadharma.

As against this, the varnas have an intimate relation to one's profession. The pursuit of one's calling is one's dharma. He who forsakes his, falls from his varna. He himself is destroyed, his spirit decays. That man causes confusion of varnas and thereby society is harmed and its organization breaks down. When everybody discards his varna, the malorganization of society grows, chaos

[1] Not translated here. The question was how Gandhiji could say that he wanted, not abolition, but only reform of the varna system, even though he wanted feelings of high and low among the castes to go and approved of inter-varna marriages. Gandhiji was further asked to what extent he would permit intermarriages and inter-dining.

reigns and society perishes. If the Brahmin class abjures its work of imparting education, it falls from its pedestal. If a Kshatriya gives up his work of protecting the people, he dishonours his varna. If a Vaishya discards the earning of money, he falls from his varna. If a Shudra abandons serving, he falls. All stay in their places by remaining engrossed in their own duty. He falls who gives up his proper duty. A Shudra who does his appropriate duty is better than a Brahmin who discards his duty.

This system of varnas left no scope for privileges. It was merely a duty, an obligation. There is no room at all for feeling of high and low where it is a question of an obligation.

Today we see the disappearance of the varnadharma. If one varna discards its own duty, the whole varna system declines. Today the Brahmin has discarded the attributes of a Brahmin, the Kshatriyas his fighting qualities and the Vaishya his Vaishya character. Some may ask: "Since all are engaged in earning money, what is wrong if one considers that the qualities of a Vaishya still persist?" However, it is not correct to say so. The Vaishyas of today earn wealth only for themselves, hence they would be regarded as thieves in the language of the *Gita*. It is the Vaishya's dharma to earn money and, taking out of it only as much as is needed for his livelihood, to utilize the remainder for the benefit of society. One rarely comes across a person who observes such Vaishya dharma. Hence even Vaishya dharma has perished.

Now there remains Shudra dharma. How many Shudras are there who observe it? Labour involuntarily rendered is not service. There is no place for coercion in dharma. It is only labour regarded as sheer duty and rendered voluntarily for the betterment of society that can be called service. Hence we have regretfully to admit that varnadharma has been totally destroyed. By defining a Shudra as a labourer, the commentator has insulted him and has harmed Hinduism.

Nevertheless, varnadharma has come to pervade the very being of the Hindu. He may well have connected it, through lack of understanding, with inter-dining and intermarrying and with untouchability. A Hindu cannot be at peace with himself without a concept of varnadharma. Therefore its revival is possible. Without penance religious awakening or revival is improbable. Penance is the only great force whereby religion can be safeguarded and established. Penance without knowledge is no penance but merely self-torture. A blending of penance and knowledge is possible in Brahmin dharma alone. He alone who strives to ac-

quire knowledge of the Brahman is fit to be a Brahmin. If such an endeavour is made today, Hinduism, that is to say, varnadharma, will be revived some day. Fortunately, there is a small class engaged in it today. Hence I have an unshakable faith that Hinduism—pure sanatana dharma—will once again reveal its lustre and point out to the world the way to its good.

My Hindu religion is all-embracing. It does not advocate antipathy towards other beliefs. Religions have been interwoven. One sees a special quality in every one of them. But no one religion is higher than another. All are complementary to one another. Since this is my belief, the speciality of any religion cannot run counter to another, cannot be at variance with universally accepted principles. Examining varnadharma from that point of view, its interpretation can only be what I have put forward. Moreover, history indicates that followers of Hinduism at one time voluntarily observed it.

In order to make observance of this varnadharma possible again, all must voluntarily accept Shudra dharma. The Shudras render service mainly through manual labour. This dharma is feasible for all. That is why it is possible for everyone to follow it. Moreover there has been a feeling of contempt for the Shudras. If everyone regarded himself as a Shudra, religion would be well rid of this concept of high and low.

Someone may say, 'If everyone regards himself as a Shudra, why not as a Harijan?' I would definitely not oppose such insistence, but since there are not five varnas in Hinduism and since untouchability is on the wane, I use the word 'Shudra'. After the pledge[1] about Hindu awakening was taken in Bombay under the presidentship of Malaviyaji, there is no room for untouchability in Hinduism. Hence at the time of revival of varnadharma, the talk of regarding all as Harijans will be considered out of place. If Harijans and all others stay as Shudras, all will easily be men of God.

But if, with full understanding, all begin to observe the dharma of service and to regard themselves as Shudras, it will certainly not imply that none will learn *brahmavidya*[2]. Some people will learn and teach it according to their desire and ability. Some will look after the people, some will earn money. The standard of living of all will be about the same. The condition where one is a millionaire and the others beggars will not subsist. The wealth

[1] For the text of the pledge, *vide* pp. 17-22.
[2] Knowledge of the Brahman

of the Vaishyas will be regarded as the wealth of the people. All these three forces will be utilized merely for social service. All will be regarded as Shudras only, so that there will be no feeling of high and low. All this will automatically promote the revival of varnadharma.

There certainly is room in varnadharma for tradition. Without that there cannot be proper order; therefore, the progeny of those who impart knowledge will observe the same vocation. All cannot all of a sudden become *brahmajnanis*[1]. There is no objection if they do. And, to become a *brahmajnani* is to reach the ultimate in service. There is not even a trace of pride or selfishness at all. And if there emerge many such *brahmajnanis*, then the varna system can once again be rehabilitated.

Now a few words about inter-dining and intermarriages.

For those who have correctly understood the foregoing portion, there is no need to write more. No one is obliged to eat in the company of a particular person nor obliged to give his daughter in marriage to anybody in particular. Therefore, all will naturally follow their own practice and traditions in respect of giving their daughters in marriage and inter-dining. I have now thought of only one varna, and the Harijan is not excluded from it, so it will suffice to say that all will seek alliances according to their convenience and live and move and eat where their soul finds satisfaction. After untouchability has ended, there is no need to say more on this subject.

In the end, I shall repeat what I have said many times before. This question of varna system has no direct concern with the removal of untouchability. The abolition of untouchability is the highest duty of every Hindu. The Harijan Seva Sangh exists for that purpose. It has its sphere defined and I have played the chief role in making it do so.

The ideas about varnadharma at present are my own. Even he who does not subscribe to them should not shirk from working for the abolition of untouchability. None need fight shy of it because I happen to be the major participant in it. If the Hindu community does not accept my ideas concerning the system of varnas, they will remain mine alone. I cannot force those on others, nor have I the desire to do so. If those ideas are contrary to Hindu religion I will be thrown out of the Hindu community like an unwanted grain[2]. Observance of the dharma to

[1] Knowers of the Brahman
[2] A Gujarati phrase

banish untouchability is certainly the common duty of all Hindus. I do not wish to hide a single idea of mine and thereby deceive anyone. The question of varna system has indirect relationship with untouchability, hence it is understandable that my associates and others wish to know my ideas about it. That is why I have to develop those ideas. But there is not the slightest reason for anyone to feel confused because of them. Individuals do not matter at all where the question of religion is concerned. These will come and go. Religion is eternal, it will go on. There have been many ideas about it, and there will be many more. Just as God's attributes are endless, the frontiers of religion are unending. No one has understood it thoroughly. All should follow it to the extent they understand it, so that the chariot of religion will keep moving forward. Knowing this, and leaving me out of account, all should do research in religion for their own sakes. The conditions of doing that research are well known. He who will observe these conditions will alone know religion to some extent. There are certain rules for getting knowledge of all type. They call for effort. Religious research requires the utmost effort. Therefore, at the very outset of that research, those with experience have suggested the observance of *yamaniyamas*[1].

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 19-3-1933

146. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

March 19, 1933

MY DEAR MARY,

I have your two nice letters before me. Of course you did a lot of body labour in the Mission as do many. That was not my point. My point was doing just as systematic body labour as the inmates and mastering the different crafts. But let me not labour this point. Body labour for bread and therefore bread labour is the ideal we are trying to reach at the Ashram. But you are to do just what and as you like. I do not want you to work under tension. I would be deeply grieved if I found you had worked under tension in order to fulfil the Ashram routine. I want you to catch the spirit of the Ashram. There should be a feeling of satisfaction and joy at the end of every period. And that comes if every

[1] Rules and observances for the spiritual aspirant

minute is dedicated to God and every activity done for Him and His. No more time to say more today.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6000. Also C.W. 3325. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

147. LETTER TO KESHAV

March 19, 1933

MY DEAR BROTHER KESHAV,

I am now able to give you my opinion about your scheme.[1] Kakasaheb is of opinion that you do not need any pretentious building just now. The brother who went to Sabarmati has not gained much experience. You have already two looms. They should be worked for the time being. You are not manufacturing enough yarn even to feed those two looms. You should therefore go slowly but steadily and extend only when you have a nucleus of trained spinners and trained weavers having perfect control over their work and are able to produce what may be called marketable yarn and khadi. If you do not do this, you will share the fate of several organizations that I know have started with a high purpose and a noble motive but for want of efficiency and application have died out. This is an industry which requires just as much scientific skill, application and time as any other. Indeed this requires a little more, but certainly not less.

I would therefore ask you to withdraw this public appeal and develop the work silently and unostentatiously, and when you have done that, you will find that you have money waiting for you for extension.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20626

[1] *Vide* p. 6.

CWMG - IIV

148. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 19, 1933

MY DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

This is in reply to your letter of the 13th instant No. 921.

I am afraid I cannot take shelter under the easy solution you have suggested for my discharge from your complaint. I did mean what I said when I dictated the sentence, "I wonder if you read the English *Harijan*."[1] I know the kind of worker you are, and ordinarily I should certainly not expect you to read the papers and magazines that may be issued on behalf of the Society[2]. It would be an impossible task for any secretary to undertake. As it is, we have not many newspapers, magazines and literature published under the auspices of the Society. But even what is being published you cannot be expected to read, and if you attempted, you could only do so at the sacrifice of much more valuable work. But I wanted to single out the English *Harijan* and the Hindi *Harijan*, the English, because I write down all my thoughts in that paper, and they are as much addressed to you as to other Harijan servants, and that I do, because I am supposed to be guiding and shaping the policy of the Society; therefore it was that by politely asking the question I suggested that you should make an exception in favour of the English *Harijan* and make time to read it; the Hindi edition you have to read, because it is being published under your very nose, and because the latest matter can be supplied to the Hindi *Harijan*, but it cannot be to the English because of the distance. The Hindi *Harijan* has to be packed with facts and figures which I would have to copy from it and which I would love to do. You will be speaking to the innumerable workers and giving them precise instructions through that paper, or else it has no reason for existence. The Hindi *Harijan* need not contain essays. It should simply contain a translation of my messages and first-class authentic information from the Central Office, as also definite weekly instructions to workers. Then and then only will it justify its existence.

Now, as to the other part of your letter. I have told you already what view I take of the other organizations. We have

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIII, p. 430.

[2] Servants of Untouchables Society

to treat them as if they were our own, not in order to dictate, but in order to serve them and in order to harness their services, if they will give them to us. But you know best whether to approach them and how, if at all. Of course, I had and could have nothing against Lala Mohanlal[1]. Your and my business, however, is, as I conceive it, to investigate all complaints, good, bad and indifferent, so that we leave no loopholes for mistakes or complaints so far as it is humanly possible to do it.

This brings me to the last part of your letter—Overhead Charges. Both you and I have been lifelong workers and connected with numerous organizations. I really regard myself as an expert economist and organizer in my own way. We shall deserve the curses of posterity, if not also of the present generation, if we do not show that we have put the bulk of our collections into Harijan pockets. 10% overhead charges, therefore, I regard as a liberal estimate. Propaganda we must have, and plenty of it, both among Harijans and caste men. But we have to make the propaganda practically self-supporting, especially amongst caste men. In my opinion, the best propaganda is constructive work amongst Harijans. It will tell not only upon the latter but also upon caste men. For the present you may have two collections, one for constructive work, that is, for putting directly into Harijan pockets, and the other for propaganda. As a matter of fact, propaganda work ought to be paid for out of the sale proceeds of our weeklies and the sale of our other literature, so that the moneys we may actually collect otherwise would all find their way into Harijan pockets. Our caste-Hindu workers should therefore be volunteers or receiving just maintenance money, and we should find out every available Harijan worker whom we would pay fairly well. He may not give just now very efficient work; I would not worry, but would teach him to do the work. All this can be done only if we have workers religiously-minded, treating this movement as an essentially religious one and approaching it in the religious spirit. Then you will find that we shall have the least opposition to encounter, and no matter what opposition we encounter, the movement must flourish. If we cannot get sufficient hands to work the movement and to work it in that fashion, I, for one, will not hesitate to say that we should cease to be an organization. Without that organization you had your own great work cut out for you, and I have mine. The organization was set up in the belief that it

[1] Secretary, Punjab Branch of Servants of Untouchables Society

was needed by the people, as I still believe it is, but the test that I have laid down would be the proof of that need.

I have given you only an outline of what is passing through my mind. You will share this letter with Sjt. Ghanshyamdas; if you think it worth while, you may come down here to discuss the whole thing, or, if you have caught the spirit of my letter and appreciate it, you need not trouble.

Lastly, I do not want you to reduce to practice anything of this letter because I have written it. You will only reduce to practice that which commends itself to you, and never otherwise. My duty is done when I have passed on my thoughts to you.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20633

149. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

March 19, 1933

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,

I have your letter. You must have improved your spinning in regard to the count, evenness and the strength of the yarn. Great care, even more than about the count, should be taken about the strength and the evenness. There is bound to be a difference in the count if the cotton or the sliver is bad, but there should be no difference in the evenness and the strength. Till you reach the standard when you may be said to pass in regard to these two, it cannot truthfully be said that you have spun.

Whether one is working in the field or doing some other work, one must feel interested. Anybody who is devoted to duty is interested only in doing his duty and not in doing a particular work. Such a person never wishes to choose his own work. He does with interest whatever falls to his lot because he considers that his dharma. Anybody who does some work unwillingly is not doing it as dharma. Can anybody force himself to do any work as dharma.

BAPU

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

150. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 19, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

As soon as I have solved one moral problem, I am faced with another. At the moment it seems that . . .[1], in whom I had put absolute trust, has fallen. He has become mad after . . .[2]. He has been inflamed with passion. By chance his passionate letters to . . .[3] fell into . . .'s[4] hands. He sent them to me. They give a picture of one blinded by passion. He tried to get hold of the letters by devious means, but failed. He met me yesterday with . . . [5]. Her generosity of heart is in no way less than . . .'s[6]. Her love of me crushes me under its weight. I see that, instead of being angry with me, she still shows me more love than a daughter to her father. On the other hand, . . .[7] makes me tremble. He now says that it was never his intention to marry . . .[8], but that he was only testing her. I should like to believe that this is true, though it would be bad enough. But it sounds incredible. Nobody believes it. If . . .[9] is even now deceiving, he is showing a greater depravity than could have been imagined in him. Vallabhbhai, who had great liking for . . .[10] also seems to have lost it. Personally, I have not been able to judge what is in his heart. My condition is like that of Arjuna: "I do not know where I am, nor can shake off my fear."[11] I have work before me which I must do, and it helps me to forget all my pain. But, unknown even to me, a fire is raging inside.

I do not know what atonement I would do if I were outside. Nor do I know what my duty is while I am here. I do not feel that . . .[12] has been guilty. She is a completely innocent and trustful girl. Do show this letter to Panditji, Chimanlal, Gangabehn, Durga, Lakshmibehn and Totaramji, and to others to whom you may think it desirable to show. Ask them to write and tell me what they think about this matter. If . . .[13] is there, he also must read it. I wrote to him only the day before yesterday. I have asked Kaka to discuss the matter with . . .[14]. He was to go to . . .[15].

[1] to [10] The names have been omitted.
[11] *Vide Bhagavad Gita*, XI. 25.
[12] to [15] The names have been omitted.

I have advised Kaka to detain him. I should like you to throw what light you can on this subject. I am not in a condition just now to write more, for I am in darkness as to my dharma in the situation.

I have faith that I will not fail to do my dharma and that, as always, God is clearing my path even on this occasion. Hence, even though you may see in this letter the anguish of my heart, believe that I am calm.

BAPU

[PS.]

You will find with this letters for Santokbehn and Lakshmidas.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8337. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

151. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 19, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I handed over a few letters this morning for being posted. You will have received them before this.

The letter to Lakshmidas was left behind here. It has now been posted to Bardoli.

Anandi is steadily improving. She is still weak, and gets a little temperature. I hope it is due to the operation. She is being nursed carefully.

You must have now known Parachure Shastri's decision.

Suresh's letter contains this remark: "In all institutions, respect is shown to the rich and never to a poor person." I have asked him if this is true about the Ashram too. Read my letter to him. If that is his experience about the Ashram, ask him gently for evidence. If we have that defect, we should overcome it.

Have you received there a copy of Valji's *Ishucharita*? If you have, let anybody who has read it write to me and tell me what he thinks about the book.[1] If you have not received any, I will send one from here.

BAPU

Total: 22

[1] For Gandhiji's opinion of the book, *vide* Vol. LI, pp. 258-60.

CWMG - LIV

[PS.]

All the twenty-two letters are bound together.

The twenty-third, to Prabhudas[1], is loose.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8338. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

152. LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

March 19, 1933

CHI. VIDYA,

Now that you have Mahadev[2] why should you write to me? Be frank and say that because of the appearance of Mahadev in the house, you have got behindhand in writing and therefore need not apologize.

It is necessary to keep children free of constipation. You can give him castor oil even daily. Just ten drops will be more than enough. Give my blessings to Anand whenever you write to him.

I have not met Dr. Mehta again.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

153. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

March 19, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

I wrote to Narandas, who says in reply:

> I have already written to you that Yamuji has started teaching Ramabehn. She must have got angry before this arrangement was made. I hope now her anger will disappear. How could I say that I would never call on her? I should not even think of taking up such an attitude. I arranged for somebody to teach and talked with her for a while. And now I look in every day at her house or at the Bal Mandir. If she has no confidence in me, I shall try to win it.

So, now, you will admit that you are defeated. Or do you still adhere to your view?

[1] Addressee's nephew and Chhaganlal Gandhi's son
[2] Addressee's son

CWMG - LIV

From time to time send me a report of the progress in your study. How is the condition of the arm?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 5344

154. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 19, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

Your suspicion is baseless. As you frankly criticize other people and say about them what you feel, so did Mahadev. I asked him. He sensed disrespect for him in your repeatedly emphasizing "For Mahatmaji"! He said what he felt. You explained and the matter is over. You should learn to endure criticism of you and overcome your sensitiveness. Cultivate some sense of humour. We should not weigh all the criticism against us with the weight which we use in weighing gold; for some of it, we should use the weights with which we weigh iron or stones. And in doing so, we should take no account of half a maund this way or the other. You don't look delicate, but your heart is very sensitive. Harden it now and make it less sensitive. Instead of reasoning with you, I am now going to order you. You may then disregard my order if you wish. You are not permitted to disregard others' orders, but you may disregard mine as often as you like. Whether your conduct in doing so is rude or civil, whether your offence is criminal or civil, we shall decide in each case.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 10330. Also C.W. 6770. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

155. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

March 19, 1933

BHAISHRI PARIKSHITLAL,

I received your sincere letter. It is from my own point of view that I find the figure you state to be frightening, but if I accept the other opposite standpoint it is the most reasonable. Your duty is that of a soldier. You should follow the standard laid down. It is for Thakkar Bapa and your local or provincial (or whatever they call it) Committee to lay it down. My function is only to

point out the direction. You may carry out as many of my suggestions as seem practicable in the circumstances. There is every risk, and even probability, of the result being contrary to what was intended if my advice is followed mechanically. Your first duty, therefore, is to weigh my suggestion in the light of your experience and, if it does not seem sound enough, to set it aside and forget all about it. You may put it before your Committee if you find any worth in it. If the Committee also approves of it, you should take it to Thakkar Bapa and carry it out only if he also approves of it. I will not say more than this here. I am now going to discuss my suggestions in the English and the Gujarati editions of the *Harijan*. So you will be able to know about them.

I state here two rules for your consideration.

1. The money needed for propaganda work should be found from such work itself. In other words, it should be self-supporting.

2. Constructive activity is the best propaganda. Money invested in it will be fully rewarded.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 20629

156. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

March 19, 1933

CHI. NARMADA,

I got your letter. If you are really eager to learn the *Gita* and music, you will certainly succeed in learning them. But whatever you learn you should learn thoroughly.

My compliments to all if they feel interested in working in the fields.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2774. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

CWMG-IIV

157. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

March 20, 1933

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

I have more than once told you about the condition of Sardar Vallabhbhai's nose. You know also how reluctant he is to talk about it. But we who know it are getting nervous. He suffers terribly whilst the attack lasts. All the remedies that you and Major Mehta suggested have been tried without success. The attacks are becoming more and more frequent and more and more troublesome. The worst attack was witnessed on Saturday last. The discharge from the nose and sneezing continued for more than thirty hours. The eyes were blood red and the nose naturally so. The whole day long he ate nothing, drinking only tea in the morning and having fruit and milk and boiled vegetable in the evening. He is not able to take his ordinary meals. I do feel that it is time that he was examined by his own specialists. Dr. Deshmukh is his general adviser and I should leave it to Dr. Deshmukh to bring such nose specialist as he likes. Dr. Damani has generally attended to his nose but I understand that he is suffering from smallpox and may not be available.

Will you please send this to the Government for an early decision ?

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: G.N. 3882; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(1) A, p. 3

158. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

March 20, 1933

CHI. BHAU,

Your decision to stay on there for the present is correct. It is desirable that you should get rid of your constipation completely. Can you do any work there? You should sometimes visit the villages around Rajkot. Some of them you can visit even casually while out for a walk.

CWMG-LIV

You say that you tell stories to farmers in the evenings. Does this mean that you also stay with them?

I read your letter all over again. I see from it that Jamnadas does not give you any work there. Have you made any new acquaintances?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6754. Also C.W. 4495. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

159. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

March 20, 1933

CHI. JAMNADAS,

Why are you lazy in writing to me? You do not yet seem to have been restored to health. Is there no chance of its improving?

Sarupbehn was there recently. Why have you not written anything about her? I expected an account of the visit from you.

Tell me your experience of Bhau, and also give an account of the Harijan work there.

How is Khushalbhai[1] now? Prabhudas wrote in his letter that there was discharge of pus from the ear. How is Devbhabhi[2]?

Does Bhai help in any way?

Kanti[3] writes in his letter that aunt[4] wants to come to see me. Tell her that she should give up this desire born of ignorant love, and that I am very well. If she is still eager, she may certainly come. How are her eyes? I am enclosing letters for Sushila and Bhau.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I find that you do not give any work to Bhau. You may write to the Ashram to send you the expenses on his account.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9647. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Khushalchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's cousin and addressee's father
[2] Wife of Khushalchand Gandhi
[3] Son of Harilal Gandhi
[4] Presumably Raliatbehn, Gandhiji's sister

160. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

March 20, 1933

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters, I hope that you get mine. I will write to Shanti along with this.[1] Sita's boils seem to have persisted. I was surprised to read about Jalbhai's daughter. Was it some known man? How did the girl come into contact with him, and how did she get rid of him? How are Sorabji's affairs?

Lakshmi was married to Maruti last Tuesday. At present at least it seems that the marriage will be successful. Lakshmi and Maruti are staying with Manju. Anandi has been operated upon, as it was detected that she had appendicitis. She is at Shri Trivedi's place. Velanbehn is here with her. Anandi is progressing satisfactorily. Ramdas and Jamnalalji are here and live together. They are both well. I hope you get the *Harijan*, both English and Gujarati. Rajaji and Devdas are at Delhi. Ba is with Mirabehn and keeps fairly well. I suppose Manilal must have been appointed a trustee now. Did you discuss about the press with West? You ought to cultivate relations with him, irrespective of whether the talks bear fruit or not.

All four of us are happy.

Sushila now seems to have learnt how to write letters. If Jalbhai taught Sita a game, may I not say that I taught Sushila to make her letters a little interesting?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4808

[1] *Vide* the following item.

161. LETTER TO SHANTILAL J. MEHTA

March 20, 1933

CHI. SHANTI,

Is it too much to expect a letter from you?

Either you should leave Phœnix just now, or, if you decide to stay there, you should give up doing odd jobs and also your desire to make money. Everyone who has tried to serve and to pursue his personal aims at the same time has failed in both. I expect better from you.

I hope your wife agrees with you. Encourage her to study. Do not live extravagantly.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

162. LETTER TO R. R. CHAKRAVARTTI

March 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I propose to deal with it in the columns of the *Harijan*.[1] Nevertheless, I would like you to furnish me with proof in support of your statement that there is a propaganda going on against Brahminism. I should be able more fully to deal with the question if I knew what was at the back of your mind and what was the evidence in your possession.[2]

Yours sincerely,

SJT. R. R. CHAKRAVARTTI
PROFESSOR, NARSING DUTT COLLEGE
129 BELILIOS ROAD
HOWRAH

From a microfilm: S.N. 20641

[1] *Vide* "The Much-maligned Brahmin", 25-3-1933.
[2] *Vide* also "Letter to R. R. Chakravartti", 1-4-1933.

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163. LETTER TO ISHWAR SINGH

March 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 15th instant. You can publish the Urdu translation of English *Harijan* on your own responsibility and without in any way identifying me with its contents. If you finally come to the conclusion that an Urdu translation of the *Harijan* should be published by you, I can only hope that you will take care that the translations are faithful, and if you publish it in collaboration with the provincial organization of the Servants of Untouchables Society, it will be better.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. ISHWAR SINGH
MANAGER, LAJPAT RAI & SONS
LOHARI GATE, LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20644

164. LETTER TO K. R. KRISHNA IYER

March 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. The marriage[1] you refer to had no connection with the untouchability movement. It was arranged years ago. We do not know to what varna the husband of the child belongs. He was picked up as an orphan boy by one of the members of the Ashram and he has been brought up as his own child.

So far as varnashrama is concerned, I have expressed my views already in the pages of the *Harijan* and I have stated my belief that restriction on the intermarriage and inter-dining is no part of varnadharma and was not in the palmy days of Hinduism.[2] I

[1] The reference is to the marriage of Lakshmi, a Harijan girl, with Maruti.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 453-5.

have also expressed my opinion that at the present moment in India there is in reality but one varna possible, and that is of Shudra, in other words, that of service. But you can learn my views more fully from the pages of the *Harijan*.

Lastly, whilst all anti-untouchability workers are bound by the programme of the Servants of Untouchables Society, nobody is bound by my personal views or acts.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. R. KRISHNA IYER
KALLADAIKURICHI (S. I. R.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20645

165. LETTER TO M. MEYAPPA

March 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of 17th instant and I am glad that you distributed khadi to poor Harijans and that you presided at an anti-untouchability meeting. There are many more things that you can do, and these you can study from the pages of the *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. M. MEYAPPA
VETRIYUR, *via* SIVAGANGA (S.I.R.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20647

166. LETTER TO MOHANLAL[1]

March 21, 1933

MY DEAR MOHANLAL,

I am much touched by your letter for which you need not have apologized at all; nor were you an accused person in my estimation. I knew that you were a member of Lalajee's Society. But workers have got to answer all kinds of charges in a detached spirit. You do not perhaps know what charges Lalajee himself

[1] In his letter dated 15-3-1933 (S.N. 20518), the addressee at the instance of Amritlal V. Thakkar had given replies to the charges made against him by Swatmadas. *Vide* also pp. 93-4.

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had to answer. I had long discussions with him about these. I have referred to the charges against Dadabhai in my autobiography. Therefore you have been in quite good company. You have given me however the letter that I desired and expected from you.

Yours sincerely,

LALA MOHANLAL
C/O SERVANTS OF THE UNTOUCHABLES SOCIETY
LAJPAT RAI BHAVAN
LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20648

167. LETTER TO ANN MARIE PETERSEN

March 21, 1933

MY DEAR MARIA,

Just one line to acknowledge your letter and to tell you that generally speaking the Superintendent's permission is not needed for people to visit me on matters of untouchability, because a general order has already been passed by the Government. Lest therefore there is any delay in your receiving an official reply, I write this to tell you that you will be admitted if you come during the ordinary hours, which are between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. except on Sundays, and also on Wednesdays and Thursdays, if you can possibly avoid the last two days. Sundays have to be avoided for the convenience of the administration, Wednesdays and Thursdays for my *Harijan* work.

The sooner you get away and rest your tired body the better for you and your work of love.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20646

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168. LETTER TO RAMPAL SINGH

March 21, 1933

DEAR RAJA SAHEB,

I had a circular letter signed by you sent to me, which showed that the U. P. Dharma Rakshana Sabha were securing the opinions of the pundits on the question of temple-entry. I wonder whether any further steps were taken in the matter, and if so, what was the result.

Yours sincerely,

HON. RAJA, SIR RAMPAL SINGH, K.C.I.E.
PRESIDENT
U.P. DHARMA RAKSHANA SABHA
LUCKNOW

From a microfilm: S.N. 20649

169. LETTER TO SWAMI SHYAMANANDA

March 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I quite agree with you that only temple-goers should have the right of deciding as to who shall not enter their temples.

As to the necessity or advisability of our temples being regularly visited by the middle-class people, it is a different matter. Much reform in temple-worship has to be undertaken before people will voluntarily desire to visit temples. I think that reform will come but in its own time.

Yours sincerely,

SWAMI SHYAMANANDA
C/O THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
RANGOON

From a microfilm: S.N. 20650

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170. LETTER TO SUDARSHAN V. DESAI

March 21, 1933

CHI. MAVO,

I have your letter. You should learn to draw the letters. You can do that only after you have learnt to draw straight lines, triangles and circles since drawing letters is more difficult than drawing those three figures. How can I explain this to you convincingly ?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5764. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

171. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 21, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter of the 18th yesterday. What you write regarding Ramabehn is fully worthy of you. That is what dharma requires. I hope Duncan has recovered now.

Parachure Shastri will now be arriving there very soon, accompanied by his son. His wife is not coming just now. You will, therefore, send every month a sum not exceeding Rs. 30 for her support. All the jewellery she had, has been eaten up. Get fully acquainted with Parachure Shastri.

I am returning to you Shanta Panwelkar's letter to keep. I think we should pay her Rs. 20. But you and Prema know better. I have not even seen her. If, therefore, your view is different from mine, don't forward my letter to Shanta. If you agree with me, obtain the consent of the Committee and forward the letter. Don't do anything on the responsibility of you two alone. We are having bitter experience of . . .[1] here. He seems to have fallen completely. He is trying hard to hide his guilt. He is discussing the matter with Kakasaheb. I am waiting to see what the outcome is. Meanwhile, I am awaiting the views and experiences of you all.

[1] The name has been omitted.

. . .[1] has been asked to remain here for the present. If . . .[2] is there, show him this letter.

BAPU

[PS.]

Enclosed are Shanta's letter and my reply, one letter for Duncan and letters for Valjibhai and Mavo.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8339. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

172. LETTER TO DIWAKAR SINGH

March 22, 1933

MY DEAR DIWAKAR,

I have your letter. No doubt the less demonstrative you are the better and more permanent your work will be.

Your last paragraph makes bad reading. You say, "Sweeping of public roads has become irregular." That's wrong. Having started the work you should have done it with scientific precision and regularity. Your irregular scavenging will produce no effect on the public. You saw with what trumpeting the work was inaugurated and I read with pleasure that you were thinking of constructing special carts or wheelbarrows for removing the refuse. But this can be necessary only if you are doing your work thoroughly. Your energy will be frittered away if you will jump from work to work without doing anything completely. What will happen if after having half-finished a table, a cabinet maker began a chair and so on? Will you not call it all a waste of effort? That is precisely what happens generally to philanthropic undertakings. I would like you to guard yourself against that error. If you will do the street-cleaning then you must have a map and a programme according to the number of volunteers you have, and after you have begun a street, you may not leave it till its dwellers have taken up the cleaning themselves. In order to impress them with the necessity of so doing, you will have to be gentle and patient with them, and your cleaning will have to be so thorough as to excite their pleasure and admiration, and when that happens you will see that the thing will work, but you will have to concentrate your attention wholly upon one single piece till outsiders who are the sole judges are able to say, "It's well done".

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

I am not able to appreciate your presentation of the football to the Harijan boys. For a country like India a ball that costs Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 is an expensive thing. Harijan boys will have footballs given to them by patrons. Servants have got to exercise the greatest care and discretion in their service, especially when it is they who have to make the choice.

Your having shifted to servants' quarters is undoubtedly a very fine idea, and if you will try to live as simply as the Harijans, consistently with your health, it would be a good thing.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

KUNWAR DIWAKAR SINGH
HOLLAND HALL
ALLAHABAD

C.W. 9656. Courtesy: Municipal Museum, Allahabad. Also S.N. 20658

173. LETTER TO PRAKASH

March 22, 1933

MY DEAR PRAKASH,

I was glad to have your letter and to know that you had no lung trouble whatsoever. If you were taking meat foods before, you will not spoil your health by abstaining from such foods. Unless you have a religious conviction that meat-eating is wrong and if you do persist in giving up meat, you will flourish only if you will take as much milk and butter as you can, and take starchy foods sparingly, avoiding all pulses, if it is possible to do so. Whole wheatmeal chapatis or bread, green vegetables, some juicy fresh fruits, milk and butter should be an ideal complete diet.

I would advise you to send your detailed observations and suggestions about the Ashram to Narandas.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. PRAKASH
C/O ANANTA CHARAN ROY
JAILOR
PATNA CAMP JAIL

From a photostat: S.N. 20666

174. LETTER TO M. C. RAJAH

March 22, 1933

DEAR RAO BAHADUR,

I have your letter accompanying the appeal for funds for the permanent building of the Kannappar Free Reading Room. You may depend upon my doing whatever is possible for me to do.[1]

I presume that you received my previous letter regarding your Bill. Of course there was nothing in it to call for any acknowledgment, nor need you now send any acknowledgment. Absence of contradiction from you will be sufficient presumption for me that you had received my letter.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20660

175. LETTER TO DR. T. S. S. RAJAN

March 22, 1933

DEAR DR. RAJAN,

Here are some papers in connection with Kannappar Free Reading Room.

Please tell me what can be done by you and what need be done by me. You should return the papers when you reply to me.

Yours sincerely,

Encl.[2]

From a microfilm: S.N. 20661

[1] *Vide* the following two items.
[2] These are not available.

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176. LETTER TO SECRETARY, KANNAPPAR READING ROOM

March 22, 1933

THE SECRETARY
KANNAPPAR FREE READING ROOM
ROYAPURAM, MADRAS

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter of 24th January last was received by me yesterday through the kind offices of Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah.

I am taking immediate steps to find out what is possible for me to do in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20659

177. LETTER TO P. R. SATHE

March 22, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I do not quite see what you are driving at. I see nothing wrong in preaching temperance and habits of cleanliness so long as they are not made a condition of removal of untouchability.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. R. SATHE
PLEADER
GONDIA, C. P.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20662

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178. LETTER TO SECRETARY, JATHI NASHINI SABHA

March 22, 1933

THE SECRETARY
THE JATHI NASHINI SABHA
CANNANORE

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Though you can read your meaning in my writing, I must confess that I am too dense to read my meaning in your writing. You are no doubt satisfied that I do not recognize any distinction between high and low. Are you equally satisfied that everyone should pursue his ancestral occupation so as to conserve national energy, national talent, avoid unequal distribution of wealth and keen competition? If you are, then you will alter the aims and objects of your Sabha, but if you are not prepared to alter the aims and objects in accordance with the idea presented, you might agree with me that your prosecution of your aims and objects is likely to create confusion and suspicion if you tack it on to untouchability. Do you not observe that I do not tack on even reformed varnadharma to untouchability? I have simply stated my position in order to avoid misunderstanding, and, what is more important still, the charge of suppressing my opinion in order to gain adherence for the cause of the abolition of untouchability.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20665

179. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

March 22, 1933

CHI. LILAVATI[1],

You are a silly girl. Would you feel hurt if I told you that I tolerated you because you were a good girl and that I would take

[1] A child widow who had joined Sabarmati Ashram in 1930. She later studied medicine at Bombay, worked in hospitals and took part in the national movement.

CWMG-LIV

no interest in you if you were a bad girl? If not, then why should you be hurt by what I said? My remarks were prompted only by love. I expressed my love by saying that I tolerated you in spite of your unsettled state because your intentions were good, but you misunderstood my remark completely. What is one to do to a person who thus displays his or her ego?

You should know that by learning some work or by studying you may become self-supporting, but you cannot be sure that that will make you good. On the other hand, if you become good, mentally strong, and healthy in body, then your character will be sound and you will become self-supporting also. This does not mean that you should not study further or learn a craft. Do that in the Ashram as much as you can during spare time and be satisfied. Engrave in your heart the golden rule that devotion to duty includes everything else. For the present, only do this much, have full faith in Narandas and follow his advice. Do not look upon your money as your own but regard yourself as a trustee. You should not, therefore, spend it even on buying fruit for me, since I get fruit from the other people. It is the Harijans who need the money most. Keep it for them.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9572

180. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 22, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your big packet of mail.

It was a great thing indeed that the [Chamar] children gave up buffalo flesh. But there may possibly have been violence behind this. If they parted with it through fear, what happened was bad. If they so wished they should have been given some compensation for giving it up since it was their food. Hence you or some other responsible inmate of the Ashram should go and ask them. It would be fine if they handed over the flesh of their own accord and could give up eating buffalo flesh for ever. If they are not ready to do that, we should have patience with them.

You should find out from them or from Chamars who have connections with the Ashram the money value of a carcass. Try and find out from them, if you can, what the hide, intestines, bones, etc., would fetch if sold separately and how they use these things.

If anybody else feels sick as Duncan did, you should immediately apply hot fomentation on the abdomen and give the person a piece of ice or lemon to suck. He may also drink cold water one tea-spoonful at a time. Very often the vomiting stops with these measures. If one had not eaten any poisonous food, there is no cause for alarm at all. An enema also will stop vomiting. You should tell this to all who live in the Ashram.

Impure attraction had sprung up between . . .[1] and . . .[2]. They hid their love for quite a long time. I came to know of it by chance. They used to meet secretly and also write to each other secretly. I have still not been able to fathom what is in their hearts. I do not know how far . . .'s passion has carried him. Neither seems to have purified his or her heart of lust. We have a rigid rule, to which no exception is condoned, that all young men and women who live in the Ashram as inmates should regard one another as brothers and sisters. The love of these two had gone beyond that relationship. The men and women living in the Ashram are forbidden to meet each other alone. These two have violated that rule. And they also tried, successfully, to deceive the whole Ashram, which means that they have violated our chief vow, that of truth. Thus they have violated three important rules of the Ashram.

I had boundless trust in . . . . I had thought him to be a *brahmachari* of the highest purity. I had proudly believed that he would never deceive me at any rate. I had believed . . . to be an innocent and pure-minded girl who could never feel passion. I looked upon her as my first-born daughter. I have been proved wrong in my estimate. Falsehood cannot hide itself from one who scrupulously follows truth, non-violence and *brahmacharya*. Such a person immediately knows anybody who is lustful and all violence subsides in his presence. I have ceaselessly striven for many years to observe these three vows, but I admit that I have failed in my effort. I do not say this in pride. It is my vow of truth which compels me to make this admission. I should have discovered the true character of . . . and . . . . My failure to do so is a sure sign of the imperfection of my spiritual attainment. I see that it is imperfect in regard to all the three requirements. I know my spiritual poverty. Unknown to me, falsehood, violence and passion are lurking in me.

I, therefore, feel as much compassion for . . . and . . . as anger against myself. Personally, I don't judge them, nor should

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

anybody else from among us do so. However, my attitude towards them will appear to have changed from now onwards. In fact, it is they who will have changed. Equality consists in treating a sick person and a healthy person as each deserves. One's attitude towards both should be inspired by love. In either case, one must consider the good of the other person. My attitude towards these two will be in conformity with this principle. I will treat them as sick persons and nurse them as such. All of us should do that. How we can do so, I shall be able to explain later.

Everybody should learn from this incident. The boys and the girls should take a warning from it. Any of them who feels passion should confess the fact. They need not be ashamed of it. If I discover a snake in my bed, I cannot be blamed for it. After I have discovered it, I should remove it. Passion is like a snake in the body. One need not feel ashamed of admitting its presence. On the contrary, it is one's duty to do so. It is a sin to let the snake remain and feed it. One's duty is to get rid of it. If any girl or boy wishes to marry, she or he is free to do so, except that the prohibition against a brother and a sister or other near relations marrying ought to be observed. I have often cautioned people that nobody should write or receive private letters. Everybody should hand over to the Secretary his or her letter without sealing it. The Ashram is one family. Truth can have nothing private. Everybody who observes this one rule will save himself or herself from many pitfalls. However, nobody should be forced to observe it. The letters of all adult inmates will continue to be treated as they are treated now.

This is meant for all. If you would like to suggest any change in this or if you don't feel inclined to read it out to the people there, you may hold the letter back for some time and let me know what you desire. You had warned me against . . .'s[1] disregard of rules and his lethargy, and I had been warned by many against his excessive intimacy with . . .[2] But I did not wake up. Let me see whether I who have been so stupid and obstinate, change now.

Even when you send many letters, you put them in an ordinary envelope. By the time it arrives here, it is almost completely torn. Some day some letter will get lost. You should either send in a stronger cover, or tie the envelope with a string as we do a packet sent by book post but stamp it as an ordinary letter. The risk in adopting the latter course lies in what might happen in

[1&2] The names have been omitted.

the office here. One of the letters may slip out. If you wish to economize, let somebody make strong envelopes in the Ashram itself. Even if he makes only one every day, that will suffice. You must be receiving strong brown paper. Probably some persons will also have khadi which can no longer be used. With these materials, you can easily make cloth-lined envelopes.

Are there any persons, besides Parashuram, who know Hindi and English well? If there are, send me their names.

BAPU

[PS.]

Read my letter to Dhiru. Discuss the matter with him and let me know. You will have received the letter which I wrote yesterday. I wrote in it about Shanta Panwelkar. I have read . . .'s[1] letter. I don't see how we have a duty to let him live in the Ashram. The Ashram cannot be turned into a home for invalids. He also asks for allowance for the maintenance of his parents. We cannot pay it. Explain this to him. If he wishes to get admitted to a hospital, he may certainly do so. His mother should do some work. He may write to somebody in his town. In any case, I don't think we can keep him.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8340. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

181. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 23, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter and the cuttings. Unless you make time for the operation I know you will never have the time. This always happens with busy people, and, therefore it is necessary to consider matters of health as real matters of business. I do not write this as a philosophic truth, but as a practical truth which I have enforced in my own life and in that of others. I hope, therefore, that you will set apart a month or so for the treatment and make an appointment with the doctors beforehand with the fixed resolution of keeping that appointment.

I note what you say about the work in Calcutta.

About Mr. David's scheme[2] I hope to hear from you further.

[1] The name has been omitted.
[2] *Vide* pp. 90-1.

I shall certainly write something in the columns of the English *Harijan* about the Hindi edition as soon as I find the Hindi to be up to the mark. I have written fully about this to Thakkar Bapa, as also to Viyogi Hari. I need not, therefore, repeat what I have written to them. You will give to it what time it is possible for you to give, and make it brimful of instructions and information so that no workers would care to be without it.

You suggest that I should send the money due to the Central Board to your firm in Bombay.[1] How should I save the commission thereby, unless you have meant that I should send notes through someone going to Bombay? If I do that, it would mean my having to run some risk of the money being lost. I have not that courage.

As to the denunciation of the Yeravda Pact by the Bengal Council, I have not felt much disturbed and I am not quite certain that counter-propaganda is necessary at the present moment. In no case can the Pact be revised unless all the parties to it agree. It will be time enough to apply our minds to the Bengal opposition when the parties are regularly consulted. I was consulted and I have sent my opinion[2], of which I send you a copy. But you and Satisbabu know much better than I can what to do in Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 20671. Also C.W. 7933. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] *Vide* p. 23.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to British Indian Association", pp. 23-5.

182. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 23, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

I have your letter of 12th instant. In my opinion, according to the Pact, in the heading 'untouchable' can only be included those whose touch pollutes and who labour under the disabilities incidental to untouchability, but if the Pact can be otherwise interpreted and all those who are considered and are depressed, including the so-called backward classes [are covered], I should be delighted. I should be also delighted if it were open under the Pact to anybody to be classed as untouchable. But I see serious difficulties in the way. The inclusion of any but birth-untouchables might be resented by the latter on the ground that they would then be entitled to stand for Parliamentary elections and thus deprive birth-Harijans of the certainty that they have of election today, and they will be right in their contention, and in the present demoralizing atmosphere I do not see any chance of reason and charity having full play or any play.

This explains my opinion and my fears. I do not however ventilate my opinion just now in public, because it is irrelevant and unseasonable. When the time comes, I shall not hesitate to express it.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20679

CWMG-LIV

183. LETTER TO S. C. GHOSH

March 23, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

What is the use of asking me questions which you have asked? What matters is not what I believe but what you believe and your belief will come to you through prayer and service of God's creatures.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. S. C. GHOSH
96 BELTALA ROAD
KALIGHAT
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20673

184. LETTER TO GIRDHARILAL

March 23, 1933

DEAR LALA GIRDHARILAL,

I have your letters and Sarup duly brought the sweets you sent, for which please accept the joint thanks of the family. I am glad the progress continues. I have not tried Dr. Agarwal's treatment. I simply acknowledged the letter and the book he sent me. I am always attracted to such natural treatment and therefore wrote saying that I would like to try the treatment. But unfortunately I do not get the time.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20669

CWMG - INV

185. LETTER TO N. K. GOGTE

March 23, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[1] I appreciate your argument. I am myself a follower of the Advaita doctrine. But that doctrine does not reject belief in temples.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. N. K. GOGTE
CHALISGAON

From a microfilm: S.N. 20672

186. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

March 23, 1933

TO
THE HOME SECRETARY TO
THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

DEAR SIR,

I have just had the Government's reply to my letter of the 18th instant.[2] I fear that the reply raises a vital issue which I thought the Government had decided once for all in 1922[3]. The very principle that the Government have now communicated was departed from in that year. Then too it was a question of fasting by the fellow prisoners. Major Jones was then the Superintendent. When the fasting became known to me, I sought an interview with the prisoners so that I could advise them. Major Jones would not listen to my proposal. I had to approach H.E. the then Governor, and I was permitted to see the prisoners with the happiest of results.[4] Exactly the same question arose in 1930 when I was incarcerated for the second time.[5] Major Martin was the

[1] It dealt with Gandhiji's article, "Are Temples Necessary?", pp. 49-51.
[2] *Vide* p. 118.
[3] This should be 1923.
[4] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, pp. 170-1 and 183.
[5] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 155-6.

CWMG-LIV

Superintendent and he would not listen to my request to see a fasting prisoner. There was correspondence with Government in which I suggested that I was humanitarian above everything else and that I could not exist without being able to make use of my influence as such, wherever it was possible to do so. Here there was not the slightest intention of disturbing the prison discipline and at last my contention was allowed by Government and I was permitted to see prisoners every week, so as to understand their position, and wherever necessary offer helpful suggestions. So far as I am aware Major Martin never had any occasion to deplore the Government's decision to allow me the liberty. That liberty has been continued during this incarceration, with restriction as to the number of prisoners I may see during any single fortnight. And I am not aware of any inconvenience having been thereby caused to Major Bhandari. The Superintendents under whom I have been a prisoner and the Inspector-General of Prisons will perhaps testify that my intervention, wherever it was found necessary, has been helpful.

My present request has no connection whatsoever with special orders passed by the Government of India regarding matters arising out of untouchability. I would request Government not to disturb a decision they arrived at as long as 1922, which was after full deliberation confirmed in 1930, and which has been carried out during the present incarceration. I venture to suggest that no new circumstance has arisen for the revision of that decision. I have raised no new point. Indeed I was painfully surprised when my telegram about the reported fast of Seth Poonamchand Ranka was stopped. I therefore renew my request that the telegram to Bajaj[1] (Wardha) may be sent without delay and that the decisions of 1922 and 1930 that I have referred to may be confirmed so as to set my mind at ease.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3883; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), A, p. 73

[1] This seems to be a slip for Bachhraj; *vide* p. 54.

187. LETTER TO V. D. HULYALKAR

March 23, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. To all the preaching that you are doing I should add some tangible work, say, teaching Harijan children. I take it that you diligently read the weekly *Harijan*.

Now about your questions.

1. The *Devadasi* question is very little, but by the purity of your own life and perseverance you will be able to reduce the evil. The only effective argument I can suggest is that Harijans should realize that there can be no religion in reserving one daughter as *Devadasi*, for the simple reason that the millions of other Hindus do not do so and regard such reservation as impure. Those who have already given themselves up to an immoral life will only leave it when a sense of shame is created in Harijan circles. It will not do for you to become panicky.

2. The game of mud and water will be given up if you will carry on your propaganda in perfect gentleness and if you have endeared yourself to Harijans by constructive service.

3. If Harijans can become vegetarians, nothing can be better; but if they will not, they should at least give up carrion and beef.

4. Of course it is difficult for you to find them in their homes during the day-time. Certainly, therefore, visit them at night or early in the day, but they will not be in the mood to listen to you early in the morning.

5. By constantly defending the Harijans against insults they will themselves learn to resent insults.

6. All things considered, a well-chosen vegetarian diet with the addition of pure milk is undoubtedly better than a mixed diet of meat and vegetables.

7. Smoking surely is not necessary in order to secure rest. Wherever organized labour is working, employers of labour should be induced to give rest at fixed intervals to all, smokers and non-smokers.

8. I am afraid that the argument that field labour is more paying than a peonship requiring a knowledge of the three R's is true and therefore Harijan parents will not be easily induced

to send their children to schools without being shown that it will be more profitable in the end.

9. There is no question of first and last; the awakening should be general, both amongst the Harijans and the caste men.

10. Truth and non-violence must always succeed. Tit-for-tat is the law of the beast, not of man.

11. I have no doubt that the present Harijan movement will purify Hinduism all round and will succeed in preventing disturbances or disruption.

12. Everybody is authorized to ask Harijan servants all kinds of questions, much more so their parents, therefore such questions should be patiently and courteously answered.

13. If your silence and fast on Mondays is a matter of vow, you cannot break it on any account unless you have left any loophole.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. VISHNU DAMODAR HULYALKAR
FREEDOM HOUSE
JAMKHANDI (S.M.C.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20674

188. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

March 23, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

I have your letter of 20th instant. I understand your point and your difficulty. You need not now worry over the thing. I must not issue any general instructions, for I have no authority. These must come from the Central Board, that is, Thakkar Bapa. I can only give my humble opinion and I know also that I may make egregious mistakes not being in touch with the outside world. Therefore I confine myself to a discussion, as a rule, of general principles.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20675

189. LETTER TO S. T. MISRA

March 23, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

The opinion[1] of M. Sreedhar Shastri and his friend was published in the supplement of the *Aaj*. A copy was handed to Sjt. Haribhau Pathak to be sent to the Mahamahopadhyaya. This was some time ago.

Yours sincerely,

PT. S. T. MISRA
MOGLAI BAZAR
DHULIA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20677

190. LETTER TO N. Y. NADKARNI

March 23, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and the information contained therein. When reformers persevere in their effort I have no doubt that they will leave an impression upon the sanatanists.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. N. Y. NADKARNI
4TH CONTRACTOR'S CHAWL
CHARNI ROAD
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20678

[1] Regarding the untouchability question

CWMG-LIV

191. LETTER TO BOYD TUCKER

March 23, 1933

MY DEAR BOYD,

You can never tire my patience, for I value the interest you are taking in everything I say or write or do. I know also that you do not argue in any spirit of controversy. I see your difficulty. You take or seem to take only one view of things. I have a profound faith in the Jain doctrine of Anekantvad. It is the many-sidedness as opposed to one-sidedness. To illustrate this celebrated doctrine we have a well-known story of 'the elephant and seven blind men', all of whom described the same creature in seven different ways, and the poet ends by saying 'they were all true and they were all false', and we may add 'God alone is true, no one and nothing else is or can be wholly true.'

Holding this view I can appreciate and defend your attitude, but I can also defend my own. If the world will be influenced by my attitude on the question of temple-entry, not in its own way but in my way, I have no fear about its moral safety.

You will be pleased to know that I have an energetic letter from a Maharashtrian, completely defending your position and wholly dissenting from my reply[1]. You must have seen Gurudev's splendid letter on the question. It came to me when the ensuing *Harijan* was filled up. I hope therefore to publish it next week.[2] I believe that he has sent it to me for publication. But you may enquire. If he does not desire publication, I will naturally withhold it, but in that case, please telegraph at once. I hope he is doing well. With love and respects from us all to him.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat : S.N. 20684

[1] *Vide* "Are Temples Necessary?", pp. 49-51.
[2] *Vide* "This Fight Is Necessary", 1-4-1933.

192. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

March 23, 1933

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I hope you remember the draft [Bill] approved by you, which Sarupbehn, that is, Vijayalakshmibehn, has shown to me. May I publish it? I will do so if you permit me. It seems to be good. It pertains to throwing open to Harijans one of the State-owned temples. In a subsequent letter you say that the idea has been dropped, as there is a danger of its leading to something like a referendum and that, in that case, the caste Hindus might stop going to the temple. The result thus might be the opposite of what is desired. May I express my view? Why should we fear the consequence of doing what is right? Let other caste Hindus not go to that temple; at any rate you and Ramabehn, the Maharaja, Ranisaheba, etc., will go. And I am sure a few other individual reformers also will go to it. It will be good if the Harijans are allowed the use of even one temple. If the reason you have given is the only one, I would request you to throw open one very popular temple even at a great risk. It seems from your letter that in Bhavnagar itself there are about four temples under State control. Even the sanatanists should not object to the Harijans being permitted to go to one of them. I hope you got my previous letter.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5927. Also C.W. 3243. Courtesy: Mahesh P. Pattani

193. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

March 23, 1933

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

Your letter. Of course you have my blessings on your birthday. God will grant you non-attachment and equanimity. My companions too join in my good wishes. Give our regards to all the friends there. That you have the company of such friends is

good fortune for both of you.[1] Radha is keeping indifferent health. Kusum's condition too is not good. We are all well. Jamnalalji is keeping fit.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2399

194. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 23, 1933

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I have your letter. The letter I wrote to you ought to reach you. You must not lose hope. Whatever He wills will happen. You should take the treatment and then keep silent. I have written a long letter to Dr. Sharma regarding his going to the Ashram,[2] which should reach him. Your letter was enclosed with that. You must have heard of Lakshmi's marriage. She has gone away to Bardoli.

Many Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 280

195. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

[On or after *March 23, 1933*][3]

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I got both your letters. I hope you received the telegram I sent yesterday about the temple. It will be a fine step if you succeed about it.

You are also perfectly right in what you say about receiving an order from me. One should not wait for my views every time. I have even made an earnest appeal to Pattaniji to throw open one temple at Bhavnagar. We should get as many temples opened at as many places as we can. It will of course be excellent

[1] The addressee was at this time in the Multan Jail from where he was released in early May.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Dr. Hiralal Sharma", p. 86.

[3] From the reference to Gandhiji's appeal to throw open a temple to Harijans; *vide* "Letter to Prabhashankar Pattani", p. 171.

if some people build new temples which are open to all and if sanatanists also help in doing so.

You write nothing about your health. You ought to write something.

I follow what you say regarding the elders. Who can explain to them that they should now live on fruit juice, that that will keep their bodies free from impurities and their minds calm and that they do not require any other food for energy? This is, however, not for them, but only for you, so that you should know from now what you should do when you become old. If God puts me in a similar condition and I am not willing to stop eating altogether, may He grant that I wish and have the strength to live only on fruit juice. I have no doubt that when most of the organs of the body begin to fail, air and water are the only food. All this, however, is in the lap of the future.

I am returning your draft herewith.

BAPU

[PS.]

I enclose with this letters[1] for Sushila and Bhau. I have not received Jethalal's letter regarding Harijan work.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9625

196. LETTER TO N.

March 23/24, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I had your two letters. I like them. The poetic touch about one of them was quite in its place.[2] I hope you got my telegram[3] which I sent immediately I finished reading your letters approving of the idea of going to a village and living amongst its Harijans. If it is well thought out, it is an excellent plan. But there should be no hurry or hysteria about a single step which you may now take. Until Truth has become natural to you, life will certainly appear hard and you will experience what may appear to be disappointments. There is no such thing as dis-

[1]&[3] These are not traceable.

[2] In a letter dated March 21 the addressee had said, ". . . I shall follow through any trials the way you point out. There is no "guru" on the face of the earth or in the heavens—nothing for me now but Truth, which is the vast beautiful cosmos.

appointment when one is filled with Truth. It then simply shines through one and lights the whole life.

You must tell me more about Rudramani. There should be no guide for you but God, the Truth. I do not want you to be under any more spells. You may be thankful for such service as is rendered to you and is legitimate for you to accept, and mostly it can only be the food that you may need and the other necessaries of life. A servant has no further wants, and especially a servant of Harijans. I can imagine nothing nobler or more inspiring than this service. It carries with it complete satisfaction.

You will find a note for S.[1] with this. It was good that you made him write those few lines, and it was good that you used the balance of the money left in the way you have described. The description made my eyes wet.

Yours sincerely,

March 24, 1933

[PS.]

I have your very good letter today. The foregoing was dictated yesterday. May Truth surround you and fill you.

BAPU

From a microfilm: S.N. 20689

197. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 24, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter came in yesterday. It is now 3.15 morning.

I am glad you are free from constipation. You won't feel the heat at all if you will continuously keep the wet cloth on the head. It cools the whole system. I do not know how they bring your milk. If it is strained as soon as it is milked or if it is bottled immediately and well corked and wrapped in a wet cloth, it should keep for many hours and drunk cold and unfired. I have given up fired milk altogether without any ill consequence. I get all the vitamins and perhaps only one pound that I take gives me more strength than more of boiled milk will. I am still on milk and paupau and oranges and dates. Oranges I take only once. This appears to be quite enough, perhaps more than enough. But

[1] The name has been omitted.

what I want to tell you is that if you can manage unfired milk you will suffer less from the heat. The milk must be kept in as air-tight a bottle as possible and the latter put in a wet cloth. The wet cloth keeps it ice-cold. You may strain it through a cloth before you. The cloth should be washed well immediately after use and so should the bottle. If that is done, I should feel quite at ease even though you may take your milk unfired. I think I have made my instructions quite clear. If you do not like the change and are otherwise feeling quite well, you need not make the change.

My weight stands at 104 lb. I do wonder. Though I try to live without attachment[1], I have no doubt that there are things that unconsciously affect me. You know my great regard for . . .[2]. He has been my greatest *brahmachari* in the Ashram and the most truthful boy. You have also known what might even be called my partiality for . . .[3]. Well, both have been found making love to one another and trading on my faith in them. They have even been contemplating marriage. . . .'s[4] letters have come into my hands. I had hopes of making . . . a proper Harijan girl. But now I do not know what will happen to . . . and . . . . I am making an effort to patch up the broken vessels. But I do not know how far I shall succeed or how far they will help. But all this is the language not of detachment but of attachment. I know the language of detachment, I am not practising the art. Hence it would be untruthful to use the language. I cannot dismiss these two lightly from my mind. I hope to do so in time. The immediate work in front of me does not permit me to brood over their sin. But because I have written to you, I see quite clearly how I stand myself. You are not going to worry over this. I am quite all right in spite of the tempest. God keeps me. I have laid bare the struggle going on within. But it is momentary. Truth will stand even if the Ashram is reduced to ashes and all my idols are broken to pieces. . . .[5] has been grand. And who knows that this discovery will not lead to a greater cleansing all round. Therefore you are not to grieve but to rejoice. Here at 4.15 the prayer began. This is after prayer and hot water and honey 4.45. Princess Aristarchi continues to send her weekly letters full of love for *Harijan.* She is fasting and praying and saving for the cause. If you will like to have more of the cards she has been sending, I would gladly send them. She sends you her love

[1] The source has "detachment", evidently a slip.

[2], [3], [4] & [5] The names have been omitted.

and so does Madeleine Rolland. The Rishi[1] seems to be keeping fair in spite of the rigours of the winter and the collapse of order and democracy in Germany. They of course send their love to you. And for that matter all who write from Europe. But you know how indifferent I am about sending you these messages. Tell Ba I may not write to her every week.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: C.W. 9672. Courtesy: Mirabehn

198. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

March 24, 1933

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter. The *Harijan* will go to Malcolm MacDonald as desired by you. Agatha has sent some more names. It will go to them also. I am glad the lettering for *Harijan* was liked so much.

I have not quite understood the suggestion about Banarsidas. Of course he is a capital worker and an equally capital Hindi writer. His whole soul is also in such work. But what special work can be taken from him? There is a Hindi edition of the *Harijan* issued in Delhi under the direct supervision of Ghanshyamdas and Amritlal Thakkar. There is also a Bengali edition, a Tamil edition and a Gujarati edition. Gurudev is co-operating. I had a very fine letter[2] from him only this week and a poem[3] being his own translation of a Bengali poem of his. Do you suggest anything else or anything more?

We are all keeping fairly well and fit and putting in as much work as is possible to put in.

Love from us all.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 982

[1] The reference is to Romain Rolland.
[2] For the text of the letter, *vide* "This Fight Is Necessary", 1-4-1933.
[3] Published in *Harijan*, 25-3-1933, under the title "The Sacred Touch"

199. LETTER TO PRINCESS EFY ARISTARCHI

March 24, 1933

Your letters are all touching. I do value your selfless love and your heart-felt prayers, and I have not a shadow of a doubt that the prayers of the pure are always answered. You are therefore absolutely correct in saying that you have to develop all possible purity in order to have your prayers for the Harijans answered. You will not therefore apologize for your long letters. They are not too long for me. If they reach me when I am too busy, I glance through the contents and then leave them aside to be read fully on finding a little leisure.

I am glad you like the *Harijan*. If you want any complimentary copies to be sent to anybody, please do not hesitate.

I hear weekly from Mira. I send your love to her and she sends hers to you. But I am a very indifferent carrier of such love messages. I expect friends to take these for granted.

PRINCESS ARISTARCHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 20698

200. LETTER TO DR. HARRY J. EHRLICH

March 24, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. The name of one book is *Keener Vision Without Glasses* by Benjamin Gayelord Hauser, and the address is Tempo Books Inc., 580, Fifth Avenue, New York.

Yours sincerely,

DR. HARRY J. EHRLICH
84 CHURCH ST.
NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20700

201. LETTER TO R. B. GREGG

March 24, 1933

MY DEAR GOVIND,

I have your letter and I had the book[1] also. I am at the book now. I do want to give a trial to the method, and I would rejoice if I can throw away the spectacles I have used for years. Kakasaheb is here. He never gave the method a real trial, but he may do so now.

I hope you are regularly getting your copy of the *Harijan*. I want you and Radha[2] to read it critically and give me your suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. GOVIND
543 BOYLSTON ST.
BOSTON, MASS., U.S.A.

From a photostat: S.N. 20699

202. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

March 24, 1933

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have your long letter after some waiting. The account of your meeting is very interesting. It was impossible that with all the earnestness and force you could put into your words you could fail to be effective.

The Cross undoubtedly makes a universal appeal the moment you give it a universal meaning in place of the narrow one that is often heard at ordinary meetings. But then, as you put it, you have to have the eyes of the soul with which to contemplate it.

I am glad you are mothering the Muslim girl from Hyderabad. You must tell me more of her when you have known her more.

[1] *Keener Vision Without Glasses* by Benjamin Gayelord Hauser
[2] Addressee's wife

I never knew that people out there ever carried loads on their heads. Is what you saw the usual practice in your part of England? What could be the weight, and what are the receptacles made of in which the load is carried? What is the distance that is covered? Is it the ordinary house-refuse that they contain?

I hope Hans[1] has found an answer to his prayer.

Maria wrote to me the other day and I saw how glad she was that you were at last coming. She is weary with fatigue, both in body and mind. She is almost on the verge of breaking, and I am anxious that, whilst she is still fit, she should run away to Kashmir and give her body and mind rest for a few months. She needs it desperately.

Love from us all and kisses to the children.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 121. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also S.N. 20697

203. LETTER TO N.

March 24, 1933

It is not enough that you will strive. It is necessary that you have the strength. Striving is enough for God. But the promise is that real striving generates always enough strength. Therefore I shall judge you in accordance with the actual result you show. Have I made myself clear? You have a fearful struggle in front of you to overcome the wretched past. But if truth really possesses you, there is nothing to fear. Light dispels the deepest darkness. Truth conquers the blackest sin which may be otherwise rendered as untruth. I want you therefore to be on the watch-tower.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] A German boy living with the Menons at Selly Oak

204. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

March 24, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I have your letter. There need be no feverish anxiety about the publication of N.'s statement. As you will see from the letter[1] enclosed herewith I have asked her to let me have a copy; if you have it, you may let me have a copy. I telegraphed to her on Wednesday on the strength of her letter that she might go to a Harijan village. After all, that is her destination, and if she can go there now, so much the better. I have asked her, but you will also tell me what will happen to her post when she goes to a village.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20696 a

205. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 24, 1933

MY DEAR MARGARETE,

Your letters continue to come with clock-work regularity. Of course you are not going to be upset if you are turned out as a Jewess. I shall be now eagerly waiting for your letters to know your fate.

If you will have it so, you can take the palm for economy, though you must remember the old proverb that "one swallow does not make a summer", and for that reason your summary dismissal of the question of food does not mean that the solution is as easy as you fancy it is for you. Whilst it need not be given undue importance, it is a gross error to think that food has nothing to do with a person's moral or even physical growth. The experience of the sages of the world shows that they have given importance, some more and some less, to it, and the majority have admitted that a bloodless diet is necessary for full spiritual enlightenment.

[1] This is not traceable.

You need not worry over the poor comprehension that your girls have shown of ahimsa.[1] I do not wonder. There is no response to ahimsa from the atmosphere. They have never been taught to attach the slightest value to it, and probably they have been taught to despise it. You cannot expect them all of a sudden to understand the value of ahimsa in an atmosphere so hostile as yours.

Mahadev has been receiving your letters and he has got your booklet too. As I have heard of *Parsifal* and as it was quite a booklet I read it during odd moments in two days and I liked it very much.

Yes, Mr. Kodanda Rao also got your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Spiegel Papers: Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also S.N. 20701

206. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

March 24, 1933

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I have just read your article about ahimsa. Your ideas are good as far as they go. But the article is not worth printing. You should go still deeper into the subject. Ahimsa does not seem to me to be a simple thing to write about. Instead of trying to write an article about it, it would be better to describe the thoughts which arise and the difficulties which are experienced while putting the principle into practice. Your statement that as an ethical principle ahimsa is universally accepted is also not true, though to a certain extent it is so accepted. Many people regard it as dharma to kill deadly animals or creatures. Others regard the killing of sinful men as dharma.

Of course there would be nothing wrong in your frequently writing such articles in order to clarify your own thoughts to yourself.

How are you now?

I am returning the article.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 6078. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

[1] The addressee had said, "For two months I have been studying your works with my girls : a German school edition, excerpts from *Young India* . . . The result is miserable. Out of 20 girls I have not converted a single one to ahimsa."

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207. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

March 24, 1933

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your long and beautiful letter. Who wrote it for you? Stay there as long as you think it necessary and solve the problems.

Why does Ramibehn[1] carry a burden on her mind? Has she forgotten her study of Sanskrit and the *Gita* ?

Do not spoil Mahavir and Krishnamaiyadevi. The latter must do some work. And Mahavir should keep an account of every pie. Do not let him become a beggar. He must make some return. He will be happier if he learns to face difficulties. He should not use the name of the Ashram anywhere. By all means give him whatever help you can in finding a job.

We cannot meet, but you may write to me and ask any question which you may wish to.

For what was Mirabehn criticizing Ba? The latter is full of faults, no doubt, but her devotion is immeasurable. There can be no doubt that Ba is covering herself with glory. Her faults are overshadowed by her firmness of mind.

I did get the list of simple books which you read. I am now waiting for your account of your reflections.

Kaka and I meet every day. He keeps good health. At present he lives only on milk and fruit. By milk I mean curds.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8799. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

[1] Ramibehn Kamdar, addressee's sister

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208. NOTES

Will Not Temples Be Deserted?

An M.A.,LL.B. enquires:

> If temple-entry is allowed to Harijans, it is highly likely that the caste Hindus and the priests will desert them. In that event, of what avail would the right of temple-entry be?

My only answer to this question should be that the correspondent evidently does not follow the movement but has simply condemned it, as his question implies and as I know from his long letter from which I have taken the question. But such an answer will not be sufficient for the cause.

Let the correspondent and those who think like him understand that the contingency that they contemplate can never happen, because the movement is not designed to force entry into any single temple, whether by law or otherwise. The assistance of the Legislature is being sought in order to make it possible to throw open temples where public opinion is ripe. It is impossible today even where public opinion unanimously desires it. When, therefore, caste Hindus, as also the priests, desire the entry of Harijans into particular temples side by side with them, there can be no question whatsoever of the temples being deserted. When the temple-entry of Harijans is permitted under these voluntary conditions, the temples would be all the purer for their admission, as is the case with numerous private temples which have been opened and which have not been deserted either by the priests or the caste Hindus.

Women Workers in Cuttack

Shrimati Rama Devi[1] of Cuttack sends me a letter in Hindi, giving an account of the work being done by the women of Cuttack amongst Harijans. I give a translation of portions of the letter:

> Since October I have been working amongst Harijans, with seven other sisters. We confine our attention to Cuttack only. We are all volunteers, working under the direction of the Anti-untouchability Board. The only pecuniary assistance we receive is in the shape of books and medicine from

[1] Rama Devi Choudhry. *Vide* also "Letter to Rama Devi Choudhry", 4-4-1933.

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the Municipality. The stock of medicine is supplemented by local *Kavirajs*. We have distributed ourselves in four *bastis* of Bhangis, allotting two workers to each. We give instructions in the three R's to the girls, teach them *bhajans* and read to them simple religious books. We distribute medicines amongst the ailing inhabitants, clean their quarters, report their special difficulties to the Committee, and we put before the womenfolk the desirability of refraining from eating beef or carrion. They were afraid of us when we first approached them. They had no faith in what we said to them and would not even listen. Slowly they shed their fear of us and now they do listen to us to some extent. We hope to get other volunteers amongst the women of Cuttack. Some girls have already begun work with us.

I congratulate these sisters of Cuttack on their devotion to the cause of the much-desired reform. Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Conservative by nature, if they are slow to shed superstitious habits, they are also slow to give up all that is pure and noble in life. In this struggle for religious reform, therefore, the women of India may be expected to take a leading part. I hope, therefore, that the example of the women of Cuttack will prove infectious and that the work begun by Shrimati Rama Devi and her companions will be continued in spite of the difficulties and disappointments that they might have to face.

What More Can I Do?

A correspondent from the South writes:

> I and my friend bought Khadi worth Rs. 20 and distributed it amongst Harijan brethren. I presided at a meeting advocating removal of untouchability and I am proud to be able to say that my friends are taking steps in the direction. What more can I do?

This is a curious question. But I have not taken it literally. The writer, I am sure, does not mean to convey that he is fully satisfied with what he has done. But whether he is or not, in my opinion no one can afford, in this big campaign, to be satisfied with giving a little of his substance and occasionally presiding at meetings, assuming, of course, that he or she has much more time at their disposal. When the spirit of reform seizes one, hundreds of things will press upon one's attention. It is not, however, for me to say what a particular person should do. He must take up the whole programme of the Servants of Untouchables Society and do all those things which it may be possible for him

to do, consistently with his other obligations. The programme of the Society is merely illustrative, by no means exhaustive; therefore, it is open to anyone to supplement it, so as to meet with any peculiar circumstances that may be prevalent in his own locality.

From Europe

The reader will be glad to share the following with me from a letter[1] from a friend in Europe.

Harijan, 25-3-1933

209. THE MUCH-MALIGNED BRAHMIN

A Bengali Professor[2] writes a long letter from which I take the following extracts:

> You will be distressed to learn that the anti-untouchability movement in certain parts of the country has degenerated into a vile and violent propaganda against Brahminism and all that it stands for. Misleading half-truths and deliberate untruths are being assiduously circulated in order to lower the Brahmins as a class in the estimation of the general public. Is the practice of untouchability confined exclusively to the Brahmins? Are not the other caste Hindus equally guilty? Even admitting that the Shastras were made by the Brahmins, where is the proof that the Shastras enjoin a rabid type of untouchability as is practised today in certain parts of India?
>
> Is it not a fact that the Brahmins have made a very substantial contribution towards the success of the present anti-untouchability movement? Is it not, again, true that the majority of those of our worthy M.L.A.s who have adopted an obstructionist attitude towards the Temple-entry Bill happen to be other than Brahmins? Why, then, this tirade against the Brahmins, who perhaps realize more than anybody else the gravity of the situation created by the scourge of untouchability?

Except for the writings in the papers and periodicals representing the anti-Brahmin movement which has been going on in the country for some years and which was inaugurated long before the campaign against untouchability was, I have not seen any attack, violent or otherwise, upon Brahminism. Certainly

[1] Not reproduced here. The correspondent had said, "You are perfectly right to have reminded me of the useless expenses in cabling to you", and had gone on to say that it would not happen again. He had also said that he had begun to save up for the Harijans.

[2] R. R. Chakravartti; *vide* p. 147.

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the Servants of Untouchables Society has had nothing to do with any such attack, and the writer is quite right in saying that I would be distressed if I learnt that the anti-untouchability movement had degenerated into a vile and violent propaganda against Brahminism. I have, therefore, asked the correspondent to furnish me with the evidence that may be in his possession to prove the serious statement he has made. The letter enables me, however, to reiterate my own opinion of Brahminism and Brahmins.

I believe Brahminism to be unadulterated wisdom leading one to the realization of Brahman, that is God. If I did not hold that view, I should no longer call myself a Hindu. Brahmins, however, like all the other members of the human family, are not all true representatives of Brahminism. But I have to believe that, of all the classes in the world, the Brahmin will show the largest percentage of those who have given up their all in search of knowledge, that is Truth. I know of no system other than Hinduism under which a class has been set apart from generation to generation for the exclusive pursuit of divine knowledge and consigned to voluntary poverty. That Brahmins could not keep up the high standard that they had imposed upon themselves is no special fault of theirs. Their imperfection merely proves that they were as fallible as the rest of mankind, and so corruption crept into the so-called sacred books, and we have the spectacle of the most selfless rules governing Brahmins side by side with the selfish rules also made by them in order to help their breed. But it was the Brahmins who rose against the corruptions and selfish interpolations into the sacred texts. It was they who time and again strove to purge themselves and society of evil. I confess that I have the highest reverence for Brahminism and a sneaking regard for Brahmins and that, in spite of what is to me the sorrowful spectacle of Brahmins so-called making a frantic effort against the reform movement and lending their undoubted ability to the opposition, I am consoled, and let every unbiased Hindu be consoled, by the fact that the reform movement, too, is being led by those who are born Brahmins but who today take no pride in their birth. If a census was taken of all the workers against untouchability, I think it will be found that the majority of workers who are devoted to the cause without any remuneration or with only just enough to keep body and soul together are Brahmins. But I admit that Brahmins as a class have suffered degradation. If they had not, if they had lived up to their profession, Hinduism would not be in the degraded state in which it is. It would be a contradiction in terms to suggest that Hinduism is what it is in spite of the correct life of

the Brahmins. That could not be, because the Brahmins themselves have taught us to believe that they are the true custodians of the divine wisdom and that, where there is divine wisdom, there is no fear, there is no grinding pauperism, there is no high and low state, there is no greed, jealousy, war, plunder and the like. Because Brahminism went down, it drew down with it all the other classes of Hindus, and I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that, if Brahminism does not revive, Hinduism must perish, and for me the infallible test of the revival of Brahminism, that is, Hinduism, is the root-and-branch removal of untouchability. The more I study the Hindu scriptures and the more I discuss them with all kinds of Brahmins, the more I feel convinced that untouchability is the greatest blot upon Hinduism. This conviction is amply supported by many learned Brahmins who have no axes to grind, who are devoted to the pursuit of truth and who receive nothing, not even thanks for their opinion. But today Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are mere labels. There is utter confusion of varna as I understand it and as I have explained it in these columns, and I wish that all the Hindus will voluntarily call themselves Shudras. That is the only way to demonstrate the truth of Brahminism and to revive varnadharma in its true state. Because all Hindus may be classed as Shudras, wisdom and power and wealth will not disappear, but they will be all used for the service of not a sectional religion but the service of Truth and humanity. Anyway, in battling against untouchability and in dedicating myself to that battle, I have no less an ambition than to see a complete regeneration of humanity. It may be a mere dream, as unreal as the silver in the sea-shell. It is not so to me while the dream lasts, and in the words of Romain Rolland, "Victory lies not in realization of the goal but in a relentless pursuit after it."

Harijan, 25-3-1933

210. IDEAL HARIJAN TEACHER

The question is being asked as to what I expect of a teacher of Harijans. I admit that my test is exacting, but it will be found also that it is none too exacting for a willing worker. Moreover, my test is the only real test, if it is granted that this movement has a purely religious motive behind it. I may also add that I tried the experiment with complete success, while it lasted, in

Champaran years ago.[1] It could not be continued, because my stay in Champaran proved to be brief, and the volunteers who had offered their services had undertaken merely to give a start, the idea being to raise local teachers of the type contemplated.

Let me briefly describe the teachers and the experiment.

The teachers were Avantikabai Gokhale, Anandibai Vaishampayan, Kasturbai Gandhi, Manibehn Parikh, Dharanidharbabu, Narahari Parikh, Babasaheb Soman, Chhotelal Jain and Devdas Gandhi.

These were all, of course, responsible men and women, some of them pleaders and graduates. None of them were trained teachers. The majority had no knowledge of Hindi except that they could, with more or less difficulty, make themselves understood. Kasturbai Gandhi was illiterate but was in no way behindhand to other teachers. These were spread out in four or five villages. I forget the exact number for the moment. They were to start with the children but finish with the men and women. A knowledge of the three R's was only one of the items. They had to look after their health and their character. They were not to use corporal punishment on any account whatsoever. Work was to be like play. The children—boys and girls—were on no account to be tired out. The first business of the teacher was to examine the appearance of each boy and girl—their eyes, ears, teeth, hair, nails, etc., and clean them, wherever necessary, and teach the boys to keep themselves clean, to see to it that the children behaved properly towards one another and that they did not use foul language.

Let me say in parenthesis that the non-Hindi teachers learnt their Hindi from the children. They were otherwise so raw that the teachers could merely see that the children traced the alphabet correctly and count the numerals in proper sequence. The central fact was to create round the school an atmosphere of culture.

The teachers were given no domestic servants. They had to do their own cooking, washing, etc. Where there were no buildings, they were to help building bamboo huts. In every case, clean, open spaces and, in my opinion, the simple art of the rustic were insisted upon. Paraffin tin shanties or dungheap surroundings were religiously shunned. In one instance we were able to secure the site of a temple. In every case the school became the pride of the villagers and a centre of culture.

[1] *Vide* Vols. XIII and XIV; also Vol. XXXIX, pp. 333-5.

But it had also to radiate its direct influence upon the grown-up men and women. They received medical aid and therethrough also object-lessons in cleanliness, etc. The teachers' living quarters, which were adjacent to the school, or where both house and school combined, were to be the dispensary of the village and contained a stock of quinine, an opening medicine, and an ointment with dressings. They were to confine their attention to constipation, malaria and simple ulcers. The dispensaries were organized under the late lamented Dr. Dev of the Servants of India Society who personally supervised this department of relief and attended to all serious cases. He penetrated the homes of the villagers and transformed little Bhitiharva in a few weeks' time from a dung-and-mud-sodden village into a clean-looking cluster of hamlets with the willing assistance of the villagers, and if I remember rightly, without the cost of a single pice. Dr. Dev was not a mere overseer of works. He was himself the leading labourer working with the spade and the shovel.

What Dr. Dev himself did in Bhitiharva the teachers did with more or less success in the other villages. The village roads and wells were cleaned. Inroads were made into the huts with the willing consent of the dwellers. Their little yards were cleaned for them in the first instance. The teachers had to become one with the villagers, share their troubles and sorrows and point to them the way to health and happiness in that malaria-and-superstition-ridden, unknown part of India, once the land of Janak and Sita. It was in remote Bhitiharva that Kasturbai made the discovery that several women had no wardrobe but the one ragged sari on their persons. When one of the poor but dignified ladies was gently advised to bathe daily, she hotly replied, "Come into my room, see if I have a change of sari and then give me your advice. You don't expect a lady to bathe naked, do you?" There was nothing more to be said. When I heard the tragic story, I could but drop a silent tear in shame and sorrow.

I need hardly carry the description any further. The would-be teacher of Harijans can easily fill in the details.

That was my very first experiment in village schools, as it was my first living experience of Indian villages. Fifteen years have rolled by since. My experience has widened considerably. During these years I have seen hundreds of villages. I fancy I understand their wants much better than I did in 1917. To my ideal school for Harijans, therefore, I would add handicrafts, and most certainly begin with spinning and other cotton processes. I would add night schools for both the grown-ups and the children. I would

entertain no high hopes of success. I would not even attempt to carry things by storm. I would, on the other hand, approach my work in due humility and infinite faith in my mission. I would let the children and the parents dominate me before I dream of dominating them. I would seek to qualify myself as their servant by right of love, in the fullest confidence that in the end I would dominate not them but their hearts. I have already outlined this scheme before two co-workers, one a High Court pleader and the other a very well-educated sister. Each wanted to know how they could take up immediate service. And I gave them each a fair half hour inviting them to be the ideal teacher. I now present the invitation to every servant of Harijan who is in need of work. I offer no pay. But I undertake to find villages for those who cannot. Everyone has to pay his or her own expenses and if he or she is too poor, he or she has to beg enough from his or her friends. The teacher has to live like a Harijan. Therefore, not much expense is needed. The school building will be any verandah or open space that might be offered by the Harijans. "Where there's the will there's the way."

Harijan, 25-3-1933

211. AUNDH STATE AND UNTOUCHABILITY

I had requested Pandit Satavlekar, the well-known Vedic scholar of Aundh, to acquaint me with facts about the anti-untouchability movement in the Aundh State, as I had seen reports about it in the Press. His letter traces the progress of the movement during the last ten years and recounts the difficulties in the way of the reformer. I give below a condensed rendering of his Hindi letters:

> There are 72 villages in the State. The Chief is a Brahmin of advanced views and wants untouchability to go. Ten years ago, he invited the so-called untouchables in the State to fulfil the following three conditions, in order to enable him to declare them on a level with other Hindus and entitled to temple-entry:
>
> 1. giving up of carrion,
> 2. giving up eating leavings of food,
> 3. daily bath.
>
> These simple conditions were proclaimed in all the villages. The response was not encouraging. This was in effect

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the reply received from every one of the villages:

(1) It is impossible for us to give up carrion as we get it free. We can think of giving up carrion if we are given clean meat in lieu of it.

(2) We would fain give up leavings of food. Give us clean food instead.

(3) There is not enough water for bathing and washing.

(4) We are indifferent as regards temple-entry.

The matter was allowed to rest there. Then came Sjt. V. R. Shinde, the great abolitionist, who visited them in their homes and appealed to them to avail themselves of the Chief's offer. He also asked them to abolish untouchability amongst themselves. This appeal, too, fell on deaf ears.

After this I started a village sanitation programme. We went out every morning singing *prabhat pheris* and offering to clean the courtyards and surroundings of houses of which the tenants were indifferent. The results were somewhat encouraging. We offered soap and other washing facilities to those who were doing scavenging. But they said it was too much to expect them to keep clean, when they had to earn their living from an unclean occupation.

This was followed up by propaganda in the shape of *bhajans*, *kathas*, and special fairs. Classes were held to familiarize the Harijans with religious books. Schools with two teachers—an untouchable and a touchable—were started to induce them to learn the three R's. No grown-ups came forward, but youngsters did come and are still coming to these schools.

Here is an account of the present state of things:

The State schools are open to all, and they are being availed of by Harijan children. Harijans may visit temples after a bath, and they are doing so.

In October last a Health Day was held, volunteers were posted in every Harijan quarter and the Chief was good enough to announce prizes to those whose houses and surroundings were found to pass the test of cleanliness. One month's intensive work before the Day was enough to do the trick. Every street and every Harijan quarter was a model of cleanliness. In fact, some Harijan houses in Aundh looked cleaner than Brahmin houses. His Highness, with the Ranisaheba, made a point of visiting every quarter and in Aundh alone, 105 prizes were awarded, half of them being

won by the Harijans. The Ranisaheba went into every Harijan house, made inquiries about their appointments and needs, and the Harijan women honoured her with marking with their own hands her forehead with the auspicious *kumkum* mark.

This led to a general awakening throughout the State. On October 26th a meeting was held in the Bhawani temple for distribution of prizes. It was attended by numerous untouchables.

Harijans have free access to the palace, and the Ranisaheba and her daughters often attend Harijan weddings. The Chief has allowed a Harijan Chamar to open his shop in a high-caste quarter. On the auspicious Makarsankranti day—14th of January—the Ranisaheba invited Harijan women to the palace and distributed Sankranti gifts to them. A Harijan *kathakar* gave a discourse in a famous temple and a number of caste Hindus attended it.

I may, therefore, say that, so far as the State is concerned, there is in Aundh State no recognition of untouchability. But neither the caste Hindus nor the Harijans have reaped the full benefit of this. I shall illustrate what I say. The opponents of reform are more non-Brahmins than Brahmins. Temples visited by the Harijans are boycotted for the most part by non-Brahmins. In my own press there are six Harijan workers. The Mahar among these regards himself as superior to the five Mangs. When they sit down to feed in my house, they decline to sit in the same row.

In towns untouchability is going, but villages do still seem to be a difficult proposition. In this connection, I must advert to carrion-eating once again. It has led to most unfortunate results. It seems to stand like a dead wall between Harijans and caste Hindus and has often led to quarrels, and it may lead to bloody feuds. The reason is that the Harijans do not scruple to poison cows and buffaloes and bullocks to the consternation of the poor agriculturist, who feel that association with these cow-killers is unthinkable. There were no fewer than 124 cases of cattle-poisoning in the course of four months during the last year and special provision had to be made in the Law to prevent such crime.

I would request you to guide us with suggestions for future work.

This is an instructive and truthful account of the campaign against untouchability in the Aundh State. Pandit Satavlekar

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is an old silent reformer of unremitting zeal. He is a great Sanskrit scholar and has dedicated himself to the spread of the mission of the Vedas. Aundh has a liberal-minded Chief who, with the Rani-saheba, deserves congratulations for abolishing untouchability from his State. Notwithstanding the existence of favourable circumstances, in Aundh, the progress of reform has been slow. For progress is lame and taxes the reformer's patience. Pandit Satavlekar has asked for suggestions. The work has been so thorough that I can only say, 'Continue without losing faith and success is a certainty.'

I must confess that I have no anger against the Harijans who poison cattle. We are reaping as we have sown. We dare not neglect a single limb of society without the whole of it suffering. We have wholly misinterpreted the great law of karma and virtually consigned the Harijans to their own fate. We have forced them to labour for us on utterly inadequate remuneration and never cared to know how they have lived and fared. The wonder is that they are not much worse than they have been described.

I have suggested the only infallible method of weaning them from carrion-eating. All dead cattle should be declared State property and the cattle should be treated under the supervision of reliable officers, and proper remuneration should be given to the Harijans who may be willing to skin the carcasses and dispose of the several parts thereof as they may be directed. Here there can be no quarrel, no cattle-poisoning and no carrion-eating. All the proceeds from the disposal of the skin and other parts of carcasses should be earmarked for the benefit of Harijans, thus freeing the State from suspicion of exploitation.

For further guidance on this matter, I suggest a careful perusal of my article on "Disposal of Carcasses"[1] in last week's *Harijan*.

Harijan, 25-3-1933

[1] *Vide* pp. 65-6.

212. CABLE TO GEORGE LANSBURY

March 25, 1933

RT. HON. LANSBURY
BOW, LONDON

MY CONDOLENCES.[1]

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 201

213. LETTER TO BERNARD

March 25, 1933

MY DEAR BERNARD,

I suppose if I subscribed myself 'M. K. Gandhi', it must have been in awe of your impending practice as a lawyer.[2] As long as you remain a spinner and weaver, bottle-washer and door-keeper, I could afford to be 'Bapu', but to a practising lawyer in his gown, it becomes a different proposition. I am glad that at least your luck, if not that of all the lawyers, depends upon the good luck of the producers. You are welcome to a reasonable share of their produce for encouraging quarrels between them and then professing to adjust them. It is any day better that you should thrive on their quarrels than that you should thrive on their quarrels plus poverty.

You give me bad news about Florence[3]. That accounts for her complete silence. So you have failed in your first examination as husband. Let's hope you will do better next time and not grudge poor Florence a mosquito-net.

What tragedy to be killed by bandits! Where was Dr. Vishnu Ram[4] killed and how and what was the cause of the murder ?

[1] The addressee had lost his wife.

[2] The addressee had complained about Gandhiji signing his letter as M. K. Gandhi.

[3] Addressee's wife, who was down with fever at this time

[4] Florence's uncle

I am not quite so sure as you are that you will die gladly when your debt is paid. For I am quite sure that when one debt is paid, another would be hanging over your head for, is not life a perpetual duty? And I am quite sure you would like to live for its proper discharge, unless you develop a fondness for 'fasting unto death', as my critics will point out, like me.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20706

214. LETTER TO SATYENDRANATH GANGULI

March 25, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. For me God and Truth are one, and of all the names by which we know God, Truth has always appeared to me the most appropriate name to know Him by, and for me selfless service is contemplation and meditation, whereas the so-called meditation may be self-indulgence. For me God is formless and therefore my vision of Him does not consist of any form. I think you will realize the Truth of what I am saying if you read the *Bhagavad Gita* carefully in the light of my remarks and live up to the interpretation I have tried to put before you.

You can hardly ever get pure, fresh olive oil in India. I am told that there are olive trees in Kashmir and that olive oil is pressed there. I have never seen it. The olive oil one generally gets at the chemists'. It is often a year old, never less than six months, and I have ceased to believe that it can be a substitute for milk. You may therefore dismiss olive oil from your mind considered as an independent food. Fresh sweet oil that we can get abundantly in India is, medical men say, a good substitute for olive oil.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. SATYENDRANATH GANGULI
P.O. JAMALPUR
MYMENSINGH

From a microfilm: S.N. 20707

215. LETTER TO ABDUR RAHIM

March 25, 1933

DEAR PROFESSOR,

I thank you for your letter of the 14th instant. I entirely agree with you that the proper thing is to abolish all distinction between touchables and untouchables and know them both by the generic name 'Hindu'. But so long as it is necessary to distinguish untouchables from touchables, surely it is better that they are known by an inoffensive name than by an offensive one. An undutiful or unregenerate son might call his mother 'father's wife', but a dutiful regenerate son would respectfully call her 'mother'.

As to over-emphasis on temple-entry, I shall be entirely at one with you. Temple-entry, again, you will not mind agreeing, is necessary for the untouchable if he is to be an integral part of Hindu society and an equal partner with the caste Hindus.

As to your third question, whilst all non-Hindu help would be welcome, surely penance has only to be done by those who have committed the sin. Temple-entry has got to be given by those who have robbed the Harijans of their sacred right, but I would certainly draw the line sharply at the natural religious boundary, but I should summarily put down any political differences or political exploitation. For me this is purely a moral and religious question.

Yours sincerely,

PROF. ABDUR RAHIM
DELTA HOUSE, 77/60 BONDEL ROAD
BALLYGUNJ, CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20703

CWMG-LIV

216. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 25, 1933

DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

I have your several letters, all received today. I shall be interested to know the replies you may get from the various associations in the Punjab. Whatever may have happened in the past, we must not leave alone the Punjab Alienation Act. But the first thing is to have the full text.

As to the disposal of the funds, I propose to carry on the discussion in the *Harijan* before we evolve a definite policy. You will see my article[1] in next Sunday's Gujarati edition, and I hope to write something for the English edition[2] also.

As to Bengal's quarrel with the Yeravda Pact, my own opinion is that Satisbabu was hasty in throwing down the challenge. I have written to him to that effect.[3] His telegram appeared in the *Harijan* inadvertently. Shastri had no time to show it to me, and he used his discretion, as he soon found out, not wisely. But that does not matter. I wrote straightway to Satisbabu and gave him my view. You will have seen my reply[4] to the British Indian Association. I have sent a copy of it to Sjt. Ghanshyamdas. When we are required to give an opinion, there should be no mincing matters, but so long as the opposers do not refer to us, we need not take any notice. The Pact is a solemn agreement and it can never be altered without the consent of all the parties to it.

With reference to your tracts, certainly all of them can be advertised in the *Harijan*. Send a descriptive advertisement.

Enclosed is an interesting letter[5] from Dr. Gopichand.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Encl. 1

From a photostat: G.N. 1117

1 *Vide* "Propaganda *v.* Construction", pp. 206-9.
2 *Vide* "Propaganda *v.* Construction", 1-4-1933.
3 *Vide* "Letter to Satis Chandra Das Gupta", pp. 116-7.
4 *Vide* pp. 23-5.
5 This is not available.

217. LETTER TO T. TITUS

March 25, 1933

MY DEAR TITUS[1],

As I am anxious that in the Ashram we should use unfired milk, it is necessary to ensure perfect cleanliness and as little exposure to air as possible. Hence the following questions:

1. Are all our cows free from disease?
2. Are their teats and udders free of all boils or cracks?
3. Before they are milked, are the udders properly washed with warm water?
4. Are the hands and arms of the milkman washed thoroughly up to the elbow?
5. Are the utensils thoroughly disinfected?
6. Are the strainers treated likewise?
7. Is the milk returned at once to thoroughly disinfected milk cans with air-tight lids?
8. What are the hours of milking, both in the mornings and in the evenings?
9. Have you a special milking place, such as I saw at the dairy in Bangalore, and if you have, is it a good, well-lighted, airy place?
10. Is the cow-shed kept in perfectly clean condition?
11. Are you conserving all the dung and urine and using both for manure?
12. What is the average quantity of milk yielded by each cow per day?
13. What is the total yield per day and how much of it is sold out?
14. Are the calves allowed their share?
15. What is the highest yield of a single cow in the Ashram and the lowest during 24 hours?

From a microfilm: S.N. 20704

[1] Manager of the Ashram dairy

218. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 25, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I send with this the letters written by . . .[1] to . . .[2] which have come into my hands. All of them were received in one envelope on the same day. You may read them if you wish. I send them for . . .[3] to read. After he has seen them, send the letters to . . .[4]. I have kept copies with me. I have promised to return the letters to . . . . Only so is it our duty to send them back to him. Otherwise he has no right to them. It is only a question of keeping my promise.

The wound which has been inflicted on me has still not healed, but I do not brood over the matter either. I cannot think much about anything just now except the work for the removal of untouchability. It helps me to forget all my sorrows. But whenever I have to think about . . . 's conduct, the wound revives and reminds me that it has not healed.

Though . . . wrote such letters, he says that he did not wish to marry . . . , but only wanted to cure her of the desire to marry him. He admits that the evidence of the letters proves the contrary but says that he will prove his statement by his future conduct. I have lost my trust in him, however, and that is what pains me most.

I have now told . . . that he should return to the Ashram as soon as his health has improved and in future scrupulously observe all the rules of the Ashram. I have also told him that he should stop enjoying whatever freedom he enjoyed till now, and that he should excel all the others in observing the rules. He has unreservedly promised to do all this. If he does not keep his word, he cannot continue to live in the Ashram. I know that you can keep a strict watch in such matters. Do so. Give him whatever work you like. He should always have his meals in the common kitchen and should have no relations with any girl.

This is my personal view. . . . has proved by his conduct that he is not fit to live in the Ashram. But he will not reform outside the Ashram nor can we know whether he has reformed.

[1], [2], [3] & [4] The names have been omitted.

I do believe that we should give him the opportunity which he desires. But it is possible that all of you there hold a different view. I think it is our duty to respect . . .[1] 's wishes in this matter. If he feels that there is a risk in letting . . . remain in the Ashram, the latter certainly cannot remain. I would not at all be pained if he thought so. But even if he agrees with me, do consult the Committee and, if all of you feel that my view is morally correct, let . . . remain. I have had a frank talk with . . .[2] and he has promised that he will take . . . with him and return to the Ashram. Even if she falls ill there, he will not take her anywhere else. He believes that we should be content with whatever treatment is possible in the Ashram. It goes without saying that I fully agree with this view. That is the only course which is in keeping with our vow of poverty. . . .[3] will, therefore, have my fullest support. But this means that both . . . and . . . will live in the Ashram. . . .[4] has no objection to that. I also see no danger. I don't think . . . will make a mistake again. And, moreover, everybody will be vigilant now.

Let all the boys and girls learn a lesson from this episode, and the grown-ups too. If any of them has impure feelings towards another or if any two have secret relations, they should confess to you orally or in a letter. We respect the privacy of everybody's correspondence. But I think it absolutely essential for the ideal of the Ashram that nobody should have secret relations with anybody. It has been my experience over many years that such relations militate against purity of character. I hope you have shown all my letters on those subject to . . .[5]. Other senior inmates also may read them.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8341. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1], [2], [3], [4] & [5] The names have been omitted.

CWMG-II-IV

219. NOTES

Untouchability among Swaminarayans and Jains

A gentleman writes.[1]

I did not know this. I had always believed from my childhood that there was no untouchability at all among the Swaminarayans because the Gandhi family has had very close relations with the followers of this sect for many years past. But I have been able to read very little literature of that sect. From the books on Jainism and my Jain friends, I have come to know that there should not be an inkling of untouchability among the Jains. But the Jains also are very much influenced by untouchability. The Poet Rajchandra often used to say that Jainism had spread mainly among the Vaniks, so the Jains who should have the highest courage were filled with cowardice and those who should have the best knowledge have become dry, and penance without knowledge had no power in it. Having known the Jains very well, I bear testimony to the truth in this allegation and that has always made me unhappy. The Jains have always regarded ahimsa as their exclusive virtue but its real form has been completely hidden. Kindness towards living beings other than human beings has always assumed an acute form and the Jains do not hesitate to enforce that even by compulsion. If ahimsa in its pure form were alive among the Jains, there would have been no trace of untouchability in their midst, every Jain would be an embodiment of love and thousands of men and women social workers would have come forth from amongst them.

Dhed and Bhangi

I give below[2] the experience of a Harijan teacher to show what kind of difficulties a person who works as a teacher among the

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that cobblers, generally considered untouchables, had been accepted by a Swaminarayan sect and allowed to enter its temples, and that among the Jains, there was an *Antyaja* saint known as Mahetaraj Muni, who was very popular in his time.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that Dheds considered the Bhangis as their inferiors. The Bhangis wanted to educate their children with Dhed children but the Dhed elders were opposed to their children studying with the Bhangi children and separate classes for the Bhangi children had to be started.

Harijans has to face, how cautiously he has to deal with them, and how he has to identify himself completely with the children.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 26-3-1933

220. ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Absolute Law[1]

You seem to have grown very impatient. Please examine carefully the distinction I have made between the castes and the system of varnas. Untouchability springs from the sub-castes. When untouchability has been removed, the barriers of caste will also go, followed by the divisions of sub-castes. In the case of varnashramadharma however there is not the slightest suggestion of untouchability, i.e., in the varnashramadharma as I understand it. It is a spiritual law like physical laws, and has no exceptions. Whether or not we accept it, the law will continue to operate. One man may rest content after knowing that water is a compound of oxygen and hydrogen; another may discover its properties and potentialities and put them to various uses. It was one such inquiring mind that invented the steam engine. Those who understand the significance of the law of varnas fall into this category. I am never tired of saying that there is no idea of superiority and inferiority in varnadharma as I understand it; where then is the need for a specific demand to remove it? Dr. Ambedkar has a right to be angry with caste Hindus because they do not speak as reasonably as they ought to. You at any rate should understand that to declare a war on varnashramadharma cannot but harm the struggle for the removal of untouchability.

Only One Varna Nowadays[2]

If we must classify all Hindus according to varnas, there is today no varna other than the Shudra. And the ultimate good of

[1] A correspondent had asked whether there might not be other Harijans who would subscribe to Dr. Ambedkar's views. It was possible, he had argued, that in their heart of hearts there might be lurking a feeling that their serfdom would end only with the wiping out of the caste system, the varnas and everything else. Was it not Gandhiji's aim, too, to eliminate all inequalities in the long run?

[2] A co-worker had asked, "Since you wish to preserve varnadharma how can you say that there is only one varna, viz., Shudra, although as a matter of fact we do not deserve to be called even that?"

Hindu society lies in admitting this state of affairs. If we admitted this the distinctions of higher and lower varnas would cease to exist without our having to do anything about it. Not that after this no one may endeavour to pursue spiritual knowledge or any other branch of learning; none the less it does mean that all shall earn their bread by their own effort and through body labour and shall apply their other talents in the service of the masses. True, we have not seen varnadharma of this kind being practised; I have however no doubt that it must have been followed in what Hinduism regarded as *Satyayuga*[1].

What Will Mere Temple-entry Avail?[2]

I have never believed that mere temple-entry would solve the problem of untouchability but certainly I do believe that untouchability will not disappear unless Harijans get the freedom to enter temples like the caste Hindus. And I also believe that after the temple doors open for them means of wealth and wisdom will not be difficult to find. I know very well that even a highly educated Harijan with a good income cannot gain admittance to an orthodox Hindu home, his untouchability does not leave him. But his untouchability will go if the temples are thrown open to Harijans, i.e., as soon as the unity of religion is found. Anyway I have never said that no constructive work can be accomplished without temple-entry; in fact constructive work is the main programme of the association for removal of untouchability.

A Matter of Pledge[3]

You have completely lost track of [our ideal]. Would one following the path of truth care for the consequence? Temple-entry is certainly a part of the pledge the Hindu society took in the meeting of September 25 held after the Yeravda Pact. *Antyajas* have a right to enter temples; therefore we ought to try to keep our pledge even if the entire society is opposed to it. To a votary of truth this should be as clear as light. Society's opposition will be only momentary in so far as we never want to force

[1] Age of Truth

[2] The barrister president of a Harijan uplift society had argued that temple-entry was not the answer to all problems and that means of educational and economic progress ought to be made available first.

[3] A worker, irked by the opposition to removal of untouchability, had suggested other non-controversial programmes. He also wanted to know if the temple-entry movement would serve any useful purpose, since it was a step side-tracking the principle of non-co-operation.

our entry. We intend to preserve dharma at the cost of our lives. How long then would the opposition last?

The resolution pledging all this includes the demand for legislation as well. With this resolution Hindu society has given the assurance that so far as it can it would certainly get such and such things done through the present Legislatures. And if we fail to achieve it, it is no doubt going to be the first task of the swaraj Parliament. Can there be a more unambiguous pledge? I am surprised that you do not see the great difference between offering and asking for co-operation. You would not co-operate with me if I offered to lead you to a den of vice, but does it follow that you would not want, would not even ask for, my co-operation if I wanted to guide you to the house of the Lord? It was and still is our duty to ask for people's co-operation for the Bill.

Branches of the Same Tree[1]

The twigs, leaves and fruit of the same tree, though they are separate from one another, do not remain untouchable among themselves; on the contrary they grow, in form and substance, with one another. The human race has to live like a tree. If one branch is severed as untouchable, it dries up and the tree is weakened to that extent. This is exactly what has happened to Hindu society.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 26-3-1933

221. WOMEN'S DUTY

With the passage of time, I feel that women will have to make a very big contribution to the work of serving the Harijans. The whole world knows that woman most truly protects religion because she is by instinct conservative. If she sustains superstitions, she also observes *vratas*. A religion cannot be safeguarded without tolerance and patience. Woman is the embodiment of tolerance and patience. Religion would not endure even a moment without faith. A man's faith cannot measure up to a woman's. Only linguists may know the true position, but in Sanskrit and in the languages derived from it, we find that many words

[1] A correspondent had described the movement for the removal of untouchability as no less futile than crossing berries with mangoes.

indicative of virtue are feminine. *Shri*[1], *smriti*[2], *medha*[3], *dhriti*[4], *kshama*[5], ahimsa, *pavitrata*[6], *shanti*[7], *daya*[8], *namrata*[9], are all feminine names. And everywhere these qualities are met with in greater measure in women. I do know of saints who dismiss the proposition by saying that one glimpses these virtues in a woman because she is often illiterate. But the sum total of the experience of the whole world bears testimony to what I say. The above-mentioned virtues have no connection with knowledge of the alphabet but have a direct bearing on religion. Moreover, religion would have perished long ago if it was thought that the educated alone could preserve it. It is not many centuries since the art of printing was invented. But religion has come down to us from time immemorial. We have not heard of any religious preachers having been praised for their knowledge of the letters. On the contrary their followers have proudly affirmed that if they had any literary knowledge, it was of little significance. Whatever intelligence they had in them was only God-given. Their knowledge of the language was not bookish but was due to their penance and devotion to truth.

Whether all this is true or false, I have long held this belief and even if it is an illusion, so long as it is not removed it is to me not a falsehood but pure truth. So for the religious activity of removing untouchability, I am laying great store by women's contribution. Without their help and goodwill, this task cannot be accomplished. Hence I reproduce the following extract from a letter received from a woman from Cuttack.[10]

Because I have cited the example of Utkal, the women of Gujarat should not feel that I mean to suggest that they do no such work. They should not forthwith bring any such charge against me. But at the same time they should never imagine that they alone render such service and no one else does so. If anyone has this misconception, it is only to remove it that I have

[1] Beauty, grace, wealth
[2] Remembrance
[3] Intellect
[4] Fortitude
[5] Forbearance
[6] Purity
[7] Serenity
[8] Compassion
[9] Humility
[10] The letter is not translated here; for a summary of it, *vide* "Notes", pp. 183-4.

quoted the above letter. The women, and even the men, of Utkal are considered to have the least awakening. But even there women have started working. This may, perhaps, give fresh encouragement to the women of Gujarat. I do not know whether even in Gujarat the women are doing such work as the women in Cuttack do. If they are doing it, they should send me an account of it and if they are not, they should start doing so.

Men as well as women have to do two kinds of work—one among the Harijans and the other among caste Hindus. One has to bring home patiently to the caste Hindus that untouchability is a great sin and also raise fresh workers from among them. The magnitude of the work is so great and the dirt of untouchability has accumulated to such an extent that as long as several men and women do not come out to work, this monster of untouchability will not be destroyed. If fortunately there has been a genuine religious awakening, all those who have had such awakening will be able to do this work easily.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 26-3-1933

222. *PROPAGANDA* v. *CONSTRUCTION*

The summary which I gave of a Harijan's severe criticism of the Savarna Harijan Seva Sangh of his Province has produced good effect. The workers have become vigilant. But they are also baffled. Does putting money into the pockets of Harijans mean constructive work or teaching a few children, digging a few wells and getting a few temples opened? This is work for a century. Propaganda means a countrywide effort to create among the people a feeling against untouchability through speeches, pamphlets, and social dinners, parties, etc. (The reader should understand the difference between social dinner and inter-dining. Social friendly dinners mean sitting together for meals at a social get-together, each one eating from his own plate food which is acceptable to him. While interdining means eating at each other's home food prepared by the inviting party. Brahmins and Vanias who believe in caste restrictions will participate in social dinners but may not associate with inter-dining.) What a contrast between constructive work progressing at snail's pace and propaganda work conducted at the speed of a hurricane! This is what puzzles the workers.

Propaganda is of course essential. But mere propaganda is likely to prove as short-lived as a bubble. Really speaking, the most effective propaganda lies in pure constructive work. But since pure constructive work is a near impossibility, propaganda is necessary to supplement constructive work. Pure constructive work means constructive activities by men and women workers of character who have perfect faith in the cause and who do their work in a missionary spirit. We, however, are imperfect. We may, therefore, sincerely do the best we can by way of constructive work and simultaneously carry on propaganda, too.

Here I wish to examine the question only from the financial point of view. One thing should be self-evident, namely, that we are bound to get a hundred per cent return on whatever money is put into the Harijans' pockets in the right manner. Whereas the money spent on propaganda work will remain an uncertain investment till we actually see the result.

I would, therefore, advise all branches of the Sangh to utilize the contributions they have received for constructive activities. We shall never have to repent for the money so spent. If we get from among caste Hindus, teachers, masons, carpenters, etc., to work without remuneration or for nominal remuneration, our constructive work will progress so fast that we shall have very little need for propaganda. In that case the entire money except what is paid as wages to the caste Hindu teachers and artisans will go to the Harijans. I would regard the money thus spent on running a school or digging a well as reaching the pockets of Harijans. Our ideal, of course, should be to see that the wages in connection with public wells or schools for Harijans should go into the pockets of Harijans. But, till such time as we are able to reach this ideal, we should humbly content ourselves with the next best thing. Every institution for Harijan welfare should maintain a separate account for such constructive work.

Propaganda work should be self-supporting. Pamphlets ought not to be distributed free of charge. A public-spirited printing press may print at nominal charge or free of charge, and the cost price of each pamphlet may be borne by the people. One who wishes to circulate the pamphlet among his acquaintances free of charge should pay for the copies himself or anyone from among the people whose interest has been aroused in the movement should pay for them. Pamphlets received free are thrown into the waste-paper basket. Only a speculator would do such business. But even he adds such expenses to the price of the things to be sold. A religious body like the Harijan Seva Sangh simply cannot afford to indulge in such

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speculation. From whom would it recover the expenses incurred? What information about eradication of untouchability can we get from a report stating that one crore copies of pamphlets were distributed? Who can say how many people cleansed themselves of the evil of untouchability after reading them? Who can say, even, how many people read them? If, however, the reader had paid one pie at least for a copy, we may assume that he must have read some portion of it.

Propaganda work carried on along these lines would not only be self-supporting but, if it becomes popular, it would promote constructive work, too. I cherish the ambition even today that, if the *Harijan* weeklies become popular, we may be able to save some money from their proceeds and utilize it for constructive work. The reader may note that some of the work of these weeklies is done with the help of volunteers and that, whenever money is paid, it is paid at lower than market rates. I mention this fact merely to point out that the *Harijan* weeklies are in the nature of propaganda work and that they are also self-supporting. *Harijan* is published in Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati and Hindi. The Gujarati edition is on the point of becoming self-supporting. The Hindi has not become so. The principle for pamphlets, books, etc., should be the same as for the *Harijan* weeklies.

And now about the expenses on the salaries and travelling allowances of the workers engaged in propaganda activities. Most of such workers would be caste Hindus. They, however, would never ask for any payment. What effect can the speeches of paid workers have on the people? Their travelling expenses should not have to be borne by the institution employing them but should be met by the people. That is to say, the reception committees of the places which have invited them should bear the expenses. The permanent body may arrange these things but should not bear their expenses. And lastly about the office expenses, the salary of the accountant, the travelling expenses of the secretary, the rent for the building, etc. This expenditure should not exceed ten per cent of the total budget. Any institution whose administrative expenses total up to more than ten per cent should be looked upon as a self-destroying and useless organization.

It is my firm opinion that the institution for serving Harijans which has been set up solely for the purification of religion and which exists for that one purpose cannot continue to function in any other way. If I have been able to clarify my idea the reader should be convinced that

(1) it includes a mighty organization;
(2) there is great scope for widespread propaganda;
(3) it is a test of the people's faith and also conducive to its growth.

Finally, it is necessary to state that I am offering advice without being engaged in that field at the moment; so my views may be wrong. If they do not appeal to the workers' intellect, they deserve to be discarded. Even if they appear suitable, I do not have the right to get them accepted or put into practice, but the Harijan Sevak Sangh and its sub-committees certainly have that right. My duty is to give my opinion and to keep quiet. The institutions concerned may give thought to this article and send their suggestions to Thakkar Bapa. Then, on receiving his suggestions, all of them may act accordingly.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 26-3-1933

223. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

[*March 26, 1933*][1]

CHI. MARY,

My joint letter[2] set forth my views not necessarily for your acceptance. You are to do just what you think is best. My letter was a help to your thoughts and no more. You can get and give the best only if you do what appears to you to be proper. You two have come to see things for yourselves and not to take a set course at the Ashram.

I know you did not suggest but I meant that many in the Ashram were unconsciously slavishly following the Ashram routine and therefore not getting the best out of it. And then many of them, unlike you, have come in the hope of forming their character and making something out of themselves. They may and can afford to follow the routine unintelligently but you may not and dare not. If you follow the routine you must do so intelligently and whole-heartedly. Therefore you should take only what you can easily digest of the routine.

You must not get malaria. You should take things easy. The bowels must be kept in order. The stomach should not be loaded.

[1] From *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. III, p. 202
[2] *Vide* pp. 9-10.

No cold bath whilst you are at all weak. No pulses, only a little bread plus milk, greens and fruit. Smear the uncovered limbs with paraffin oil. Do not be afraid of it or its smell. It does not soil anything. The mosquitoes keep away from paraffin. Do not live under tension. This is a mental process. 'Be careful for nothing' is both a spiritual and physiological maxim.

The *Punch* is quite all right in spite of the hard facts of life but the harder fact is that neither Mahadev nor I nor any other of our company can give a minute to anything outside *Harijan* and other kindred work. Therefore we arrange a *Punch* and *Judy* show from among the threads of our work. And it beats the original, I assure you. You may pass this on to your aunt.

Others besides you have asked me to write on Jesus. If God wants me to do it, He will find the time for me.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5998. Also C.W. 3323. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

224. LETTER TO DUNCAN GREENLEES

March 26, 1933

Consider it a temptation. Ever since you came my eyes are fixed on you. I on my part want to entrust to you a pure Harijan school where you can teach both the children and their parents.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 202

225. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

March 26, 1933

BOYS AND GIRLS,

I have your letter. You must have heard about . . .[1]. All of you must take a lesson from what happened. If you wish to be good, and follow truth, observe the following rules:

(1) Nobody should hide anything or talk anything secret with anybody.

(2) Nobody should meet anybody in private.

[1] The name has been omitted.

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(3) A boy must not have friendship with a girl. It is not natural. Why should a girl wish to have friendship with a boy instead of with another girl?

(4) The boys and girls living in the Ashram are like blood brothers and sisters. Just as brothers and sisters cannot marry, so also those living in the Ashram at the same time cannot marry. The relationship between brother and sister is not friendship. It is a pure relationship and of a kind which a man or woman can have with any other woman or man. Brother and sister never wish to be alone. There is nothing secret between them.

(5) If any boy or girl feels an impure desire, they should immediately confess it before their elders.

I desire that you should observe these rules voluntarily.

BAPU

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

226. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

March 26, 1933

CHI. JANAKIMAIYA,

What is this? You do not even reply to my letter. Are you so much afraid of me? If you feel unhappy about giving money for Harijans,[1] tell me so. Is it that you find the purse-strings easy to loosen when you wish to send me oranges, but too tight when you have to give money for Harijan work?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Jamnalal went to Bombay yesterday. He will be examined there by Dr. Modi. His health is perfectly all right. He has gone only for your and his own satisfaction.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2911

[1] For the David Scheme; *vide* pp. 90-1.

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227. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 26, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your mail.

I wrote to you about . . .[1] yesterday.[2] I have also sent his letters. I understand what you say regarding Narahari.

You did right in paying Parachure Shastri the expenses for the journey and fixing Rs. 30 to be sent to his family. Arrange a class for those who wish to learn Sanskrit, and also ask him how many hours he can give for teaching Marathi. Let me know how you find him. Write about Shantaram[3] also. I would be very happy if his intellectual powers develop.

Read my letter[4] to Titus in which I have written to him about milk. How many times does Parachure Shastri drink milk? If milk is preserved for him in a clean bottle every day and if the bottle is wrapped in thick or double or twofold wet cloth it would remain as cool as ice and he can drink it without heating it. It would be better if he drinks unboiled milk. The bottles and the corks should be washed every day in boiling water. The cork should be made of strong material. The bottle should be filled to the top, so that no air might remain inside. I think that all those who are trying the experiment of living on milk would benefit more if they drink it unboiled. I have been drinking my milk unboiled for the last six weeks. Show this letter to Purushottam. His view should be treated as final. Kusum still gets fever, and yet she is better! I don't wish to suggest that this is impossible. If the range of temperature is going down, she may certainly be said to be better.

BAPU

[PS.]

[Letters enclosed for] Soniramji, Duncan, Mary, Parachure and Titus.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8342. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The name has been omitted.
[2] *Vide* pp. 199-200.
[3] Parachure Shastri's son
[4] *Vide* p. 198.

228. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

March 26, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I got your beautiful letter. I hope you will always keep up this attitude. Haven't I promised to preserve the yarn for you ?

I will keep my promise. You need not refuse it. You certainly have a right to ask anything from me. Your request for the yarn was blameless. It was the manner in which you made it that was wrong. You have now rectified your mistake, and so I have nothing to say.

You see how my hopes are being reduced to ashes. How much I thought of . . .[1] and of . . .[2]? I could never suspect them. I had built high hopes on them, but they were like a house built on sand. What should we do to realize the ideal which the Ashram has placed before itself ? It can be done only if everybody tries to do what he can independently of others. Do you do that? I hope you know my definition of *brahmacharya*. Do you think you can observe such *brahmacharya*? Likes and dislikes have no place in it at all. I don't wish to criticize you, nor to lecture to you. I only beg. Till my begging bowl is filled, the Ashram will never become a true Ashram.

I am glad that you wrote about your health. If you eat crushed cabbage, uncooked, it may possibly do you no harm, but it will certainly do no harm if you eat it boiled. It is not necessary to eat all vegetables uncooked. It will be enough if you eat a few raw vegetables. But the main thing is that you should speak as little as possible. The delay in following this rule may lead to such serious consequences that subsequent self-control will not avail you. Everything should be done at the right time. The throat requires rest exactly when it is sensitive.

I am glad that you became acquainted with Maruti. Write to the couple from time to time. Lakshmi wants a companion from the Ashram. Is there anybody whom you can send? Also write to Lakshmidas and find out if she can stay there.

Jamnalalji told me that there were many Maharashtrian ladies in the Ashram whom he had sent there. It is his desire, which

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

he wanted me to convey to you, that you should train some of them for the Mahila Ashram. Is there anybody whom you can train? She should be a mature woman. Let me know if there is any such. Jamnalalji wants this to be conveyed to Narandas also. I will not mention this message separately in my letter to him. I reserve for it some further explanation in connection with it.

I cannot say anything about the White Paper[1]. Moreover, the matter is out of my sphere while I am in jail, and so I have not even read it.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10331. Also C.W. 6771. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

229. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 26, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

This is in continuation of the message from Jamnalal which I have given in my letter[2] to Prema. One reason why we have been able to take no service from the older women in the Ashram (after the struggle) is the Ashram's lack of ability, that is, my lack of ability. When Jamnalal talked to me about some other ladies, I felt a stab in my heart. He also felt unhappy that he had to make the suggestion which he did. But what could he do ? He had often asked me in the past for workers, but I could not do anything then. I think we have got an opportunity now. I first thought of Lakshmibehn[3] and then of Durga[4]. There is a Mahila Ashram in Maharashtra, and that too in Wardha. There will be Vinoba's company and guidance, too. There is also Janakibehn. Will Lakshmibehn agree to go and stay there without Panditji ? Will Panditji like that ? If not, why not ? Mathuri[5] also will go and stay with Lakshmibehn. She will get the same kind of training there that she does in the Ashram. If Lakshmibehn does not agree to go or cannot go, why shouldn't Durga go? She is in any case bound to remain separated [from

[1] Setting out the British Government's proposals for constitutional reforms in India

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] Wife of Narayan M. Khare

[4] Wife of Mahadev Desai

[5] Daughter of Narayan M. Khare

Mahadev] at present, probably for some years. She will not have to do hard physical work there. She will have only to supervise. The burden will not be too heavy for her health. She may certainly take Nirmala[1] with her if she wishes. Narayanswami[2] also may go if he wishes. I thought about Kashi[3] too. But she is a complete invalid and so I dropped the idea. I cannot think about Santok[4] just now, and I do not know Jamna's[5] capacity. I think Lakshmibehn and Durga would be the best. Manibehn[6], too, I think, can go. She has done such work in Champaran. I have not discussed this idea with Mahadev here. I cannot think of any other senior women. I think I have given you ample information. If any lady volunteers are willing to go, let me know. And if the Maharashtrian ladies who have recently joined wish to go, they also may go. Their services will certainly be required. But there should be a mature and experienced woman at their head who would look after all the women as her daughters and be in charge of the Ashram. The work requires maturity, purity of character and common sense. Other qualities will follow from this.

I hope Mohan[7] has fully recovered.

I have already written about Raojibhai of Dharasana and, therefore, say nothing about him in this letter. It is not our duty to shelter him. I think it is beyond our means to do so.

I have also written to you about buffalo flesh. Sitla Sahai continues to write to me. But I tell him every time in my reply that he should convince you. Does Mahavir write to you ? I have had no letter from him at all. Gangabehn has helped him to get a job of Rs. 25 per month,[8] and she says in her letter that she will try to get some work for Krishnamaiyadevi also. How are Maitri and Durga ? I had no letter from ...[9]. This creates a doubt in my mind whether she has fallen again.

BAPU

[1] Mahadev Desai's sister
[2] Probably Narayan Desai
[3] Wife of Chhaganlal Gandhi
[4] Wife of Maganlal Gandhi
[5] The addressee's wife
[6] Wife of Narahari Parikh
[7] Narahari Parikh's son
[8] *Vide* "Letter to Gangabehn Vaidya", p. 182.
[9] The name has been omitted.

CWMG-IIV

[PS.]

Prabhavati has not received a copy of the discourses[1]. Send one to her. I have received today's post, that is, the letters posted on the 25th. I have replied to Amina in a separate letter enclosed with this. What is the doctor's diagnosis of Mohan's illness? I got Jamna's letter. Tell her only this : She should put complete trust in Purushottam and continue the experiment faithfully.[2] She is bound to get cured.

[PPS.]

The list of books and chart of stars are attached separately. Nineteen letters are bound together and Amina's is kept loose.[3]

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8343. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

230. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

March 26, 1933

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

I have your letter. I am returning the list of books. It will be worth while, when you get the time, to go through the books which I have marked in it. If you do not understand any words in them, you may take Dr. Talwalkar's or Dr. Hariprasad's help. The best thing to do however would be to read up one or two short books on anatomy and physiology. You would then be able to follow by and by what you may not follow now. You have sufficient patience and I am sure, therefore, that you will master the subject. The experiment of drinking unboiled milk is worth trying. Write to Gaurishankar and ask him. Do you suffer from constipation? Keep me informed about the results of the experiment of Chimanlal and Jamna.

BAPU

[PS.]

I got your letter. For stopping vomiting, enema with 20 grains of soda bicarb in water may be given slowly drop by drop.

[1] Which Gandhiji wrote for the Ashram inmates from Yeravda Prison in 1930; *vide* Vol. XLIV. They were subsequently published under the title *Mangalprabhat*.

[2] *Vide* p. 70.

[3] According to the source, this was preceded by a list of the letters.

This will take half an hour. A special catch is available which permits the water to flow only drop by drop. Ask Mrs. Lazarus to show you the method.

From Gujarati: C.W. 910. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

231. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

March 26, 1933

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I have your report. If you show these people the same love that you did for Gita when you nursed her without any feeling of aversion during her attack of smallpox, even their filth will smell sweet to you. I hope you take with you medicines for the sick. If you work with the patience of the Meru, you will never give way to despair. You are not the only person doing this kind of work. There are others also doing similar work in other parts of the country. I have not written about them but their work is going on. Such work should become a common thing among us.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 354. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

232. LETTER TO MITHUBEHN PETIT

March 26, 1933

CHI. MITHUBEHN,

I got your letter. You have undertaken a Herculean task. You will succeed in it only if the women whose signatures you have sent are sincere workers who will remain with you till the last, and have a religious spirit in them and are capable of strict self-discipline. Do not embark on anything beyond your strength. Success will be yours if you have the necessary strength.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: S.N. 20708

CWMG - IIV

233. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 26, 1933

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I shall write a few things just now and the rest later. Your articles are the only thing in the Hindi *Harijan* that we find worth reading. Your language is sweet and vigorous but I cannot be satisfied with this. A major portion of the material will have to be sent from here till proper arrangements are made there. Mahadev and I will translate as well as write original articles. Viyogiji can correct our Hindi. Moreover the Sangh should supply notices, suggestions, provincial news, and such things. All this should go toward raising the sale of Hindi *Harijan* to thousands of copies. It ought to become the chief gazette of the Seva Sangh. I have refused to send items to Ramdasji or anyone else for translation. *Harijan Sevak* cannot be successful at all under such an arrangement. If no translators can be found in Delhi and Viyogiji cannot undertake the translation or arrange for it I would consider it necessary to discontinue the *Harijan Sevak*.

I notice that there is more work to do for the *bastis* of Calcutta.

I understand about the David Scheme. The suggestion should be considered. I shall write more. Appoint the Selection Board.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 7934. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

234. LETTER TO SULOCHANA

March 26, 1933

CHI. SULOCHANA,

I have your letter. As regards marriage you must tell your father that this period of your life should be devoted to studies and that you will let your wishes be known if on the completion of studies you desire to marry. Marriage cannot be essential for all

girls. There are many women in the world who remain unmarried.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9133

235. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

March 27, 1933

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

With reference to Seth Jamnalalji's transfer to Arthur Road Prison for medical examination, will you please ascertain from the Government whether I may correspond with him freely and receive letters from him freely in view of the daily interviews I was permitted to have whilst he was here, of course subject to the limitation of the correspondence strictly to his health and untouchability matters ?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

From a photostat: G.N. 3884; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 261

236. LETTER TO BHAILAL

March 27, 1933

BHAI BHAILAL,

I have received your letter. I intend to make use of the information given therein.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3299

CWMG - LIV

237. LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI

March 27, 1933

BHAI NANALAL[1],

I send herewith Maganlal's[2] letter and telegram. You will also find on the telegram form the reply I am sending to him.

It seems to me that now the only thing to do is to effect a partition. That also will require the signatures of all. Hence in my reply, I am asking Maganlal to come here. I believe that Chhaganlal[3] also will welcome the partition. And Champa[4] seems to be eager for it. If that is so, and if you do not think Maganlal's presence necessary at all, you should wire to him from there asking him not to come. However if you think with me that the presence of all the three brothers will be necessary you too should send a wire to Maganlal asking him to come.

I feel worried about Champa's and Ratilal's[5] attitude. Champa will naturally follow her father's advice and Ratilal seems to be under Champa's influence at present. I have no trust now in Prabhashankar[6]. His motives do not at all seem to be pure. That day he showed no regard for truth or courtesy. I felt that for the sake of money he was ready to harm the interests of his daughter and son-in-law. I will not, therefore, be inclined in his favour, that is, I will not approve of his being made the guardian. However, I certainly do not think myself to be the only friend of the Doctor. I regard you and Ratubhai[7] to be equally his friends. You may certainly, therefore, appoint Prabhashankar as the guardian if you so wish. Sardar, to whom I have shown this letter, is of my opinion. You may rest assured that I will not come in the way of anything that may be decided. I have only explained my own feeling. If it finds no echo in your heart, it should be ignored. I am writing this so that I may have a clear conscience in the matter. I will have no objection to your showing this letter to Prabhashankar. In fact I wish that you should do so. It seems

[1] Business manager and partner of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta
[2], [3] & [5] Sons of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta
[4] Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's daughter-in-law; Ratilal's wife
[6] Champa's father
[7] Chhaganlal's father-in-law

best that he should know what I feel. I do not wish to write all this to Champa and Ratilal. It is not right that I should tell them all this. But just as I feel unhappy at the thought of creating ill-will towards Prabhashankar in their minds, I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you what I thought.

I am not happy that this business is getting complicated and dragging on. Please try your best to settle it as early as possible.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9640

238. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

March 27, 1933

CHI. LAKSHMI[1],

At last I had a letter from you. I did write to you. I hope you keep good health. What is your daily programme of work now?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Can I take it that Uncle has completely recovered now?

CHI. LAKSHMI JERAJANI
KHADI BHANDAR
KALBADEVI[2]
BOMBAY

From Gujarati: C.W. 2814. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya, Bombay

239. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

March 27, 1933

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

I have your letter. After reading the article in Gujarati *Harijan*, you may ask me whatever you want. I have written on similar lines for the English. It will be published shortly. I know that you get something for your monthly expenses. There is noth-

[1] Niece of Vithaldas Jerajani, a khadi worker of Bombay
[2] The source has "Kalka Devi".

CWMG - IIV

ing wrong in it. If this money is drawn from the main account, I would not think it wrong in principle. But if that account can't bear the burden, I would not mind the money being drawn from this account. I know that in this poor country it is difficult to find all honorary workers, but no institution will find workers like you a burden.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI PARIKSHITLAL MAJMUDAR
UNTOUCHABILITY ERADICATION SOCIETY
ELLISBRIDGE
AHMEDABAD
B. B. & C. I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3995

240. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

March 27, 1933

CHI. NARMADA,

I got your letter. You did well in burying the piece of meat with your own hand. I hope you took it away from those people without hurting their feelings. Remember that nothing should be done forcibly.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2775. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

241. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

March 27, 1933

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I have been writing to you regularly. What can I do if the letters do not reach you? I wrote a letter in Gujarati on hearing from you. Why did it not reach you? That was a long letter. [All][1] your questions had been answered.

It is well that you did not take up the duties of a watchman.

That you do not receive regular letters or visitors does not mean that you should give up [your right to receive] either.

[1] The letter is damaged here and at several places.

Even if no one or no letter comes, you must learn the art of remaining cheerful. If they come, well and good, but you must be content even if they don't come. If they don't come you may consider all that time well-saved for some work. But take it that however busy I may be I shall always save some time for writing to you.

I shall write to Narandas about the *Mangal Pravachan*.[1]

My weight is 104 lb. which is good. I am taking fresh milk, papaw, oranges and dates.... I take it twice a day. I wake up in the morning.... The *Harijan* practically takes up the whole day.

I hope Kanta knows that I am deliberately not writing to her so that she may receive other letters.

Give up all worry.

Lakshmi has been married to Maruti.[2] About 100 Harijans came from Ahmedabad to bless them. They were all served with fruits. Maruti lives at Bardoli with Lakshmidas.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3305

242. INTERVIEW TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

March 27, 1933

Now more than ever before redoubled efforts should be made to open all the private temples to the Harijans.

Asked if the failure of the Assembly to pass the motion for circulation of the Bill held up temple-entry, Gandhiji replied in the negative and proceeded:

It does not mean that the temple-entry question would be held up, but it does mean that what is due to the Harijans in the light of the pledge given in September last has not been paid and, therefore, every effort should be made in order to redeem that pledge. Meanwhile whatever other ways are open to educating public opinion and gaining access to temples for the Harijans should be tried and one thing that naturally suggests itself to me is the opening of all private temples to Harijans.

There is no custom in connection with the private temples which can be pleaded by the third party in order to prevent the

[1] *Vide* p. 216.
[2] *Vide* pp. 15-6.

entry of Harijans to them. They should be thrown open to them and those who have none may even build new temples for the Hindus in general and these would be the model temples with model management and model priests so that they would be a true expression of Hinduism.

The Hindustan Times, 28-3-1933

243. LETTER TO VERRIER ELWIN

March 28, 1933

MY DEAR VERRIER,

Although I have often found that truth however ugly it might look in reality did good, I believe that A.[1] came nearer to you both. The fact is that even if one party is pure the others tend to become so. But when the others are striving in the same direction the success of one almost ensures the success of the others.

I did not tell her that you were being unconsciously self-deceived. She says she did not wish to convey any such meaning to you. I had no proof that you were being self-deceived. What I did say was that all of us were likely to be self-deceived but that you were incapable of conscious falsehood and that therefore you would confess your promise at once if you had ever made it.

There is no doubt that she loves you both and she wants to work with you. She is doing some Harijan work now. I have told her that it [is] impossible at present but if all goes well, there is no reason why she should not be able to work with you later.

And now about Mary[2]. To me it seems quite necessary that you should separate for the time being and test yourselves. Mary or you may go to Almora or to Sabarmati or Wardha or any other place you may think fit and do there some Harijan work of a temporary character. If you have shed exclusive love altogether you should feel happy as well in association as in separation and just now there should be positive joy in separation. I have found this indispensable in all such cases and there have been several. You should think it over and give immediate effect to the proposal if you find substance in it.

And now for your health.

It is now 3.45 a.m. and I must leave you in God's care. His care is the only true care. A human being's is good enough only

[1] Alla; *vide* "Letter to Verrier Elwin", pp. 59-60.
[2] Mary Gillett

in so far as it anticipates His. You will therefore accept of my suggestions only that which finds an echo in your heart. Every moment makes me humbler and conscious of the sublime fact that man's true effort consists only in knowing the will of God who is Truth.

You carry the love of every one of the company.

With deepest love,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20727

244. LETTER TO ABHA

March 28, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Your questions are very queer. If I knew exactly who I was it would be a great feat. My mission is service of all.

I think that the legend about Radha and Krishna is celestial.

I would advise you not to study me but study God which is Truth.

Yours sincerely,

SHREEMATI ABHA
18-B HARTAKI BAGAN LANE
P. O. BEADON ST.
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20728

245. LETTER TO AMULYA KUMAR BASU

March 28, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. You have no cause whatsoever for apologizing for doing what you conceive is your duty. I give the others the same credit for honesty of purpose that I would claim for myself. All therefore I would expect you to do is never to swerve from truth even in order to gain an end which you may consider to be desirable. You will then receive congratulations from me for your fighting me, and who knows that you may not teach me to see the Light if I am enveloped in darkness. It is

therefore in a friendly spirit that I shall approach your paper[1], and if I find untruthfulness, unfairness or bitterness anywhere in it, I shall draw your attention, and I would like you to do the same thing towards me if you find in the *Harijan* any untruth, any exaggeration, any discourtesy towards those who think differently from me. Rightly or wrongly, I regard untouchability as the greatest curse for Hindu religion. I am therefore sparing no pains to get rid of that curse. But if it is a blessing and if anybody can make me see it, I shall accept him as my deliverer, for, he would have saved me from an error which I have nursed practically for the past fifty years.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. AMULYA KUMAR BASU
5 AKSHAY KUMAR BASU LANE
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20731

246. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

March 28, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I hope you received my letter[2] in Hindi which I wrote the day before yesterday, i. e., 26th. I do think that we ought to find out a means of dealing with the *basti* problem in Calcutta as a whole, and not piecemeal. When therefore you next go to Calcutta I suggest your having an informal meeting of the principal Municipal Councillors. No matter what vested interests have grown up, they should be attacked and the problem dealt with. From what you write to me, the cheapest method evidently seems to be to demolish these *bastis*. The opposition to the introduction of a more humane method of carrying night-soil seems to me to be perfectly useless. Improved methods must in the beginning stages mean more expense, but undoubtedly less in the end. The question behind all the difficulties that arise resolves itself, as a rule, into apathy on the part of those who profess their appreciation of the necessity for reform, but are not prepared to sacrifice anything for it. You must therefore turn this apathy into active sympathy, and a way out will be quickly found.

[1] *Sanatani*, an English weekly
[2] *Vide* p. 218.

As to the Hindi *Harijan*, I wrote to you the day before yesterday telling you that the only articles that were found worth reading were yours, except the first. Your style is pleasing, simple, idiomatic. Your method of dealing with the subject is plain, direct and easily understandable. Of course the translation of my articles was faulty, but that difficulty will now be got over by sending translations ready-made from here. The Hindi will have to be polished there. This ought to reduce expense and improve the paper.

Pray do not worry about the David Scheme. I just told you how I came to write about it. But I quite understand your difficulty. If it becomes necessary, we must naturally fall back upon the Central Fund. But let us for a while wait and see if we can get even half a dozen subscribers with the full amounts. I do not despair; only I never get time to frame nice letters. But I will do so one of these days. When I have one or two names I propose to announce your name with these.[1] There was no question of your letting me down by your enthusiastically taking up the Scheme.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

[PS.][2]

You would remember our discussion about Ramanand Sannyasi. After that, I had written to him that I had received complaints concerning his character. I enclose his reply. He now writes to me that you have asked him to produce Urdu *Harijan*.

BAPU

From a copy: C.W. 7935. Courtesy: G. D. Birla. Also S.N. 20732

247. LETTER TO ABINASH CHANDRA DAS

March 28, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I know the difficulties that you have to undergo. I am hoping and praying that untouchability has now not a long lease of life. Anyway, there are many caste Hindus who do not believe in untouchability as an integral part of Hindu religion and are prepared to give their lives in order to eradicate it.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", pp. 90-1.
[2] The postscript is in Hindi.

CWMG LIV

I do hope that you will not repeat the mistake that caste Hindus have made by erecting barriers amongst the so-called untouchables.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. ABINASH CHANDRA DAS
BANGIYA JHALLA MALLA KHATRIYA SABHA
14 NARENDRA SEN SQUARE
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20730

248. LETTER TO GIRDHARILAL

March 28, 1933

DEAR LALA GIRDHARILAL,

I do not know Dr. Tripathi, nor does any of the other three. But you do not want anybody to write to him, do you?

Prickly heat could be easily got over if the doctor would allow you to take Kuhne-baths, otherwise called hip-baths, in which only the hips remain under water and the legs are kept outside. Perhaps you know that.

Yours sincerely,

LALA GIRDHARILAL
109-A MAHENDRA MANSIONS
ESPLANADE ROAD, BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20729

249. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

March 28, 1933

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

DEAR SIR,

In continuation of my letter of the 23rd instant I enclose herewith a cutting from *The Bombay Chronicle* reporting Seth Poonamchand's fast. In view of the report I would respectfully ask for a reply by tomorrow evening. I would urge the Government to enter into my feelings, although I am a prisoner. With all the will in the world to find my peace as a prisoner in complete obedience to authority, I cannot suppress the humanitarian in me;

I cannot give up the mission of a lifetime. I would ask the Government also to realize, if I may say so with due humility, that I occupy the position of a parent to hundreds of men and women. They would not expect me to let Seth Poonamchand die without my making an effort to save him if I can.

I am asking Col. Doyle to telegraph or telephone the contents of this letter to you.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Encl. 1

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3)A, p. 87

250. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY[2]

March 28, 1933

The matter is so urgent that it is most difficult for me to wait. As it is, it has been a torturing thing for me. If anything happens to Seth Poonamchand, it will haunt me for the rest of my life that I failed to secure permission from Government to establish communication with him in the nick of time. I must therefore ask for an immediate reply.[3] I would suggest that the Government of Bombay should on their own responsibility allow me to establish communication with Seth Poonamchand through the C. P. Home member.[4]

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40) (3)A, p. 91

[1] Doyle conveyed the message on telephone and received the reply : "We are corresponding with the India Government. Won't Gandhi wait till day after tomorrow ?"

[2] This was written on receipt of the Bombay Government's reply to the preceding letter.

[3] This was received on March 30, 1933; *vide Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. III, p. 206.

[4] Gandhiji requested the jail authorities to convey the letter on telephone.

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251. LETTER TO R.

March 28, 1933

MY DEAR R.,

I thank you for your two letters but I must tell you that they do not give me any satisfaction. I did not write[1] in haste. I wrote simply on the strength of what N. Devi had told me and afterwards written to me. Even your own letters strengthen my suspicion that lurking behind your actions there is a subtle emotional love which is undesirable and which borders on the impure. That is the mildest manner in which I could put it. Nor am I satisfied about this guru of yours if that is the gentleman whom N. Devi has described. Here I am on delicate grounds, because I know nothing of him and I may be doing the gravest injustice to him. You cannot disown your responsibility about your companions. You were all working together, the central attraction being N. Devi, at that time not a fountain of purity. You cannot divest yourself of responsibility for all that happened during that period. I would like you therefore to be a little more introspective than you have been, and tell me whether the scavenging work continues unabated as it was begun, and if it is continuing, who are the workers, how is it being done, who is the leader, and what is the result up to date. If the work has evaporated, you will tell me why.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm : S.N. 20735

252. LETTER TO N.

March 28, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your letters of 23rd and 24th. I expect that you left for the village on Sunday as you had intended. May Truth take care of you there!

I know from personal experience how difficult it is to wash heavy khadi if you do not have plenty of water. Generally washing

[1] *Vide* "Letter to R.", pp. 121-2.

comes before sewing, but if it is the same cloth that requires washing and sewing, the sewing undoubtedly precedes, because you thereby save time. Washing will tear the cloth more at the point where it requires mending, therefore more time has to be given to sewing if it is done after the washing. Your dress itself may require a little alteration when you have got rid of all the ornamental part of it and made it just so as to protect the body and satisfy the surrounding convention. The quantity required is very small, the convention being the convention of the poorest.

I am glad you heard from Sir Todd Hunter.

I am not at all satisfied with R.'s letters. There is still the old infatuation lurking, and as I read them, a disposition to justify the past. I have written[1] to him gently drawing his attention to the inadequacy of his letters. Durgadas's letter I like still less. The mode of address is unpardonable. He can be no guide, friend and brother to you, who, although on his own showing he knew that you were a fallen woman, did not lift his little finger to save his sister. There is no question of your resuming your correspondence. Your correspondence just now must be with God of Truth and yourself. Nothing should come between you and Him. I come in because I am witness to the promise that you have made to your Maker and because I want to be able to claim you as a permanent co-worker in the service of the Harijans, in my opinion the most suppressed in the world, but neither I nor you can render that service unless that direct touch with Truth is completely established and the utmost purity attainable by a human being has become the exclusive passion.

You must beware of cold.

If you can procure whole wheat meal you ought not to take any rice at all. You should learn how to make chapatis. It is an incredibly simple performance. Take 4 ounces of clean wheat meal, mix in water and knead it well, roll it on any smooth surface, wooden or stone, with a rolling pin—even a clean ruler will serve the purpose—and roll it slightly thinner than a cardboard piece and bake it on a flat iron disk, turning the sides while it is baked. Out of 4 ounces you can make six of these chapatis, 6 inches in diameter. These would be perfectly digestible. I am sure that the lady of the house or hut where you are to stay knows all this simple cookery. Pulses should be avoided altogether. Of tender coconut you may take one whole per day if it is very tender, and of course you use all the water in the coconut also. You ought

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

to procure some fruit and green vegetables, not potatoes and the like, but leaves, marrow, cucumber, pumpkin, etc.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20733

253. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRAN

March 28, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRAN,

It is refreshing to see your signature after so many months. I have been following you nevertheless.

Narayana Iyer I know well from his *Permanent History of Bharat Varsha*, and I think I met him also in Trivandrum. He is a learned man but not a very clear thinker. That was the impression that his *Permanent History* left on my mind. But he is an enthusiast. Anyway, I shall try to read his pamphlets.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20734

254. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY[1]

March 28, 1933

DEAR MOTIBABU,

I have your two letters, one enclosing a translation of the letter from Shree Panchanan Tarkaratna. Do please take your own time to deal with the questions that you want to in your letter to me. I shall be patient. As soon as I get a moment I shall read the Trust-Deed you have sent me and let you have my criticism, if there is any to make.

What is the matter with your eyes? Do please let me know exactly what it is.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20725

[1] Of Prabartak Sangha, Chandernagore

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255. LETTER TO D. VALISINHA

March 28, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter and a copy of your journal.

As a prisoner I am precluded from sending messages except on untouchability. Therefore the only message that I can send you is this, if it is of any use to you: One of the many things for which I revere the life of Gautama Buddha is his utter abolition of untouchability, that is, distinction between high and low.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. D. VALISINHA
MANAGING EDITOR, "MAHA BODHI"
HOLY ISIPATANA, SARNATH
BENARES

From a microfilm: S.N. 20736

256. LETTER TO BHAU PANSE

March 28, 1933

CHI. BHAU,

I have your letter. For the present, you should continue to stay there. You should learn how to mix with people and yet remain uninvolved. You should cheerfully clean latrines and do other physical work which other people ordinarily do not do. You should keep up the desire to return to the Ashram,[1] so that you may be able to observe all its rules. For the present, however, you should keep the wish in check, stay there, and build up good health. We only wish to serve our fellow men wherever we may be, and there, too, you have enough opportunities for service. It is very good indeed that you come in contact with labourers.

Write to me regularly. Fix a particular day of the week for that purpose and write on that day without fail.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6752. Also C.W. 4495. Courtesy: Bhau Panse

[1] At this time the addressee was in Rajkot; *vide* pp. 144-5.

257. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

March 28, 1933

. . . This Friday will be a day of family gathering. . . .[1] is eager to come. You also may come on that day if you wish to, teach the lesson about Harijans to Dilip[2]. He needs your company. Taramati[3] should learn to be a teacher.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 122

258. LETTER TO BABULAL

March 28, 1933

BHAI BABULAL,

1. If, in spite of your mother's opposition, you regard eradication of untouchability as your dharma, it would be your duty to follow it as much as you can, but keeping your mother mollified.

2. Where no arrangement of clean water for Harijans exists the first duty would be to provide the facility. To that end a good well should be constructed which may be used by all but its situation should be convenient primarily to the Harijans. An explicit notice should be put up there to the effect that the well is both for touchables and untouchables but the untouchables have the first right to it.

3. The agitation for the use of other wells should be continued alongside.

From a microfilm of the Hindi: S.N. 20737

[1] The name is omitted in the source.
[2] Addressee's son
[3] Addressee's wife

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259. LETTER TO SECRETARY, CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION, BENARES

March 28, 1933

SECRETARY
CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION
BENARES

There may not be anything very wrong in distributing clothes and sweets to Harijan children but it does not in any way impress me. Were they in need of these things? If they were it was well that the things were distributed. If there was no need I am afraid it will not help eradicate untouchability, it can possibly lead to self-delusion. Is it not possible that we forget our true duty by making such donations? Such are the questions that arise in my mind. But I do not wish to judge your action. And I have no right to comment on any activity in which the revered Malaviyaji was himself participating. It happens at times. I hope you understand me.

From a microfilm of the Hindi: S.N. 20724

260. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

March 28, 1933

Two large-sized telescopes[1] placed in the open yard occupied by Mr. Gandhi in the Yeravda Jail presented an unusual spectacle amidst the severe simplicity of the jail surroundings. . . .

[Mr. Gandhi said:]

They are for me.

Astronomy had always interested him, Mr. Gandhi stated, but after entering the jail this time, he was devoting himself to it with greater interest than ever before. Mr. Gandhi proceeded:

Now it has become a passion with me. Every free minute I get I devote myself to it. It is a wonderful subject, and more than

[1] According to the report, these were lent to Gandhiji by Lady Premlila Thackersey of Poona.

anything else impresses upon me the mystery of God and the majesty of the universe. To be lying on your back in the open air on a starry night and regarding universe after universe in the immeasurable expanse, you cannot help becoming a worshipper of God. My mind leaps with joy as I do so. Oh, it is marvellous!

It did not require a study of higher mathematics, Mr. Gandhi added, as his interest in astronomy was not professional. He had been reading numerous books on the subject and with the aid of the apparatus before him, he would see more of those universes with his own eyes. He could easily understand their use as their adjustments, though delicate, were simple.

The Hindu, 3-4-1933

261. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

March 29, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

You have sent me a cutting from the *Free Press* about the opening ceremony of a school. What I should like to have from you is not Press cuttings for reproduction, but an authenticated report from you so that I can publish it under the authority of the Provincial Board. Sjt. Anjaria should have supplied you with this report of the opening of the school in Andheri.

In the report it is stated that the gathering consisted mainly of Harijan men and boys. Could that be true? An authentic report should also state how much the running of the school is likely to cost and how much has been already collected towards the cost, and there should be something of the description of the building itself. And then it is bad to have to print a report of an isolated event. There should be a connected narrative of the activities of or under the Board during a given period.[1] Do you not think so?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20743

[1] In reply to this the addressee assured Gandhiji in his letter of April 1, 1933, (S.N. 20798) that the *Free Press* report was "an exact reproduction of the authenticated report that was sent to the Press".

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262. LETTER TO N.

March 29, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your letter of 26th instant. You are right. I do want truth and love to peep out of every word I write, and if they do not do so, it is not due to want of effort on my part. You need not therefore be afraid about my consciously rubbing up R. the wrong way. I wrote[1] to him yesterday expressing about the same sentiments that you have in your letter before me. He sent me two letters in the same cover, both of them were unsatisfactory. I could see that truth had not yet dawned upon him.

You will describe your new situation as fully as you can, your surroundings, the neighbours, the population of the village, the things that can be purchased in the village, its distance from Mysore or Bangalore or any big centre, distance from the nearest railway station, the condition of water supply, the composition of the population and the like. Tell me also whether you can have good milk there. What are the cattle in the village? And if you cannot get good cow's milk, and if there are goats there, you will not hesitate to have goat's milk for S.[2] You should learn to milk goats yourself and have the goat brought before you, so that you are sure of the purity of the milk supplied, and if there are cows there, learn to milk the cows yourself. If you feel weak or if you find that your digestive apparatus does not keep up to mark, I would like you to go back to milk and butter, but no butter so much as milk, and take unfired milk, as you saw me take it. I should then have no anxiety about your health.

Whilst I would like you to live the life of the poorest of Harijans, I do not want you to do the impossible, and therefore whatever your health peremptorily demands, you should take if you can get it for the begging. If you cannot, in a perfectly honourable way, God will give you the strength to suffer privation, but even then you will not misfeed yourself. Fasting is better than taking food that you cannot assimilate or that gives you no stamina. A few dry dates or raisins or figs well washed will at a pinch sustain

[1] *Vide* p. 230.
[2] Addressee's son

you and even S., but I am sure that if you have living faith in living truth, it will not try you beyond your capacity for endurance.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20751

263. LETTER TO R. F. PIPER

March 29, 1933

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was sorry not to be able to meet you. Here are the answers to your questions:[1]

1. By machinery I have no doubt you mean power machinery. Considered in terms of millions of the population of India, power machinery is not indispensable for their material prosperity.
2. Mankind has found religion in some shape or other indispensable for its very existence, hence it is fair to presume that mankind will need religion and I cannot conceive the moral growth of mankind without religion.
3. It would be presumption on my part to pronounce any judgment on Christianity, or for that matter any religion other than my own.
4. By incessant and prayerful striving.
5. I know of no method whereby man can be made good, but in so far as any making is possible it can only be done by setting a personal example.

Yours sincerely,

R. F. PIPER, ESQ.
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

From a photostat: S.N. 20750

[1] The questions asked by the addressee were:

(1) Are not machines necessary for the material development of India? (2) What can religion contribute to human progress? (3) What chiefly is faulty in Christianity? What strong? (4) By what methods do you come by your basic discoveries or insights? (5) How make man good? (S.N. 20667)

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264. LETTER TO PANCHANAN TARKARATNA

March 29, 1933

DEAR PANDITJI,

I thank you for your letter which Motibabu has kindly translated for me.

On the one hand I see that you consider the matter of untouchability supersensuous and on the other you are applying mere mundane situations to the matter. Personally, I do not regard untouchability as a supersensuous matter. I regard nothing as supersensuous which is capable of being proved through the senses. Thus, I would consider the question of the existence of God as supersensuous but not so the shape of the earth, and as our Shastras teach us, it would be a misuse of spiritual gifts to apply them for the discovery or for proving the properties of material objects. Untouchability as described in the Shastras is a purely material thing. There is nothing supersensuous in it. Therefore if I apply the ordinary laws governing the examination of ordinary things I am doing no violence to the Shastras.

Thus examined, in spite of what may be said in the Shastras, hereditary untouchability has no basis, and if a *Chandala*, so described, did not disclose his birth, there is no test whereby he could be distinguished from the rest. What applies to him applies with much greater force to his progeny.

I am afraid that your analogy of the Red Indians, the Australian Indians and other such races has no application whatsoever to Indian conditions, and it is historically untrue to say that in India there has been no mixture of races. On the contrary, there is incontestable proof that mixture of blood has been constantly going on in India since the known beginnings of time.

As to the pandits whose testimony I have cited, several who have upheld my interpretation I have not even had the pleasure of knowing. They have accepted the same authority that you are quoting, only they have given a different interpretation to yours.

With due humility I claim that though I can make no pretension to Sanskrit learning, I know enough of Sanskrit and have read enough of the scriptures to be able to form my own judgment on conflicting interpretations being presented to me of the Shastras.

With reference to your son, my own recollection is distinct

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that he was to have come as your representative, not in order to have a religious disputation but to hold a discourse with me in order to present your viewpoint and in order that I could understand it, so that if it was at all possible we might find ourselves on the same platform.[1]

Surely, that was an object wholly different from that of the pandits who came to engage in a set debate between rival schools of thoughts with judges to regulate the debate. Your son coming as one of these disputants was not the same as his coming as your deputy without the conditions that governed the pandits. Of course there was nothing wrong about his being one of the pandits, but that could not be a fulfilment of your promise. If he had the intention of engaging in a friendly and personal conversation with me after the debate, he could still do so. I shall be pleased to meet him any time he comes and patiently listen to all he might have to say. I can give you my assurance that I have not shut my ears to anything that might have still to be said on behalf of the party that upholds modern untouchability as an integral part of Hinduism.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20744

265. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

March 29, 1933

DEAR MOTIBABU,

Here's my reply[2] to Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. 1

SJT. MOTILAL ROY
PRABARTAK SANGHA
CHANDERNAGORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20744

[1] *Vide* pp. 29-30.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

266. LETTER TO KEDAR NATH TEWARI

March 29, 1933

MY DEAR TEWARI,

I have your letter. I well remember meeting you and your wife on the metre gauge Delhi line.

I am delighted to find that you have opened a well for the public including Harijans. I hope the general public is making use of it side by side with the Harijans.

With regards to both of you,

Yours sincerely,

PT. KEDAR NATH TEWARI
C/O R. S. JHANGI RAM BHATIA
BEHIND GOVT. PRESS
LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20749

267. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

March 29, 1933

CHI. AMINA,

I hope Qureshi's imprisonment has not made you unhappy. It seems that you have again stopped your study. Has Wahid's[1] fever gone? You must continue to write to me.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6664

268. A LETTER

March 29, 1933

Is it truthfulness to live in the Ashram but follow a mode of life different from the Ashram ideal? I want you to get out of this. I would rather say that you lived thousands of miles away from me but followed truth than that you should stay with me

[1] Addressee's son

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and live in falsehood. I have already failed once in judging you. Similarly, it is possible that I may be proved wrong again in distrusting you. I pray to God that I may be. If that happens, my first failure will be cancelled out. At present, however, I feel that you have been deceiving me.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 205

269. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 29, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your big packet of mail today. You will find with this a detailed letter of suggestions to Purushottam. Ramabehn cannot be got operated upon immediately. In any case do get her examined by Haribhai[1]. So far as I can judge, the operation will not be an easy one. I also doubt its necessity. Is it likely that the arms which did not become limp all these years will become so now? I cannot be easily alarmed by such a fear.

Kanu's[2] case requires careful thinking. Get him examined again by Haribhai. Let me know what he says. The pain in the arm seems to have lasted very long. I think it is not being vigorously massaged. He is likely to benefit if that part is also exposed to the rays of the sun. I have had no experience as to whether it would help better if the rays were passed through a red glass. My experience means the experience of Hanumantrai. Ask Purushottam to read Dr. Sharma's book which we have there and to try the experiments described in it. Perhaps they may help.

I understand what you say regarding Narahari's letter. Discuss with him and other responsible inmates of the Ashram, the suggestions which you approve of and let me know the result. I think you will find most of the suggestions acceptable. That you will be able to please Narahari is also an important consideration.

Mohan must have recovered now. His illness has lasted quite long.

It is not that I want only scholars' criticism of *Ishucharita*[3]. I want yours and the women's too, if you and they have read the book. Since the book has been written for the layman, Valji is

[1] Dr. Harilal Desai

[2] Addressee's son

[3] "Life of Jesus"; *vide* Vol. LI, pp. 258-60.

eager to know the opinions of all. He wants them no matter whether they are favourable or otherwise.

You should start utilizing Parachure Shastri's services now. Has his son been given any work? Can he do anything? Can you control him?

I will wait for your next letter for your views regarding Shanta.

I have written to Santok regarding Keshu. You need not write from there. She and Damodardas are coming tomorrow to see me. I have a letter from Keshu written yesterday in which he says that he may not now go there.

If Dhiru[1] himself wants to learn painting in a spirit of dedication and agrees to observe the [Ashram] vows in Santiniketan and live there as an ideal student, if he is also ready to learn whatever else he can learn there, I think he can do excellent service afterwards. Painting also can be of two kinds, divine and demoniac, *sattvik* and *rajasik*, moral and immoral. I believe every word of what Dhiru has said. If he is so eager to learn painting, I think we should encourage him. Just as Panditji has dedicated his art to service and people get its benefit and are likely to get it in a still greater measure in future, so also can one dedicate painting to service. Painting is silent music. We can see from our experience of paintings which excite passion that, if a painter painted pictures which would purify us of passion, their power would be felt even by the coarsest of men. There are pictures painted with this aim. But of course there are very few painters of this type. If somebody from the Ashram becomes such an artist, we should admire him. Probably you do not know that we had started training Balkrishna[2] to make him such a sculptor. He had even made a few statues. He himself then gave up the work. He has even given his reason for doing so in the letter which I received from him this week. We shall not mind if Dhiru's effort to learn painting also meets the same fate. I don't know how they teach painting in Santiniketan. But there is no better place in India at present for learning this art. But I should also like to say that if anybody else, following Dhiru's example, wishes to learn painting, we may not readily agree. Dhiru's heart has been set on this art for many years and his love of it is pure. He seems to be well-behaved in other ways and has the strength and the will to observe the Ashram rules. He has also been living in the Ashram

[1] Vrajlal Gandhi's son
[2] Balkrishna Bhave

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for many years. If these assumptions are not correct, we cannot send him. We cannot send him also if there is the slightest doubt about the purity of his character. He can be sent only if he understands all this, willingly accepts the conditions which I have put in my letter to him and if all of you can trust his word, and if all these requirements are fulfilled I think it is our duty to let him go. All of you should consider the case from this point of view and decide. Don't forget to invite Narahari to join in the discussion. After the incident concerning . . .[1], we should be careful. A frightened man sees a cause of fear everywhere. If Dhiru indulges in lustful fancies, if he is a boy with an impure mind, painting is likely to prove a dangerous pursuit for him. These arts are alluring. The world itself is alluring, and it is no wonder that the arts of an alluring world should be equally alluring. But just as the world, though it is alluring to the senses, can be a field, for attaining *moksha*, can be a manifestation of the glory of God, so can art. Out of a thousand artists one may become a *bhakta*. I know that nine hundred and ninety-nine become lovers of the flesh. If you have faith in Dhiru that he will be one in a thousand, if all of you feel sure about that, let him have your blessings and go. Having done so, we should trust to our fate. We will dedicate to Shri Krishna our decision to send him.

I started writing this letter before the morning prayer and end it exactly at four o'clock. It is still ten minutes before the prayer starts.

BAPU

[PS.]

Anandi is now able to move about. She has been coming to see me for the last two days.

There are nine letters in all, including this.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8344. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The name has been omitted.

270. TELEGRAM TO BACHHRAJ[1]

March 30, 1933

To
BACHHRAJ
WARDHA

REPORT FULL CONDITION POONAMCHAND. IF JAJUJI OR POONAMCHAND'S WIFE ABLE SEE HIM THEY MUST TELL HIM FAST QUITE WRONG IF IT BE FOR ABOLITION CLASSIFICATION.

GANDHI

Home Department, Government of Bombay, I. G. P. File No. 20-X

271. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

March 30, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

Today I take this up after prayer and after writing important letters to the Ashram about the ailing persons of whom three are having the fasting cure under Purushottam's supervision. So you are not to grumble if I give this only half an hour.

Your letter came in yesterday, i.e., record good time after your transfer.

You are hard on poor babies!! You forget that you were one and I expect thankful for having survived the baby stage! Celibacy for those who can appreciate it and live up to it is a very fine thing. But it must be allowed that it is a supernatural state for embodied beings. They live in pain and will to the end of time. It is therefore perhaps improper to be impatient with the married state and its results. After all we owe Gautam Buddha, Jesus, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Rama, Krishna, St. Francis and numberless such men and women to the married state. We cannot afford to be self-righteous. We cannot fathom the mystery of God.

[1] According to *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. III, p. 206, Gandhiji was permitted by the Government to send a telegram to Jajuji but not to Poonamchand directly; *vide* the letters to the Secretary, Government of Bombay, pp. 228-9 and 271.

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We need therefore to be charitable at every step. We ourselves stand in need of charity every moment. Married state is the only deliverance for millions from a life of lust and misery. It is well that Verrier and Mary have been able to give up the idea of marriage but I was not going to judge them if they had married. They are both striving to do the best that is possible for them. They are brave and true souls. No one is expected to do more than the best. To live up to one's dharma (i.e., the best in one) is better than trying (vainly), to live up to another's dharma (i.e., his best). A sweeper who lives up to his state is superior to the Brahmin who is merely playing at his state. Is all this clear, I wonder? I did not want to deliver this sermon to you. But your references to Verrier and the poor dead twins jarred and I thought I would warn you. Do not brood over this. These are momentary things in you. Your bottom is sound and fully weather-proof. It is good that you pour out your innermost thoughts to me without staying to think how I would take them. I want to know you just as you are. And here goes the 5.30 bugle. I must not stay with you longer today. The rest you will have from Ba's letter.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6268. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9734

272. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

March 30, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

I have your letter of 23rd instant. I understand what you mean. Of course I saw the sentences that followed your description of Bengal untouchability as a greater curse. There was no logical sequence between that description and what you stated. By describing it as a greater curse you prepared the reader for the greater depths of degradation but not the extent in point of numbers. And then, I suppose you are not aware of the fact that if the Bengal description of untouchability was applied to Madras, then the untouchables would be perhaps 90% of the Hindu population, for every non-Brahmin is practically an untouchable to a Brahmin in the Bengal sense of untouchability. There are only two divisions in the south, Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Are you aware that if a non-Brahmin looked at the food of a Brahmin, that food becomes polluted? Hence my insistence upon stepping into the

opponent's shoes and examining his argument from his own standpoint. I think that there is decidedly a meaning in the Bengal argument that untouchability in Bengal is of the mildest type and that real untouchability is confined to the Bhangis, Mehtars and the like, who are, after all, imported. That we have to deal with every aspect of untouchability is quite true, but we shall only be able to deal with it when we are exquisitely balanced in our statements and that balance can only come if we will give even an exaggerated importance to the arguments of the opponents. Ahimsa is a most exacting dame and it sits with the most sensitive scales noticing even an atom's weight of *himsa* or want of charity. We are on the safest ground. We therefore need not be in a hurry to give them battle. It will be time enough when they reach our border. Whatever case they have, they are weakening by going about it the wrong way, but there we cannot help them. They will have to see the error themselves.

I wonder if I have made my argument quite clear. If I have not, you must hammer away at it till I see your point or you see mine.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20756

273. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN

March 30, 1933

MY DEAR KELAPPAN,

I have got your long-looked-for letter. You ought not to keep me waiting so long. You do not consider that the Guruvayur affair is over. It won't be over till every public temple, let alone Guruvayur, is open to the Harijans. Therefore it is necessary for me to keep myself in touch with you, the prime cause of making Guruvayur the centre of the temple-entry fight. All your activity therefore has to have the opening of Guruvayur as the background. Public opinion should be cultivated. The sanatanists should be converted. We do not want the temple to be opened in the teeth of their opposition, but we want them to be converted. That can only happen if we are pure, single-minded, gentle, courteous toward them and show that religion is just as precious to us as they claim it is to them.

I see what happened at the Conference. Do not now wait for any instruction from the All-India Board, but make a list of the

names proposed by you as the Committee and send that list to the All-India Board and a copy to me. Give a brief description of every member of the Committee.

I am surprised that you are not getting a copy of the *Harijan*. I shall see to it that you get a copy. The paper is being sent to you at Shraddhanand Ashram, Payyoli. The address will now be changed. But you must enquire at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. KELAPPAN
PAKKANARPURAM, PAYYOLI (N. MALABAR)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20754

274. LETTER TO VITHAL S. PANDIT

March 30, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your interesting letter of 26th instant describing your work in the matter of untouchability. You should continue to inform me of the progress from time to time. I don't need to give you any special guidance, but I take it that you are diligently following the columns of the *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. VITHAL S. PANDIT
HON. SECRETARY
R. D. HARIJAN SEVA SANGH
KUDAL (DIST. RATNAGIRI)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20755

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275. LETTER TO M. M. ANANTA RAU

March 30, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Forgive me. I evidently missed your question. You may show the correspondence between us to anybody you like.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. M. M. ANANTA RAU
SANATANA DHARMA KARYALAYA
40 ISWARDAS LALA ST.
TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

From the original: C.W. 9579

276. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 30, 1933

MY DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

You have given me a capital story[1] for the *Harijan*. It is going in this week. It does not show you as a sentimentalist, but, thank God, it shows that you do possess sentiment. Every possessor of sentiment is not a sentimentalist. Let us hope that this advertisement would not mean loss of employment to him. Let us hope that this example will prove infectious.

Poor Shastri and his wife have had a bad time of it. They were both laid up in bed with malaria and Shastri's mother-in-law is not keeping overwell. But they are much better now.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1118

[1] This was about a Bengali youth, an Oxford graduate, working as sweeper in the streets of Delhi in the regular employment of the city Municipality and was published in *Harijan*, 1-4-1933, under the title "Sweeper by Choice".

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277. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

March 30, 1933

MY DEAR BHRRR,

I have your letter. I hope that the heat which must have now commenced in Kathiawar was not unbearable. You have been luckier than before in your collections this time. If you had not been, the white beard would have been required to be dyed black. That it would have made you look much younger than you are is true, but one cannot have the cake and eat it also. Happily, no such transformation is now necessary and let the silvery beard continuously produce silver coins in abundance.

Yes, Raihana came to me and presented me with a Harijan song. Let her stay here as long as it is possible for her to do so. What she requires is quiet and cool air. There she would be besieged by young men requiring her advice. But she has no business to act the grandmother whilst she is so feeble in health. Kamalmian should behave better, and he must get out of the middling condition. Please give my love to Mrs. Hamidali. May she take you away to Mussoorie before May, if it is possible. Devchand Parekh is greedy. You cannot go to Africa for collections and it is a wrong thing on principle. You cannot carry on anti-untouchability work by getting money from outside. Local work must be locally paid for. If the very large population of Kathiawar cannot find sufficient money for untouchability work, it had better not be done. And after all, money is not the primary thing. The primary thing is character and application. Money won't change the sanatanist's heart. Untouchability campaign is service of God. You cannot summon Mammon to your assistance for rendering that service. Therefore so far as Kathiawar work is concerned your limit is Kathiawar.

Love from us all to you all.

Yours,
BHRRR

From a photostat: S.N. 9584

278. LETTER TO P. N. RAJBHOJ

March 30, 1933

MY DEAR RAJBHOJ,

At last you are in the Ashram. Now I want you to become of the Ashram. You will therefore commence with silent labour and feel at home with everybody.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 782

279. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 30, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I forgot to write to you about Rajbhoj. Look after him. Ask him and find out his needs. He will have to observe all the Ashram rules and take part in all its activities.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8345. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

280. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

March 30, 1933

CHI. AMINA,

Everyone writes and tells me that you are showing great courage and patience. If Imam Saheb's daughter, brought up in Phœnix and in the Ashram, does not do that, whom else can we expect to do it? If you keep up your patience till the end, both you and I will win. I always wished to see you in excellent health and capable of complete self-control. I suppose you know that both the words, *sanyam* and *parhejgari* mean self-control. One cannot cultivate devotion to God without self-control. It was for

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cultivating self-control that Imam Saheb came to live with me permanently. He was very eager to see you having grown up to be a woman leading a life of self-control, and it seems that you will fulfil his hope.

I hope the children are happy.

I have written to Purushottam for your treatment.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6665

281. A LETTER[1]

March 30, 1933

I discovered only here that Mani's orderliness is inherited from her father. It astonished Motilalji who was given her room at the Ashram and he exclaimed that such neatness he had not seen even at Anand Bhawan. This is something which you can learn from her. And she has a wonderful capacity for service to anyone whom she chooses to serve. In courage some of you can compete with her, so I will not say anything about it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4: Maniben Patelne, p. 98

282. LETTER TO GOPIKANT CHOWDHURY

[Before *March 31, 1933*][2]

DEAR BROTHER GOPIKANT,

Yours is to hand. Let the wells be open to one and all. Public opinion should be gathered in favour of temple-entry. Inter-dining is not a component part of the removal of untouchability. 'To drink water polluted by Harijans is not a sin'—this is my personal motto. When we wish to do away with untouchability, it is not a sin to drink water 'polluted' by untouchables.

[1] The source identifies the addressee as a co-prisoner of Manibehn Patel in Belgaum Jail.

[2] The newspaper report is dated March 31, 1933.

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Whether to drink or not to drink water is a thing of individual concern. You are ever welcome to me, if there arises any necessity.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a newspaper cutting: S.N. 20785

283. LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER

March 31, 1933

MY DEAR HORACE,

Your long letter pleased me immensely. You should repeat the performance whenever the spirit moves you.

You will see that I have made use in the current *Harijan* of one important portion of your letter.[1] The other important part is with reference to reproducing in the *Harijan* the views of Dr. Ambedkar and those of the sanatanists. This is not always possible. I gave much thought to it. To make the paper self-supporting, to refuse all advertisements, as the initiator of the movement to give my views as exhaustively as possible on the current happenings about Harijans, to combine all these things in one paper becomes almost an impossible task. And then the reproduction of sanatanist views and those of the Ambedkar school was unnecessary for the vast majority of readers, because they knew all the sides of the question and they had been published in the daily Press. It could then be of use only to the foreign readers, of whom there are naturally but a select few. Whether few or many they could not be neglected, and I knew that they were being well-supplied with the literature outside what could be handled by the *Harijan*. And this extra reading they had to do, whether through the *Harijan* or through the original sources, and I came to the conclusion that I must leave them to gather the different viewpoints through the original sources. And because I have done so, it has been possible for me, even from almost the beginning, to make the *Harijan* self-supporting. I have certainly taken extraordinary precaution not to give any colouring to the views of the other sides, whenever it has been necessary for me to give them. More than this I must not say.

[1] *Vide* "Notes", sub-title "Hard Facts, Not Words", pp. 260-1.

Thus, though I am not able to give effect, as you would wish it, to this part of your letter, you know that everything you say must produce its invisible effect upon my mind, and therefore whatever you think is worth passing on to me you should do unhesitatingly. The freer and fuller the criticism of friends and associates like you, the lighter and better will my work be, and such criticism will itself be an important part of our contribution to the Harijan cause.

Please share this letter with C. F. Andrews, Jack Hoyland and others.

I hope you are now so well that there is no occasion even to make any enquiry about your health.

Love to you all from us all.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1420

284. LETTER TO ELIZABETH F. HOWARD

March 31, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I was greatly touched by your letter. The information that you give me about the proposed Ashram at Itarsi is instructive. I hope that when the founders do actually come, they will keep themselves in touch with me.

It will no doubt be a very great thing if you could start an inter-racial settlement in South Africa. I know how difficult it is, but what is difficult for us, frail human beings, will not be difficult for God when it becomes His will.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS ELIZABETH HOWARD
ARDMORE
BUCKHURST HILL
ESSEX

From a photostat: G.N. 866

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285. LETTER TO JOHN S. HOYLAND

March 31, 1933

MY DEAR HOYLAND,

I have your letter. I take this up at the point where I have left the letter to Horace Alexander.

You have asked whether I could suggest anything for your silent prayers on Friday evenings in connection with the Harijan cause. This is what suggests itself to me as I am dictating this letter:

Let those who are working for the cause of the most helpless people in the world never swerve an inch from truth and cause them always to be humble in what they do. Let them do it all for Thy sake.

Love from us all.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

JOHN S. HOYLAND, ESQ.
HOLLAND HOUSE
WOODBROOKE
SELLY OAK
BIRMINGHAM

From a photostat: C.W. 4509. Courtesy: Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, and Jessie Hoyland. Also S.N. 20765

286. LETTER TO KAMALADEVI

March 31, 1933

DEAR KAMALADEVI,

I have your letter. Do come and see me on the 10th April. I shall be looking out for you on the day at about 2 o'clock. That would be a convenient hour for me.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20786

287. LETTER TO GERTRUDE S. KELLER-CHING

March 31, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I have your long letter and I was glad to find that you had gone to a meeting addressed by Mr. Errivaz.

There is one sentiment in your letter which I should like to correct. You say: "My life is a great rush and I do not get much time to pray and meditate." This is what people often say, but it is not right. I think the Latin proverb is literally true: "To labour is to pray." And if you would but labour for the sake of God, then no work becomes a rush. We simply give then the best of what is in us. Then there is no feeling of utter exhaustion, and when the whole life becomes a dedication, it becomes a perpetual prayer and meditation. For meditation you do not need a special time. Meditation to be true should be interwoven with every activity of ours. Try and test the truth of this for yourself.

You have asked me how I am keeping. Thank you for the enquiry. I am keeping quite well indeed.

Mrs. Gandhi and Mirabai are co-prisoners living in the same jail. They are quite well and happy.

Yours sincerely,

MRS. GERTRUDE S. KELLER-CHING
VILLA LAVOISIER
LE SIGNAL

From a photostat: S.N. 20779

288. LETTER TO N.

March 31, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

Ramachandra tells me how he saw you off for your village and how Rudramani was too late for the train and how Ramachandra had to advance Rs. 10. Who was to pay the railway fare ? Was it Rudramani ? Do tell me all about him, his age, his education, his occupation, and let him write to me.

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I am sending you this letter to the address that Ramachandra has given me.

Then Ramachandra says, "To her I particularly said that she must dress very much more modestly than now and live like the village womenfolk do." This is right. You know how best to give effect to it. Of course the idea of modesty differs with different countries and different people, and if we leave our surroundings and adopt others', we have to respond to them when we want to suit ourselves to the surroundings and identify ourselves with the people as you do with the Harijans. I know that there is the question of expense involved here. You will tell me all about the proposal frankly and fully. Let me have a copy of the statement that you were to publish.

Then Ramachandra says, "Please be writing to her if possible to keep silence for some hours daily and not to talk much and get worried." This means that you have been talking away and if that is so, again Ramachandra's warning is correct. It would not be a bad thing at all if you actually imposed silence on yourself for a few hours daily and made a conscious attempt not to talk except when it became absolutely necessary. Let your service be your sermon, your talk, your delight.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20777

289. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

March 31, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I have your postcard. What you say is quite correct. I am writing to N. Devi. Do please tell me something more about Rudramani. Who is he, what is his education, what is his occupation? Did he refund you the Rs. 10? Was he to pay for the fare, or was he not ? Has he sufficient means ?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20778

290. LETTER TO ADA WEST

March 31, 1933

MY DEAR DEVI,

I am glad you have been accommodated in a place where you will be less prone to colds. Muriel tells me how useful you had made yourself at Kingsley Hall. You could not do otherwise, no matter where you were placed. I would have been surprised if she had given me a different report. I shall expect to hear from you during the next week. Then I shall know how you actually felt in your new place.

Yours sincerely,

MISS DEVI WEST
C/O MISS A. PALMER
218 WHIPPENDEL ROAD
WATFORD, HERTS.

From a photostat: S.N. 20775

291. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

March 31, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

You are still unrepentant. Be it so then.

You did a very good thing in calling Amina to stay with you. She will be happy there. Treat her children as if you had adopted them as your own.

I hope your study is progressing well. One must never give up a task that one has undertaken. When you are very busy, you may give less time to study, but you should have some practice every day in reading, writing and speaking.

We should not decide about the arm in a hurry. I have written to Narandas. Sardar will write from here to Dr. Patel. It is necessary to get information about some details from him. I hope the advice about the operation has not frightened you. Wasn't Anandi operated upon without any trouble? About you, too, I

will decide quickly after getting all the information. There is no cause at all for worry.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5346

292. LETTER TO S. D. SATAVLEKAR

March 31, 1933

BHAI SATAVLEKAR,

I have your letter. Your reply about beef is very much to my liking.[1] Rajendralal Mitra was a great scholar. He died many years ago. Someone had casually sent me the booklet[2].

The propaganda work should not be totally abandoned even though no journal is brought out in Marathi. I hope *Sakal* and other papers lend their support to the eradication of untouchability.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

PANDIT SATAVLEKAR
SVADHYAYA MANDAL
AUNDH
DIST. SATARA

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 4774. Courtesy: S. D. Satavlekar

293. NOTES

MAJORITY *v.* MINORITY

A graduate from Madras sends the following quotation from *Indian Home Rule*:

> It is a superstition and an ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong, and those of minorities to have been right. All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to the majorities. If among a band of robbers, a knowledge of robbery is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation? So long as the superstition that man should obey unjust laws

[1] The addressee in his letter had said that where the Shastras mentioned eating of the cow, the word "cow" was to be interpreted as "produce from the cow".

[2] *Beef in Ancient India*. Gandhiji had sent it to the addressee for his comments.

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exists, so long will their slavery exist. And a passive resister alone can remove such a superstition.[1]

and writes:

Kindly permit me to invite your attention to the above extract from your *Indian Home Rule*. From this we see that you once held the opinion contained therein. However, the above opinion of your own has been trampled under foot in connection with the temple-entry question. Are we to take that the present position differs from the position held by you then? Apparently, the position taken up by you is inconsistent. We hope to be enlightened on the subject.

It is unjust to a writer to quote against him passages from his writings without reference to the context. Nor should I care to defend what may appear to be my inconsistencies. I should leave the readers to judge for themselves. In this instance the quotation appears to me to propound a great truth often overlooked. Anyway I believe in every word of it. The Temple-entry Bills do not violate the rule. They do not bind the minority to anything, they compel it to do nothing. But if a majority may not compel a minority to its will, nor may the latter compel the former. But the natural rule is that, where there is a dispute between a majority and a minority, the latter will, without admitting the rightness of the action of the former, let it have its way and, if it believes the majority in the wrong, refuse its co-operation. One of the Temple-entry Bills does that and nothing more. But I am myself so jealous of the rights and wishes of minorities if only because I have been always, in the beginning at least, in a minority. I have, therefore, proposed, as the reader should know, a solution whereby the minority will have its wishes also respected. The other Bill takes away no rights of anybody. It simply takes the question of untouchability from the purview of the civil law. It does not interfere with the conscience or the religious observances of anybody. In fact, the Bills are designed to protect all views and one merely provides what to do in the event of a difference of opinion. Here I see no infringement of the rule enunciated in the quotation from *Indian Home Rule*. It shows how a minority can protect itself.

"Hard Facts, Not Words"

For the guidance of anti-untouchability workers I quote the following from a long and instructive letter from an English friend[2] from whom I had invited suggestions for improving the *Harijan* :

[1] *Vide* Vol. X, pp. 49-50.

[2] Presumably Horace G. Alexander; *vide* p. 253.

> The statement of *things done*, of progress, from week to week, seems to be very valuable. I wish it could sometimes be expanded, and not give only the skeleton. . . . I have wondered if the new Society will undertake any local surveys and publish the results. I should like to read paragraphs like this : 'In . . . taluka according to a survey made by a member of the Society during the last fortnight, 25 village wells are being used by all castes without discrimination. Twelve of these have been opened to the untouchables since last September. But there are still 18 village wells from which the untouchables are excluded. The figures for temples are'. . . and so on.
>
> Of course, I do not know if you have enough volunteers present for much work of this kind. Naturally, they will combine propaganda with their survey. You know that we, Britishers, prefer hard facts to many words—or at least, we think we do!

I venture to think that it is not only the Britisher who wants hard facts rather than words, that is, practice more than precept. Everyone wants deeds. Words may follow to explain the deeds sometimes. The more reports one can have of the work done and the difficulties experienced both with the sanatanists and the Harijans, the more useful will the *Harijan* become. There should be no difficulty in producing surveys such as has been suggested by the correspondent. We have nothing to conceal. If we find that in a particular area there are one hundred wells and only one has been opened to the Harijans, we should not be ashamed to own the fact. The shame will lie not in the confession of the fact but in its existence. The confession will be the beginning of its end. We shall learn to deal with difficulties only when we know them in their full measure.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

294. PROPAGANDA v. *CONSTRUCTION*

The indictment[1] by a Harijan of Harijan uplift organizations that was published in these columns some time ago has given rise to interesting correspondence.

It is necessary in the light of that indictment and the correspondence to examine the pros and cons of propaganda and construction and to know exactly what is meant by the latter.

Propaganda in connection with the anti-untouchability movement has meant an energetic distribution of literature among the

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 458-60.

caste Hindus, spreading information about untouchability and holding meetings among them. The Guruvayur referendum was essentially such propaganda. It has also meant holding Harijan conferences and the like for the purpose of telling the Harijans what is being done by the caste Hindus and what is expected of Harijans in the way of internal reform, such as observance of the laws of sanitation and giving up carrion-eating and other un-Hindu practices.

Such propaganda is undoubtedly necessary. We cannot have too much of it, if we can carry it on without creating bad blood and friction. Whilst the sanatanists are organizing themselves and imagining Hinduism to be in danger from the reformers' activity, the latter have to be careful. We do not want to rub the sanatanists up the wrong way. Wherever, therefore, these are in a state of rage, the reformers would do well not to hold their meetings. They are bound to contradict all falsehoods and exaggerations and themselves be scrupulously careful about what they say, write or do. Falsehood will never help any cause, certainly not religion.

Such clean propaganda should be self-supporting. Insistence on making it self-supporting will help to keep it pure and within bounds and make it most effective. Leaflets and other literature must be paid for and may even leave a margin of profits to pay for the necessary expenses of travelling, etc. Let not the reader imagine that I am writing this without any experience. On the contrary, what I am saying is based on an extensive experience gained before I became a 'Mahatma' and whilst I was little known in the surroundings in which God had placed me. Economy of time and money (one and the same thing) was an instinct with me. One who has faith in his mission will find it easy enough to enforce this golden rule of truthful propaganda.

This does not mean that the reader pays for his leaflet in every case. That would be an ideal state. But it does mean that the central organization does not bear the cost. The local agency requiring the leaflets should pay the central organization for them. The local agency in its turn will see that it gets the cost repaid to it, partly by readers and partly by moneyed men interested in the distribution of leaflets. In this way the cost of propaganda will be evenly distributed and not felt by anybody. Such distribution would be a fair index to the strength and popularity of the propaganda. The various editions of the *Harijan* are most certainly designed as propaganda. They will have to be self-supporting or they must stop. The English and the Bengali edi-

tions have already become so. The Gujarati is on a fair way to being so. The Hindi edition is still struggling. The Tamil edition is being published by Sjt. Ganesan without any cost to the provincial organization. The publication of these editions renders it easy for local organizations to carry on their propaganda without much or any cost. They can have all interesting and instructive information published in the various editions of the *Harijan*, which is their organ.

There then remain the travelling charges of lecturers. It goes without saying that they must be all volunteers. If they are moneyed men, they often pay their own travelling expenses. Where this cannot happen, these expenses must be found by the inviting agency. And the general rule is for reception committees formed for the purpose to raise special subscriptions and defray the cost locally. Thus the permanent organizations, whether central or local, merely procure lecturers, give guidance, lend the weight of their name and influence, but, as a rule, incur no expense.

Thus considered, the overhead charges include merely the cost of the organizing staff, rent, stationery and the travelling expenses of the Secretary. The chief officials are often wholly honorary, or are volunteers drawing just enough for their maintenance and always below their market price. And if the general staff consists wholly, or so far as possible, of Harijans, there will be very little money going into the pockets of caste Hindus, certainly nothing like even ten per cent of the collections of the organizations. Thus, Lala Mohanlal of the Punjab Provincial Branch says:

> Regarding the overhead charges, I have briefly to submit that, excepting the peon and the clerk, whose bill comes up to Rs. 50 p.m., no overhead charges of permanent or temporary nature have been incurred by the Punjab Board. I am working as General Secretary of the body, but I am drawing my allowances from the Servants of the People Society of which I happen to be a life member. I think this is the minimum staff required for running a provincial organization.

The bulk of the collections will, according to the scheme suggested above, be available for constructive work, such as conducting preparatory schools for Harijans, giving scholarships, opening wells, etc. Here again, care has to be taken to see that most of the paid staff is composed of Harijans, or caste Hindu volunteers who have offered their services free or for less than their market price. But it must be our aim to replace all paid caste Hindus by Harijans. Then there is every chance of all but ten per cent of the collections finding its way into Harijan pockets.

And who will deny that this will be the best and the most effective propaganda both for Harijans and caste Hindus? The latter cannot but be touched by the silent, effective and dignified selfless work of caste Hindu volunteers and the consequent rise of the Harijans in the social scale. And there is no reason why we should not have thousands of young men and women from among caste Hindus doing this noble service among those whom society has cruelly neglected for generations. Have we got these missionaries? I have already shown in these pages that we do not need highly educated persons. We want men and women of grit, immovable faith and character that will resist temptation.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

295. STUDENTS AND VACATION

The following is a condensed rendering of a Hindi letter received from a student in Dehra Dun:

> In the hostel belonging to our College, hitherto the Bhangis have taken the leavings of our dishes. But since the awakening we have stopped this practice and we have been giving them clean chapatis and dal. The Harijans are dissatisfied with this. In the leavings they get some ghee and delicacies. The students cannot afford to set apart all these things for Harijans. Then there is this difficulty. We may adhere to the new practice we have adopted, but the Harijans will continue to receive leavings of caste dinners, etc. What is now to be done? And at the same time that you answer this question, I would like you also to say how best we can use our vacation which will presently be upon us.

The difficulty that the correspondent has raised is real. The Harijans have got so used to the leavings that they not only do not mind them but look forward to them. Not to receive them they will regard as a positive deprivation. But this tragic fact just shows the degradation both of Harijans and of caste Hindus. The students need not worry about what happens in other places. The first thing is for them to be in the right and I suggest to them that they should resolutely set apart for their sweepers a liberal amount of the food that is ordinarily cooked for them. The Dehra Dun student has raised the question of cost. I know something of the hostel life all over India. It is my conviction that the general body of students spend far more on delicacies and luxuries than

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they should. I know, too, that many students consider it undignified not to leave their plates with ample remains of the helpings they had. I suggest to them that to have any leavings whatsoever on their plates is undignified and a sign of disregard of the poor people. No one, least of all a student, has the right to take on his plate more than he could comfortably eat. A student has no business to multiply the delicacies and luxuries. The student life is meant for the cultivation of self-restraint in everything and if they will follow the method of self-restraint and adopt the clean habit of not having any leavings on their plates, they would find that they would effect a saving in their expenses, in spite of setting apart a generous portion for their sweepers from the ordinary food that may be cooked for themselves.

And then, after having done that, I should expect them to treat the Harijans as if they were their own blood relations, speak to them kindly and tell them why it is necessary for them to give up the unclean habit of eating the leavings of other people's plates and of making other reforms in their lives. As to the use of the vacation by students, if they will approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. I enumerate a few of them.

1. Conduct night and day schools with just a short course, well conceived, to last for the period of the vacation.

2. Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, taking the assistance of Harijans if they would give it.

3. Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near their villages and teaching them how to study nature, and generally interesting them in their surroundings, giving them by the way a working knowledge of geography and history.

4. Reading to them simple stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

5. Teaching them simple *bhajans*.

6. Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons and giving both the grown-ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.

7. Taking a detailed census in selected areas of the condition of Harijans.

8. Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans.

This is but a sample of what is possible to do among the Harijans. It is a list hurriedly made, but a thoughtful student will, I have no doubt, add many other items.

I have so far confined my attention to the service of Harijans, but there is a service no less necessary to be rendered to caste

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Hindus. The students can often in the gentlest manner possible carry the message of anti-untouchability to them in spite of themselves. There is so much ignorance which can be easily dispelled by a judicious distribution of clean authentic literature. The students can make a survey of those who are for abolishing untouchability and who are against and, whilst they are making this survey, they may take note of wells, schools, ponds and temples open to Harijans and of those closed to them.

If they will do all these things in a methodical and persistent manner, they will find the results to be startling. Every student should keep a log-book in which he should enter the details of his work, and at the end of the vacation a comprehensive but brief report of the results of their labours could be prepared and sent by them to the Servants of Untouchables Society of their Province. Whether other students accept all or any of the suggestions made here, I shall expect my correspondent to give me a report of what *he* and his associates have done.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

296. 'THIS FIGHT IS NECESSARY'

The reader will appreciate the following instructive letter that Gurudev wrote on reading mine to Boyd Tucker on the place of temples, churches and mosques in religion in reply to his letter to me.[1]

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

It is needless to say that I do not at all relish the idea of divinity being enclosed in a brick-and-mortar temple for the special purpose of exploitation by a particular group of people. I strongly believe that it is possible for the simple-hearted people to realize the presence of God in the open air, in a surrounding free from all artificial obstruction. We know a sect in Bengal, illiterate and not dominated by Brahminical tradition, who enjoy a perfect freedom of worship profoundly universal in character. It was the prohibition for them to enter temples that has helped them in their purity of realization.

The traditional idea of Godhead and conventional forms of worship hardly lay emphasis upon the moral worth of religious practices; their essential value lies in the conformity to custom which creates in the

[1] For the text of Gandhiji's letter to Boyd Tucker, *vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 465-6. *Vide* also "Letter to Boyd Tucker", p. 170.

minds of the worshippers an abstract sense of sanctity and sanction. When we argue with them in the name of justice and humanity, it is contemptuously ignored, for, as I have said, the moral appeal of the cause has no meaning for them and you know that there are practices and legends connected with a number of our sectarian creeds and practices which are ignoble and irrational.

There is a tradition of religion connected with temple worship, and though such traditions can be morally wrong and harmful yet they cannot merely be ignored. There the question comes of changing them, of widening their range and character. There can be differences of opinion with regard to the methods to be adopted. From the point of view of the trustees of traditions, they are acting according to an inherent sense of propriety in preserving them as they are, in keeping the enjoyment of idol-worship in temples for exclusive groups of people. They not only deny the right of such worship to Christians and Mahomedans but to sections of their own community. Particular temples and deities are their own property and they keep them locked up in an iron chest. In this they are acting according to traditional religion which allows them such freedom, rather enjoins them to act in this manner. A reformer, in dealing with such morally wrong traditions, cannot adopt coercion and yet, as in fighting with other wrong and harmful customs, he must exert moral force and constantly seek to rectify them. This fight is necessary. I do not think Tucker makes this point clear.

As to the Santiniketan prayer-hall, it is open to all peoples of every faith. Just as its doors do not shut out anybody, so there is nothing in the simple form of worship which excludes peoples of different religions. Our religious service could as well take place under the trees, its truth and sacredness would not at all be affected but perhaps enhanced by such a natural environment. Difficulties of climate and season intervene, otherwise I do not think separate buildings are really necessary for prayer and communion with the Divine.

I have sent a poem[1] for the *Harijan*—translating it from one of my recent Bengali writings. I do hope it is one in spirit with the ideals of the *Harijan*, which I read with much pleasure and interest. There can be no more hopeful sign for India than the fact that her repressed humanity is waking up as a result of the great fast.

With loving regards,

Yours sincerely,
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Harijan, 1-4-1933

[1] "The Sacred Touch"; it was published in *Harijan*, 25-3-1933.

297. KABULI ZULUM[1]

The training in patient endurance of the Harijan has to be very generously supplemented by inviting Muslims of piety and influence to meet the Kabulis and point out to them that the taking of exorbitant rates of interest and the use of force for its recovery is contrary to law, morals and Islam and that, therefore, they should either [*sic*] be satisfied with the ordinary interest and recourse to law, if there is failure to pay. Similar educative propaganda has to be carried on among the Bania money-lender who charges the same unconscionable rate of interest as his Kabuli brother.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

298. ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY IN BIHAR

The following report has been received from Bihar of the work done to the middle of March.[2]

It is surely not enough for the local Committees to state that certain wells having been opened to Harijans were closed. It is necessary to state what steps have been taken to mend matters. In so far as a pure water-supply is concerned, it seems to me that it is the first duty of every Committee to make a rapid survey of the conditions as to water-supply and, where it is wholly inadequate, to take steps to redress the grievance.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

[1] The article under this caption, which was adapted from Bengali *Harijan*, and which is not reproduced here, described the plight of Harijans who had borrowed money from Kabuli and Bania money-lenders.

[2] The report, not reproduced here, covered various aspects of anti-untouchability work done in Bihar and gave figures concerning temples and wells opened to Harijans, Harijan boys admitted to schools and scholarships given and temperance meetings held.

299. *PROTECTIVE CLOTHING*

The Home Office in England published for official use a carefully prepared pamphlet entitled *Protective Clothing for Women and Girl Workers Employed in Factories and Workshops*. I am obliged for the pamphlet to Sjt. Hiralal Shah's industrious zeal. It contains different patterns of protective clothing for a well-classified list of employments, and it states that protective clothing has been found to be required for safeguarding the worker against accident or injury to health, or for securing her comfort and convenience in her work, or for protecting her ordinary clothing against damage caused by the materials, machinery, etc., used in the process in which she is employed, or resulting from the conditions under which the work has to be carried [on]. It goes on to state that in the great majority of cases the need for protective clothing arises from one or other of the following causes:

1. dusty or dirty processes,
2. working about machinery,
3. climbing ladders, etc.,
4. use of acids or caustic liquids,
5. wet processes,
6. excessive heat,
7. exposure to weather, etc.

Then follows an instructive but brief description of every type of clothing recommended. There are seven such types designed for 31 employments, coming under the headings I have already given. The pamphlet is profusely illustrated.

I mention this only in order to show the care with which the lives of employees are regarded by the Government in England and to drive the truth home that such meticulous care is exercised in devising methods of not only protecting employees engaged in dirty or injurious trades but also of protecting the public. How much more care is necessary in this climate for protecting the so-called untouchables engaged in dusty or dirty processes and for protecting also the public from the contamination caused by the workers in such employment becoming living carriers of dust and dirt! Their untouchability in no way protects society. On the contrary, a false sense of security aggravates the danger of contagion or infection, and this aggravation is doubled by the fact

that such employees, being neglected by society, become themselves so inured to insanitation that the surroundings in which they live become positive factories for disseminating dirt and disease. Hence the necessity for adopting without delay the very simple reform advocated by Sjt. Hiralal Shah. If we did not take a crooked view of untouchability, we should go to the quarters where the untouchables reside; we would begin our study of their conditions by entering our sanitary closets with our eyes wide open. Then society will not consider any cost too great for initiating and completing the reform, by ensuring the necessary measure of sanitation not only in the closets but also in the quarters inhabited by Harijans and by providing protective clothing and conveniences for washing and change.

Harijan, 1-4-1933

300. LETTER TO R. R. CHAKRAVARTTI

April 1, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter[1] of 28th ultimo for which I thank you. I have read Hardayalbabu's letter[2] and carefully noted the parts underlined by you. Are you not hyper-sensitive? I regard it as an inoffensive letter. The substance of it is unfortunately true. The Brahmin as a class does not show himself at his best. I hope you read my article[3] about it in the *Harijan*. I would like you, if you can, to shed what appears to me to be false sensitiveness and to join the ranks of reformers for the purification of Hinduism.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20796

[1] Presumably in reply to Gandhiji's letter to him; *vide* p. 147.

[2] This was enclosed in proof of his complaint regarding a campaign against Brahmins.

[3] *Vide* "The Much-maligned Brahmin", pp. 185-7.

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301. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

April 1, 1933

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

DEAR SIR,

I am thankful for the receipt in due time of the Government reply to my request about the C. P. prisoner, Seth Poonamchand Ranka, who is reported to be fasting in the Seoni Jail. I am hoping that the permission will be adequate for the purpose intended.

The permission however does not dispose of the larger issue discussed in my letter of the 23rd March. The Government's reply raising the larger issue disturbs the whole arrangement under which I have lived as a prisoner under successive Superintendents. I would therefore like to know the Government's decision on my request. The delay caused in my establishing contact with Seth Poonamchand has meant to me an agony I would not like to go through again.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3885; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3)A, p. 109

302. LETTER TO V. B. KIRTIKER

April 1, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter[2] of the 15th ultimo. I kept it by me all these days in order to read your argument. It is instruc-

[1] The addressee in a despatch advising the Government of India as to the contents of the letter said the letter was under consideration. He also informed Government of India that two requests from correspondents of foreign newspapers to interview Gandhiji had been turned down.

[2] In this the addressee had suggested abolition of the four varnas and a healthy fusion of all the castes and sub-castes of Hinduism.

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tive but not convincing. Varnadharma is not a man-made law but it is a law governing the soul. Man may break it as often as he likes, as he is doing, but he pays the penalty for it. Obedience to it sets free a vast amount of energy for the development of the substantial self, whereas disregard of it involves the expenditure of an amount of energy far too much for the result achieved. You have got to demolish not the varnadharma itself, but its inverted form. I am at one with you in doing so, but I have endeavoured to show that true varnadharma is a great discovery of Hinduism. I can be no party to the attempt to destroy it because the form in which we see it today is serious [*sic*].

Yours sincerely,

SJT. V. B. KIRTIKER
KASHI NIVAS
40 JUHU ROAD
SANTA CRUZ
[BOMBAY]

From a microfilm: S.N. 20797

303. LETTER TO MOHANLAL

April 1, 1933

MY DEAR MOHANLAL,

I have your letter together [with] *The Punjab Land Alienation Act* by Justice Shadi Lal and your articles which I am sure will help me to understand the implications of the Act.[1]

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20799

304. LETTER TO PADMAJA NAIDU

April 1, 1933

I was sorry that you had to run away so abruptly, but I do hope that there is nothing serious with Father. I hope too that you will behave yourself and not get worse than you were here.

[1] Gandhiji had asked for the text of the Act in his letter of March 25, 1933, to Amritlal Thakkar who must have passed on the request to Mohanlal, a prominent worker of Punjab; *vide* p. 197.

You will render me an account of what you may do without much exertion for the Harijan cause.

PADMAJA NAIDU

From a microfilm: S.N. 20805

305. LETTER TO V. S. R. SASTRI

April 1, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I kept your letter[1] all these days without acknowledgement, because I did not want to send you a reply without having read your letter which you have had so carefully prepared. I must thank you for all the labours that you have given to the task. The texts you have quoted are not unfamiliar to me nor the meanings that you have given. The difference arises from the application. I observe that there is a fundamental difference between you and me, if I may for the moment put myself, a layman, side by side with one so learned as you. That difference is in the interpretation. I look at the Shastras as one organic whole. You take isolated texts and prove your point. That method is as ancient as the human race, but I hold it to be altogether erroneous. It has led to the formation of innumerable sects and rival divisions without bringing us nearer to God or Truth. I will not therefore trouble you any more with my questions but will naturally always welcome anything you might wish to say.

I note also what you say about ahimsa and truth. Here again the same difficulty faces me. I can agree with the position you have taken up and yet defend my own without the slightest difficulty and on the strength of the very Shastras with which you are undoubtedly so familiar. May it not be just possible that those who have the Shastras and the different interpretations of every one of the texts by heart may miss the central point, and those who neither know them by heart nor understand the meaning of various texts may realize that central truth?

Yours sincerely,

PANDIT V. S. R. SASTRI
25/N SUBBARAYA MUDALY ST.
MYLAPORE, MADRAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 20800

[1] Of March 11

306. LETTER TO S. V. SONAVANE[1]

April 1, 1933

MY DEAR SONAVANE,

I have your letter. I have heard from Shree Jajuji also. Am I right in assuming that you will take the whole of your course at the Benares Hindu University? If so, have you got the syllabus and the terms? If you have not, you may make the preparations, for I am hoping that the needed scholarship will be found for you, subject of course to satisfactory certificate being received from the University from time to time.

You are asking for Rs. 10 towards the maintenance of your parents. Why do you want that assistance? Are you at present finding that amount for them? If you are not, how have they managed up to now? I understand that you have a grown-up sister or sisters. Should they not be earning something? Have they received any education? If they are willing workers, work can surely be found for them. But I am in darkness. Please give me the exact condition of your home.

The enclosed is the form I would suggest for your signature if you approve of it. If you do not, you would tell me what alterations you desire.

Yours sincerely,

[ENCLOSURE]

With reference to the scholarship up to Rs. 2,000 (Rupees two thousand only) that I may get from . . . for the prosecution of my studies at the Benares Hindu University, I undertake, at the end of the course, to use all my services for the advancement of the Harijan cause, and I shall always regard the scholarship as a moral obligation to repay it out of my earnings, should they exceed my requirements calculated on a simple scale.

Place.....

Date.....

From a microfilm: S.N. 20801

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's application for monetary help in the shape of a scholarship for Harijan students. His ambition was to study Civil Engineering for the next five years.

307. A LETTER

April 1, 1933

I have read the addition to the original legal opinion. I do not think that it is necessary to publish it now. It will simply raise an unnecessary discussion. What may prove useful is another considered opinion based on other questions altogether. I could frame them, but I have not got the time. If Mr. Bahadurji could think out something original and striking, I would love it. I do not mind even if it is an anonymous contribution, but I want something solid, absolutely impartial, a study of the Bills that will compel attention and show, as I think they do show, that there is no compulsion, as it is generally understood, involved in either Bill against anybody.

I enclose herewith letter[1] for Goolamben.

Encl. 1

From a microfilm: S.N. 20795

308. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 1, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

. . .'s[2] affair is becoming a very painful one. It has led to other revelations. I still do not quite see my way, but I will draw your attention to one rule of the Ashram.

Nobody in the Ashram can accept a personal gift. Anything received by any inmate belongs to the Ashram. Nobody possesses anything that is his personal property. This rule is implicit in the vow of non-possession. But I think there are some exceptions to this rule. All of you should consider what they are and commit them to writing.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8346. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] This is not traceable.

[2] The name has been omitted.

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309. LETTER TO MANSHANKER J. TRIVEDI

April 1, 1933

CHI. MANU,

I read your letters to your father. Every word in them bespeaks the purity of your heart. But you are altogether on the wrong path, as you have forsaken your duty. It would be considered a breach of trust if a person appointed to do one thing leaves it and does another. An agent commissioned to buy vegetables has no authority to return with a precious stone, though the latter is more valuable than the former. A jewel cannot serve the same purpose as a vegetable. As you are still a student and went abroad specially for study, you ought not to marry Elizabeth even if she is as good-looking as Rambha and as faithful as Savitri. To fall in love while one is a student is against dharma. If you understand this, wake up from the spell under which you have fallen. If, however, you think that it is your dharma to cling to your error, I am helpless.

I have written to your father about the other points.

May God show you the right path and lead you to your good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 22622

310. EXPERIENCE OF A TEACHER

I have already given[1] some experience of a teacher who has been working among Harijans. From his other letters, I give below some more of his experiences[2].

The reader need not be startled by this teacher's enthusiastic language. He is an emotional person. His experience is very new. We hope the English proverb about new brooms will not apply to this teacher and his enthusiasm will grow day by day. And it will

[1] *Vide* pp. 201-2.

[2] Not translated here; for a free and condensed translation by Gandhiji, *vide* "What It Means", 8-4-1933.

only grow if he has faith. The sun of faith can melt mountains of ice. If this teacher has towards these Harijan children the same feeling of love that a mother has for her child suffering from a repulsive disease, he will not be repulsed by their uncleanliness but will make them tidy and clean like other cultured children. Whether this teacher fulfils the promise or not, the conditions that he has laid down for himself are indispensable for an ideal teacher of Harijans.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 2-4-1933

311. IN KODINAR TALUKA

The well-known lawyer of Amreli, Shri Harilal Govindji, describes the workers' tour in Kodinar taluka as follows.[1]

I know that the pace of Harijan welfare activities in Kathiawar is slow. In spite of that if those who work there do not lose heart and give up patience, if they work with steadfast faith and love, untouchability will be uprooted from Kathiawar also. It is a very bad habit to concentrate on results. A person who gets disappointed at seeing results over which we have little control and which necessarily depend on many other factors is not a brave man but a coward. Cowards have never produced results. Those who are indifferent to results but remain engrossed in their work become instrumental in bringing about early results. Moreover, there is never any defeat for them because their success lies in their doing their duty and not in the results thereof. One is master of one's actions, the master of results is God alone. Therefore I hope that Shri Harilalbhai and his friends will cling unto death to the resolve they have expressed in this letter.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 2-4-1933

[1] The report is not translated here. The correspondent had described how he and other Harijan workers had tried to create an atmosphere congenial to the removal of untouchability and how favourably the sanatanists and the Harijans had responded to his gesture.

CWMG-LIV

312. LET THERE BE NO BLUNDER!

Shri Hiralal Shah sounds the following warning[1] about what I wrote concerning his scheme[2].

This warning is justified. If anyone's scheme is not presented as it is, there may be terrible consequences. And one who has presented his thoughts methodically is shocked if their translation is given by someone else differently; not only that, but at times it may produce a contrary effect and a blunder may be committed.

I have presumed on the part of the readers an acquaintance with Hiralal's scheme and have thus endeavoured to save my article from possible misinterpretation. I have made no effort to put the scheme just as it is before the reader. I have only given a summary. I have suggested that the scheme deserves consideration. My work is at present limited. I place many things before the readers. Whether to implement them or not is up to the men and women workers. It is the author's responsibility to take care of his scheme after I have more or less introduced it [to the public]. At present I can do no more than this.

There was much else in Shri Hiralal's letter. I have quoted only the essential part of it. Those who are interested in this scheme should write to Shri Hiralal and obtain full information and should then do what they can to implement his scheme.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 2-4-1933

[1] This is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that if a scheme were not properly introduced, the result would be contrary to what was desired. He had then cited the example of the uniform and added that if proper care were not taken about its use, instead of removing untouchability it might actually perpetuate it by becoming a symbol of it.

[2] *Vide* pp. 124-5.

CWMG-IIV

313. ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

WRATH OF HARIJANS[1]

How can your anger be pacified? I do not quite understand what your demand is. The chief executives of the Harijan Sevak Sangh are caste Hindus because it is for them to atone for their sins. Harijans can most certainly form their own organizations and they have been doing it. They should try to provide guidance to the institutions manned by caste Hindus. Ultimately, it is for the caste Hindus to pass the test at the hands of Harijans. God alone knows whether or not they will. The caste Hindus' burden of sin is so great that they are beyond redemption; who can save them now? If their sins have accumulated so much, they are most likely to meet their doom. But tell me what else can the caste Hindus do except regarding the Harijans like themselves and how can they make amends to the Harijans who do not regard themselves as Hindus? And, pray, what kind of amends?

IS NON-CO-OPERATION NOT APPLICABLE TO HARIJANS?[2]

I have your letter. Convey the following to your friend: No one is surprised that the food accepted by the stomach of a sturdy man is not acceptable to the stomach of a delicate man. It is sheer lack of understanding to apply the great rule to the absolutely uneducated when it can be applied only to the sensible. All rules are not equally applicable at all times and places and to all men. Such rules could hardly be as many as the fingers of one's hand. Many other rules have to be modified according to differences of time, place and individuals. If we thought in terms of the good society, we would realize that applying to Harijans or their children the rule we have applied to ourselves is likely to prove grossly unjust. The friend should adhere to his position and firmly participate in the giving of scholarships, etc., to Harijan children.

[1] A small section of Harijans, not satisfied with the Temple-entry Bill, the services of Hindu reformers or the Yeravda Pact, had demanded the management of all Harijan welfare bodies by Harijans themselves.

[2] The correspondent, Nrisinhaprasad Bhatt, a co-worker, had found it odd that the people participating in the non-co-operation movement should be called upon to help the Harijan students studying in Government schools and universities (S.N. 20714).

WHY A NEW NAME?[1]

Your argument that all Hindus, whether touchable or untouchable, should be known as Hindus is correct. But so long as untouchability is not wiped out, why should not our brethren who are regarded as untouchables be addressed by a sweet rather than a bitter name? A wayward son can refer to his mother as his "dad's woman", whereas, an obedient son will address her as "honoured mother".

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 2-4-1933

314. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 2, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. You did well in writing it. It is a good one. I cannot reply to you in detail today. Though the letter is good, it shows a pride unworthy of a woman who claims to be a *brahmacharini*. Remember the story of Narad. The moment he felt proud of his *brahmacharya*, he fell. One who aspires to observe *brahmacharya* relies only on God, and hence he is always humble. He never trusts himself. Anybody who is incapable from birth of feeling passion is not a human being. Such a person is either God, or lacks the power which makes a man a man or a woman a woman. In other words, he or she is an incomplete human being, is diseased. How can God be proud? Is a stone proud of being a stone? A diseased person should not be proud of being so. A man or a woman can cultivate the strength to control his or her passion and put the power so conserved to better use. But as soon as he or she becomes proud of such strength, it will be lost. How do you know to what extent the power of *brahmacharya* which you may have in you is being wasted? Your *brahmacharya* is certainly not perfect. Find out the natural truth about you. If you never feel passion, are you a goddess? A goddess would be a different kind of being from what you are. You are no goddess, and I don't think that you are diseased, since you get monthly periods. Examine yourself and write to me again.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10332. Also C.W. 6772. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] A gentleman had remarked that by calling the untouchables Harijans untouchability would be perpetuated under a new name.

315. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 2, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

The clock has just struck three and, after cleansing the teeth, I have sat down to write this letter.

You seem to feel a little defeated. That will not do. You must have observed that I tell everybody in my letters that they should do nothing mechanically unless they are convinced about it. One should accept a thing either with one's heart or with one's reason. One can accept a thing with the heart only if one has faith. But in either case one feels satisfied and happy. When reason does not understand a thing nor does the heart accept it, one feels discontented and slowly loses strength and energy. Though such a person works day and night without rest, his work is not well done and he becomes weaker and weaker and falls ill. This does not happen when one does work in which one has faith. 'What can I do? I know that all this is not right, but I have to do it out of respect for my elders.' This is not faith, but false civility. According to our definition of truth, it is also a form of untruth. This is the feeling which your letter [of the 31st] gives. Don't do anything because Narahari or I ask you to do it. Do a thing only if you are convinced that it is right. You are completely free to reject all suggestions of Narahari, for the final responsibility is yours. Many of Narahari's suggestions appeal to me, that is, they seem good on paper. If you feel that some of them are already being acted upon or that some others don't deserve to be accepted, you ought to take no action about them. You should try to explain your point of view gently to Narahari, and, if he does not see it, you should be patient and have faith that he will see it in the end or that you will see your error. Meanwhile, you should not let estrangement grow between him and you and neither of you should suspect the other of deliberate hostility. In some matters everything depends on one's method of work. You should understand Narahari's point of view. He is particular only about two things. He is open-hearted, hard-working and sensible. He has no control over his temper and is incapable of understanding certain things. But he doesn't worry about those things either. He is good at heart and harbours no resentment. One should be

patient with such a person. You should, therefore, try to understand his suggestions patiently and reason with him. Do not get upset or lose your peace of mind.

Read the letter which I have written to Parachure Shastri. I have written in it about his diet. He should now start working.

I sent a wire to Jivraj[1] at once yesterday. I will write to him today. We should bear all things. Just now I am probing the depths of mental leprosy. This case of physical leprosy, therefore, does not affect me much.

Umedram wants to learn music. Make the necessary arrangements for that and then arrange the rest of his programme of work.

Invite Marybehn to come again.

Personally I don't feel at all that Kusum is improving. Did you forward to Talwalkar my letter to him? I myself have no faith in his method of treating consumption. I would prefer Sharma's treatment if he agrees to come. Now Purushottam is our Sharma. I don't want to load him with much work till he is sure of his health. It is desirable that he should undertake more responsibility only after his experiment on himself has succeeded. Otherwise his health would break down. We will make no change before I get Talwalkar's reply. Nor should we upset Kusum. Talwalkar is a gentleman. He is also an experienced physician. Many patients put complete faith in him and remain under his treatment till the end. Quite a few of them die, but some recover too. It is the same with other physicians. If, therefore, we lose somebody by trusting to Talwalkar completely, we will not blame him. I have only expressed my own lack of faith in his method of treatment. I have faith only in nature-cure. When a case requires an operation, we certainly require a surgeon, but that happens in very few cases. If you have thought further about Kusum's case and have any suggestions to make, write to me. Get from Talwalkar his reply to my letter as early as possible.

Don't burden Purushottam with responsibility for more than four patients at a time.

. . .[2] does not seem likely to come in the near future. All the same, I have discussed the subject further in my letter to . . .[3] which you should read.

I will not write more now.

BAPU

[1] Dr. Jivraj Mehta

[2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

CWMG-IIV

[PS.]

As for those who worship Me, thinking on Me alone and nothing else, ever attached to Me, I bear the burden of getting them what they need.[1]

If . . .'s[2] letters have been read by the people concerned there, please return them to . . .[3]. Send to him my letter to . . .[4] also. Read all the accompanying letters before handing them over. There are eleven in all including this.

Umedram, Jivraj, Amina, Purushottam, Mary, Parachure Shastri, Kusum, Narahari, Lakshmidas, Prema.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8347. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

316. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 2, 1933

BOYS AND GIRLS,

I would like you to collect the bones you come across. I will find a use for them. Manure is certainly made by grinding them. But how to grind them or whether they can be put to still better use—I will have to find out.

BAPU

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

317. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

April 2, 1933

CHI. JAMNA,

There is no need to write to you separately since I write to Purushottam regularly. Cling to Purushottam's treatment till he admits failure. I am sure, simple remedies will cure your disease. Patience and faith are absolutely necessary. I do not know yet what is the matter with Kanu[5]. I have been thinking about Kusum. You have wisdom and can also write well. Use your ability and pour out your heart in long letters to me.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 874. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, IX. 22

[2], [3] & [4] The names have been omitted.

[5] Addressee's younger son

CWMG - UNV

318. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

April 2, 1933

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I have your letter. I don't think it possible to get a temple built. However, you should continue your efforts. Some day failure will change to success.

I send you with this a letter for Ranjit Pandit. He has gone there. You may give it to him if you want to and if he is there.

Who is Rana? His suggestions seem very bad and your criticism is fully justified. Stick to your stand, and don't mind it if, in consequence, you fail in your aim. I see no objection to a temple being built even if the funds are collected from the reformers. If such a temple is built and is maintained properly on religious lines, it can become a great centre. The site must be good and the men in charge of it should be persons of character. We do need a few model temples.

Sarupbehn gives an unfavourable account of the Bhangi quarters at Rajkot. Are they quite so bad? Wouldn't the municipality do anything to improve them?

Let me know how you are.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9648. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

319. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 2, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I wrote one letter[1] to you today morning. You will probably get it before this. What you write about . . .[2] and . . .[3] is a half-truth. Everybody makes mistakes. We should not be upset if somebody makes one, but we are bound to feel unhappy when a person hides his mistake and it is brought to light in spite of

[1] *Vide* p. 280.
[2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

CWMG - IIV

him, and then he puts up an unworthy defence. If we do not feel unhappy, we shall never find a way of preventing such incidents. If we assume that such things will always happen and do nothing to prevent them, that will mean destruction of society. We must, therefore, do what we can to prevent them. We will do so only if we are shocked by such incidents. We can say that one should not feel pain or get angry for things which don't matter, and I think you also mean only that. If you mean anything more, I am sure that you are wrong. If some other word is suggested in place of "pain" or "shock", I might accept it. But your letter seems to spring from *moha*[1], I cannot explain how. I cannot say whether the word *moha* is correct. I will be satisfied if you understand what I mean.

I have already admitted the mistake which I made.

What I want you to show is simplicity of heart, tenderness, humility, patience, forbearance and generosity towards others. You can show these things only if you come down from the sky to the earth. When will you begin to feel that you are nothing? Is it proper to bow down to Mother Earth every day and then kick her every day ? If our prayer to her is sincere, we should make ourselves mere particles of dust and learn to suffer the kicks of the world. Mother Earth then will not feel our feet, as we shall have become ash, though still alive. "Scatter the dust of separateness", as the poet says.

I have still a stock of the slivers sent by you. It was not your fault that they contain rough particles. The fault was partly that of the carding-bow and partly of the cotton. If you had carded the cotton still further, the fibres would have become weak. Other slivers do not yield very fine yarn, but they contain fewer particles.

I am very glad that you have taken Parachure Shastri's son in your hand.

You advised Shanta well. She may now do whatever she likes.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10333. Also C.W. 6773. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] Attachment

320. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

April 2, 1933

CHI. PANDITJI,

I have your letter.

It will be better if Dattatreya meets me before coming to you. What salary does he want? Which languages does he know? Perhaps we may be able to give him some work.

Umedram wants to become proficient in music. Do what you can for him.

Are the Chharas[1] still there or have they gone away? If they are there, are they still active?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 245. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

321. LETTER TO PARASHURAM MEHROTRA

April 2, 1933

CHI. PARASHURAM,

Teach Rajbhoj[2] well and see that he becomes proficient. Marybehn and Duncanbhai missed you very much.

You should not hesitate to write to me anything that comes to your mind. I wish to get plenty of work out of you, if you are ready to give it. And for that I must know your mind completely.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7513. Also C.W. 4990. Courtesy: Parashuram Mehrotra

[1] An ex-criminal tribe of central Gujarat

[2] P. N. Rajbhoj, a Harijan leader. He had gone to stay at the Ashram for some time; *vide* "Letter to P. N. Rajbhoj", p. 251.

CWMG - LIV

322. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

April 2, 1933

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter.

I do not wish to issue an order, nor do I have any such right. In the end I will always be satisfied with what you do, but I will continue to tell you what I want. I attach herewith a [draft bill] approved by you.[1] I shall publish nothing in your name without your desire or permission, and anything I might do would be not to compliment you but to serve the Harijan cause.

The suggestion is not for building a new temple and throwing it open, but for permitting the entry of Harijans to one of the four which already exist.[2] I do wish that you should do this much if possible. I am also of the view that it should be published in the *Gazette* that the Bhavnagar Ruler does not approve of discrimination against anybody in regard to schools, etc. There is some such law in your State. It will be enough if this principle is explicitly declared in it. It can be enforced only to the extent that the people are ready to co-operate. I do not wish that you should force the people to do anything. All that I want is that the State subjects should be informed of the policy of the Ruler, and that not orally but through a legal declaration. In any case I do not wish to kill the goose that lays golden eggs. For my part I want no eggs at all. The milk of a milch goat would satisfy me and I would not complain even if the goat occasionally hit me with its horns.

Do take care of your health.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5928. Also C.W. 3244. Courtesy: Mahesh P. Pattani

[1] & [2] *Vide* "Letter to Prabhashankar Pattani", p. 171.

CWMG-IIV

323. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

April 2, 1933

BHAI HARIBHAU,

Indefinite fasts certainly have their place in the circumstances which you have described. But they require the utmost fitness on the part of those who fast. It would be enough even if we get only one thousand such persons. What God has ordained will happen.

What you write about Gaurishanker is correct. Keep me informed about yourself. You claim to have gained experience only after you have fully recovered. What does Modi say? I have not heard from him as yet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 6077. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

324. LETTER TO RAM NARAYAN CHAUDHRI

April 2, 1933

BHAI RAMNARAYAN,

I have made use of your letter in *Harijan Sevak*[1]—you may look it up. Dewan Bahadur[2] and you should approach rich men and collect donations for sinking wells. Also prepare a map indicating the various spots where wells are needed. You must publish a compilation of data about the number of Harijans, their occupations and so on. Find out the outlay on the wells and other relevant facts.

Blessings to Anjanadevi[3].

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Bapu–Maine Kya Dekha? Kya Samajha?, p. 112

[1] *Vide* "Deprived even of Water", 14-4-1933.
[2] Dewan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda
[3] Addressee's wife

CWMG - LIV

325. LETTER TO KAMAL KISHORE MEHROTRA

April 2, 1933

CHI. KAMAL KISHORE ALIAS HANUMAN[1],

You have introduced yourself well. Remain a Hanuman even now. Hanuman as a child was very rampageous but on growing up he displayed his powers of *brahmacharya* and became a great devotee of Rama, so much so that when we sing praises of Rama we remember Hanuman first. You should become like him and be worthy of the name 'Hanuman'. Let us see what you do.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 4992. Courtesy: Parashuram Mehrotra. Also G.N. 7515

326. LETTER TO AMARNATH TANDON

April 2, 1933

BHAI AMARNATH,

The books should be lent to the untouchables on the same conditions as are applicable to others. But they should not be charged any subscription.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Congratulations on the additions to the library.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 229

[1] Parashuram Mehrotra's eleven-year old son who used to keep on changing places during prayers and thus cause disturbance

CWMG-LIV

327. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 2, 1933

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I have your letter. I write regularly. You must now put your faith in Dr. Sharma's treatment. God will do as He wills. Not all people spending thousands on treatment get well. So we must stick to one in whom we have placed our confidence. Doctor's son must have fully recovered. He can come to the Ashram whenever he wishes.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Do you know that Amina is fasting in order to lose weight? Purushottam is treating her.

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 281

328. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

April 3, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

I have your letter for which I thank you.[1] What I would like you to do is to send me the week's activities giving me the option of publishing them or not. I want the *Harijan* to be, among other things, a true record of substantial activities of the different organizations. I know you understand exactly what I mean. We do not want any show of work and if we cannot have any substantial work, we must humbly make that confession.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. R. LELE
C/O SERVANTS OF UNTOUCHABLES SOCIETY
JEHANGIR WADIA BUILDING
ESPLANADE ROAD, BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20818

[1] The addressee had asked in his letter of April 1, 1933, if it would be all right for him to send consolidated monthly reports instead of weekly reports (S.N. 20798).

329. LETTER TO BAJI KRISHNA RAO[1]

April 3, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I was sorry to read your announcement, but I cannot help saying that your fast was an utterly uncalled for and an ignorant performance. I hope it has left you none the worse for it bodily. There can be no spiritual gain from such an ill-conceived fast like yours. Surely you had no data to enable you to come to the conclusion that the defeat suffered by Sjt. Deorukhker was due to the sins of caste Hindus. I do not know the cause of his defeat but I am quite sure that you could not know them either. And why should you take it for granted that every Harijan candidate for election should succeed, whether he deserves or not? It would be a terrible test for caste Hindus if you expected them in open elections invariably to elect a Harijan candidate when one offers himself for election. What therefore in my opinion you need to do is to do real penance for the unjustified penance you have done and that penance consists in never again to do a single thing thoughtlessly.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. BAJI KRISHNA RAO
1ST CHETMI BAZAAR
SECUNDERABAD, DECCAN

From a microfilm: S.N. 20819

330. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

April 3, 1933

DEAR DR. SHARMA,

I have your letter and I am glad you are coming at last to the Ashram. Do please bring your child, and I shall be delighted if the place is found to be suitable both by you and him.

[1] The addressee, a social worker, in his letter of April 1, 1933 had informed Gandhiji of his intention to fast from April 1 to April 3 in order to do penance for the depressed classes leader Deorukhker's defeat at an election.

CWMG - LIV

Narandas warns me that the principal patients are just now out of the Ashram. I do not mind it at all. There are many things for you to examine and see from the nature-cure standpoint, and there is the common complaint about constipation which you would be able to deal with.

I am glad you have driven out Amtussalaam's superstition that she is suffering from T. B. She has a very vivid imagination and she conjures up evil where there is none.

I want from your presence in the Ashram much more than mere treatment of a few patients. A firm believer in nature-cure myself, I would like to find in you a kindred spirit given up wholly to truthful research without any mental reservations. And if I can get such a man with also a belief in the Ashram ideals, I could regard it as a great event. I know you too are approaching the visit in that light. You will therefore please make yourself thoroughly at home at the Ashram and study it in every detail. It is my belief that a nature-cure man should be able to vanquish the climate. Millions of human beings ought to be able to live healthy life by understanding the laws of adaptability to the climate in which they find themselves. They cannot have changes that rich men can afford and I cannot imagine nature to be so cruel as to be partial to the rich and indifferent to the poor. On the contrary I believe in the Biblical saying that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven", and another Biblical verse says that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you". Therefore I have always imagined that laws of nature are simple and understandable and capable of being followed easily by the millions.

I would ask you therefore to approach the Ashram with the set purpose of discovering the means of preserving or regaining health in the ordinary Indian climate.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh, pp. 22-3

331. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 3, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

The morning post has already been dispatched. I got your letter after it was sent.

I send with this a copy of the letter which I have written to Dr. Sharma. You will know my views from that letter. You will also find in it answers to all your questions. I, therefore, don't write more about the subject in this letter. Your question regarding Parachure Shastri is good. This is the difference between his and Raojibhai's case. Parachure Shastri belongs to the Ashram. He had come to live in the Ashram as a regular member. He intended to stay at least for three years, but circumstances obliged him to leave. I, therefore, thought that it was our duty to support him. But any number of outsiders like Raojibhai may wish to live in the Ashram. I am afraid that we cannot take in all such persons. If you and I were the only inmates of the Ashram, we could please ourselves and do anything we liked.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8348. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

332. LETTER TO BEGUM MOHAMMAD ALAM[1]

April 3, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

Your letter. I am afraid I cannot write a long letter. Restrain the Doctor from working overmuch.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 32

[1] Wife of Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Alam of Lahore

333. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 3/4 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your two letters. I have been watching the progress of the *Harijan Sevak*. Of course there is a steady improvement. There has to be a choice made, even of my writings; not all that I write for the English *Harijan* can be fit for reproduction in the Hindi edition, and I quite agree with you that what is reproduced should have the Hindi flavour about it; and not be a mere mechanical translation. I will bear your remarks in mind and will not send translations from here. Of course I want Viyogi Hari to do that. It was only because he was just now unable to cope with it that I began to translate here instead of sending the articles to Kashinath and Ramdas Goud. I quite agree with you that there should be some stories from Sanskrit or other sources, and poems too, if they are original and have first-class merit. I shall be entirely satisfied if you will look through the *Harijan Sevak* week to week as you have been doing recently.

I understand now what to do about the transfer for funds to you. Besides the money lying at the Press, I have received an anonymous donation of Rs. 500 today to be used for the cause at my discretion.[1] I am having that too transferred to the Board to be used subject to the donor's condition.

I am glad you have definitely decided to have the operation performed. I would be still gladder when you give me the definite date.

I understand what you say about the controversy in Bengal.

You ask me to send a copy of the *Harijan* to the Bengal Secretariat for His Excellency the Governor. I have a great deal of hesitation in doing so, for I do not know him personally. If therefore I send a copy to one, I should send to all the Secretariats, but that is not what you want me to do, and that is not what is necessary either, as it appears to me. I think I told you that Lord Reading and also Lady Reading used specially to subscribe to *Young India*. These big functionaries do not hesitate to express their wants, and it would look officious to supply

[1] This was from Dr. Behramji Khambhatta.

them in anticipation. But you know the Governor of Bengal, and after all, the *Harijan* is being published under the aegis of the Central Board. It would be therefore quite proper for you to send a paper in your capacity as President to any of your big acquaintances.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20814

334. LETTER TO PREM NATH BHARGAVA

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR PREM NATH,

I have a copy of your letter of 27th February. My guidance consists in a radical change in outlook.[1] What I would like you to do is to satisfy the requirements set forth in my article in the *Harijan* on the 'disposal of carcasses'[2]. If you have not read it, you should procure a copy and read it. That would mean your learning the A B C of treatment. You have to begin by handling the carcass at the spot where it is found and treating it, not in a central depot but in the village near by, knowing what to do with every part of the carcass. When you have succeeded in doing this, the second step will be to take charge of the hides that have at least gone through the primary cure, but this is a programme for which you are hardly prepared. If you are, you will certainly be my man.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. PREM NATH BHARGAVA
BAGH RAM SAHAI
AGRA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20824

[1] The addressee's plan was to appoint an agent of his factory to treat carcasses on the spot, fuller curing to be done in the tannery afterwards.

[2] *Vide* pp. 65-6.

CWMG-LIV

335. LETTER TO P. H. GADRE

April 4, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have now gone through your collection[1] over which you have laboured so much and so well.

Although the whole of the selection is good, I have omitted some of the verses, though good in themselves, as being not quite relevant to the issue.

I would like you now to make a collection of such verses, if there are any, from Gnana Dev and other saints of Maharashtra.

I shall expect in due course the information about the sweepers and Mahars in Nasik.

Yours sincerely,

GADRE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20825

336. LETTER TO GIRDHARILAL

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR LALA GIRDHARILAL,

I have your letter. I am glad you are again moving forward.

I do not think that Dr. Agrawal will get the permission[2]. If he does, I have no doubt that the Sardar may give him the time and so would I. But even if he asks for permission he should not use our names. If I can summon up sufficient courage, I shall ask for the permission myself.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20823

[1] This was a collection from Tukaram's poems relevant to untouchability. A selection from it was published in *Harijan*, 8-4-1933; *vide* "Tukaram and Untouchability", 8-4-1933.

[2] To visit Gandhiji in prison to help him give up spectacles through eye-exercises

337. LETTER TO D. G. KALE

April 4, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your postcard quoting a verse from Vaman Pandit. The use of the word 'Harijan' there does not necessarily show that it means an 'untouchable' ; if it does, you should send me the connecting verse or other authority entitling you to interpret 'Harijan' to mean 'untouchable' in the verse quoted by you.

Yours sincerely,

KALE
ASODE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20828

338. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

This is what appears in a Bengali newspaper[1]:

> We know that on Harijans having been allowed the right of entry into a certain famous temple in Bombay, no Brahmins enter it any longer; those who are merely reformers have no liking for the worship of images. In consequence this temple is now lying forsaken. . . .

Do you know anything about such a temple? If you do not, and if it is possible, please enquire and let me know whether there is any truth in that statement. If the statement can be substantiated, you will please let me know the name of the temple also.[2]

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20827

[1] *Prabartak*
[2] *Vide* also "Letter to Motilal Roy", pp. 300-1.

339. LETTER TO N.

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your two letters. I see that you are still struggling. I do not mind so long as each time you continue to come out unhurt. I hope you got my letter sent to your new address. In that letter I gave you two warnings and I hope that you took them both to heart. Who pays for all your little expenses? For instance, for the stamps and stationery, even an occasional telegram. You cannot give me too many details of your life. Truth peeps out through infinite details but it can be hidden from ourselves as well as from the spectators when a whole picture is presented. That is to say, a generalization can be made to cover an untruth. It will be true enough when I make a general statement. 'I'm all right', but that general statement will cover the untruth, namely, the fact of the bad elbow. That will only come out of a careful cross-examination of me unless I said, 'I'm all right, but for a bad elbow'. There is a great passage in the most ancient and the simplest and I think the shortest of the Upanishads. The translation is "The face of truth is covered with a golden lid", and then the seeker ends with prayer, "O God! remove the lid for me so that I can see truth face to face."[1] You now know what I mean by the golden lid.

I hope you and S. are keeping well, both in body and in mind. Is 'Chitaldrug', complete address for you?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20831

[1] *Ishopanishad*, 15

340. LETTER TO J. NARASIMHAM

April 4, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter enclosing a brief history of your Seva Sadan. I will see what can be done with it.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. J. NARASIMHAM
MASULIPATAM

From a microfilm: S.N. 20832

341. LETTER TO P. N. RAJBHOJ

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR RAJBHOJ,

I hope you got my letter[1] sent to you as soon as I learnt that you had reached the Ashram. I have now got your own letter. In a few days' time I expect you to write to me in Hindi, for there is not much difference between Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati. They are all sister languages; a large part of the vocabulary is common to them and it is easy enough to detect a similarity in grammar.

You will resist the temptation to give. I would ask you to be in no hurry. You have gone to the Ashram for the purpose of taking, therefore quietly and persistently take in all that the Ashram has to give and when that has been done, begin giving by all means, and you will find that you are able to take much more than you had expected. Do not combine giving and taking for the time being, rather believe that you cannot fail to be unconsciously giving while you are taking properly. I am most anxious that for the time at least you should bury yourself in the Ashram, and when you have either assimilated enough of the Ashram atmosphere and attitude or rejected it as unassimilable or unsuitable, you should proceed to the next stage, and in all you do whilst you are in the Ashram, I would like you to be

[1] *Vide* p. 251.

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guided implicitly by Narandas. That seems to me to be the best way of taking the most out of any institution.

I had seen the rough draft of your reply to Dr. Ambedkar's statement. There was not much in it and in no case could I have published it, seeing that Dr. Ambedkar's statement was not published in the *Harijan*. The draft was so roughly drawn that I did not know that you would want it back. I think I destroyed it after having read it.

I am surprised at what you tell me about Sind, because there there are very staunch workers. Jamshed Mehta is a host in himself. Narayandas Bechar has given himself to the Harijan cause and there are several others. The Harijans in Karachi are better housed and better looked after than elsewhere. Of course there is room for improvement, but that would be so in every case. However if you will send me concrete proposals I would gladly forward them to Jamshed Mehta. I hope that you have completely thrown off the headache you had in the beginning.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 791; also S.N. 20826

342. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

April 4, 1933

DEAR MOTIBABU,

I enclose herewith a cutting from the *Sanatani* dated 12th March. I wonder whether the cutting represents your views. If it does, you are bound fearlessly to express them even though they may be contrary to mine. I know full well that mutual regard ought not to mean always identity of views. If therefore I discovered that you hold different views from mine, my regard for you will not suffer. What binds us is a relentless pursuit after Truth at any cost.

Do you know which Bombay temple is referred to?[1] I should like to enquire. I know that several temples that were opened during the fast have since been closed to the Harijans again, but I have not known of a temple in Bombay or elsewhere deserted by Brahmins because it has been opened to Harijans. Such threats were uttered no doubt, but they were not carried out, except

[1] *Vide* "Letter to P. R. Lele", p. 297.

in the case of individuals; at least such is my information. But we have simply to know the truth and base our action accordingly. I would therefore like to enquire more fully when I get the name of the temple. As it is, I have already written to the Secretary of the Bombay Board if he knows of any such temples referred to by the writer in the Bengali *Prabartak*.

There are other statements which are open to question, but they can be regarded as matters of opinion. Therefore I have not commented on them, but I have underlined the passage, for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20829

343. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 4, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

The packet of letters which I despatched this morning was a large one as usual. Compared to it, this will be a much smaller one. I despatched the packet in the morning because the letters were urgent.

I did not find Dhanvant Raka's letter which you say was included.

I return Narahari's letter with this.

This is my view regarding guests. Even if every guest is given a copy of the rules to be observed by him, he should be given a seat by the side of a responsible inmate of the Ashram. The latter should take away from him his dish for cleaning and also clean the spot where he is asked to sit. These two things should be left to the guest only after he has himself started doing them. About the food also, the neighbour should explain to him that the general menu of the Ashram contains no rice, but that it is included in the special menu and he can ask to be served according to either. If there is only one solitary person who wants rice, he need not be asked. As soon as a guest arrives, somebody should elicit from him his special requirements and as many of them should be provided as possible.

Potatoes and *ratalu* should not as a rule be served as vegetables. I would have them served only in place of bread or rice. They are mostly starch. Vegetable means any green which contains no starch. If people would agree, I would make it a

rule to serve rice only to persons who are ill. The quantity of *dal* served should be very small. Rice is not necessary at all. Those who get milk need very little quantity of *dal*. There is no doubt that our diet contains an excess of starch. It is being proved day by day that the body needs very little starch. But we cannot force this reform on unwilling people, and in any case we should watch the result.

We should not tolerate snacks being bought from the market. But we need the fullest co-operation of the families to put a stop to this practice. If people went and saw for themselves how these things were prepared, they would never eat them again.

You should insist on the children sleeping for eight hours at night.

I believe that it is not proper to withhold a meal by way of punishment. I myself, though, have been guilty of ordering such punishment. I am also becoming more and more convinced that there should be no physical punishment either. I have no doubt that the very fact that the need for punishment is felt bespeaks our imperfection. We must learn how to teach without the use of any form of punishment, and we can do that only if we refrain from punishing even in extreme cases.

The suggestion about the dictionary should be immediately implemented. A copy should be kept not only in the library but also in the office. Everybody in the Ashram should form the habit of consulting it. This will mean some expense, but it is worth incurring.

BAPU

[PS.]

Narandas,

Please tell Titus that I will reply to him some other time.[1]

I have not heard from you what you have decided regarding Dhiru.[2]

My suggestion about the women stands.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8849. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] *Vide* "Letter to T. Titus", pp. 305-6.

[2] Regarding giving him permission to join Santiniketan; *vide* pp. 243-4.

344. LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI

April 4, 1933

BHAI NANALAL,

I have your letter. I also will wire to Maganlal. Let us see what he does. Bhai Prabhashankar has written to me. There is no need to reply to his letter. Do keep in touch with him. I have said what I felt. I have heard from Chhaganlal too. He agrees to the division of the property.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9630

345. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

April 4, 1933

CHI. MANI,

I do not understand your complaint about letters. We do write to you regularly. We are now trying to find out why you do not receive our letters. I abstained from writing to you when Father wrote but even then I generally penned something at the bottom. Sometimes possibly that was also not done. That is the reason why I am confused. You have certainly the right to complain and even be angry if you do not hear from anyone of us. You ought to feel sure that we shall never, for whatever reasons, refrain from writing to you and if we do you should know that it must be through accident.

We are all well here. Father has resumed his study of Sanskrit. I would not say that he is making rapid progress but he is doing quite well. He makes constant efforts to remember what he has learnt so far. Dahyabhai generally comes every week to see us.

My hand is as it was but it does not interfere with my work. Mahadev is in good health. Chhaganlal Joshi is also well. If you need good slivers we can send some from here, as we receive plenty of them. We had news of you from Mridula and also from Kamaladevi and Lilavati. You have created a good im-

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pression on all of them. Ba and Mirabehn are all right. Mirabehn writes to me every week. At present Kakasaheb is here and helps with the *Harijan* work. It is also published now in Gujarati, Hindi and Bengali.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, pp. 98-9

346. LETTER TO KARSANDAS VITHALDAS

April 4, 1933

BHAI KARSANDAS,

The chapters that you have sent are good. I will send them back after using them.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

SHRI KARSANDAS VITHALDAS
HARGOVAN DESAI'S CHAWL
3RD FLOOR, BEHIND PORTUGUESE COMPOUND WALL
BHULESHWER, BOMBAY 2

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

347. LETTER TO RAMA DEVI CHOWDHRY

April 4, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. The correction has been made.[1] Send me the names and other particulars of the ladies working with you. Send also your own particulars. I hope the work is done daily and regularly. I shall have a better idea of it if you give me your daily programme.[2]

MOHANDAS GANDHI

SHRI RAMA DEVI
ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY LEAGUE
CUTTACK, ORISSA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2787

[1] *Vide* "Notes", sub-title "Women Workers in Cuttack", pp. 183-4, and "Notes", 8-4-1933, sub-title "Two Corrections".

[2] The addressee did this in her letter of April 11.

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348. LETTER TO T. TITUS

April 4, 1933

MY DEAR TITUS,

Your letter is full and very good. I shall read your report with avidity. It may be sent to me by registered post and I shall return it after reading; that would save time and labour.

You must have read literature about the qualities of unfired milk and how long such milk remains in an eatable condition without needing to be boiled. I have simply suggested its being put in an air-tight bottle or an air-tight vessel and wrapped in wet cloth under the belief that milk so kept remains for 12 hours or so without altering its quality, and if your reading confirms my belief, you should popularize the use of unfired milk in the Ashram, and begin to preserve it in the manner suggested by me. You begin the milking early. Some of the milk is not used till 10.30 or 11 o'clock. If therefore it is taken in an unfired condition, it has got to be preserved against atmospheric changes. And I think that the milkmen or milkmaids should be frequently watched and taught to wash the udders, etc., in a thorough manner.

My recollection of the Bangalore Dairy is that the animals were taken to a special open place for the purpose of milking. Was that not so? I have a notion that Col. Smith told me that it was better to take the animals to a free open space for milking. If this is a good practice, and I think it is, we ought to adopt it. But you know better. I do not want to give you more work than is absolutely necessary. I do want our dairy to be a first-class model dairy of its kind. We cannot go in for expensive methods, but we must go in for all the methods that would ensure, through methodical labour and meticulous care, cleanliness and purity of milk. What is the lowest yield required from a cow to make her self-supporting? And what is the cost?

Now about homoeopathy. I must confess that without any specific cause I have never been able to take kindly to it, though some of my friends have often recommended it to me. I have noticed too that these friends themselves at critical moments have given up homoeopathy and gone to allopathy. Though I should like to believe to the contrary I am driven to the conclusion that

allopathy, although it has great limitations and much superstition about it, is still the most universal and justifiably the most popular system. Allopathy provides opening medicines, ointments for a variety of boils and eruptions, disinfectants for various situations and includes surgery of a most wonderful type. It is an all-inclusive system. It can well include homoeopathy, biochemistry and the latest nature-cures. If therefore allopathy rids itself of the worship of mammon, which has overtaken most human activities, and could exclude vivisection and other practices which I call black, and liberally took advantage of the new methods discovered by lay people, it would become all-satisfying and quite inexpensive.

Having said this, if you have an accurate knowledge of homoeopathy and can easily spare the time necessary for treatment, I do not mind your introducing it in the Ashram subject of course to consultation with Narandas and the other responsible people in the Ashram. I would love to think that we were independent of outside medical assistance or that it was only rarely that we have to trouble our medical friends. My ideal is to find whatever alleviation we want in the Ashram itself. It pains me when any of us have to go out for medical relief or treatment or to call in medical assistance. We may never reach that perfect state, but the nearer the approach to it the better for us. I would therefore be pleased if you could even minimize the occasions for seeking medical help from outside. Tell me what treatments you would give to Kusum, Jamna, Chimanlal and last but not least Parachure Shastri. These are all typical cases.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20830

349. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

[About *April 4, 1933*][1]

CHI. NARAHARI,

What is the matter with Mohan? What is wrong with his hands ? What is the cause, according to the doctor, of their becoming paralyzed? So far I did not worry about him, thinking that he suffered from ordinary fever; but now I feel a little

[1] From the reference to addressee's letter to Narandas Gandhi; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", pp. 301-2.

worried and want to understand what exactly is the trouble with the hands.

I read your letter to Narandas. I liked some of the suggestions you have made in it. I suggest that you should discuss them with Narandas. It was of course good that a meeting was held, but the person who is expected to execute them should understand them fully. I should like unity of hearts between you, if that is possible. I fail to notice it at present. Try your best to bring it about. Do not give up the attempt in despair.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9059

350. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

April 5, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

I have your letter of the 1st instant enclosing a copy of your letter of the 19th March.[1]

The *Sanatani* I have been getting regularly. You need not therefore send it to me. Who is the editor? He wrote to me saying that he had met me before. I cannot recall his features. What was or is his occupation?

Ramanandababu's note is indeed interesting; but that is his style whenever he is displeased with anything.[2]

I have given you my views fully about our duty concerning the Pact.[3] You will now do exactly what you think is called for by the local situation. I have the Bengal schedule prepared by the Bengal Government.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20839

[1] This gave details of the facts behind the agitation against the Yeravda Pact. One of the complaints was that the Pact had given an excessive number of Council seats to Harijans, Namashudras and Rajbanshis thus adversely affecting the interests of caste Hindus and national progress.

[2] Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of *Prabasi* and *The Modern Review*, had written a scathing editorial "Help for Harijan Students", backing the opponents of the Yeravda Pact.

[3] *Vide* pp. 116-7.

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351. LETTER TO V. R. DIGHE

April 5, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter giving an account of buffalo sacrifices in Janjira State. I shall see if it is possible for me to do anything in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. V. R. DIGHE
KHADI BHANDAR
DADAR

From a microfilm: S.N. 20836

352. LETTER TO DIWAKAR SINGH

April 5, 1933

MY DEAR DIWAKAR,

I have your letter. I cannot possibly undertake to judge you, and if, on closer introspection, you have found the present method of serving better than the one you started with, you should stick to it.[1] You have understood my point and that is enough for me.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20837

[1] The addressee had stated in his letter that he had given up street-cleaning and taken to cleaning his own lavatory as well as the other hostel lavatories when occasion arose.

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353. LETTER TO AMULYADHAN ROY

April 5, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which I thank you.

My position is quite clear. The Yeravda Pact is a solemn document.[1] It cannot be altered except with the consent of all the parties interested in it.

So far as I am concerned, I have seen nothing warranting a change in my opinion.

Of course you are at liberty to publish my reply, if you wish it.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. AMULYADHAN ROY
GIRISH GHOSH LANE
GHUSURI
P. O. BELURMATH (HOWRAH)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20838

354. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 5/6, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I send with this a letter written by a lady named Malidoshi on behalf of the labourers working in the Ashram. You may not have read it. Inquire about the matter and let me know what the facts are.

Madhavji's brother Chatrabhuj writes to tell me that the former's two children cannot be properly looked after in Calcutta. I have already suggested that the children's aunt should take them to the Ashram and keep them there. She might leave after the children begin to feel at home there. You also should write to

[1] The addressee, an M.L.C., had informed Gandhiji of the motion passed against the Yeravda Pact in the Bengal Legislative Council on March 14, 1933. He had opposed the motion but asked for advice as to future action.

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them and get the children under your charge if you can. I have written to Madhavji and Lakshmi about this.

I hope Duncan is better.

Read my letter to Titus.[1] You may send the report of the dairy as it is. I will get a copy taken out here if necessary. Otherwise I will return it after reading it.

To me also Keshu writes only a few lines every time. I have now given up hope about him. He has made up his mind to leave the Ashram. It seems Radha also wishes to live outside.

I hope you received my letter in which I wrote about Dr. Sharma and Parachure Shastri, and followed what I said. If you did not follow any point, please ask me to explain.

BAPU

Enclosed: Malidoshi's letter and letters for Champa, Parachure Shastri, Titus, Malidoshi and Rajbhoj.

April 6, 1933

[PS.]

Tell Durga that I gave her the date of my release as May 4, but it is not correct. It is May 19. Ramdas will be released on May 1. I get Durga's letters regularly. I will write to her in a day or so.

I had a letter from Gaur Gopal. I replied to him immediately. That was many days ago. Write to him and tell him that he may go to Shail Ashram. It has a vacant room. He will make his own arrangements for meals, etc. Prabhudas will help him in that. It is our duty to look after his comfort as much as we can.

I hope Dhananjay is being properly nursed. You know what he is suffering from. Let me know who attends on him. It would be better if he was an elderly person, for he would then run less risk of infection.

What has happened to Liladhar ?

BAPU

[PPS.]

We have a copy of Poore's *Sanitation* in our library. Send it to Shri N., Chitaldrug, Mysore.

In case you don't have Gaur Gopal's address there, I give it below :

C/o Sjt. Gagendraprasad Das, Advocate, Patna

[1] *Vide* pp. 305-6.

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Enclosed letters:

Duncan, Premi, Chimanlal, Amina, Anandi, Nanibehn, Durga, Purushottam, Narandas, Talwalkar, Durga (Babo).

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8350. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

355. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

April 6, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter came in only yesterday. I am beginning this before prayer 3.45. I overslept myself. Being the fasting day it does not much matter perhaps.

You have done well in writing as you have done. The difficulty about the execution is threefold. (1) The Ashram site has to be removed or the other activities have to be. (2) There is no one in the Ashram who would stay on the condition you name, save perhaps Narandas. (3) The Ashram has not been conceived in the manner suggested by you.

The last is perhaps the fatal difficulty. Mine is a novel experiment, dangerous and, it may be, even impossible of achieving. The idea is to have a place where people can train themselves to lead the celibate life in the midst of ordinary temptations. . . .[1] and . . .[2] fell not because they could not overcome animal passion. They have not gone so far. But they suppressed truth. Now truth can only be cultivated in the midst of men and women of different temperaments and subtle temptations. It is easy enough for a few people of similar habits not to deceive one another or be found out. That is no truth. It has to be lived in the natural surroundings. Exception has been taken even to the Ashram life as being not natural.

I wonder if you have followed me so far. If you have, you must at once perceive that the first two difficulties are the natural consequence of the deliberate creation of the third. Having constituted the Ashram as it is we have the men and women and the activities that we have. And out of these men and women and the activities we cannot create what you have contemplated. What you suggest can only be done by withdrawing two or three men and women and sending them to another place to

[1&2] The names have been omitted.

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live their own life and draw some kindred spirits in due time. But that would be to admit failure. I should not mind it if it became inevitable. I am not at all convinced that it is. If out of the present experiment a few of us lived of whom it could be said that they fairly satisfied the test, I should be quite satisfied that the experiment had succeeded. In an experiment such as we are making failures must be the order of the day. Each will be a stepping-stone to success. The . . . incident has disturbed me but not baffled me at all. Prompt measures have been taken after the discovery and are still being taken.

You should know also my diagnosis. The fault lay in my over-confidence in both these young people. The earlier fault lay in their parents. . . . had the notion that his children will better conform to the Ashram ideal if they were brought up in isolation. . . . nursed the thought. And so the children grew to be selfish, and exclusive and self-centred. The motive behind . . . was good. And so I carried out the tradition after . . .'s death. I was bound to as his heir to test its efficacy. The result we know. I am not sorry. . . . had every right to do what he thought was good for the Ashram. As for . . . the way with . . . was reverse. But . . . did not quite assist her husband. She had no policy of her own but she herself could not follow out the Ashram ideal and so . . . grew anyhow as the pet of the Ashram. The natural thing is likely to happen now. The proud family of . . . will cut themselves from the Ashram and live their natural life. That will not be bad. . . . has learnt her lesson. She will for . . .'s sake more and more conform to the ideal. . . . was the dupe, . . . was the villain (used not in its quite ugly sense). The whole Ashram knows that truth at any cost will alone save it. Things will tighten themselves along these lines.

Several other things will be gradually done. No violent changes will be made. There is not the slightest cause for alarm. You are perhaps unnecessarily harsh on Prema. She has her grave blemishes but she has contributed nothing to the incident. Her physical *brahmacharya* appears to me to be above suspicion and she is truthful to the point of bluntness. She is meticulous in the observance of the outward rules. She has a vile tongue. She is trying to control it. Anyway there is no one who can conduct the Ashram better than Narandas. He must be left to manage it to the best of his ability.

Now I want you to work at this exhaustive letter and give me your criticism, ideas and suggestions unhesitatingly and with-

out reserve. You have plenty of time for hard thinking. I am unperturbed. I am taking things easy, meeting each situation as it arises. Narandas will faithfully carry out instructions. And if I felt the call I am quite capable of disbanding the whole Ashram in so far as I have the power which legally I have not. But that is nothing. The moral authority is there. You may therefore make any drastic suggestions you like.

All well here otherwise. You will explain to Ba whatever is said here in so far as it may be necessary.

Love from us all.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 9673. Courtesy: Mirabehn

356. LETTER TO NAGENDRA NATH BHATTACHARJEE

April 6, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of 27th March and now I have got the piece of khaddar woven out of the yarn spun by Junu[1]. Please thank the little friend on my behalf and tell her that I shall gladly make use of the khadi and think of her when I use it.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. NAGENDRA NATH BHATTACHARJEE
DHALBARIA VILLAGE
MATHURESHPUR P. O.
KHULNA DIST. (BENGAL)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20855

[1] The addressee's six-year old daughter who had spun for two years in order to present the yarn to Gandhiji

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357. LETTER TO R. K. GOLIKERE

April 6, 1933

MY DEAR GOLIKERE,

I was certainly surprised to get your letter, and still more so to read the contents. I thank you for thinking of me and sending me your book. I shall certainly make time to read it. I shall understand more fully than now the significance of your new definition of astronomy.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. R. K. GOLIKERE
SARASWAT BUILDINGS
GAMDEVI, GRANT ROAD
[BOMBAY]

From a microfilm: S.N. 20856

358. LETTER TO DUNCAN GREENLEES

April 6, 1933

I have your letter. It fills me with joy.[1] It is so frank and downright sincere. I understand every word of what you say and you shall do as truth in you guides you and it will give me full satisfaction. And, no matter where your lot is cast, I shall regard you as an Ashramite. Meanwhile, take whatever is to be taken from the Ashram without in any way forcing yourself. You have taken a great step in fasting. I hope you are letting Purushottam guide you. As much water as you can drink, hot or cold, should be taken. It can do you no harm whatsoever if it is properly taken. You know the best and cheapest method of keeping water cold. Wrap the vessel in which it is kept with wet cloth. You have to take a full enema daily and if there is a feeling of nausea, you will take a few drops of lemon with water, and even honey, if you have a sweet tooth.

DUNCAN GREENLEES

From a microfilm: S.N. 20840

[1] The addressee had informed Gandhiji of his intention to go to Madanapalli to take up teaching.

359. LETTER TO V. S. KATHAVTE

April 6, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have our letter. I think that you have to give up all idea of marrying the girl. You do not seem to realize that she is only eleven years old. She cannot have any idea of marriage at her age, and if she has, it is an unhealthy and premature knowledge, which is not to be encouraged. Apart therefore from the close relationship which undoubtedly exists I think that the age of the girl is an effective bar, and you ought not to read into her eyes any message for you.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. V. S. KATHAVTE
SAVANUR

From a microfilm: S.N. 20849

360. LETTER TO KESHAV

April 6, 1933

MY DEAR KESHAV,

I like your frank letter. I thoroughly understand your position, and though I may not quite agree with it, I can appreciate it. You know my own fundamental position, don't you? I never feel that what appeals to me as the whole truth must necessarily appeal to the others as such. Truth that we see is always relative knowledge and therefore it need not have universal application. My prayer therefore for my neighbours is: "May they see the Truth as Thou the All-knowing One, would have them to see it."

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20852

361. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

April 6, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

Your postcard announcing your resignation[1] does not come upon me as a surprise, as your letters of late had prepared me for it. The language betrayed your uneasiness. I hope that in spite of your leaving the Board, your interest in the Harijan cause will continue unabated.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. R. LELE
WADEKAR BUILDING
BOMBAY NO. 4

From a microfilm: S.N. 20853

362. LETTER TO N.

April 6, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your letters of 31st March and 2nd April together.

You were quite right in accepting Sreenivas Rao's gifts and asking him to send you whole wheatmeal and dried fruit. It is a great handicap that you can get no fresh leafy vegetables. But you know that leafy vegetables are grown in no time. I had an English friend living with me in South Africa who grew sufficient cresses in a fortnight's time. You should get some seeds, have just a little plot of land, fence it in, dig it well superficially and beat up the earth well. You can use the manure that the animals around you may give, and sow lettuce seeds, tomatoes and any of the leaves that grow easily there. You should make some explorations also in and about Chitaldrug. I cannot imagine all that place being without leafy vegetables known as *bhaji*. I would ask you not to abstain from milk and butter at least just now. You may take only a little quantity if you like, but I am

[1] From the secretaryship of the Bombay Provincial Board of the Servants of Untouchables Society

afraid that you will become weak in due course if you do not take these two things, for you are not having enough fresh fruit nor wheatmeal.

You need not write anything to Durgadas[1] about your statement, but write it out yourself from memory and let me have it.[2]

I understand what you say about pulses for S. As he is very active according to the description you gave me here, perhaps there is no harm if he is given a moderate quantity.

I shall send you the book on village sanitation. I am writing to the Ashram, but let me give you the substance of Poore's method. The theory is that 18 inches of the surface of earth is all filled with germs which do the work of scavenging for all the creatures that reside on it. These germs can work on all the filth that the creatures deposit on the surface of the earth from day to day. Poore having known this and having understood the most economical use that the Chinese make of human excreta developed his method and said that all the excreta, both liquid and solid, should be buried not more than 12 or at the outside 18 inches below the surface of the earth. He therefore does not suggest movable latrines nor the ordinary deep-pit latrines. He suggests receiving the excreta in buckets, each person covering the excreta with earth, which is ready in the closet, so that the closet remains clean and sweet-smelling all the time. These buckets are emptied in the squares, dug up and kept ready, not many yards away from the latrine itself, and then the earth, which is heaped up on the edge of the square, is taken up and the excreta covered with it. No more excreta should be heaped upon the deposit just made. Ample earth is thrown on each deposit so that dogs and other animals may not dig out the thing. Inside of a fortnight all that excreta is worked upon by the germs and turned into fine manure and the ground is ready for cultivation.

We have followed this plan most successfully at the Ashram for 17 years, that is, since its inception. The whole of the performance takes no time and there is no smell emitted out of these squares.

I hope you will have no difficulty in following what I have said. This is the cheapest method of dealing with human and other excreta. All the kitchen refuse is also dealt with in the same manner, only this cannot be mixed up with the excreta,

[1] Then an editor of the Associated Press of India

[2] The addressee had prepared a statement about herself and sent it to the Associated Press of India for publication. It was, however, not published.

because the work of the germs done upon vegetable rubbish is different from the work done upon the excreta. But the process is the same in all other respects. We have found in the Ashram, by observation, that wherever we have made use of this excellent manure, our crops have been much richer in quantity and quality.

If you have any difficulty in following this, please ask.

Of course you are quite right in asking the Municipality to give you all the assistance you need. If they give it, well and good; if they do not, you won't worry or fidget. For the time being, you have your work cut out for you amongst the Harijans, and what is more, in mending yourself.

Now about the dress. You need three articles only—a loose vest somewhat after men's shirt with short sleeves reaching up to the elbow only, skirt reaching 2 or 3 inches above the ankles, and a *kuchh* like mine but not so long and smaller in size. If you want to go to the trouble of sewing, you can have something after the style of men's shorts. This makes the simplest dress. The *bawis*, that is, the female mendicants, wear something like this. Your saris can be turned into vests or shirts. The skirts you have should serve the purpose, and very probably you have something answering knickers or shorts.

Yours sincerely,

[PS.]

As to your addressing me Bapu, you are wrong. You will address me as such when you have confidence in yourself that you will inspire me with trust in you and will never deceive me. I am trying to trust you by signing myself Bapu.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20849-a

363. LETTER TO B. ANAND NAICKER

April 6, 1933

MY DEAR NAICKER,

I purposely kept your long letter of the 15th March in order to be able to find time to read it. I have now read it. I fear that you will not be able to do justice to the shop. What I would like you to do is to take up some outdoor physical work such as would occupy you during the day, free your mind from thought of yourself and what you will do and what you will not do, but simply concentrate on the work in hand. Such work is undoubtedly light gardening. You will then understand the lan-

guage of flowers and fruit and I have no doubt that it will interest you.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. B. ANAND NAICKER
C/O POSTMASTER
POST OFFICE, BASAVANGUDI
BANGALORE CITY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20851

364. LETTER TO K. A. SREENIVASA SETTY

April 6, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your three letters and I was delighted to understand that His Holiness[1] had thrown open the Mutt at Chitaldrug to Harijans and that he is advising them to abstain from meat-eating.

Your objection regarding the name of the Central Board is quite sound, but the name was adopted before the name 'Harijan' came into vogue. But all the Boards are known as Harijan Seva Samaj or Mandal in the Indian languages.

I note that an association has been formed at Devangere for the uplift of Harijans, and I am glad to find that the Brahmin graduate, who is doing the teaching work, is living in Harijan quarters bringing about clean living amongst them.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. A. SREENIVASA SETTY
HON. SECRETARY
ADI-KARNATAKA SAHAYA SANGH
DEVANGERE (MYSORE STATE)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20850

[1] Jagadguru Jayadeva Murugharajendra Swami of Lingayat community

CWMG - LIV

365. LETTER TO T. V. K. SWAMI

April 6, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. All people do not ask for my permission for dedicating their books to me, and in your case I must not give any permission because I would not understand your work[1]. But, like so many others, you are free to dedicate your work to me, so long as you do not announce that you have done so by permission.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. T. V. K. SWAMI
GITA VILAS
KALLAKURICHI
S. ARCOT

From a microfilm: S.N. 20847

366. LETTER TO DR. G. R. TALWALKAR

April 6, 1933

DEAR DR. TALWALKAR,

I was delighted to have your full letter about Kusumbehn and I appreciated your having got it typed for me.[2] I understand the letter thoroughly. You have given me the information I was anxious to have. Kusumbehn is perhaps the most obedient patient you have had, at least in the Ashram, and since you have full confidence in your treatment having done her good, it shall continue without interruption, so long as she retains faith in you and in your treatment. She is disturbed, as I am also, over the frequent attacks of diarrhoea she is having. I suppose I am properly describing the frequent motions she has every few days, but if that also is a part of the treatment, then neither she nor I can

[1] This was a Tamil translation of the *Gita*.

[2] The addressee had prescribed tuberculin injections for Kusum Gandhi who was suffering from T.B.

CWMG - IIV

have anything to say. Of course I have in mind your idea of a proper sanatorium, but that lies in the womb of the future.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 20348. Also C.W. 9687. Courtesy: R. K. Prabhu

367. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 6, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

You are both foolish and wise, and so I cannot apply one epithet to you. You must stop speaking almost completely, and speaking loudly altogether. You must also stop singing. When absolutely necessary, you may speak in a whisper, otherwise you may convey what you wish to say by writing. You will repent if you don't do this.

If *bajri* and *jawar* don't suit you, you must stop them. I should like to put you on unboiled milk. You may at the same time eat a few raisins, chewing them slowly and sucking the juice. That will make you feel that you have eaten something. Tomatoes should grow in the Ashram all the year round. And when *bhaji* is in season, you may eat that and other greens, boiled. If you can live on these things, I don't think anything more will be necessary. You will be able to keep up your strength on this diet. Try it.

I was pained to hear about Kisan.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10334. Also C.W. 6774. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

368. LETTER TO LAKSHMIDAS P. ASAR

April 6, 1933

I was very happy to learn that you would be able to come and live in the Ashram. That will be a great help to Narandas.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9534. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Joshi

369. LETTER TO GOMATIBEHN MASHRUWALA

[*April 6, 1933*][1]

I hope you have understood the significance of the proposed fast.[2] What is Nathji's[3] view? He did not approve of my last fast. I don't know if he approved of it afterwards. The proposed fast is of a different kind. If you know Kishorelal's view, write to me about that too.

You should not get nervous. Try to purify yourself as much as you can. Do some work of service. Do not get upset at all. Take care of your health. If I die, you will have to complete this *yajna*. How you may do that, I myself don't know very well. I have explained to Kaka. I have also written about this to the inmates of the Ashram. I have explained to Mahadev and Chhaganlal, too, as much as I understand. I don't have time to write more.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9530. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Joshi

370. LETTER TO RAMJI G. BADHIA

April 6, 1933

Your fast will not do any good either to you or to anyone else, and it cannot but cause pain to me. Even fasting has its rules. If I have any influence with you, give up the idea of fasting and do as I have advised. Banish suspicion and anger from your mind and understand Mathuradas and others. One who fails to understand his well-wishers cannot be happy. If you have so much faith in me, why should you not have equal faith in Narandas, Mathuradas and others? I hope you have faith in Rajbhoj at any rate. If you have, you should follow his advice at least. It will definitely sustain me in my fast if your mind is at peace.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9533. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Joshi

[1] As given in the source. However there appears to be some doubt as to its correctness. According to *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. III, p. 255 the idea of the fast mentioned in the letter came to Gandhiji on April 30.

[2] This was to commence on May 8, 1933.

[3] Kedarnath Kulkarni, Kishorelal Mashruwala's guru

CWMG - LIV

371. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

[*April 6, 1933*][1]

I understand your feelings. Association with me can be very painful. I myself am not a free agent. I am never sure of what will happen the next moment. My very freedom seems bondage to me, whereas slavery to the God of Truth seems freedom to me. Though I didn't at all wish to undertake a fast, I had to do so. But the lightness of heart which I felt after I had taken the decision is beyond words. You should, therefore, rejoice at the fast. I am sure, nothing will happen to my body. But what even if my expectation proves false? In that case, you should think that God had no more service to take through this body. Please, therefore, do not feel unhappy. The human body is a thing more brittle even than a glass bangle, and the *atman* that dwells in it is the only imperishable reality. Keep this thought constantly in your mind and go on doing what service you can. You and Shankerlal should take rest just now. Come during the last days.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9531. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Joshi

372. LETTER TO LAKSHMIBEHN M. SHARMA

[*April 6, 1933*][2]

CHI. LAKSHMI,

I get several complaints against you. You spent Rs.40 on saris and have bought so many bangles that you would not be able to wear them even in your whole lifetime. You forget that you are married to a poor man and are a poor father's daughter. I am poorer than even Dudhabhai. You should know that my proposed fast will be for you also. I will be fasting for all who are connected with me. Moreover, you are a Harijan girl. You ought to understand your duty. You will cause me much pain if you tell lies or learn extravagance. Wake up. Do write to me.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9532. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Joshi

[1] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 322.

[2] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 322.

373. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGRAWAL

April 6, 1933

BHAI MOOLCHANDJI,

You have to bear with your wife's misguided fondness.[1]

If your son-in-law loves khadi your daughter is bound to be influenced.

You should leave your younger brother to himself.[2]

In order to overcome your anger you should daily recite Ramanama and remove yourself from the spot the moment you feel angry.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 773

374. LETTER TO DR. G. V. DESHMUKH

[Before *April 7, 1933*][3]

DEAR DR. DESHMUKH,

I badly need your assistance in one or two things.

(1) Is there any chemical or physiological distinction between carrion and slaughtered meat? If there is, what is it?

(2) Do you know of any medical reason for the great repugnance that even meat-eaters have against carrion?

(3) If you are of opinion that there is no difference between fresh carrion and slaughtered meat, can you say whether flesh of dead cattle treated two or three days after death or even 24 hours after death would make any difference?

(4) You may know that some Chamars poison cattle for possessing the carcasses and they are said to eat their flesh. Will not the flesh of poisoned cattle affect the

[1] The addressee had said that though his wife habitually wore khadi she was still fond of other clothes.

[2] He was addicted to tobacco and hemp.

[3] *Vide* pp. 331-2, in which Gandhiji acknowledges the addressee's reply to this letter.

CWMG - LIV

eater in any way? Is the flesh not tainted by the poison, or are there any poisons which, while they kill the cattle, do not harm their flesh?[1]

You know all about the Bombay Corporation and, therefore, you know all about the slaughter-houses. What I would like you, therefore, to give me is the scientific method of skinning dead cattle and of separating all the different parts of the carcass and the way of disposing of all the parts in the most economical manner. You should be knowing how, apart from the meat, the skins, bones, entrails, etc., of the slaughtered cattle are disposed of.

If those in charge of slaughter-houses cannot give all the information, I would like you to go out of your way to secure the most exhaustive information for me.

I do hope you are getting the English *Harijan*. In that case you must have read my article about "Disposal of Carcasses"[2]. If you have not read it, I would like you please to do so.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Harijan, 8-4-1933

375. THE LAW AND THE HEART

A sanatanist who believes in temple-entry by Harijans but who does not think that legislation to this effect will serve any purpose, in one of his letters writes.[3]

The extract quoted above is couched in beautiful language but the writer has not attempted to understand facts relating to legislation. There is no doubt that untouchability is a mental attitude. It cannot be abolished by legislation. Law can touch the body, but not the mind. The mind can be touched only by love and persuasion.

For the spreading of dharma any other means cannot be effective, nor should they be resorted to.

The correspondent is afraid of strife. This fear too in my opinion is unfounded. No one wants to have the temples open-

[1] For extracts from addressee's letter answering these questions, *vide* Appendix.

[2] *Vide* pp. 65-6.

[3] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had questioned the desirability of legislation enabling Harijans to enter temples, on the ground that this might lead to friction. He had advocated educating public opinion for the purpose.

CWMG-LIV

ed by force. Temples will be opened only where public opinion has been prepared in favour of opening the temples to the Harijans and nowhere else.

If that is so, then why the legislation? As conditions are today, even if the Hindu temple-goers, priests and custodians of a temple desire that Harijans should be allowed inside the temple for *darshan*, the law prevents them from doing so. There is no doubt about this; it is a self-evident fact. Legislation is needed to have this obstructive legislation revoked. It is clear enough that only legislation can remove legislative restriction. Yes, in the new legislation that is being talked about there should be no compulsion. One compulsive legislation should not be replaced by another compulsive legislation. As far as I understand, no question of compulsion arises in either of the two bills. The idea in both is to remove legal interference only.

But, today, the orthodox are so adamant that they are not prepared to listen to anyone. They write lies, they slander, abuse, and even resort to violence. Under such conditions what are the reformers to do? If the reformers wish to safeguard dharma, their first duty is patiently to put up with the high-handedness of the orthodox, answer hatred with love, and lies with truth. Let them bear abuses and violence. Let them continue to do their duty. Let them continue their efforts to have the obstructive law repealed. Let them make attempts to have private temples opened to Harijans, and themselves keep away from temples which are barred to Harijans. The reformers should also endeavour to remove any other difficulties that the Harijans may be facing.

I have spoken and written several times that for me abolition of untouchability is a penance. Religious impurity cannot be removed without self-purification. Untouchability is the greatest impurity in Hindu religion. Even if thousands of Hindus were to fast in order to remove it I should not consider it a great thing. Perhaps, even such a great offering may not be sufficient for that great *yajna*. In order to find Lord Shiva what a great deal of fasting Parvati had to do! Every time man was faced with a spiritual crisis he invoked God through fasting and penance and only then was he able to overcome the crisis. Tulsidas has written:

> By the strength of *tapasya* God created the universe,
> By the strength of *tapasya* Vishnu protects all creation,
> By the strength of *tapasya* Shambhu destroys,
> By the strength of *tapasya* Shesha carries the burden of the earth.

All creation rests on the strength of *tapasya*. Understand this, and go forth to do *tapasya*.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 7-4-1933

376. THREE CONUNDRUMS

A teacher asks:

1. According to the system of varnashrama, in which varna would the Bhangis and Chamars be placed?
2. May one following one trade marry among those following another trade?
3. Since untouchability must be eradicated why should we not also inter-dine with the untouchables?

Strictly speaking all these questions have been answered in *Harijan Sevak* in one way or another. I shall nevertheless answer them here in the hope further to elucidate the matter.

In my view the system of varnashrama does not today exist any more. All the varnas have given up their respective functions. The Shastras say, and reason agrees, that when all the attributes of the varnas vanish the varnas themselves vanish. The varnas have today given up their dharma and so there has come about a confusion of varnas. If there is any varna that still survives it is the Shudra varna. It is under this varna that all of us, "touchables" and untouchables, ought to be classed. If this is not desired, people may choose for themselves what varna they like. The point is that varnashrama as an institution does not exist any more. Dharma is not a matter of choosing; it is not a matter of rights, only of duty. In dharma there is no one high and no one low.

The second question concerns intermarriage. I have repeatedly said that marriage is not a matter necessarily connected with the varna divisions. It is a personal matter. As a rule, however, people like to enter into matrimonial alliances with their neighbours or with people who are like them. The practice therefore of people marrying among people belonging to the same occupations as themselves will continue.

The third question is one concerning inter-dining. Removal of untouchability as it has today been defined does not include within its scope inter-dining, and rightly so. Eating and drinking are personal matters. One will eat and drink where it pleases one to.

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Certain norms will nevertheless remain. Everyone will not be eating everywhere indiscriminately. While no hard and fast rules can be laid down it must however be said that no considerations of high and low should apply here. Unfortunately in Hinduism today the only things that remain are these considerations of high and low, touchability and untouchability. Everyone treats others as lower than themselves and refuse to touch food or water offered by them. I see nothing of dharma in this. On the contrary in this way we only make ourselves the laughing-stock of the world.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 7-4-1933

377. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 7, 1933

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letters and enclosures, also copy of an article of yours in an old number of *The Modern Review*.[1]

I understand and even appreciate the moral repulsion against 'fasting unto death'. I have perhaps some repulsion, if not the same repulsion, against fasting unto death myself, but I remain unmoved. There are many other things I have done and am still doing against my will, because I count my will as nothing before God's will when I see it clearly before me. I will make myself as certain as it is humanly possible to be that the will that appears to me to be God's is really His, and not the Devil's. But when I am clear about it, I rejoice in obeying that will, rather than mine, although I may have no human companion to endorse it. That this kind of fasting has a definite place in Hinduism, and properly so, I have not a shadow of a doubt, but it is a privilege that comes only to a few, and when it comes in obedience to a call from above, it has a mighty force, only fasting unto death is a corrupt expression. Where I used it first, it had its definite meaning. Now it is being used torn from its context and looks certainly barbarous. But it is there, and its real meaning is unmistakable, and you can almost say that it is not so much a 'fasting unto death' as it is a 'fasting unto a new life'.

[1] The article bearing the caption, "Racial Segregation and Untouchability", appeared in the March issue of *The Modern Review*.

All the same, I value your letter and the information you give me about the English attitude. I do want English sympathy in this big struggle. I do want also to be understood. You cannot therefore be too frank or too communicative with me.[1] I shall never misunderstand whatever these few English friends might have to say.

Kirby Page's article which you have sent I shall see as soon as I get time, and if there is anything worth saying, I shall reduce it to writing.

I hope that your brother's septic teeth were extracted and that he had benefited by the extraction.

You know all about Verrier's change of mind. He had changed it before your blessings were received, and you know the reason also for the change. Whilst I was prepared to bless the marriage, I cannot help saying that I blessed the change still more. So much depended upon Verrier's decision. I told him that if it was a human want on his part, he must marry, no matter what misinterpretation might be put upon his action. The change came over both Verrier and Mary without any prompting from anybody at all.[2]

Yours sincerely,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 1301; also Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, pp. 281-2

378. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 7, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter of 28th March.

I do not mind those who have, under a mistaken notion, gone away from the Hindu fold, returning when they like. But what I cannot understand is the occasion for any expense whatsoever in connection with their return. For, if they have left the Hindu fold under a mistaken notion, as soon as they discover their mistake, it is itself a sufficient *prayashchitta*, and no further ceremony is necessary. So much on the merits. Assuming that

[1] Gandhiji reproduced one of the letters from C. F. Andrews in *Harijan*, 15-4-1933; *vide* "Thinking Aloud", 15-4-1933.

[2] Verrier Elwin and Mary Gillett decided not to marry as the possible family demands would make their social service difficult for them.

CWMG - UIV

there must be some expense which the returning Doms[1] cannot be expected to pay, why should not the S.U.S.[2] bear the expense or contribute its quota? I should give my answer in the negative, because I feel that the S.U.S. has its very defined sphere, namely, service of the Hindu Harijans. It has no connection with those who are today not Hindus. Its sphere begins after the return of the prodigals. The latter is the function of a separate organization altogether. Here therefore there is no question of fear, but it is a question of confining ourselves to the original purpose. However limited it may be, the return of the Doms is a kind of *shuddhi*, and the difference between the extreme *shuddhi* and this modified *shuddhi* is a difference in degree only. And once the Society takes up this modified form, it would be most difficult for it [not] to lend its assistance to the various other shades. However desirable therefore the return of the Doms to Hinduism may be, I am quite clear that its encouragement by the Society is outside the scope laid down at its very foundation.

As to the advertisement of the Titagarh Mills, I am quite clear that we may not entertain their advertisement in any shape or form, and if it is a matter of getting cheap paper, it can be had from many other mills without the slightest difficulty. We are getting the paper for the English edition at less than market-price. It was possible to have a still more reduced quotation, but I thought it would not be proper to ask for further accommodation.

As to the Hindi *Harijan*, I have already told you that it is getting on quite satisfactorily, and if you persist in the effort, I have no doubt that you will make it self-supporting in about a month's time. You will see the note about it in the ensuing number of the English *Harijan*.[3]

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, pp. 215-6; also S.N. 20861

[1] The lowest among Harijans working at cremation ground
[2] Servants of Untouchables' Society
[3] *Vide* "Notes", pp. 333-4.

379. LETTER TO DR. G. V. DESHMUKH

April 7, 1933

DEAR DR. DESHMUKH,

I am very grateful to you for your most exhaustive and learned reply to my query. I liked it so much that although the editing of the ensuing number of the *Harijan* was finished, I made room for your letter. Of course you may hand the correspondence for publication in the local Press.

There is a domestic matter on which I want your advice. As you know, Sardar Vallabhbhai has some trouble about his nose. It has worried him all these many months, but just now the irritation has gone almost beyond endurance, as it seems to us onlookers. As you know it is not his habit to complain, but we, his companions, know what it all means to him. The prison medical men have undoubtedly done whatever they were capable of doing. But their remedies have brought no relief. I notice that he has, constantly to clean his nose, and there is always some discharge coming out. He uses a big towel for the purpose and in 24 hours it is fairly dirty all over. By a big towel I mean a bathing towel that is used in middle class Hindu households. It has appeared to me that if he cleaned his nose with warm water 3 or 4 times a day he will not have so much discharge and will not have the trouble he has in cleaning the nose. But he has been told by a doctor here that washing the nose is likely to dry it. All the affected part is therefore likely to cause greater discomfort. Though I did not have the same class of disease as Sardar Vallabhbhai has, the only way I have kept myself clean and free from any trouble has been to wash out the nose constantly, sometimes taking in the water and bringing it out through the mouth. At one time I used to have a nasal douche with a little permanganate solution added to the water and sometimes a few grains of chinosol. I do not know whether in your opinion washing of the nose with simple warm water or with anything added to it is likely to give relief to the Sardar. If you have any other suggestion to make you will please make it. I would ask you not to publish this information. I have simply written to you for my own satisfaction.

There are one or two more questions of a public character and regarding public health which I would like to ask presently if I am not unduly encroaching upon your time.

Yours sincerely,

[PS.]

You say that everything except the skin and fat should be buried for manure. But entrails are used for making guts and other purposes. And do the fresh bones become decomposed as early as they would be if they were pounded after being dried? What is the practice in the municipal slaughter-houses?

DR. G. V. DESHMUKH
39 PEDDAR ROAD
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20859

380. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 7, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got the post dispatched too, after the usual big mail. The envelope was torn. There was a remark on it by the post office that the letters were in danger of slipping out. You should get cloth-lined envelopes made there, or pay for such envelopes or tie the envelope carefully with a string. But the last course will take more time, and, if we look upon time as money, we shall stand to lose in the end. Collect some pieces of old, worn out khadi and get about a hundred envelopes made in advance. The time spent in making them will not have been wasted.

Ramabehn has complained that, as Dhiru's weight is not increasing, you gave, at Panditji's instance, a coupon for an additional *tola* of ghee, but that you deducted money for it the following month. Ramabehn's request to raise the amount from Rs. 11 to Rs. 12 was not granted. She is afraid of talking to you about this lest she be insulted. This is the substance of her letter. Read my reply to her. Go and see her and hear what she has to say. Let me know what truth there is in her complaint. How is her arm? . . .[1] is coming to see me today. After our meeting I shall probably write to you about another painful

[1] The name has been omitted.

affair. I am sure that he will now leave the Ashram.

I hope you got the letters dispatched yesterday.

BAPU

[PS.]

Letters enclosed: Rama, Amina, Mani, Kusum.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8351. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

381. LETTER TO MUNNALAL SHAH

April 7, 1933

BHAI MUNNALAL,

We were all happy to read your letter. Your impression is correct. Describe those of your experiences in Pondicherry which you found particularly interesting. I hope you have settled down now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8647

382. NOTES

"HARIJAN SEVAK"

The readers know that there is a Hindi edition of the *Harijan* called the *Harijan Sevak*, which is published in Delhi by the Hindustan Times Press.

It has not yet become self-supporting, whereas the English has. If any of the editions has to show a loss, I should personally prefer that it were English, for real propaganda against untouchability has to be carried on amongst the masses and, therefore, the message has to be delivered to them. Hence the necessity for publishing correct information in the various Indian languages, and as Hindi is admittedly the most largely understood and spoken language, one would like to see a large circulation of the Hindi *Sevak*. It is steadily improving and, being more or less the same in substance as the English edition, it naturally contains most of the things to be found in the English edition, besides things of special interest to the Hindi reader. At the present moment about 1,000 copies are sold. At least 2,500 copies should be sold in order to make it self-supporting. I hope that the various organizations

in the Hindi-speaking areas will see to an increased circulation of the Hindi edition. The workers should report their need of the kind of literature wanted in their districts.

Two Corrections

The newly published *Sanatani* has a well-deserved laugh at the expense of *Harijan* by telling its readers that the opening of two temples in Ratnagiri reported in the issue of 25th February was repeated in that of 4th March. This was an obvious mistake for discovering which I offer the *Sanatani* my congratulations. Its inference, however, that, if temples continue to open as in Ratnagiri, there should be no need for Temple-entry Bills is hardly justified, inasmuch as these were private temples. And even if the trustees of a stray public temple were to run the risk of a prosecution and open the temple under their charge, the trustees of other public temples cannot be expected to do so.

The other correction to be made is on behalf of Shrimati Rama Devi of Cuttack, who says that in the general description of her activity[1] she did not mean that she herself did the actual teaching but that the girls who accompanied her did it.

Bhor State and Untouchability

One read in the papers that the Chief of Bhor had abolished untouchability in his State, so far as the law was concerned.

I have now got the text of the proclamation dated 1st November 1932. It is as comprehensive as it can be and advises the subjects of the State for the sake of their own religious advancement to do away with untouchability as it is observed today.

Those who have supplied me with a copy of the proclamation have also given me a bulky report of the reformers' activity in the Sudhagad Taluka of the Bhor State and they mention their hopes and their difficulties about their work. The workers are few, and the tremendous activity that has covered the whole of India in connection with untouchability woke up the orthodox party also in Bhor State, and so the reformers experienced unexpected opposition, so much so that the Harijans were themselves frightened to take advantage of the services that the few reformers were prepared and able to offer.

I need not take up the space of *Harijan* and the time of the reader by recounting the difficulties and describing the successes that the reformers had. The reading of their report has left the

[1] *Vide* "Notes", pp. 183-4.

impression on my mind that reformers need not expect thorough success, unless they are themselves willing to suffer boycott, complete ostracism, and, maybe, even loss of their social position and their belongings. Easy chair and substantial religious reform go ill together. The orthodox party, sincerely believing that their religion is in peril, may be expected to fight every inch of the ground and to give no quarter to the reformers. They have been taught to believe that to relegate a large portion of mankind to perpetual untouchability and all it means is a just retribution. They will not hesitate to believe that those who seek to free untouchables from their shackles would deserve the same retribution and, from their own point of view, they may not be blamed. The reformer, therefore, who has a religious conviction about the necessity of reform is expected to brave all the consequences of his activity, and if a sufficient number is found all over India, the result is a certainty in spite of the opposition of orthodoxy. For I believe that truth and time are on the side of reformers, and where these are ensured, it matters little whether reformers are few or many.

As Thoreau has said so well, "All reform all the world over always began with one person taking it up."

Harijan, 8-4-1933

383. HARIJANS AND TEMPLE-ENTRY

The other day a deputation of Harijans led by Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah waited on H. E. the Viceroy with reference to the Temple-entry Bills. The following extract from their representation will be read with interest:

> The opening of temples to our people along with other Hindu castes is a matter of the greatest importance for our social emancipation. We quite realize that we cannot hope for a permanent emancipation and betterment unless our status in the Hindu religion is improved. We, therefore, hope Your Excellency's Government will assist the passage into Law of the Temple-entry and Anti-untouchability Bills. . . .
>
> The courts in India are now assisting the enforcement of the superstition of untouchability. British Law has not left the superstition to its own resources, but has placed the machinery of the courts and the State at the disposal of the caste Hindus in the maintenance of those superstitious practices. Even if the Government cannot interfere in the religious practices of the Hindus, it should at least refrain from assisting in the

enforcement of such practices, when they are opposed to humanity and public welfare as in the case of the treatment accorded to us. The Bill for the abolition of untouchability, sought to be introduced in the Assembly, puts an end to this anomaly and does not interfere with the religion of any person or community.

The Temple-entry Bill, for which we seek Your Excellency's support, is drafted so as to provide a legal machinery for peaceful and gradual evolution of reform with the consent of the people concerned. Each locality will be enabled to work out a suitable compromise for solving the question of our status. We beg Your Excellency to help in the achievement of a peaceful solution of this question that so fundamentally affects the dignity and the daily life of a community of forty-six million souls who cling to the ancient Hindu religion, to which they belong, and who wish to find an honourable place in it without causing turmoil or disturbance.

In the face of the above, it is a cruel suggestion to make that the Harijans do not want temple-entry. There is undoubtedly a difference of opinion as to the emphasis laid on temple-entry as compared to the economic and political uplift. But not even Dr. Ambedkar opposes temple-entry. He will be the first man to bring it up against the caste Hindus, and rightly, if there was no movement for temple-entry. The fact is temple-entry is not a substitute for any other uplift. It is an indispensable test that religious untouchability has been abolished and that the Harijan is no longer the pariah of Hindu society. It is not impossible to conceive that untouchables may all become economically and politically superior to the caste Hindus and may yet be treated as untouchable by caste Hindus, no matter how poor and even degraded they themselves may be. There are many individual Harijans who are economically well off and are members of legislative and municipal bodies, but to the orthodox caste Hindu, they are just as untouchable as they ever were, so long as they have no right of temple-entry, as the caste Hindus have. Temple-entry prohibition and the consequent segregation that it carries with it constitute the distinguishing bar sinister of perpetual degradation. When that is lifted, and only then, will religious untouchability be said to have been abolished. The question, therefore, is not how many Harijans want temple-entry or, having got the privilege, will exercise it.

Caste Hindus have to recognize that right if they will purify Hinduism and render justice to over forty millions of fellow Hindus. The reformers may not, therefore, slacken their effort. The fact that the Bills have been hung up is no cause for despon-

dency or going to sleep. The passage of the Bills, since they are private, will mean a mere register of the Hindu will, if they are passed by a clear Hindu majority and if they have the backing of Hindu opinion outside. They would be of no importance to me if they were forced upon Hindus by a superior power. I am interested in them because they are necessary to remove a legal hindrance in the way of reform. Whether orthodoxy represents the majority or the minority of one, it is able to stop the onward march of reform. The Bills are required for the sake of religious toleration. They have no further or other use.

That points to the necessity for legislation and the education of public opinion in the matter of Temple-entry Bills, if the public temples are ever to be opened. The pace will be accelerated if private temples, of which there are many, are opened and if temples for general worship are built where public opinion demands it. As a result of the recent brief tour of Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit in Kathiawar, she told me that there was a movement in Rajkot for the building of a general temple for the use of all Hindus—Harijans, reformers and the orthodox, if the last will join.[1] The temple is proposed to be built after the ancient pattern, so as to combine a school, dharmashala, a place of congregation and worship. I do hope that those who have the scheme in hand will persevere with it and bring it to fruition. There need not be much money required for it. It can be built in sections as the huge temples of the South could only have been. A beginning can be made at once by securing a good open site and the services of a devout honest *pujari*. Mere brick and mortar is of no use, if the *pujari* in charge is corrupt.

But I am digressing; my purpose for the moment is to drive home the truth that the temple-entry movement must be carried on by

1. educating public opinion as to the necessity of legal provision for removing the legal difficulty,
2. inducing private owners to open their temples to the Harijans and
3. building new temples where necessary and where public benefaction would provide funds to build combination temples after the ancient manner on sites easily accessible to Harijans.

Harijan, 8-4-1933

[1] *Vide* Vol. LV, "A Model Temple", 29-4-1933 and 30-4-1933.

384. TUKARAM AND UNTOUCHABILITY

A controversy has been going on whether the saints, especially of Maharashtra, have favoured untouchability. Sjt. P. H. Gadre of Nasik has contended that they have not only not favoured it but written unequivocally against it and have laid it down in emphatic terms that a man is to be judged and known, not according to his birth, but according to his deeds and that devotion to God purifies all men irrespective of their caste.

I reproduce below a selection[1] from the verses collected by Sjt. Gadre from the celebrated saint Tukaram.

The translation is taken, unless otherwise stated, from the work of Messrs Fraser and Marathe, who have kindly permitted Sjt. Gadre to quote from their work.

I hope that Sjt. Gadre or some other student will send a similar collection from the writings of the other saints. The reader will remember the quotation reproduced in these columns from Moropant, who describes untouchables as Harijans.

Harijan, 8-4-1933

385. WHAT IT MEANS

I gave the other day an extract[2] from the experiences of a new teacher of Harijans. Here is a free and condensed translation of extracts from a recent letter of his:

> Within the few days that I have been teaching these children, I see that I have to give them object-lessons in everything. Cleanliness is the most difficult thing. For the past fortnight, therefore, I take the children regularly for bathing. I get them to wash their clothes with a bit of soap. Of the little children I wash the clothes myself. I supply them with brush sticks and get them to use them every day. I pare their nails and attend to every other detail. The result is that cleanliness occupies a larger place in my mind just

[1] Not reproduced here
[2] *Vide* "Notes", pp. 201-2.

now than giving them a knowledge of the three R's. Their parents appreciate this personal attention that is being given to their children. Now they, too, come to my nightly gatherings. I give them stories from the *Ramayana*, *Jatakmala* and adaptations from Tolstoy, and I propose to add Nanabhai's sketches of the heroes of the *Mahabharata*.

In the morning I have an attendance of about ten children. There is a double attendance in the evening. Generally I take pleasure in this work, but events happen that confound me. Sometimes drunkards appear on the scene. Sometimes there is a proper fight between husband and wife, and sometimes I have to be an unwilling listener to choice abuse. Boys try my temper at times. Once one of them went beyond limits in his pranks and I had to take him by the hand and put him out. But I have faith in God and I am hoping that this will be my life-work. I know that it is most taxing and if I did not hold on to my faith in God, I should have a recurring fit of disappointments.

You have drawn my attention to weaning them from the habit of taking leavings of food from their employers. But I shall be patient. When I have gained their confidence, I shall broach the subject to them.

I would love to learn how to skin carcasses and tan the hides. This is necessary if I am to deal with the habit of carrion-eating. Many of them add to it the drink habit and it is the commonest thing for both men and women to indulge in tobacco. The more I come in touch with them, the more I am baffled by the insanitation amongst many of them. There is a stench coming from their bodies and their clothes, especially when they have eaten carrion. Add to this the foul smell coming from the dung heaps. In order to minimize the effect of these smells, I generally sit under the open sky.

This is followed by a heart-rending description of the dirty habits of two boys. Such experiences need not dishearten any teacher. Let us remember that this is a direct result of the criminal neglect of caste men and of compulsory segregation of the most useful members of society, and all that in the name of religion. If we are to reduce our death-rate and to bring under control the diseases that are rampant among us, we will have to have hundreds like this teacher, who would work amongst Harijans with real love and unquenchable faith. We have to feel towards these children as if they were our very own. What

CWMG-IIIV

do parents do when they have their children suffering from terrible confluent smallpox or still more dreadful diseases, filling their rooms with stench and dirt? They do not mind staking their everything in order to see their children cured. We shall have to bestow the same love on these Harijan children. We shall have to have the same patience with them even as we have for our own. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I shall proclaim from the housetops that, unless we remove the scourge of untouchability from our hearts, Hinduism is doomed. The Shastras do not warrant the neglect of a single human being in the way in which we have neglected over 40 millions, and if we would repent of our sins, I would like to have an army of voluntary workers, drawn from the so-called higher classes, offering to teach and take care of Harijan children.

Harijan, 8-4-1933

386. A DONATION

A friend who wants to remain anonymous sends Rs. 500 to be used at my discretion for the Harijan cause. The money is being forwarded to the Central Board to be used subject to my approval.[1]

Harijan, 8-4-1933

387. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

April 8, 1933

CHI. MARY,

I have your letter.

So far as I am concerned, I have no hesitation in saying 'welcome'.[2] The hesitation may well be all on your part. I would love to have all nationalities and religions represented in the Ashram, but if it has not up to now succeeded in attracting them all, it is due to our limitations. We have many shortcomings to overcome.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", pp. 294-5.

[2] The addressee had stayed in the Ashram for a few weeks and had asked Gandhiji in a letter whether she could return to it for a longer period.

CWMG - LIV

You talk of your 'old age'. If you can disclose it without blushing, let me have it; but I am quite sure that you are not 64, and I should be sorry to think that I am regarded as an encumbrance because of my old age. Totaramji, whom you must know by this time by his name, is older I think even than I am. Therefore you need not worry about your age. What view Narandas and the other members of the Ashram take, I shall presently ascertain. I shall ask him to give their opinion quite frankly as they should do without needing any warning from me. But even if you decide to throw in your lot with the Ashram and the Ashram gladly takes you, as a preliminary, let it be definitely for one year, for your convenience. I attach very great importance to the spiritual value of a promise, a pledge or a vow, by whichever name we may describe the act. Therefore if you take the final plunge at once it means that it will leave no door open for escape. One who has great regard for the sanctity of vows will therefore be cautious. After you have tried yourself in the Ashram for one year and found that you like the physical as well as the spiritual surroundings, then you may take the final plunge.

I hope you are both enjoying yourselves in beautiful Kashmir. Do write regularly from there.

Love from us all to you both.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6002. Also C.W. 3328. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

388. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

April 8, 1933

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

A letter from Seth Poonamchand's wife which I see is dated 27th March and two letters from Seth Jaju dated 30th March and 1st instant were received by me only yesterday about 4 p.m. These relate, as you know, to Seth Poonamchand Ranka's fast and about which the Government have passed special orders. These are of no avail for the purpose intended, if the letters received and sent are to be held up for many days before they are delivered to me. I would like to know why they were held up in spite of the orders and whether in future I may have the correspondence in this matter promptly delivered to me.

This delay makes me more anxious than ever to receive the

Government's answer to my letter[1] of the 1st instant addressed to the Secretary to the Bombay Government.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3)A, p. 167; also G.N. 3886

389. LETTER TO HARKISONDAS

April 8, 1933

MY DEAR HARKISONDAS,

I have your letter of 7th instant. I think that it is necessary for you to give the local Press as fast as you can all the news in connection with the activities of the Board. Nothing should be kept as the first copy for *Harijan*. *Harijan* exists for the movement and not the latter for the *Harijan*. But I would like a fortnightly or weekly report, whichever is more convenient for you, giving in a concise form the activities of the Board, so that the news in the *Harijan* may reach those who have no access to the local Press or who would not look at it even if they had. Moreover, the *Harijan* can only publish the barest summary of your activities, whereas the local Press would be expected to give ample space to each one of the items you may supply it with. I think I have made my meaning quite clear.

Yours sincerely,

HON. SECRETARY
BOMBAY BOARD

From a microfilm: S.N. 20870

390. LETTER TO RAMESH CHANDRA

April 8, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[2] Is it not a universal experience that things that were at one time pure have become impure through the march of time? Both the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*

[1] *Vide* p. 271.

[2] In this the addressee had contended that no varnadharma could be practised without doing away with the caste system.

contain ample evidence that at one time varnadharma was followed in the sense I have described.

I never knew that it was the impression of almost all the Hindus that the caste system was the same as the varnashrama. No Hindu to my knowledge has claimed that there are innumerable varnas, but every child knows that there are numberless castes. Is it not also a fact that there are many castes claimed to belong to the same varna? So far as I can see, the origin of caste is wholly different from the origin of varna, and except up to a certain point the function also of caste differs from that of varna.

I do claim that in ideal varna there can be no inequality whatsoever. There would be a variety, but not inequality.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. RAMESH CHANDRA
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
SILCHAR
(ASSAM)

From a photostat: G.N. 6092; also S.N. 20865

391. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

April 8, 1933

MY DEAR SHREEPRAKASH,

I must disappoint your hope that I would stop all further correspondence, only let not the hope deferred make the heart sick. Your letters though long give me more and more insight into your mind and I like that in connection with all co-workers. You have not perceived that you have put the cart before the horse in the proposals you have made. In none of your proposals is there any effort required on our part. Everything has got to be done through the Legislatures, therefore through the Government, and that, throughout history, has been the way to perdition. All the reform that you adumbrate can only come after we have made adequate effort at least to arouse public conscience against the monster of untouchability. Untouchability is the extremest form that the oppression by the high-caste Hindus over so-called lower castes has taken. I would like you therefore to study the genesis of untouchability and its far-reaching effects far more fully than you seem to have done.

CWMG - LIV

I hope you have almost regained your lost strength.

I am glad Father has been paying occasional visits.

The weekly bulletin from Calcutta shows that Shivprasad is still far from well. Let's hope that we shall soon have better news of him.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

SJT. SHREEPRAKASH
SEVA ASHRAM
BENARES CANTT.

Sri Prakasa papers : File No. G. 2. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also S.N. 20866

392. LETTER TO N. V. THADANI[1]

April 8, 1933

MY DEAR THADANI,

You have tried to cover your mischief with a jester's tricks, but the bulky enclosures[2] were there to tell their own tale. When the day for the weekly editing comes, I shall go through the correspondence and see whether I can extract something useful for me.

I shall look forward to your unveiling the mystery of the *Mahabharata*. Many have tried and failed. If you succeed, your success will be due to the accumulation of their failures, and if you also fail, it would be an additional stepping-stone to the success which your successor will unjustly seek to claim for himself, if he is a fool.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. N. V. THADANI
RAMJAS COLLEGE
DELHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 20872

[1] Principal of Ramjas College, Delhi

[2] These formed the addressee's correspondence with Jagadguru Shankaracharya concerning Vedic authority for the existence of the fifth caste in Hinduism.

393. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

April 8, 1933

CHI. JAMNALAL,

You ought to go and see Seth Poonamchand Ranka as early as possible. Tell him that his fast is against the principle of satyagraha and on my part I feel that it cannot be defended on any grounds. Everyone is not against the classification of prisoners. Not all of the prisoners who get "A" and "B" classes willingly accept "C" class. One who is given a higher class is not bound to enjoy all the conveniences of that class. Those who avail themselves of those facilities are doing that of their own accord. How can Seth Poonamchand compel them to forsake those facilities? How can he resort to fast for that? That he may give up a number of facilities himself is a different thing altogether. I myself do not like classifications but fasting is not the means by which the changes can be effected. I hope that Shri Poonamchand Ranka will give up his stubbornness. He should know that as long as he considers himself a satyagrahi, he is obliged to observe discipline. As an originator of satyagraha I should have some right to lay down the code for a satyagrahi. From that point of view also he should listen to my advice.

May God grant you success.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 107

CWMG - LIV

394. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

April 8, 1933

CHI. KAKA,

I got your letter. I sent my reply[1] to Keshav three days ago. It was a brief one. He must have seen you by now.

These friends may start using honey at the Eucharist. But other Christians, and particularly the Roman Catholics, will never agree to do that, since the word used in the service is "wine". It is more likely, however, that they might use grape juice which has no intoxicating effect. Some scholars do interpret "wine" in the original as "unfermented grape juice". So in any case there must be grape juice. Such blameless juice is used in some churches, and nowadays hundreds of thousands of bottles of such grape juice are available. In Trivedi's books also which you have sent, different methods of obtaining such grape juice are described. Hence the suggestions to use it can be immediately implemented.

It could be very good if that gentleman undertakes to publish a Marathi edition of *Harijan*.

Give me detailed information about you from time to time.

Send me that American book about eye treatment. Do get your eyes treated there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9496. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

395. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

April 8, 1933

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter.

Read the accompanying letter to Sharda[2] and give it to her.

You may not be able to provide Krishnamaiyadevi a job, but you can certainly give her some work to do. You can give

[1] *Vide* p. 315.

[2] Daughter of Chimanlal N. Shah, an Ashram inmate

her sewing and embroidery work, as you formerly used to do. My point is that she must produce something and not feel that she is living on charity.

Dharmakumar's education should consist in his upbringing at home. That is the ideal of education in the Ashram. If children learn from their parents to be virtuous and to love bodily labour, book-learning they will get afterwards. We know from experience that book-learning does not always make a person virtuous. I am sure that anybody who possesses a good character will never starve, though he may not become rich. Misplaced compassion is not non-violence; it is, on the contrary, a form of subtle violence and one should, therefore, guard against it all the more carefully. You should help both Krishnamaiya and Mahavir, but in the right manner. They should shake off their lethargy and work, and live contentedly. Pyare Ali says that he can help Mahavir to earn up to Rs. 40 or 50. If he does not get more than Rs. 25 at Sundardas's place and if he satisfies Sundardas by his work, it would be better, provided of course the latter can release him, to keep him with Pyare Ali. Think over this. . . .'s[1] whole family is leaving the Ashram. I have still not been able to understand . . . [2]. He believes that he was never fit to live in the Ashram, since he wants to become a big engineer. . . .[3] says that she cannot do without certain pleasures and, therefore, she also was not fit to live in the Ashram. If they leave, . . .[4] certainly cannot live alone in the Ashram. Thus the whole family will leave. This is no ordinary event. But it is right that they should leave. We would not like anybody to stay against his wishes. This is our reward for having practically exempted the family from observing the Ashram rules. . . .[5] now wishes to take up an independent job in some factory. It seems he wants to join . . . [6]. There will be no harm if he can do so. Of course his expenses will be high. In Deolali itself the family will spend about Rs. 100. . . .[7] himself will spend rather freely. I, therefore, think that their expenses will come to Rs. 150. God's will be done. The Ashram, of course, will stop giving them money. But I think we shall have to give them a month's expenses.

You seem to be fairly occupied in solving family problems there. Do try and solve them.

If Kaku and Lakshmi have developed such relations that they even meet each other alone, I would advise that they should

[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6] & [7] The names have been omitted.

be married off. After they are married, they may, if they wish, live separately and may observe *brahmacharya* as much as they wish. But, before they are married, if they constantly think about each other, feel physical attraction towards each other and even occasionally touch each other with such feelings, that would definitely be against dharma. An engagement may be broken off, but a marriage cannot be dissolved. If, therefore, there are occasions for them to go out together, it is desirable that they should get married. Discuss this with Kaku and Lakshmi, and also with Nath.

How much would your sister need? Meet Jamnalalji and have a talk with him and afterwards take your sister to meet him. If she is not eager to earn money, if she wants to live a life dedicated to service and has no responsibility for supporting anybody, and if she is ready to follow the Ashram way of life, I think she can live in the Ashram. But this may not perhaps be possible for her at this age.

Ask Gomati why she has stopped writing to me. I have not heard from Kishorelal of late.

If Manju[1] wants to be a doctor and if you can meet her expenses, encourage her in her ambition. I don't think it is a great achievement to be a doctor. All the same it is a form of education and one acquires knowledge. If she loves it, by all means let her have it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 8800. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

396. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VARNA SYSTEM

A student after reading my article[2] on the system of the varnas writes.[3]

Yes, I believe in the hereditary division into varnas. Had it not been so, the varna system would have had no meaning at all and serve no purpose. It would be mere jargon.

[1] Addressee's grand-daughter

[2] *Vide* "Varnadharma", pp. 130-4.

[3] The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent had asked whether Gandhiji believed that varna was determined by birth, which belief would be contrary to the doctrine of individual freedom.

The system of varnas is no man-made scheme. It emanates from the law of Nature or God. It rests with man whether or not to abide by the law. Hence, man's individuality does not suffer in any way. Fire says you will burn yourself if you touch it. If we do not pay heed to what fire says and hold it in our hand just to assert individual freedom, we are bound to get burnt. The same applies to the law of varnas. The sages, at the end of their penances, realized that a class structure was essential for social progress and so brought about this division. It is left to us whether or not to accept it. No one is going to take us to task if we refuse to do it. But who can then stop Nature's punishment? Why indeed call it punishment? Who can prevent what may be the natural consequence of not abiding by the laws of the varna system? So, the division into varnas can do no harm to individuality.

But why should varnas be by birth? It is not something I have produced out of my pocket. Birth is at the very root of the varna system. The very name Brahmin is suggestive of the qualities expected of a Brahmin and one would prepare his progeny for them. The same is true of a Shudra. He will cultivate in his children the qualities expected of a Shudra. This is not to imply that a Shudra is not entitled to knowledge. The system of the varnas is necessarily related to livelihood. A person shall earn his livelihood only by pursuing the occupation of the varna in which he is born. There is no objection to one varna acquiring the knowledge of all the other varnas. For individual progress and protection of freedom, all people should have the qualities generally found in all the four varnas. But each man must especially develop the qualities of his own varna.

The varna system emphasizes the curbing of material greed so that it can leave greater scope for spiritual development. Material objects and material happiness are transitory. If man gets himself entangled in acquiring that alone, makes it the sole aim of his life, he will not be able to think about his soul. This does not in any way dampen human endeavour. When man does not have to go in search of means of livelihood, when means of livelihood are ready for him, all his efforts would be directed towards the spiritual quest. It is my firm conviction that by hitting upon the varnas the Hindus have made a great spiritual discovery, and have provided means for spiritual development. In course of time we forgot this fact and the varna system became disorganized. It reduced itself to touchability and untouchability and to restrictions on inter-dining and intermarriage. This

resulted in its fall, viz., the confusion of the varnas. People lost themselves in encroaching upon the vocations of the other varnas. The Brahmin gave himself to greed and abandoned his duty as a Brahmin.

If the sea catches fire, who shall put out that fire? If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? That is why Hindu dharma is in decline today.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 9-4-1933

397. OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS

It is one's duty to obey one's parents. They are one's teachers. They are God. Shravana achieved his salvation by regarding his parents as God. While obeying his father's orders, Rama gave up his kingdom. Now you say that untouchability is *adharma*, that Hinduism will perish if that blot is not washed off. To many of us what you say sounds true. But our parents do not accept it. As one of my friends undertook to do service to Harijans, his mother left her home and could be located only after midnight. She has returned home, but a great difficulty faces my friend. What should this friend do now? This must be the case with many young people.

This is a summary of a letter. This is a real difficulty. I believe in devotion to parents. While my parents were alive, I conducted myself regarding Shravana as an ideal. I believe that whatever I have achieved is due to my devotion to my parents and the fruit of their blessings. Despite that, I think we can imagine circumstances in which disobedience to the orders of parents becomes one's clear duty. Where the parents have been given the place of a teacher and of God, they have been thought of as perfect beings, so that to their offspring they are perfect. The children do not even entertain a doubt that what their parents say may be full of ignorance or error. They certainly are partial to their parents, because they desire their welfare. Where there exists a pure environment and the children have complete faith in their parents, the latter's well-being consists in carrying out their parents' orders.

But when the children have a doubt, what is to be done? The parents say, 'Drink liquor, eat carrion, offer bribes, secure that job by telling lies, one can speak an untruth in business, marry a nine-year old girl, there is sin in touching an untouch-

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able,' etc., etc. What should children do when such a situation arises? I think that the answer is provided in asking the question itself. When parents issue an order which appears to the children to be clearly an *adharma*, it is their dharma to disobey it. But where there is the slightest room for doubt as to what is right and what is wrong, it is one's dharma to do one's parents' bidding. One cannot compare any other man's word with that of one's parents. In such circumstances, one has to follow one's parents' word only. Only he may disobey his parents who feels it incompatible with his dharma to obey them.

But who can claim such religious prompting? An impudent, licentious or selfish son may get such an urge. But he does not thereby acquire the right to disobey his parents. Only a son who has restraint, thoughtfulness, renunciation, forbearance, etc., who has known what it is to obey orders, who has clearly experienced religious awakening, may alone have the obligation to act contrary to his parents' orders. Moreover, in an age of licentiousness and independence when many sons belittle their parents, it is difficult to say who disobeys his parents' command regarding it his dharma to do so. But because of that we cannot say that a few conscientious sons should not observe their dharma. I believe he who observes the conditions which I have pointed out will not commit a mistake.

Again, those young men and women, who act contrary to their parents' wishes cannot claim the facilities of their parental homes and their parents' money. They should be ready to give up home and wealth without hesitation and anger. Very often such conduct produces a good effect. The parents' opposition calms down. Where the parents are licentious and the son is restrained, one very often sees a change brought about in the parents. One cannot say this in regard to untouchability. Here both can be restrained. Both can regard their own conduct as dharma. Such honest differences may even endure. Here one can only expect that both will conduct themselves by tolerating mutual differences. Parents should not expect their grown-up sons or daughters always to obey them. And where the parents remain obdurate or threaten to kill themselves and so on, the youths who clearly know their dharma should thoughtfully observe it.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 9-4-1933

398. NEW USAGES OF TERMS[1]

[*April 9, 1933*]

From the point of view of the correspondent[2] there is some truth in what he says, from my point of view there is none. I have given words a wider meaning, no doubt, but I have not rejected the popular meaning. The correspondent gives up the popular meaning, and tries to accept mine. This attempt itself is misguided. If we give up the popular meaning, what meaning can we expand? I have faith also in stone and other images. The fact is that language can never completely express human thoughts. So, the meanings of words continue to expand. It is impossible, it is unnecessary, to coin new words for every sense. When the same word is used to convey opposite ideas, there is a definite danger of ambiguity and absurdity. There is no such danger here as I have only expanded the popular meaning. In fact, it is not an expansion but a clarification of the meaning. The popular meaning tells us that the stone is God. But the correct idea is not that the stone is God but that God pervades the stone. People might say that if there is God in the stone, why should we not regard the stone as God? The body is not the soul, but the soul dwells in the body. Yet millions say and believe that the body itself is the soul. It is of course true from their point of view, or rather, there is an element of truth even in what they think. It means that the popular meaning does not deserve to be abandoned altogether. As a concept grows wider, the meaning of the term would go on expanding too. What I am doing is nothing new. My ideas themselves may strike one as something new. This is inevitable because that is my *sadhana*[3]. One has to think in the search for Truth. The narrow meaning does not satisfy. With contemplation the same meanings of the same words are found satisfying. It is said that the Vedas are but an expansion of *Om*. Tulsidas says that Rama himself is *Om*, Rama himself is the Vedas. Rama includes everything.

[1] The Gujarati translation of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 9-4-1933.

[2] The correspondent had stated that Gandhiji had used terms like 'idol-worship' and 'temples' in a new sense and wanted these new meanings to be explained so as to avoid possible misunderstanding.

[3] Spiritual striving

He alone is, all else is illusion. But the Rama of the people is only a son of Dasharatha. Tulsidas says: "My Rama may be Dasharatha's son but He is also much more: He is *Sachchidananda Purnabrahma.*" There is no contradiction in this at all. It is the broadening of an idea, expansion of a meaning. Tulsidas meditated and in his meditation had a vision of the flawless, formless, all-pervading Rama. This has not led to any absurdity. On the contrary, we have a better understanding of the significance of the avatars. It has brought peace to our mind and heart. And we also realize how Rama has come to be known as more than Dasharatha's son. Similarly, let us proceed from the stone to the atom and we have endless images. And we see God hidden even in the atom. Hence, the whole world is given to image-worship. The place in which the image of Jagannatha is installed is a Jagannatha temple. And the place where a few persons sit together and pray to God is also a temple. So a temple is an integral part not only of Hindu dharma but of religion as such—one may call it a church or a mosque, a gurudwara or an *upashraya*[1]. As long as the body and the soul are related, temple and God will always stay together. The body is a fountain of filth as well as an abode of God. Similarly, a temple can also become a den of vice, and it is already an abode of God. "As is one's faith, so is one's gain."

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 14-4-1933

399. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

April 9, 1933

CHI. LILAVATI,

You have acted like a child who, forbidden to touch a centipede, tries to catch a snake. Since the primus stove does not require much methylated spirit, you chose a stove which works with such spirit only! But God is kind to you, so you escaped with only a little hair burnt. Take a lesson from this. Try to understand the meaning of every prohibition or permission. That is, make your life steady, calm and thoughtful.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9325

[1] Of the Jains

400. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 9, 1933

BOYS AND GIRLS,

What had happened to Vinod? I hope she is all right now.

Shantaram will grow mentally if you give him adequate love. I hope you do not make fun of him. Does the new diet suit all of you? Do all of you write to Lakshmibehn? She remembers all of you very much.

BAPU

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

401. LETTER TO CHAMPANERIA

April 9, 1933

BHAI CHAMPANERIA,

I have your letter. I am glad you wrote. Even if only a handful of workers show extreme humility on the one hand and firmness even to the extent of being ready to lay down their lives and sacrifice their all on the other, the demon of untouchability is bound to perish.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4140

402. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 9, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got today the post despatched by you on the 7th and despatched today's post from here after reading it.

Parachure Shastri had joined the Ashram for a three-year course of training with a view to doing Ashram work. His aim and mine was that he and his co-workers should work according to the ideals of the Ashram. Though, unfortunately, he had to

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leave before completing the period, he did Ashram work to the best of his ability and that is why I look upon him as an inmate of the Ashram. Here the phrase "inmate of the Ashram" is not interpreted literally. The meaning which I have given to it is wider, and not narrower, than the literal meaning. Did you read what I wrote in my letter to Duncan? According to me, he has already become an inmate of the Ashram. If he were to find himself in a difficult plight anywhere while doing public work, I would invite him to the Ashram. Wherever he goes, he will keep up his connection with the Ashram. I believe Parachure Shastri has done so. Some workers at Chinchvad also may. I would not say that about everyone who joins the weaving school. Some of them give up the Ashram way of life altogether after they have learnt weaving and work only for a living. If you are still not convinced, ask me again.

I accept all your criticism of Narahari's letter. I had observed the harshness of his language which you have noticed. But I ignored it and paid attention only to his motive and his suggestions. I read it as I would have done if it were written about me. I would ignore harsh language used by anybody about me. I, therefore, paid no attention to Narahari's harsh language about you. Moreover, I know his temperament. Your dharma is to disregard the language used about you. If your correspondent's motive is not malicious and if his suggestions deserve consideration, we should think about them. This is the way of nonviolence. It is the swan's manner. "The creator has made all things, animate and inanimate, full of virtues and defects. The good follow the example of the swan and accept the milk of virtues and leave the water of defects." Unless one acts thus, one cannot attain goodness and truth or preserve them for long even if attained. We may observe other people's defects, but it is for the spotless Brahman alone, and not for an imperfect man, to judge them. Man is described by some as an embodiment of imperfections. You must not, therefore, get disheartened. I close this chapter here for today.

I have already written to you about . . . [1]. I have no hope that any of them will continue to live in the Ashram. They cannot endure the strict discipline of the Ashram rules. I, therefore, believe that they have decided to leave the Ashram after considering their capacity. They have also no respect for you and no faith in you, but I would not mind that. I would urge

[1] The name has been omitted.

you, too, not to mind it, but when the truth is that they lack the strength or the will (the two things, ultimately mean the same) to observe the Ashram rules, both they and the Ashram would feel suffocated if they continued to live in it. I think both . . .[1] and . . .[2] can support themselves. If . . .[3] were not ill, she, too, is fully capable of supporting herself. Perhaps their capacities will grow outside the Ashram and they will do quite well. They cannot conform to the mould of the Ashram life. If you believe otherwise and can tempt them to continue to live there, I should certainly be happy. I feel that their leaving the Ashram means my doing so. It has a serious implication for me, but their remaining in the Ashram against their will or in an unnatural manner would be unbearable to me and also contrary to dharma.

We could not do anything here except keep a fast to mark the commencement of the National Week.

I have not received Valji's article mentioned in your letter. Perhaps I will get it tomorrow.

BAPU

[PS.]

In my ignorance, I have committed myself to the Board here to supply 25 Gandiva spinning-wheels at 12 annas each. After making the promise, I asked Lakshmidas the price of the wheel and he informed me that it was a rupee and a half. But I must supply 25 spinning-wheels. I had written to Keshu about this in one of my letters. But he has now left. I don't know if there is anybody now in the factory who can attend to such work. If the spinning-wheels cannot be manufactured there, request Lakshmidas to manufacture and send them. If they cost more than 12 annas each, he should recover the balance from the Ashram. Each spinning-wheel must be fitted with a spindle-bearer, a spindle and a spring. The spinning-wheel which I had made in jail is there. The new ones should be as simple. They need not be varnished. There should be a hook at the top, so that the spinning-wheel can be hung up on a wall after the work is over. The hook can be made of tin sheet. Or a hole may be made and a string may be tied into a loop. The wheel need not have a steel axle. The one sent to me by Keshu does not have it. In the spinning-wheel which we used in the beginning, there were only two nails in the wheel. I have done plenty of spinning on such a spinning-wheel. It will be enough if they are not carelessly

[1], [2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

made and if they work smoothly. The freight will be paid by the Board. Wherever you get the spinning-wheel manufactured, they should be ready soon. If you have not followed any point, ask me to explain. Show this letter to Lakshmidas.

BAPU

[PPS.]

There are 26 letters in all.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8353. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

403. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 9, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

The packet which I despatched yesterday contained a report of discussion arising out of . . .'s[1] affair along with two letters relating to it, a letter from Mary with my reply to her and a copy of the same for being preserved there.

I very much liked Marybehn's letter. I am sure you will understand my reply to her. If all of you like her nature, respect her wish. But before you do that let all the inmates of the Ashram meet together and think about the suggestion independently. None of you need think that my view has to be accepted. You will see that I have made that clear in my letter to Marybehn also.

You will find with this a letter from Jekibehn[2]. Her sons have grown up now. They can be easily looked after there. If you can keep them in the Ashram, write to Manibhai[3] and ask him to send them over. Ask him also to send the estimated expenses on their account. . . .[4]

If we only would, all of us have much to learn from the cases of . . . [5]. . . .[6] had to leave the Ashram because he repeatedly violated the Ashram rules. . . .[7] did not observe the Ashram rules and has also realized that he will not be able to observe them in future. He has not observed any of the rules till now and will not be able to observe them in future, and so the whole family is leaving the Ashram. . . .[8] was the pillar of the

[1] The name has been omitted.
[2] Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta's daughter
[3] Manilal Doctor, Jekibehn's husband
[4] A paragraph has been omitted.
[5], [6], [7] & [8] The names have been omitted.

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Ashram. Without him, the Ashram would not have come into existence at all. It is a painful and serious thing that his family should leave the Ashram. But I believe all the same that it is necessary for the sake of dharma that they should leave. We will not cease to love them for having left the Ashram. We will continue to take interest in them wherever they are. We should wish that, even though they live away from the Ashram, they will observe its rules to the best of their ability and will never do anything to bring shame on the Ashram.

I do wish that nobody will feel superior and think that they were not perfect because they left and that those who have not left are so. Those who leave can be morally worthier than those who remain. The imperfections of those who are leaving became known to all, but who knows the imperfections of the others which may have remained unknown? We should not sit in judgment over anybody. God alone knows who is good and who is bad.

We should learn a lesson from these instances and wake up. No one should conceal his shortcomings. Everybody should become more vigilant. Let nobody do anything out of false shame. One should do only what one spontaneously can, and if anyone cannot observe the Ashram rules or does not wish to do so, it would be better for them to leave. All of us are imperfect, but if, knowing imperfections, we constantly strive to follow the Ashram ideals and do not hide our shortcomings, we are fit to live in the Ashram. We should, however, leave if we do not wish to follow those ideals or have no faith in them.

If you circulate the foregoing among all friends there, it will suffice. If you wish to suggest any changes in what I have written, you may do so.

BAPU

[PS.]

Chhaganlal does not worry about Rama at all. He is sure that you will do whatever is necessary.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8352. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

404. LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI

April 9, 1933

BHAI NANALAL,

I have your letter. Even if Maganlal does not join you, you two should divide the property and put the suggested divisions before Chhaganlal. We should hope that Maganlal will accept whatever you do. You should make the divisions with due regard for the sums earmarked by Doctor for specific purposes—that is, the total value of the property should be reduced by that much.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9631

405. LETTER TO MADHAVJI AND KRISHNA KAPADIA

April 9, 1933

CHI. MADHAVJI AND KRISHNA,

I have received letters of both of you. I too had written to Medh. He wrote to me. I did not inform you as the promise was to materialize only after some time. I am very happy to know that you have a little peace of mind. There are always ups and downs. The great thing is that you have not lost your peace of mind.

Blessings from
BAPU

MADHAVJI GOKULDAS
SHAMJI SHIVAJINO MALO
MANORDAS STREET
BOMBAY

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

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406. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

April 9, 1933

CHI. NARMADA,

You should not write in a scrawl. Write neatly in big letters.

I note that you had taken away the carrion from them with their consent.[1] They eat carrion even though there are plenty of other things to eat because they have come to relish it.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2776. Courtesy: Ramnarayana N. Pathak

407. LETTER TO SHAMAL R. RAVAL

April 9, 1933

CHI. SHAMAL,

I welcome your question. Of course I would never say that people should give up eating carrion and eat the flesh of slaughtered animals instead. However, I do say that carrion has a very bad effect on the person eating it. It is considered bad all over the world. Yes, I do say that a person who cannot give up eating flesh may eat the flesh of a slaughtered animal. Of course it cannot be that a person accustomed to eating flesh will eat only carrion. It is certainly not that those who eat carrion do so because they think it to be against dharma to kill an animal for food. It is sheer superstition to believe that carrion is especially good for health.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3146. Also C.W. 2882. Courtesy: Shamal R. Raval

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Narmadabehn Rana", p. 222.

408. LETTER TO PADMA

April 9, 1933

CHI. PADMA,

I have your letter. If none of you can keep good health there, you should not stay on as a burden on the others. My advice then would be that you should go and stay in the Ashram. Instead of changing from place to place without any definite benefit, it would be better to live in the Ashram and be reconciled to whatever happens there. If, however, you keep good health at that place, you should settle there permanently. I shall await your reply.

I trust Shila is all right now and that Sarojini Devi is keeping good health.

How is Vidyavatiji's health? How many girls are there at present? What is your food? How is the climate of the place? Give me all such details.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6143

409. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

April 9, 1933

DEAR DAUGHTER AMINA,

I am awaiting a letter from you after your visit to Qureshi. I also wish to know what you feel concerning tobacco and chillies. Write frankly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6666. Also C.W. 4311. Courtesy: Hamid G. Qureshi

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410. TELEGRAM TO POONAMCHAND RANKA

Express [*April 10, 1933*][1]

SETH POONAMCHAND
PRISONER
DISTRICT JAIL, KHANDWA

REGARD YOUR FAST AGAINST RULE OF SATYAGRAHA AND DISCIPLINE. COMFORT MAY NOT BE DEMANDED BY HUNGER-STRIKE AND NO ONE IS OBLIGED TO USE COMFORTS PROVIDED IN CLASSES A AND B. HOPE THEREFORE YOU WILL PLEASE BREAK FAST.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3887. Also Home Department, Government of India, Political File No. 31/108, 1932, p. 98. Courtesy: National Archives of India

411. LETTER TO M. G. BHANDARI

April 10, 1933

DEAR MAJOR BHANDARI,

I got two wires yesterday about Seth Poonamchand Ranka, dated 6th inst. According to the postmarks on them they were delivered to you on the same date. You know how important they were. This delay baffles me. The only way I can somewhat undo its effect is to send a wire direct to Seth Poonamchand. But that I know is not covered by the Government orders. If you have the power to use the telephone or the wire I would request you to secure permission from the Government to despatch the enclosed wire[2] as an urgent message to Seth Poonamchand or the Superintendent of the Khandwa Jail at Government expense.[3] This in my humble opinion is the least that is due to the fasting prisoner and me.

[1] *Vide* the following item.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] The text of the telegram was wired by the Government of Bombay to the Government of Central Provinces to be delivered to Poonamchand Ranka.

I would ask for an early explanation of these delays in the handling of correspondence in reference to the life of a prisoner and authorized by Government.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3887

412. LETTER TO ABDUL ALIM

April 10, 1933

MY DEAR ABDUL ALIM,

I was glad to receive your letter. You ought not to be downhearted. God has been really merciful to you. Without the goodwill of many people, you could not have gone to the 'Refuge'[1] nor to the Campbell Hospital. And you have Satisbabu and all the people of his Ashram willing to render such help as may be necessary. Whilst it is true that money can buy many things, poverty has its compensations, which money can never command. If it had no attractions, many people would not have voluntarily embraced poverty. You have read the Koran, and you know that the Prophet himself and many of his companions were very poor people and they suffered privations. You should not therefore grieve over your lot.

According to your instructions I am sending this letter care of Satisbabu.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20886

413. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

April 10, 1933

SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT
HOME DEPARTMENT, POONA

DEAR SIR,

I regret to have to remind you of my letter regarding Harijan work. Kakasaheb Kalelkar whom I met on Monday last

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Deva Prasad Sarvadhikari", p. 31.

told me that there were urgent matters in the letters awaiting me in the post. There are pressing Harijan problems demanding my immediate attention. I do hope therefore that I shall be favoured with the final decision before or on Monday next at the latest.

I attach hereto a copy of the Government of India's orders[1] in the matter. In my humble opinion they are unequivocal.

Yours sincerely,

Home Department, Government of Bombay, I.G.P. File No. 10

414. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 10, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have had two cheques for the David Scheme, in all Rs. 5,000, Rs. 2,500 from Shri Suvta Devi and another Rs. 2,500 from Shri Janaki Devi.

The first donation is to be utilized for a Rajputana Harijan student, if one with proper qualifications is available, otherwise for a Harijan student in the Bombay Presidency.

The second donation is to be used preferably for a Harijan student from C. P., Marathi, failing that, from C. P., Hindustani, both failing, for any Harijan student.

I have also Rs. 100 from Janaki Devi to be used for Harijan cause at my discretion.

I have handed the amounts to Thakkar Bapa and verbally given also the instructions accompanying the donations. This is however for your record. I have still Rs. 500 to be sent to you of which I have already given you advice,[2] and I am hoping that Thakkar Bapa withdrew from the Arya Bhushan Press the sum of Rs. 1,044 which was the advance given on behalf of *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20885

[1] *Vide* Vol. LI, pp. 336-7.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", pp. 294-5.

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415. LETTER TO JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM

April 10, 1933

MY DEAR JAIRAMDAS,

I was delighted to see your handwriting after such a long time. I hope you are keeping quite well.

Is the donation of Rs. 5,000 from Sjt. Uttamchand Gangaram[1] to be announced in the *Harijan*, and if so, in what terms?

Is Dr. Choithram able to move about? Give him love on account of us all.

Premi[2] had become a regular correspondent, but of late she is frozen up. Ask her why she has been silent.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20876

416. LETTER TO N.

April 10, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

For the last three days or four I have not heard from you. I have developed regarding you a mother's anxiety. I am sure it is unnecessary, but when I do not hear from you, I imagine all sorts of things. Could you have fallen ill? Or, could you have fallen from your resolution? You must not therefore fail in writing regularly as you have promised to do.

I hope you got the long letter[3] I sent you on Friday. It contained answers to every one of your questions.

I had a satisfactory letter from Ramaswami in reply to my letter about which I wrote to you. Who is this guru of his with whom you are said to be living? How old is he? What

[1] Retired head master of a Government school in Sind. His donation was intended to finance a scheme for providing scholarships to Harijan pupils in primary schools in Sind.

[2] Addressee's daughter

[3] This was presumably the one dated April 6, which may have been sent on the following day.

languages does he know? Is Chitaldrug his home? How is Rudramuni behaving?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20875

417. LETTER TO K. RAMASWAMI

April 10, 1933

MY DEAR RAMASWAMI[1],

Your latest letter, that is of the 8th April, is quite satisfactory. I now understand the position better.

So far as your guru is concerned, I know it is too sacred a thing to be discussed. I suppose he is the gentleman whom Rudramuni also claims as his guru. Could you describe him? How old is he? What languages does he know? Not that a man to be good and true and advanced spiritually needs to know a single language. My enquiry is merely to satisfy my curiosity.

So far as your work amongst Harijans is concerned, I do not feel like guiding you for the moment. I can only hope that the work you and some others with you began will not be given up altogether, but that it will take a truer form, as I hope it has taken in the case of N.

It gave me great joy to read of your many self-denials[2] as a result of your having taken to scavenging work.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. RAMASWAMI
C/O SJT. R. KRISHNA RAO
WEAVER'S LINES
MYSORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20874

[1] A student volunteer who had engaged himself in social welfare activities such as scavenging, etc.

[2] The addressee had given up coffee and visits to cinemas.

418. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

April 10, 1933

CHI. JAMNA,

When I have sent you a vaidya like Purushottam, do you still want advice from me? And that too without yourself writing to me. I don't remember not having replied to any of your letters. I am still waiting for your reply to my last letter. Those who want me to write to them should write beautiful letters to me, or else fall so ill that they do not have strength enough even to write a letter.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 875. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

419. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 10, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I got the slivers sent with Narahari. I will give the figures afterwards. The Surati slivers weigh 18 *tolas*.

I understand what you say about Shanta. She has not yet written anything to me. It will be better if you write about both the ladies to Jamnalalji at Wardha.

Lakshmi complains that nobody writes to her. Inquire if this is so. I hope you at any rate write to her.

I am used to being harassed. God has been testing me in a number of ways. How can a person grow unless he is tested? You certainly harass me by refusing to do your duty. I have all along been advising you to give rest to your throat and also to your body. But you have been disregarding both the orders. I have given you these orders not for your good but in the interest of the Ashram. If your throat is harmed permanently and your health breaks down, the Ashram will suffer more than you will. Do you understand this simple truth? If you understand it, you would be humble and do whatever I ask you to do for your health. This is true about your temper too. It also is a

disease. You should get rid of it, and also overcome your impatience.

I hear that Kisan is a little better. I cannot understand how she gets fits.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10335. Also C.W. 6775. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

420. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

April 10, 1933

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your two letters. It was good that you observed the cutting up of the carcass of a buffalo. Now seize the first opportunity to do it.

Try to get help for the sick where it may be necessary. There are well known remedies for three or four of the diseases. You should know them. If I get time, I shall write about them.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 355. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

421. LETTER TO T. R. BHATT

April 11, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. If you will do your own bit for the removal of untouchability in your part of the world,[1] you will find that your example will be copied by others if they find in you a determined and selfless worker.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. T. R. BHATT
3 LAWRENCE ROAD
NAMNAIR, AGRA CANTT.

From a microfilm: S.N. 20887

[1] The addressee had expressed his intention to work for the removal of untouchability at Badrinath, Garhwal.

422. LETTER TO R. R. CHAKRAVARTTI

April 11, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and the cutting[1] you have sent me, and it made me glad to find that you were already doing all you could to remove the curse of untouchability.

I would not have you to infer from my defence[2] of Hardayal-babu that I would write exactly as he did. I hope you saw my article[3] in the *Harijan* on Brahmins. That explains my own personal position. I am wholly averse to a crusade against Brahmins or any particular class. I fear that we are all tarred with the same brush so far as this monster of untouchability is concerned.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20888

423. LETTER TO ANNADA PRASAD CHOUDHARI

April 11, 1933

MY DEAR ANNADABABU,

I was delighted to hear from you and still more so to learn that Suresda[4] had improved wonderfully, so much so as to enable him to go to Kurseong for a change. It would be a matter of great joy for us all if he is completely restored at Kurseong.

I note what you say about the Free Press correspondent. It was not possible to give the Free Press the messages that I used to give to the A. P.[5] Otherwise too, I was so dissatisfied with

[1] Of a letter that the addressee had written to *The Statesman* on the subject of temple-entry

[2] *Vide* "Letter to R. R. Chakravartti", p. 270.

[3] "The Much-maligned Brahmin"; *vide* pp. 185-7.

[4] Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee

[5] The addressee who was at one time in charge of the khadi work at Abhoy Ashram, Comilla, had requested Gandhiji to give copies of his statements to the Free Press of India also as he did to the Associated Press of India.

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the utterly reckless manner in which they published misstatements that I did not care to give any such facilities to the Free Press.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. ANNADA PRASAD CHOUDHARI
88 G CORPORATION ST.
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20898

424. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

April 11, 1933

DEAR SATISBABU,

There is no doubt about it that untouchability works nowhere so cruelly as in the South. That in the South all the non-Brahmins are not classed as untouchables has a historical reason. But in its working it is the same, whether you call them untouchables or not; and hence it is that you find in Madras alone non-Brahmin constituencies. Therefore in Madras you have reservation of seats for non-Brahmins and untouchables instead of merely untouchables, and the feeling between Brahmins and non-Brahmins runs much higher and keener than between touchables and untouchables. In Bengal no doubt things are bad enough and need to be mended. The untouchables in Bengal would feel the irritation just as much as the untouchables in Madras, for they know nothing worse. But when we begin to set up comparisons we have to admit that the Madras pattern is infinitely worse than the Bengal one, and if you went to Madras and studied the question you will immediately say, 'Bad as things are with us in Bengal, they are infinitely worse in Madras.' Therefore I want you to work away against untouchability in Bengal as unremittingly as you have begun, but at the same time avoid comparison with the other Provinces and be more than fair in your judgment of the sanatanists.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20893

425. LETTER TO MARY GILLETT

April 11, 1933

MY DEAR MARY,

It was wholly unnecessary for you both to leave the Ashram. What I thought necessary was a temporary separation. That seems to have come naturally.

I am glad that you are now happier. I hope to hear from you that all the excitement and nervousness have disappeared altogether and that you have a peace such as you never enjoyed before.

I can well understand what all these events must mean to your parents and especially to your mother.[1] It seems to me that if the way is otherwise open and if you have private means, it might be well not to wait for the imminence of a mental breakdown, but to go now at once, pay your parents a short visit, explain everything to them, and express your unalterable determination to serve in India. If this is at all possible I think you will find that it would save time and worry and also money. It is not to be expected that your parents will be able to follow your quick changes intelligently and sympathetically.

Your assurance about Verrier's health makes me happy.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20896

426. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

April 11, 1933

CHI. MIRA,

Your long letter came yesterday. Your argument appeals to me. Women themselves have resisted the argument that you have advanced. I have believed it always that man is the aggressor. He is more sensual than woman. I have therefore no

[1] The addressee was at this time working in the Gond Seva Sangh at Karanja (C. P.). Her parents did not approve of this and wanted her to return to England. Her mother was in danger of mental breakdown.

difficulty in following your argument. But the corollary you draw defies experience. It has been happy where it has worked. But they are rare cases and will always be so—nor is it unfortunate. The usual condition is marriage and procreation. That means breach of *brahmacharya* as we know it. That does not mean that we should not aim at it. We must aim at it even though there may be only one case of perfect *brahmacharya* out of the experiment. Many attempt, only a few will attain salvation. Therefore generally we shall have to be satisfied with married people growing to *brahmacharya* and a few only being life *brahmacharis*. If I am right, the Ashram will have to be what it is, always rising higher after every failure. . . .[1] and . . . are infinitely better for having lived in the Ashram nor is the Ashram any the worse for their having lived in it. They would easily have been much better if I had been less imperfect and more wise and for that matter the other elders. But I was their foot-rule, so imperfect and untrue. Yet I do not consider myself an unsafe guide because I am not consciously untruthful and always attempt to discover and throw away my imperfections. All I say is that failures there must be so long as we have not in our midst a perfect man or woman. But we need not lose hope nor become unnerved on discovering instances like . . .'s; they are attempts of the system to throw off impurities. I rejoice at the discovery, while I deplore . . .'s error, even as I would rejoice at the discovery of a disease in my own body, though I may deplore it. Further than this I cannot carry this tremendous problem—'one step enough for me, I do not ask to see the distant scene'. We know the fundamental truth we want to reach, we know also the way. The details we do not know, we shall never know them all, because we are but very humble instruments among millions of such moving consciously or unconsciously towards the divine event. We shall reach the Absolute Truth, if we will faithfully and steadfastly work out the relative truth as each one of us knows it.

Ba wants her letter separately because of the separate delivery. According to the date of the delivery of my letter to her, the fortnight is not yet complete. I do not understand this intricate working of the jail regulations. It differs in every jail evidently. But that ought not to cause any worry. The philosophy of prison life is that the body belongs to the keeper, i. e., the State. Therefore generally speaking it may be said that a prisoner is

[1] This and the subsequent names in the letter have been omitted.

foolish who worries about exterior wants the supply of which depends wholly upon the keeper's will. Thus everything given to a prisoner is a concession which may be withdrawn at the will of the State. Domestic letters fall under that category. We may thankfully receive and write them so long as they are allowed but we may not foam or fret or curse, if we are not allowed to do so. Regularity of delivery we may prize but irregularity ought not to unhinge us. Those who are prisoners for conscience' sake should at least grasp this very simple but not generally understood truth. If you can explain it to Ba, you should do so.

I shall see about the delivery of Hindi *Harijan*. My weight is steady at 104.

Love from us all.

BAPU

[PS.]

Sacred cards going in a separate packet.

The slip containing your copy of the vows is too precious a possession to be with me. I therefore return it for you to keep.

From a copy: C.W. 9674. Courtesy: Mirabehn

427. LETTER TO P. N. RAJBHOJ

April 11, 1933

MY DEAR RAJBHOJ,

I am not publishing your article because there is nothing in it except the oft-repeated generalization.

As I have already told you, just now it is better for you to take in what you have gone to the Ashram to receive and to bottle up all your thoughts. Let there be no hurry about sharing them with the world, and you will find that at the end of the discipline you will be able to speak with authority because you will speak with knowledge.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20804

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428. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

April 11, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I thank you for your postcard. I see that you are rendering whatever service it is possible to render to N. Let's hope that she will pass through the fire all right and come out all the purer for the ordeal.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20897

429. LETTER TO P. PANDURANGA SHENAI

April 11, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I hope when I get the time to deal with one portion of your letter in the pages of the *Harijan* without in any way mentioning your name.

As to the last question in your letter, the Brahmin who discoursed upon untouchability was in my opinion utterly wrong. Untouchability in the case of womenfolk is only in respect of a temporary condition and if there was untouchability observed about people in similar cases, there would be nothing to be said. But here it is a permanent untouchability with heartless conduct attached to it. Between the two conditions there is no resemblance.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. PANDURANGA SHENAI
20 ANDIAPPA GRAMANI ST.
ROYAPURAM, MADRAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 20895

430. LETTER TO SAROJINI NANAVATI

April 11, 1933

CHI. SAROJINI,

Raihana has familiarized me with you so much that I feel as if I knew you from birth. She has mentioned you even in the postcard she wrote before she left Poona. I can understand that you feel lonely in the house without Raihana. May God give you long life and enthusiasm and strength for service.

Blessings from
BAPU

SAROJINIBEHN
C/o JUSTICE NANAVATI, POONA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10484

431. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

April 11, 1933

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter has neither gone to the Ashram nor come to me. I had been waiting for it all the time. Yes, I did get your letter of March 21. The reason why I have received no letter from Narandas must also be the same. If there was anything important in that letter, write to me again about it.

How are you all? Write and tell me what work you are doing and what you are reading. Mahalakshmi must have received the letter I wrote to her about the children. I am waiting for her reply. To which of her letters does Kisan want a reply? I do not remember to have left any of her letters unanswered. How did she fall ill?

We are all happy. I regularly get reports about Ba and Mira. Ramdas is quite well on the whole. Surendra is not here. Devdas has been touring.

To all sisters,

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9336. Also C.W. 582. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

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432. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

April 11, 1933

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

A letter from you has come after a long interval. This should not happen. A particular day should be fixed for writing to me so that I may take it for certain that a letter will arrive on a specific day.

How is Arun? Abdul Alim writes that he is not keeping well.[1]

I understand about Mithibehn. You need not involve yourself in the matter of sacrificial killings at Kalighat[2]. The work already on your hands is enough and that itself is your *sadhana*. It will be a great achievement when the Pratishthan becomes a perfect ashram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1699

433. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

April 11, 1933

DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I have your letter written on the train. Sarojini also has sent one. She says that she misses you now that you have left. What could not be accomplished in Poona must be achieved in Mussoorie.[3] Only after that can anything be considered. Greetings from all of us to you all.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: S.N. 9658

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Abdul Alim", p. 363.
[2] The Kali temple in Calcutta
[3] The reference presumably is to the addressee's being restored to health.

434. LETTER TO M. G. BHAGAT

April 12, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter addressed to the President of the Servants of Untouchables Society.[1]

From the certificates enclosed by you it would appear that you do not belong to the Harijan class, and if you do not, no part of the donation of the Rs. 500 referred to in your letter will be available to you, but there is no reason why the general funds of the Society should not be used for the purpose indicated in your letter. If therefore you do not belong to the Harijan class, you should approach the Bombay Branch of the Society and satisfy it of the reasonableness of your application.

Pending receipt of your reply, I am keeping your papers with me.

Yours sincerely,

M. G. BHAGAT
BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20907

435. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

April 12, 1933

THE SECRETARY TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY
HOME DEPARTMENT

DEAR SIR,

I have just read the Government's reply to my request contained in my letter[2] of the 1st instant.

[1] The addressee had applied for the scholarship of Rs. 500, announced by the Servants of Untouchables Society, to finance the research he was conducting on the subject of untouchability in the *Mahabharata* under the aegis of the Bombay University.

[2] *Vide* p. 271.

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I am thankful for the correction that it was not in 1922 but in 1923 that I was permitted to see two fellow-convicts in the Yeravda prison who were fasting.

I am sorry for the decision of the Government on the issue raised by me.

Technically the Government are right in their reply. Naturally every concession lapses with the end of the prisoner's incarceration. The limits of the current concessions I have not questioned, though I did not like them in so far as the inquiry about the treatment or conduct of other prisoners was concerned. Happily there was no occasion for definitely raising the point. My endeavour has been to avoid, as far as possible, occasion of conflict with authority. I have been content to live, as becomes a prisoner, a hand-to-mouth existence in the hope that with the march of time my conduct would inspire the Government with confidence in my desire to tender and promote prison discipline to the best of my ability and thus make my way smooth for humanitarian work that was possible for me even as a prisoner to do. And I may be pardoned for referring to a policy once established by the Government and pleading for its continuity.

But the Government would on the contrary seem to repent of past concessions and to want to curtail them. For the communication under reply says, "Government are unable to extend this concession so as to cover direct communications between him and prisoners in jails other than Yeravda." Does this mean that I am not now to exchange communications which I have hitherto carried on with prisoners in jails other than Yeravda, and that in cases such as Seth Poonamchand's I am not to be permitted to offer friendly intervention? I can only hope that the Government do not mean to curtail or restrict the concession already granted to me. I request an early reply as even the concession granted in the matter of Seth Poonamchand has not, in my opinion, been properly given effect to.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3)A, p. 195; also G.N. 3888

436. LETTER TO P. R. LELE

April 12, 1933

MY DEAR LELE,

Of course, I know that you were attached to the cause of untouchables long before the question of saving my life occurred.[1] You had yourself corresponded with me as editor of the *Liberator*[2]. My point was that you should continue your interest along the lines chalked out by the Society, whatever your differences with the Bombay Branch. As you say, Thakkar Bapa is an institution in himself. I should be sorry indeed if it was a fact that the other agencies working for the service of the Harijans had materially weakened because of the existence of the Bombay Branch. I would like you to throw more light on it. And you mystify me by saying that you will 'have to be satisfied with such opportunities to serve as Dr. Ambedkar allows and gives you'. Whatever the difference as to the way of working between Dr. Ambedkar and others, surely the goal is the same except for the fact that Dr. Ambedkar would not be satisfied with anything less than destruction of varnashrama, but there is absolutely common ground so far as destruction of untouchability in the sense of outcasteness is concerned. The field therefore is so vast that all can serve, whether by belonging to some of the organizations or independently.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20906

[1] The addressee had said that the Bombay Branch of Servants of Untouchables Society had been concerned solely with preventing Gandhiji from fasting and that its existence had weakened other such organizations.

[2] Swami Shraddhanand's paper devoted to the service of the untouchables, which the addressee had joined in 1926

437. LETTER TO USHAKANTA MUKHOPADHYAY[1]

April 12, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I am grateful to you for your very long and reasoned letter. But that letter does not convince me of the necessity of untouchability, as we observe it today, for any beneficial purpose whatsoever, and you seem to give up your case when you suggest that common temples may be built which would be accessible to all classes of Hindus so that in time to come people may forget the artificial distinctions that are observed today.

So far as the four divisions are concerned, I am wholly at one with you if you agree that they are designed to regulate the duties of the four divisions and not to set up grades of superiority and inferiority nor to erect impassable barriers as to inter-dining and intermarriage. That there would be a custom set up as to marriage and dining I can quite see, but it would not be and never was an integral part of varnadharma.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20908

438. LETTER TO N.

April 12, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

After having kept me waiting for four days and holding me in suspense, you have given me a long letter.

I do not like the boil on your left foot and right leg. I hope that you know the simple treatment of boils and that by the time this reaches you, nothing will have been left of them. It is much better to stop all work than to run the risk of dirt getting into them when they appear on inconvenient parts of the body. If you do not know simple treatment of simple diseases, you have got to learn it quickly. Truly, this new life is a new birth for you. May you come safely through it.

[1] The addressee had claimed that untouchability was designed to protect the weak in the society as was the *purdah* in the North.

As for S[1]. I do not know what you mean by giving him another chance. I hope you have written to him strongly about his unwarrantable familiarity. Unless he is truly repentant, nothing whatsoever can be accepted from him, and it would not be proper to accept his mere word in order to enable you to receive a gift from him. It is demoralizing to receive gifts from those whom you want to reform or from those with whom we had questionable relationship. Therefore S. may have all the chances for showing his repentance. Nothing whatsoever should be received from him, or, for that matter from R[2]. The only person whom I regard as quite reliable is Ramachandra. Get everything you need from him and no one else. I shall write to Ramachandra to look to your wants. He told me that in reply to your letter asking for soap, he offered to send you a remittance so as to enable you to buy soap locally. This was meant to save railage for a small parcel. The local purchases you could only do if you knew the bazaar prices or if you had a reliable person who would not cheat you. Somehow or other I do not feel quite safe about R[3]. He is for me an unknown quantity. He may be a very good man, only I do not feel quite safe.

This brings me to soap. For cleaning the body, as I told you when you were with me, no soap was required. Clean water and a rough towel is all that is necessary for keeping the body quite fit. For washing the hair there is nothing to approach the soap-nut. It is to be had all over India. A few nuts soaked overnight and then well mashed with hand in the water produces soap suds with which you can clean the hair perfectly. But I have an easier method. You have abandoned everything for the Harijan service and for self-purification. Hence, you are, to all intents and purposes, a sannyasin. Therefore you have to remove the hair from your head and have a close crop almost amounting to a shave. Mira has that. Tens of thousands of widows have that crop. If you can easily let your hair go, I need not prescribe elaborate things for keeping your hair in a clean condition. I do not want to press for the crop. I do not know what attraction your hair has for you. Much as I would like every girl in the Ashram to have her hair cropped, I have been able to persuade only a few. If you have the same partiality for your hair as these Ashram girls have, I have nothing to say. But if you would let your hair go as easily as you pare your nails, then I would say: Get hold of the closest barber,

[1], [2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

get him to wash his hands and his scissors in hot water and get him to take off your hair. If he has not the clippers, then let him do so with the ordinary scissors. It won't be as close a crop as I would like, but it would be close enough to save you all the anxiety about your hair and it would save you also a great deal of time. If you do not want your hair to be cropped, I must write to you in my next letter what you should do to keep it clean without having to resort to soap. Remember that millions in this country do not know what soap is. Again, in asking you practically to do without soap, I am asking you to do something I have not succeeded in inducing all the Ashram people to do.

Now for the washing of the clothes. I wonder if you have enough firewood to heat your water. If you are a bit of an engineer, you can even heat your water by the sun-heat. It requires a metal pot and a bit of piping undoubtedly. An American educational missionary, Sam Higginbottom, is heating his water by the sun-heat in Allahabad. But this is not yet for you. I am simply whetting your appetite for doing simple things in the villages. But if you can heat your water all you need to do is to obtain the crude washing soda. Add that to your water and it becomes as soft as soap water. Soak your clothes in that water while it is boiling and let them lie in that water overnight. Wash them well the next morning and they are free from dirt though not white as snow, because they take somewhat the colouring of the crude soda. But that should not matter and is in keeping with the village life. But the clothes will be as clean as if washed in a first-class hotel in America, and all you want is cleanliness.

The change you have made in your apparel seems to me to be quite suitable. You have almost anticipated me if the robe is in addition to the skirt I have mentioned in my letter. You are hard on poor Ramachandra. I think that his remark was well meant. Your argument about the women is quite logical, but unfortunately we are not governed by logic. I must not enter into the history of the women whom you see bare-bodied. You will however realize at once that you cannot afford to vie with these sisters. Truth demands that your external appearance should be as near a representation as possible of the internal condition. You cannot afford today to claim unassailable internal innocence. When you have attained it, you won't need to demonstrate it. Do you know the story of Shukdevji and Vyas? If you don't, you must ask me to give it to you some other day.

I am not at all satisfied about your food. The *ragi* bread should go. You must have got whole wheatmeal flour by this

time. If you have, you must bake your own chapati. If you have not got that, you should live on milk and such dried fruit as you might have. It would keep you in good health and give you the needed energy. Milk for yourself you should beg, if the people will willingly supply to you. Buffalo milk is fairly rich and if you get one pound, it will serve the purpose. Of course S.'s[1] portion is a first charge. Whatever fruit and vegetables you may get now and again will really be enough to give you the necessary vegetable salts and vitamins. So far as health is concerned, a daily supply of fresh vegetables and fruit is not an absolute necessity, especially when you are living out in the open air and are not called upon to undergo extraordinary physical or mental strain.

You must control your temper, even with reference to S. You should be patient with the people who surround your little cottage and would not let you have even a little bit of privacy when you want to sleep. A little reasoning with them will set them right. Whilst you are still becoming inured to your new life, you should insist on taking an hour's sleep during the middle of the day and giving it to S. It will be good for your body and good for your temper, and if you and S. have a close crop, you will use a wet rag for the head, as you saw me use. It cools the head and the whole body instantaneously.

You should have sent me R.'s letter as he wrote it. Let me know him as he is and not as you would have him to appear.

I think I have covered all the points in your letter.

May God the Truth surround you and S. with His protecting care. I know that if you will have complete faith in Him, it will be all well with you. Here is a note for S.[2]

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20910

[1] The name has been omitted.
[2] *Vide* the following item.

439. LETTER TO S.

April 12, 1933

MY DEAR S.,

I have your lovely letter. You must continue to write to me all [and] tell me more of what you see in and around the village in which you are living. Have you made friends with any of the boys there?

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20910

440. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

April 12, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRAN,

In your otherwise exhaustive and excellent report on the conflict between Nattars and Harijans, you have omitted the dates, the respective population of the two parties, and a rough map of the area affected. But I do not want to send you this letter in order to criticize your report which Thakkar Bapa handed to me on the 6th instant, but to ask you whether you desire in the interest of the cause publicity for the report and editorial comments upon the subject-matter of it. As Thakkar Bapa was very anxious that I should take notice of it, I was preparing to do so when suddenly I came upon the paragraph of recommendations. Therein you have stated that the Committee would be trying through local influence to adjust the quarrels between the two parties. The question at once arose with me as to whether any publicity given to the report and comment would harm the progress of pacification through friendly intervention or whether it would help it. Please help me to come to a decision. Your word would be final. And if the matter has got to be dealt with in the next week's *Harijan*, you should telegraph to me. This letter should be in your hands on Saturday,

and if I get your wire before or on Monday, it will answer the purpose.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. G. RAMACHANDRAN
PROVINCIAL SECRETARY
SERVANTS OF UNTOUCHABLES SOCIETY
NO. 77 A SAMSAPIRAN ST.
BIG BAZAAR, TRICHINOPOLY

From a microfilm: S.N. 20909

441. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

April 12, 1933

CHI. JAMNALAL,

After reading Kamalnayan's[1] letter, I feel that, if you can become free from the work at Wardha, you should immediately go to a hill station. I like Mahabaleshwar the best. You can stay there for a full one month and a half. After that you can descend to Panchgani or go to any other place if you wish. You should not remain in the plains so long as the discharge from the ear continues.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2913

442. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 12, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your weekly post. I found Smt. Dhanvanti's[2] letter, but did not find Valjibhai's article. If you did send it, it seems to have been lost in the office here. I hope he has kept a copy. If it has not been left behind there, write to Valji and inform him, so that time may be saved. He should know that this is a jail.

Vaseline will help Amina better than ghee can. She should thoroughly mix a little boric acid powder with it.

[1] Addressee's son
[2] Poonamchand Ranka's wife

CWMG - LIV

I cannot take the final decision about Dhiru, since I do not know him well. Only you and others there who have known him for many years can do so. He has studied under Panditji. Probably Narahari also knows him well. He is working at present under your direct supervision. If what he writes to me can be trusted, it is our duty to let him go. But we cannot do that if we have the slightest doubt about him. Whether or not Santiniketan is a suitable place for him may be doubtful, but we have no choice in the matter. Besides, there is no doubt that they teach painting well there. Whether Dhiru will use his skill well or not will depend entirely on his character. I cannot judge whether he is a boy of good character, whether he is hard-working and whether he has any aptitude for painting. After writing a long letter to me, he has kept silent. I don't feel very happy about that. But it is possible that he has not written again because of shyness or out of respect for me.

It is desirable that everybody should keep silent for some time after prayer or talk only in whispers. A person may speak about Ashram work, however. In army barracks, soldiers are not permitted to talk after the bell for retiring is sounded. In any case there should be no murmuring immediately after the prayer. This is necessary for the good of the boys as well as of of the Ashram. This rule is strictly enforced in jails. Were it not so, life in a jail would be intolerable. In jails even lights are generally put out at a fixed hour. And talking in loud voices is never permitted. If, therefore, you can introduce a rule that people should be silent or talk only in whispers, you should do so immediately.

BAPU

[PS.]

I suppose you have read Dr. Sharma's letter. Welcome him heartily when he comes. His daughter also should be welcomed. Give him the necessary facilities for his experiments. His letters carry a very good impression of him.

I have had no comments from you recently regarding the effect of the changes in food. Let me know the results. Nobody should be forced to accept these changes. If anybody desires some modification, grant his request within our limits. Chhotubhai has written to me about this. Read my reply to him.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8354. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

443. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 12, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. It is enough that I have cautioned you. Your belief that I do not read your letters carefully is not correct. I had fully understood what you had said. Such cock-sureness is itself a sign of pride. The pride shows in your language. This does not mean that I want you to hide your thoughts or express them in carefully chosen words. I like you to write as you feel. According to me it is your virtue that you let me see you as you are both inwardly and outwardly. If you were to write with unnatural self-control, I would be helpless and unable to advise or admonish you.

I cannot teach you to become humble as a dust particle. If one understands what God is, one naturally feels like that. That understanding will come to you in its own time.

Nor do I mean that you do not have to endure many things from others. But the fact that you can wipe out all that in a moment makes me unhappy.

You believe that an atmosphere of prejudice against you has been created around me. You are mistaken in this. Sardar is certainly not against you. Do not take his humour as a sign of his being against you. I do not at all feel that Mahadev is against you either. What Chhaganlal has said against you is nothing new. He knows your worth, but says that till you can control your tongue you should be entrusted with no responsibility. This is his old complaint. You should know that I rarely talk with my three companions. There is, except for a little joking at meal times or during walks, no time for any discussion. We rarely talk about anybody unless there is an occasion to do so. With all my work, I never feel in a mood for talking about other things, nor could I waste my time in idle discussions. I have hardly been able to discuss even the painful episode of. . .[1] and . . .[2]. I have contented myself with the briefest exchange of views. There is no atmosphere of prejudice against you around me, nor is there any such prejudice in my mind. If I admonish

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

you rather harshly, it is because I regard you as my daughter and want to see you perfect. Why, then, do you feel hurt by my criticism? You may accept such of it as you think worth accepting and forget the rest. For it is perfectly possible that my criticism may be based on ignorance and that I may not have correctly understood what you said.

It is quite true that different people may see the same thing differently. We daily observe that the same energy or strength is used in different ways.

I do feel that no woman should be asked by others to do any routine work during her menses. Nobody can know when she may be having a pain. It would be best not to burden a woman with any work during such a period. She may do of her own free will whatever work she feels inclined to do. Some women feel nothing during menstruation and go on doing their work as usual. Some others feel unbearable pain. Some don't feel any pain, but can do no physical work. A woman who spends the period in the right manner gains fresh energy every month. Those three or four days are for getting back lost strength, and for that the woman should be left free from all responsibility. She should be free to lie down if she wants to. Some ignorant women do not lay aside their hectic domestic work even during that period, not knowing the harm which they do themselves. They should be properly advised. On the whole, therefore, I like Lakshmidas's suggestion.

What you say about Kisan is possible. I was very glad to learn that she had recovered. She seems to have waited for my reply to her letter. But I do not remember having not replied to any of her letters.

I have already written to you about your slivers.

You will not lose weight by living on unboiled milk. If you eat boiled vegetables once a day, I am sure you will benefit. Probably your throat needs them; I think it does unboiled milk. Why not try?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10336. Also C.W. 6776. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

444. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 13, 1933

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

You will see in this week's *Harijan* a reply[1] to your difficulty about the fast. I shall anxiously await your criticism. The story of Nineveh came into my hands quite accidentally, but it fitted in so well I thought.

In your letter of 22nd March you have asked a question about Dr. Subbaroyan's Bill. As soon as I got the Bill I felt the difficulty about a fair majority myself and I brought it up to Rajagopalachari's notice. I had suggested too an amendment even to the extent of three-fourths majority being required, because my idea always has been that unless the majority is a very decisive majority, the big reform contemplated could not work satisfactorily, and you must have seen how I have contemplated meeting the objection even of a minority of one, because what might be superstition to me may be a matter of life and death to that minority of one. His particular temple might be all-in-all to him and it might be his absolute faith that the temple will be no good to him if he had to offer worship side by side with a Harijan. But all these things are to be done when the proper time arrives. I have discussed them publicly too, but I do not want to reopen the discussion because nobody thinks of it just now. But you can have the assurance and give it to those who need it that when the Bill reaches the Committee stage an amendment for a decisive majority will certainly be carried, and any other amendment that might satisfy the sanatanists and that could leave the principle intact will most decidedly be accepted.

Mahadev has not yet made any guess about the name you have for me. I have no doubt that you have many names and not only one.

Thangai naturally would want to say nothing to me about your capacity for taking in dates because she knows that there at least I could always beat you and not by a bare majority.

About under-stamping of the envelope, there was no economy, false or otherwise, possible for us. Not having been ever

[1] *Vide* "Thinking Aloud", pp. 413-5.

CWMG - IIV

a prisoner, you evidently fancy that we are free to do as we like even to the extent of putting on stamps. You may then know that stamps are not affixed by us. They are affixed in the prison office.

Love from us all.

Yours sincerely,
MOHAN

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, pp. 289-90; also G.N. 1302

445. LETTER TO PRINCESS EFY ARISTARCHI

April 13, 1933

I have your two letters.

You often ask me to pray for you, pray for your mother. Up to now I have never said anything about this. But today I feel tempted to put my position before you. Though I believe in temples, I do not visit them nowadays, and, as you know, the temple at the Ashram has the sky above as the roof and mother earth as the floor. The walls consist of the four directions. And in this temple there are no prayers offered for friends. The morning and the evening prayers consist of set verses in Sanskrit and hymns from a composite hymn book in Gujarati, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Urdu and English, the latter only when there is someone who can sing English hymns. My response therefore to requests from friends for intercessory prayers consists simply in there and then silently commending them to God. I do not know that this would be considered at all an adequate response. But I can truthfully do no otherwise. Prayer to God with me has a different meaning perhaps from the ordinary. He needs no asking. He reads our hearts even as we do not read them. He anticipates our demands and wishes. He knows what is good for us much better than we do. He has no hesitation in summarily rejecting our wishes and desires which in His estimation are unlawful. Having all this belief in me I have not the heart to approach Him with special prayers and hence there is not that definite asking as there is with so many Christian friends, and even Hindu friends. I do not want to imply that what I am doing is better than, say, what you are doing. Each one approaches God after his own manner and each manner is equally acceptable to Him if it proceeds from the heart. I thought that I

would just say this much in answer to all the love you are pouring on me.

Yours,

From a photostat: S.N. 20923

446. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

April 13, 1933

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I am not acknowledging all your letters, because I give you a long printed letter unfailingly every week.

Sastri's letter notwithstanding, of course you are going to write naturally and not think of grammar.[1]

Like his economy, Andrews's *purdah* is a fraud. He pretends that he needs quiet for his writing and sits down to write in the midst of bustle and produces quiet from within.

I hope you have been visiting Vithalbhai Patel in his illness, and therefore I expect to hear from you about his condition. Brief cable messages published in the Press show that he is sinking. We are all anxious about him.

I hear from Mira every week. She is keeping fairly well.

Mahadev will be leaving us shortly.[2] Devdas is in Benares with Malaviyaji, and Pyarelal is in the Nasik Jail. I have not heard from him.

Love from us both.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

MISS AGATHA HARRISON
2 CRANBOURNE COURT
ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD
[LONDON] S. W. 11

From a photostat: G.N. 1464; also S.N. 20920

[1] The addressee had made a humorous reference about her diffidence in writing to Srinivasa Sastri after reading his and Gandhiji's correspondence; *vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 399-402.

[2] Mahadev Desai was to be released on May 19, 1933.

CWMG - LIV

447. LETTER TO V. A. HODKE

April 13, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to have your card telling me that the buffalo-sacrifice was stopped and that the sacrifice of other animals was reduced and that it was likely to be stopped altogether next year.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. V. A. HODKE
SECRETARY
PRANI DAYA SANGH
SIRSI (N. CANARA)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20919

448. LETTER TO GERTRUDE S. KELLER-CHING

April 13, 1933

DEAR SISTER,

I must answer your latest letter. Your account of your visit to Geneva is most interesting and I am glad that you made so many acquaintances.

And now you want me to give you an Indian name. There was a meaning in Mirabehn asking for an Indian name, having physically cast in her lot with Indians, but what is the meaning of your wanting an Indian name? Nobody will address you by that name. I therefore think that you should give up this desire for having an Indian name. It is enough that you have an Indian heart.

I hope that the quiet you were contemplating to have did you good. Of course the real thing is to find one's quiet from within. Then and then only are we quite safe.

Please remember me to all those friends whom you mention.

Yours sincerely,

MRS. GERTRUDE S. KELLER-CHING

From a photostat: S.N. 20921

449. LETTER TO DOROTHY E. NEWMAN

April 13, 1933

MY DEAR DOROTHY,

You have given me a long defence of Kamalani[1], but it was wholly unnecessary as I know Kamalani to be a very nice, steady, sober, young worker.

I am glad that the *Harijan* is proving useful to so many foreign friends. If you are not a blind reader, as you say you are not, you will sometimes tell me as gently as you like or as bluntly as you can wherein you differ. For it is the criticism of friends which I treasure and by which I profit most.

Yours sincerely,

MISS DOROTHY E. NEWMAN
20 EVENDALE ROAD
STOCKWELL, S. W. 9
LONDON

From a photostat: S.N. 20922

450. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

April 13, 1933

MY DEAR MARGARETE,

Your letter of 20th March is disturbing. Everything done in a hurry generally proves unsatisfactory when it is not positively harmful. All haste must be deprecated. From the highest standpoint, and that is the only one I am sure which you want to apply to yourself, your coming will be justified only when you are ready for the Ashram life. That clearly you are not. Your immediate duty is to be by your mother's side. You cannot risk bringing her to India. If you are thrown out of employment and have to be in search of one, you have to courageously stand by your people and suffer the hardships that they will have to suffer, and if you have imbibed the fundamentals of the Ashram life,

[1] An Indian settled in London and working for the Indian cause

you might even render inestimable help to them. All your letters to 24 people in India, therefore, to get you a job should not have been written. You do not want a job in India, but you want to give your free service, the whole of yourself, to India. You cannot do two contrary things at the same time. I wish therefore you would give up the idea of the job, remain there by your mother's side and live the Ashram life there, so that if God wills it, He will send you some day to the Ashram.

Yours sincerely,

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

451. LETTER TO ISWAR SARAN

April 13, 1933

MY DEAR MUNSHIJI,

I thank you for your letter of the 5th instant and a copy of the report produced by the Committee appointed by the Allahabad Branch of the Servants of Untouchables Society.

You will be glad to know that I began reading the report as soon as I received it. I finished reading it today. It was received yesterday. Your letter came in today. As I hope to deal with the report in the pages of the *Harijan*,[1] I do not think I need say anything in this letter.

Two things, however, I must say here which I would not want to say in dealing with the report publicly. If the figures of the population and some other necessary figures were given and the report was condensed to half the size, it would become a valuable document. I should omit the appendices. If such a condensation is possible and if you could publish it, I have no doubt that it would be a guide for the workers, and possibly to the other municipalities.

I shall hope that as a result of the report you will take effective steps to destroy the inhumanly insanitary quarters described in the report and procure a better residential site for the Harijans.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20914

[1] *Vide* "Immediate Duty", 22-4-1933.

CWMG-LIV

452. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

April 13, 1933

DEAR DR. SHARMA,

I have your letter. I am glad that you would be in the Ashram soon, if you are not already there by the time this reaches the Ashram. I hope you have brought with you your four-year-old daughter also and I hope that the little boy stuck up for his sister. I would call him very unchivalrous if he did not insist upon her being with him. You will please make yourself at home in the Ashram and express to Narandas freely all your requirements.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

DR. H. L. SHARMA
C/O THE ASHRAM
SABARMATI

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh, p. 29

453. LETTER TO SUSHILA PAI

April 13, 1933

May your friendship[1] remain unbroken. I have shown the way of preserving it. It is self-evident that personal friendship cannot last for ever. Such friendship, therefore, should be converted into love of God. It does not cease thereby but becomes enlarged and pure. The happiness of personal friendship is temporary and valueless. I believe that your friendship is only for the sake of service. What personal element can there be in such friendship? Let this thought sink in your mind. You will realize its truth from experience.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 227

[1] With Premabehn Kantak

454. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

April 13, 1933

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I got your letter. You have described things very vividly. It is of course a hard task, but persist in your efforts. Don't worry about the result. You should not worry if the temple is situated at some distance. Actually there will be an advantage in having it at some distance. Though very few Harijans may visit it now, large crowds of them will visit it by and by if there is a school, etc., attached to it. One may take the children to the temple for *darshan* in the evening. And the elders might visit it on holidays. For example, Jagannath and Bhutnath temples were at one time considered to be far way. They are probably considered quite near now. So let this new temple also be thought distant. The temple should stand on a large plot of land. According to me, even ten acres would not be enough.

I feel worried about your bad health. There is a connection between it and your mind. You alone can cure it. You should do so. I want you to do so.

I should like you to write to me more frequently, so that I might be kept acquainted with your work and the state of your mind.

Let me know if you have observed anything noteworthy about Bhau.

I am enclosing letters for Sushila and Bhau.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9649. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

CWMG - LIV

455. LETTER TO NANALAL K. JASANI

April 13, 1933

BHAI NANALAL,

I have your letter. I have been thinking a great deal about this matter. I think Ratilal has consented only to a division of the property. Chhaganlal need not be blamed. He has no control over his mind at all, and so Maganlal is naturally afraid. If the property is divided, something at least may be saved. If it is kept undivided, there is a danger of all of it being lost. If my first suggestion is accepted and implemented, the property may remain undivided, but nobody seems inclined to accept it. It was that all the three brothers should keep away for five years and leave the management of the property to trustees, accepting for themselves fixed allowances. More when we meet.

Jamnadas seems to be a fine worker. He seems to be managing the branch office there admirably. If he has produced the same impression on you, please relieve his anxiety about money. He has been worrying so much that it has told on his health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9650

456. LETTER TO SUBHADRA, SARALA AND JAYADEVI

April 13, 1933

CHI. SUBHADRA, SARALA AND JAYADEVI,

How can I say to you, you will reap as you sow? The sanatanists say: 'The Harijans reap as they sow. How can we commit the sin of helping them to improve their condition in disregard of that law?' If I were to apply the sanatanists' logic to you, I would have to demolish the little nest I have built for the Harijans. Since I can't do that, you are safe. According to the sanatanists' idea of justice, since you wrote your letter with a lead pencil, I should reply with a pencil made of stone, shouldn't I? But our aim is to win over even the sanatanists.

CWMG - LIV

But you have shown that you deserve Nandubehn's description of you.[1] As soon as you were out, you showed your nature. You started straight away drinking leaf-water. And dry leaves at that![2] I must say Chinese bullocks are better than Kathiawari bullocks. They also drink leaf-water but the leaves are green. If you again run away to the cattle-pen in a huff, Sardar is generous and will forgive your getting angry and so you need not be afraid.

In one sense the description given by Nandubehn seems to be perfectly apt. Has anybody ever heard of cows, bullocks, horses and other animals worrying? If animals had knowledge, they would be no less than yogis. It is said that yoga is extremely difficult for men to practise, but that it is part of women's nature. If a woman gives up ignorant attachment, she could easily be a *yogini*. But all of you are only learned animals!!! Remember that if you squander away the health cultivated in the yoga school by eating all kinds of sweets, you will deserve to be punished for that.

In your next letter describe some other doings of yours, namely, what you read, etc.

I am helpless about Manibehn. I write to her, but she does not get my letters. After all there must be some indications that one is a prisoner.

Kevalrambhai and my elder brother were of the same age. Both were liberal and extravagant. They both loved luxuries and comforts. In their old age, both of them lost interest in worldly pleasures and pursuits. They wrote to me, independently of each other, that they wished to join me in South Africa and spend the rest of their life there and hand over their children to my care. I gladly welcomed their desire and made preparations to receive them. But fate was unkind to me. They left me. I never got my elder brother's children under my care, though I tried hard to get them. But I got all of you without trying. Shall we attribute this to fate ruling human relations, or to the ripening of the fruit of our deeds in past lives? Now that you have come, do not leave me. Everybody who wishes may have a share in what I have to give. Secure as much of it as you can and wish good name for yourself in life. Where has that Chandrahasa hidden himself?

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] As bullocks
[2] Gandhiji means "tea".

[PS.]

Where is Nirmala? How is she?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4087. Also C.W. 52. Courtesy: Mangalabehn B. Desai

457. A LETTER[1]

April 13, 1933

I read your whole letter. Your sentiments are pure, but I do not at all possess the power you attribute to me. I too am a sinful being like others but am eager to see God face to face and striving to that end. I certainly wish that God may grant long life to you and your husband, inculcate a sacred spirit of service in you both and enrich your mutual and pure love. Please regard this letter as meant for you both. Hence I am not writing a separate letter to your husband.

[From Hindi]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 227

458. DEPRIVED EVEN OF WATER

Shri Ramnarayan Choudhari, Secretary of Rajputana Harijan Sevak Sangh, writes.[2]

The matter cannot be set right by simply discussing it in *Harijan Sevak*. Sevaks must find out how many such sweepers there are and where, and they must, wherever they are faced with the difficulty of getting water, persuade the wealthier sections of the community to have wells dug or make some other suitable arrangement. They must also side by side guide and induce the sweepers to improve their own condition. It will be for the sevaks to see in what ways their condition can be improved. In short, individual acquaintance with the sweepers is necessary. To do this devoted and efficient sevaks are required.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 14-4-1933

[1] This was in reply to a letter from a woman from the Punjab who had declared that Gandhiji was like God to her. She had requested him to write to her and her husband granting them domestic happiness.

[2] The letter, not translated here, complained of inadequate facilities of drinking-water for sweepers in Western Rajasthan, describing how, in this arid region, sweepers were compelled to take drinking-water from water-troughs where cattle drank and men and women washed themselves and their clothes.

CWMG - IIV

459. CABLE TO VITHALBHAI J. PATEL

April 14, 1933[1]

V. J. PATEL
CARE INDIA OFFICE
LONDON

GOD SPARE YOU. WIRE CONDITION.

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 319

460. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 14, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter of the 10th instant about the Titaghar Paper Mill. Our letters must have crossed. I have given my firm opinion that we cannot take in advertisements at all, as a special favour, but if you hold different views about the conduct of the *Harijan* and would open the *Harijan* for receiving advertisements in general, that would be a different proposition, and I would not resist it if you came to the conclusion that advertisements should be received. As you know, I hold strange but fixed views about advertisements even in the ordinary newspapers, but these views cannot become a decisive factor in the conduct of a big movement like ours, but I am quite certain that we could never defend a policy of taking one advertisement by way of exception.

Do you want me to take notice of the Rs. 3,000 received from Lala Kamalapat[2]?

[1] The Government's sanction for the despatch of the cable was not received till the afternoon of the 19th by which date the addressee had been sent to Vienna for treatment. Gandhiji therefore did not send it. *Vide* "Letter to Home Secretary, Government of Bombay", 19-4-1933, where, however, the date given is April 13.

[2] Kamalapat Singhania, a leading industrialist of Kanpur

CWMG - LIV

As to Ramanand Sannyasi[1], I understand what you say. I simply wanted to know whether you had found any reason to change your opinion about him. Since you still have suspicion I would suggest your sending for him and speaking to him frankly about it. If he is a good sannyasi, he would appreciate your frankness, and you will find it easier to take work from him.

I hope you received my letter[2] regarding donations from Suvta Devi and Janaki Devi.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20934

461. LETTER TO SUDHIR CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I can do nothing. But you should approach first of all the Provincial Untouchability Board and then, if you like, the Central Board.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. SUDHIR CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTY
10/1 NEPAL BHATTACHERJI ST.
KALIGHAT

From a microfilm: S.N. 20936

462. LETTER TO M. N. CHOWDAPPA

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. You have not sent me the cutting containing the address referred to by you.[3] I remember that a portion of the address was read to me but I did not then think that there was anything for me to comment upon.

[1] A leading worker of Delhi in the uplift of the depressed classes

[2] *Vide* p. 364, also pp. 417-8.

[3] The Dewan of Mysore, Sir Mirza Ismail had said in a speech at Chitaldrug that untouchability "is really to my mind more a social than a religious problem and it should be handled as such". The addressee had objected to the remark and sought Gandhiji's opinion.

CWMG - LIV

I do not understand the meaning of the 4th paragraph of your letter.

Yours sincerely,

THE ASSTT. EDITOR
"PRAJA [MATA][1]"
143-5 MINT ST.
MADRAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 20937

463. LETTER TO S. PAUL DANIEL

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I do not feel as you do about worship of God through idols. You should read what I have written about it in the columns of the *Harijan*. Then if you wish to argue, you can do so, I have written also about varnashrama. I believe in it as I interpret it. For this also I have to refer you to the columns of the *Harijan*.

As to intermarriage and inter-dining, I do not regard them as essential for the removal of untouchability. I regard no person as untouchable, but that does not mean that I should be obliged to inter-dine with that particular person or have intermarriage relations with him. These stand on a different footing altogether. We continually pick and choose so far as these two things are concerned, but there is no choice about touching people.

Yours sincerely,

MR. S. PAUL DANIEL
TRICHENDUR ROAD
PALAMCOTTAH

From a microfilm: S.N. 20933

[1] The source has "Mitra", which is a slip.

464. LETTER TO DIWAKAR SINGH

April 14, 1933

DEAR DIWAKAR,

I have your postcard. If you have resumed street-cleaning you will, I hope, stick to it quite undemonstratively, but I am going to write presently on the plague spots of Allahabad, and I would like you to read my article[1] when it appears in the *Harijan*, and devote your attention to that work. I shall be quite patient with you so long as you continue to work.

Perhaps you do not know what has happened to N. I feel that I should tell you at this stage what impression she left upon me ultimately. During my conversations with her I found that she was not leading a straight and moral life even whilst she was working at scavenging in Bangalore. But she seemed to me to be truly repentant. She has now thrown her lot completely with Harijans, has given up the gay life entirely and is living as much as possible like a Harijan in a Harijan village near Chitaldrug in obscurity and lives on such food as is brought to her. She has her son with her. She is supposed to be living under my guidance. I have no reason to suspect her. Her letters to me are quite satisfactory. But it is too early yet to say how she will ultimately develop. I am saying this to you because it was agreed between us that at least those who had come in contact with her should know generally about the sins of her immediate past.

Yours sincerely,

KUNVER DIWAKAR SINGH
HOLLAND HALL
ALLAHABAD

From a microfilm: S.N. 20932

[1] *Vide* "Immediate Duty", 22-4-1933.

465. LETTER TO H. N. KUNZRU

April 14, 1933

MY DEAR HARIJI,

I have a letter from a correspondent in Bulandshahr who says that in common with the reduction in the wages of the general staff by its Municipal Board, the scavengers also have come in for the reduction. This latter have struck against the reduction. As it is, their wages are, the correspondent contends, low enough. The Chairman of the Board does not listen to the scavengers' complaint at all. On the face of it, the correspondent's letter appears to me to be reasonable. Will you please enquire and do whatever is possible?

I enclose the letter received by me.

Yours sincerely,

Encl. 1

From a microfilm: S.N. 20935

466. LETTER TO SUDHIR MITRA

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 10th instant. I doubt very much if a monthly magazine exclusively devoted to untouchability is called for. You would therefore forgive me for not blessing your venture in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. SUDHIR MITRA
MITRA COTTAGE
2 KALI LANE
KALIGHAT

From a microfilm: S.N. 20925

467. LETTER TO HARIBHAU PHATAK[1]

April 14, 1933

MY DEAR HARIBHAU PHATAK,

My claim to be a servant of Harijan, of *Daridranarayana*, has yet to be established, and I freely admit that my food is undoubtedly one of the obstacles to the successful establishment of my claim. But you should know that I do not spend anything on my food. Here it is the costly Government assisted by spendthrift friends who supply me with my food, but the fact that somebody else spends a lot of money over my food is no defence, nor perhaps is it any defence that the goat's milk and the fruit that I take are a medical need for the body. I know that there are thousands, if not millions, whose bodies too would be pronounced to be in medical need of the kind of food that I am taking. But they have no doctors who would issue such certificates to them, and if they happen to get such a doctor, neither this Government nor our millionaires would supply them with the food that I receive.

I am an out-and-out believer in the doctrine of swadeshi, but I flatter myself with the belief that my swadeshi is not a narrow doctrine. I will take from the whole world what I cannot and do not produce in India profitably in terms of the millions. Therefore I do not hesitate to take from Arabia its health-giving dates or from Afghanistan its equally health-giving raisins. These are only a few examples of the foreign articles that I use. But my claim to be a votary of swadeshi is well established because I would take the coarsest hand-spun manufactured by Harijans in preference to the finest cloth manufactured in Indian mills.

Yes, poor Pyarelal, knowing my weakness for everything Indian, thought that he had found out dates in his paradise, the Punjab, and he did find them. These were expensive enough for those who sent them, but I had to pay nothing for them. I took them whilst they lasted at the expense of Arabia, but

[1] The addressee in a letter dated April 13 had expressed his agitation over hearing sarcastic remarks from friends regarding Gandhiji's diet, its cost and its indigenous quality. He wanted Gandhiji's assurance on this matter in order to answer such attacks.

the latter won the day, because the Punjab dates were available only during the season which lasts only two or three months. So, on the whole, Arabia will remain the victor with me because I do not propose to deny myself the dates which my body needs and by taking which I deprive no date-grower in India. I cannot give you the name of the agents because Pyarelal could not get the names, for he interested a friend of his in procuring the Punjab dates.

I am glad that the Poona Municipality has passed Sjt. Pashankar's resolution throwing open all public reservoirs to the Harijans.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20927

468. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRA RAO

April 14, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA,

I have your letter. I wish you every success in producing an Indian Tuskegee.[1] I knew much about Booker T. Washington even when I was in South Africa and I have great regard for him. You have kept before you a worthy model, but you cannot be an Indian Booker T. Washington. Only a Harijan can be that. Therefore you have to devote yourself, might and main, to the task of producing from among Harijans a prototype of Booker T. Washington. May you succeed.

You have established your right to beg, but have you established beyond doubt your fitness for making donations yield a thousandfold fruit? I want you to be foolish enough, if that is the word you would have, to do that.

Yes, I used the ghee that was specially prepared by Lady Thackersey to the last drop, and you will be glad to know that I was free of salt during the bulk of that time. Some time after I went back to salt and did not call for more ghee when I found that neither the massage nor the saltless produced the slightest impression on the elbows. I went back to salt because I was developing a queer kind of headache. I imputed it, perhaps

[1] The addressee had proposed a scheme for a "Seva Vidyalaya" or an "Indian Tuskegee" on the American model. "Begging" was to be the portfolio of G. Ramachandra Rao.

quite wrongly, to the omission of salt. Curiously enough, the restoration of salt eased the headaches. Whether this was an accident or a result of the return to salt, not perhaps even 15 grains during the day, I do not know.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. G. RAMACHANDRA RAO
C/O SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY
ROYAPETTAH (MADRAS)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20938

469. LETTER TO SAMARASA SUDHA SANMARKA SANGHAM

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and the book[1]. Please do not send the other book referred to by you, because I cannot read Tamil to understand without difficulty, nor have I the time for such reading.

Yours sincerely,

SAMARASA SUDHA SANMARKA SANGHAM
36 SWAMI PILLAI ST.
CHHOLAI POST
MADRAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 20940

470. LETTER TO RAM GOPAL SHASTRI

April 14, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for a copy of your letter to Sjt. A. V. Thakkar in answer to the complaint of Sjt. Swatmadas.[2]

You will forgive me for saying that your letter is not convincing. I do not for one moment suggest that the Dalit Seva

[1] Ramalinga Swami's *Thiru Arutpa*

[2] The addressee in his letter of March 31, 1933 had said that Swatmadas was a mischief-maker who denounced the various associations as being for the benefit of caste Hindus only. *Vide* also "Letters to Amritlal V. Thakkar" pp. 87-8 and pp. 93-4.

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Mission has not done much service, but your letter says nothing about the nature of the service rendered by your Mission. We who claim to be Servants of Harijans may not take amiss even mischievous complaints. They are best silenced by unvarnished hard facts. I had asked Sjt. Thakkar to circulate the complaint among the associations which were mentioned by Sjt. Swatmadas so that they may know what has been said about them and if they would care to give their replies so as to enable the Central Board satisfactorily to answer charges against the respective associations.

Your sincerely,

VAIDYA BHUSHAN PANDIT RAM GOPAL SHASTRI
SECRETARY, PUNJAB DALIT SEVA MISSION
LAHORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20939

471. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

April 14, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

It was only today that I could read Dr. Patel's[1] letter to Sardar. According to it, there is nothing serious in your condition. If an operation is found necessary, there will be no risk in it whatever. Let me know how much pain you suffer in the arm just now. There is no harm in moving the arm if you do it slowly. There is no fear of the arm becoming limp. That may be the ultimate result if the condition is neglected. But the trouble has been diagnosed. Hence there is no cause for worry. You should give a little exercise to the arm every day. Give me all details in every letter. I hope you are cheerful.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5347

[1] Dr. Motibhai D. Patel, an eminent surgeon of Ahmedabad

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472. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 14, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your postcard.

Read my letter to Ramji. In his postcard there are sentences such as, "The stomach kicks at the head", etc., and he asked for permission to put everything before Rajbhoj. I have told him that he could do as he wished. I simply cannot understand what has happened to him. Has he lost his reason? From his behaviour I do feel sometimes that he has. He suspects everybody, even his relations.

You will find with this letters to Dr. Sharma and Rajbhoj. Discuss with Dr. Sharma the whole problem of constipation. I hope the cracks in the skin on Amina's thighs have disappeared.

You certainly cannot pay Manilal's bills from the Ashram money. Who has provided Rs. 300 to Devdas? I hope he has not been given the sum from the Ashram. The Ashram funds cannot to be used for private purposes.

What did the doctor tell Kusum? That her motions do not stop is not a good sign. She will continue to be treated by Dr. Talwalkar, but do get her examined by Dr. Sharma also. We should know his opinion.

Keshu is trying to find a job.

BAPU

[PS.]

I have read Dr. Patel's letter to Vallabhbhai regarding Ramabehn. If he has come to more definite conclusion now, let me know. The arm was to be X-rayed. What happened about that? If it is necessary to pay Rs. 15 for that, it may be desirable even to do so. Follow the doctor's advice. There is no urgent need for an operation. It seems that she has no difficulty in using the arm for light work. A letter for Ramabehn also is enclosed.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8355. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

473. A LETTER

April 14, 1933

I feel that you should accept L.'s conditions without any hesitations. After all he is your husband. There is nothing degrading in pacifying his wounded feelings. By doing that you will rise not in your eyes only but in the eyes of God too. Moreover by not disregarding him you will definitely be able to win back his love. In friendship one does not have any right over the other. Husbands and wives are more than friends. That you follow different paths today should not affect your relations. Be calm and everything will be all right. The welfare of the children should be the highest consideration and it will be most looked after if you do not insist on anything. Even after doing this you have to remain satisfied. You want to see the children not for your happiness but for their well-being. Banish from your mind the thought of resorting to law and courts. I hope you understand what I say. Don't you? May God help and guide you.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. III, p. 230

474. NOT MERELY BY BIRTH

The following three verses from Madame Wadia's instructive address delivered the other day will bear reproduction in these pages, though they have been often quoted and published:

> Listen to these words of Yudhishthira in the "*Vanaparva*" of the *Mahabharata* :
>
> "Truth, charity, forgiveness, good conduct, gentleness, austerity and mercy, where these are seen, O King of the Serpents, there is a Brahmin. If these marks exist in a Shudra and are not in a *Dvija*, the Shudra is not a Shudra, nor the Brahmin a Brahmin."
>
> And in the *Vishnu-Bhagavata* we read:
>
> "What is said as to the marks of conduct indicative of a man's caste, if those marks are found in another, designate him by the caste of his marks (i.e., not of his body and birth)."

But some of you would prefer *Manusmriti*. Well, here you are. "As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is an unlearned Brahmin; these three bear only names. The Brahmin, who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere, becomes a Shudra in that very life together with his descendants."

These and numerous other verses from the Shastras unmistakably show that mere birth counts for nothing. A person must show corresponding works and character to establish his claim by birth. Such verses also enforce the argument that

(a) a person loses varna by failing to exhibit its peculiar characteristics,

(b) inter-varna marriage or inter-dining, whatever virtue the restrictions on them may have, does not affect a person's varna, at least not so much as the failing to live up to one's varna,

(c) birth, while it gives a start and enables the parents to determine the training and occupation of their children, does not perpetuate the varna of one's birth, if it is not fulfilled by works.

Harijan, 15-4-1933

475. SECOND HARIJAN DAY

The first Harijan Day was observed on 18th December last. Sjt. Amritlal Thakkar has been most anxious for the fixing of another Harijan Day, but I have been putting it off because of my want of faith. Thakkar Bapa was satisfied with the work done on 18th December. I was not. The fixing of a special day can only be warranted by extraordinary effort. In a sacred cause like the Harijan cause, a special day should be one of greater dedication, prayer and intensive work. Consultation with Thakkar Bapa has infected me with his hope. The last Sunday of this month has been chosen as the day of observance.

I should divide the day somewhat after this style:

1. I should begin the day from 5 a.m. with prayer and set apart for the cause some money or cloth or grain according to my means. The poorest can do this by denying themselves a meal or meals or a portion thereof without feeling the slightest deprivation. Preferably donations in kind should be converted into cash. Where this is not possible, they should be given to the most deserving and needy Harijans.

2. The work of the family Bhangi, if there is any, should be wholly done by the family or at least shared with him. This will

enable one to understand the nature of the service that the Bhangi performs and may also lead to an improved method of performing such services. Not many persons have any consideration for the 'knight of the broom' at the time of using the sanitary conveniences. If we had no untouchability in us and if we even occasionally shared the work with the Bhangis, we would have a different method of working the home sanitary system.

3. Having done these two things, we are ready for the corporate effort for the day, which should open with house-to-house collection of donations in cash or kind. This work should be finished by a given hour. The donations should be handed to the local committee, which will in its turn hand the collection to the superior committee till it reaches the headquarters of the Province. Collectors should take with them a judicious selection of literature including leaflets, pamphlets, books and even copies of *Harijan*, English or vernacular edition as may be required. The literature should be sold or given away as the exigency of the moment may require. But each committee should bear the cost of the literature ordered by it. If extra copies of the *Harijan* are required, previous advice should be given to the publishers so as to enable them to print extra copies.

4. Harijan quarters should be visited in each place and they should be cleaned wherever necessary. Meetings of Harijans should be held and their wants noted. They should be advised as to the part they have to play in the removal of untouchability. Dr. Deshmukh's authoritative opinion should be used in support of the plea for the giving up of carrion-eating. Children can arrange meetings and excursions for Harijan children. Possibilities of an inauguration of improved methods of sanitation should be explored and wherever possible, the scheme of Sjt. Hiralal Shah should be given effect to. It is neither difficult nor expensive if the people will shoulder the burden willingly. In the end it means a visible addition to the health and wealth of the community.

5. The day should be wound up by a general meeting of both *savarnas* and Harijans to pass resolutions, pledging the meeting to the removal of untouchability and emphasizing the desirability of permissive legislation regarding temple-entry.

6. Where public opinion is favourable, public wells and private temples should be opened to Harijans.

An accurate report of the work done should be sent to the Central Committee and, if possible, a copy to me to avoid delay in publication. Press messages may be sent to the Editor at press rates.

Harijan, 15-4-1933

476. *THINKING ALOUD*

Both C. F. Andrews and I have the habit of thinking aloud. Here is a sample from one of his letters:

> I have enclosed . . . 's[1] letter because I hardly think you realize how very strong here is the moral repulsion against 'fasting unto death'. I confess, as a Christian I share it and it is only with the greatest difficulty that I find myself able to justify it under any circumstances. I was convinced at the time last year when in desperation the way seemed open for nothing else and only this one door seemed unclosed. But even then it was an agony to me. I know also that I must bow to God's will even when it comes in very strange forms. Also I know that it has had its place in the past in Hindu religion and I have to try to understand exactly what it means to a Hindu. All this I am trying very hard to think out. But it has not come out all clear yet.
>
> I felt that it would be good to tell you all this at a time when there is no immediate prospect of such a thing happening. Meanwhile, I am trying to think out the whole matter. I have again and again defended over here your last fast and pointed to its results and to the fact that such a tender conscience as Gurudev's could see in it only what was great and noble. But in the great effort that you yourself are making (and we are interpreting to the very best of our power) to convert the hearts of Englishmen, whom you love and respect, to side with you and not against you in freeing your country, the following is true:
>
> 1. It *is* easy to get their sympathy with the removal of untouchability. Their hearts are truly touched.
> 2. It is *not* easy to get sympathy with the idea of committing suicide by fasting unto death. The horror and repulsion are too great, and the mere threat of such a thing benumbs instead of awakening the conscience.
>
> I know you would love me to tell you all this just now, if I have not told it to you already, because while it is not an immediate issue, I can write calmly.

I publish this letter because it deserves a public reply. I do want every ounce of real sympathy from every part of the world in the very difficult and anxious work of the purification of Hinduism, which, as I have claimed, is in a way purification of the whole human family.

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

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I know the English repulsion to fasting for religious ends and especially 'fasting unto death'. I should like to own also that even the fast which Deenabandhu Andrews reconciled himself to, though very reluctantly, has had untoward results in India, as I have discovered to my sorrow. Hindus had become delirious and done acts which, when they became sober, they undid. They opened temples and wells to Harijans freely during the fast. Some of these were closed soon after the end of the fast. A very large number of educated caste Hindus in Bengal do sincerely feel that, in the midst of the excitement caused by the fast, a grave injustice was done to Bengal in the allotment of seats to Harijans. I know, too, that in some other Provinces the Yeravda Pact was assented to under the pressure of the fast. All this was bad. I certainly had not anticipated it all when I embarked on the fast. But I do not repent of it. In the first place, the fast was not of my doing. Secondly, though the respective acts were done under the pressure of the fast, they were not in themselves evil. Were they evil, I should move heaven and earth to undo the evil.

But my purpose just now is to examine, not the effects of the fast, but the fast itself as a necessary part of the Divine scheme. If it is a part of it, it ought not to need elaborate explanations each time it is undertaken.

Although the sanatanists swear at me for the fast, and Hindu co-workers may deplore it, they know that fasting is an integral part of even the present-day Hinduism. They cannot long affect to be horrified at it. Hindu religious literature is replete with instances of fasting, and thousands of Hindus fast even today on the slightest pretext. It is the one thing that does the least harm. There is no doubt that, like everything that is good, fasts are abused. That is inevitable. One cannot forbear to do good because sometimes evil is done under its cover.

My real difficulty is with my Christian Protestant friends, of whom I have so many and whose friendship I value beyond measure. Let me confess to them that, though from my very first contact with them I have known their dislike for fasts, I have never been able to understand it.

Mortification of the flesh has been held all the world over as a condition of spiritual progress. There is no prayer without fasting, taking fasting in its widest sense. A complete fast is a complete and literal denial of self. It is the truest prayer. "Take my life and let it be, always only all for Thee" is not, should not be, a mere lip or figurative expression. It has to be a wreckless and joyous giving without the least reservation. Abstention

from food and even water is but the mere beginning, the least part of the surrender.

Whilst I was putting together my thoughts for this article, a pamphlet written by Christians came into my hands wherein was a chapter on the necessity of example rather than precept. In this occurs a quotation from the 3rd chapter of Jonah. The Prophet had foretold that Nineveh, the great city, was to be destroyed on the fortieth day of his entering it.

> So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, 'Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?' And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.

Thus this was a 'fast unto death'. But every fast unto death is not suicide. This fast of the king and the people of Nineveh was a great and humble prayer to God for deliverance. It was to be either deliverance or death. Even so was my fast, if I may compare it to the Biblical fast. This chapter from the book of Jonah reads like an incident in the *Ramayana*.

It is only proper that friends should know my fundamental position. I have a profound belief in the method of the fast, both private and public. It may come again any day without any warning even to me. If it comes, I shall welcome it as a great privilege and a joy.

Untouchability is a big sin. It may not be washed without the blood of many servants. But they will have to be fit instruments. The occasion will come to me if I am found worthy for the sacrifice. I would like my friends to rejoice in it, if it comes. They should neither be repelled nor unnerved.

Harijan, 15-4-1933

CWMG - IIY

477. *AN IMPATIENT WORKER*

An earnest but impatient worker has been trying to have temples and public places thrown open to Harijans. He had some success but nothing to be proud of. In his impatience, therefore, he writes:

> It is no use waiting for these orthodox men to make a beginning. They will never move unless compelled to do so. Drastic steps are required to wipe off untouchability. I therefore beg you to kindly favour me with your opinion if satyagraha at the entrance of the temples by workers and Harijans preventing orthodox persons from entering the temples will be an effective method. Appeals and entreaties have produced no effect, and to lose more time on these will, in my humble opinion, be sheer waste of valuable time.

Such blocking the way will be sheer compulsion. And there should be no compulsion in religion or in matters of any reform. The movement for the removal of untouchability is one of self-purification. No man can be purified against his will. Therefore, there can be no force directly or indirectly used against the orthodox. It should be remembered that many of us were like the orthodox people before our recognition of the necessity of the removal of untouchability. We would not then have liked anybody to block our way to the temples, because we in those days believed, no doubt wrongly as we now think, that Harijans should not be allowed to enter temples. Even so may we not block the way of the orthodox to the temples.

I should also remind correspondents that the word 'satyagraha' is often most loosely used and is made to cover veiled violence. But as the author of the word I may be allowed to say that it excludes every form of violence, direct or indirect, veiled or unveiled, and whether in thought, word or deed. It is breach of satyagraha to wish ill to an opponent or to say a harsh word to him or of him with the intention of harming him. And often the evil thought or the evil word may, in terms of satyagraha, be more dangerous than actual violence used in the heat of the moment and perhaps repented and forgotten the next moment. Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never

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vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence.

Nevertheless, I fully agree with the correspondent that 'most drastic steps are required to wipe off untouchability'. But these steps have to be taken against ourselves. The orthodox people sincerely believe that untouchability, as they practise it, is enjoined by the Shastras and that great evil will befall them and Hinduism if it was removed. How is one to cope with this belief? It is clear that they will never change their belief by being compelled to admit Harijans to their temples. What is required is not so much the entry of Harijans to the temples as the conversion of the orthodox to the belief that it is wrong to prevent Harijans from entering the temples. This conversion can only be brought about by an appeal to their hearts, i.e., by evoking the best that is in them. Such an appeal can be made by the appellants' prayers, fasting and other suffering in their own persons, in other words, by their ever-increasing purity. It has never yet been known to fail. For it is its own end. The reformer must have consciousness of the truth of his cause. He will not then be impatient with the opponent, he will be impatient with himself. He must be prepared even to fast unto death. Not everyone has the right or the capacity to do so. God is most exacting. He exacts humility from His votaries. Even fasts may take the form of coercion. But there is nothing in the world that in human hands does not lend itself to abuse. The human being is a mixture of good and evil, Jekyll and Hyde. But there is the least likelihood of abuse when it is a matter of self-suffering.

Harijan, 15-4-1933

478. Rs. 5,000/- FOR DAVID SCHEME

The reader will be glad to learn that Shrimati Suvta Devi, the widow of the late Sheth Ramnarayanji, has sent a cheque for Rs. 2,500/- for the David Scheme. The donor desires that preference should be given to Harijan student from Rajputana, if one possessing the necessary qualifications can be found.

Another cheque for Rs. 2,500/- has been received from Shrimati Janaki Devi, the wife of Sheth Jamnalalji. Her preference is for a Harijan student from C.P., Marathi, failing that, from C.P., Hindustani.

I tender my congratulations to the donors for their donation and hope that their example will be followed by other wealthy persons.[1]

I may state that a selection Board is in process of being formed.

Harijan, 15-4-1933

479. LETTER TO V. S. R. SASTRI

April 15, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I went through your letter very carefully as soon as I got it. You should accept my assurance that I want to be convinced. I have no axe to grind on this earth except to find Truth. You insist upon your own interpretation, or call it the orthodox interpretation, and you swear by it. That is quite natural. Others whose learning I do not doubt for one moment swear by their own interpretation. You are doing them an injustice when you say that they do so to please me. I can only tell you what I do know and what I alone can know, and that is this: They are independent men. They are scholars known to fame. They have a character to keep. And many of them were accepted as authority on Shastras before I returned to India from my long exile. It is between these two interpretations that I have to make my choice, guided by such knowledge as I have of the Shastras, both in the original and in translations.

You suggest a meeting of the Pandits representing different schools of thought. Perhaps you do not know that I had such a meeting. I listened to their arguments with the greatest patience and with the utmost respect. I approached my task without any bias. I resist untouchability because I regard it as a great lie. If somebody convinced me that it was a great truth, I would repent of my folly and swear by untouchability. Beyond this I cannot argue.

But before closing I must answer one pointed question that you have put to me. It is only in God that everything melts into one and there is neither virtue nor vice, neither good nor evil, neither sin nor merit, neither happiness nor unhappiness, and if you will, neither truth nor untruth. That is indefinable. But so long as I am in a body I must continue to experience the duality.

[1] *Vide* also p. 364.

The obliteration of duality can only exist in my imagination as an intellectual grasp. And if any person were to put forth an opposite claim, I should have no right to question his claim, and I would gladly admit the inferiority of my position. The inferiority would not worry me because it would be in accordance with the Truth as I see it.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20948

480. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

April 15, 1933

CHI. MANILAL,

I have to answer two letters of yours. I had intended to reply to your previous letter, but somehow failed to do so.

I have heard that Pragji has landed in Bombay. But there is no news from him yet.

You have written to Narandas asking him to pay the bills for the press equipment, but how can it be done?[1] It is altogether improper to use Trust funds in such a manner. It would be another thing if Narandas could make some private arrangement. You should have such dealings with the traders directly, or order the goods through traders there or remit the money in advance. I understand your difficulty, but you ought not to adopt an improper course to solve it. Otherwise you will come to grief some day. One should stretch one's legs according to the covering. It is better to draw in our knees, rather than borrow a covering from somebody else.

I hope all of you have emerged safe from the epidemic of fever there.

Do Pathar and others who come there for change of air meet their own expenses or does the burden fall on you? If it falls on you and if you can shoulder it, of course nothing like it. But if you cannot shoulder it, you should humbly tell them that everybody will have to meet his own expenses. Please know that it is against dharma to do anything beyond one's means out of a false sense of prestige. We should let ourselves be seen as we are.

I don't like at all your request to be allowed to shift the press to a city. That will mean that all my ideals are wrong,

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 409.

CWMG-IIJV

or that you do not believe in them or cannot live up to them. If any of these alternatives is correct, you should not remain a trustee and should leave Phœnix. You seem even to have forgotten how quickly and with what difficulties I turned my back on city life and established Phœnix. You grew up in Phœnix. It was there you atoned for your errors, lived an independent life. Sita was born there too. That you should forget all this in a moment and think of leaving Phœnix for ever—imagine the weakness and the pitiable condition of mind it reveals.

I supported you in one wrong step that you took and invited West's criticism. That criticism was deserved to some extent. This error was about the insertion of advertisements. I did not like your action, but I did not have the courage to tell you that you could close down *Indian Opinion* if you wished. I don't want you to fall further and drag me down with you. I will not let myself be dragged down. If you cannot settle in Phœnix with single-minded devotion and cannot live up to its ideals you should wind up the work. Or you and Sushila should dedicate yourselves exclusively to Phœnix. Instead of being forced to close down the settlement, I should like you to give your resignation to the Trustees and hand over the place to them and then do what you like. I will welcome your leaving Phœnix with your reputation unsullied. I shall not be pained if you do so. But I shall feel deeply pained if you are forced to leave the place in disgrace. Please remember that only recently you borrowed Rs. 10,000 from a public body here and took the money with you. Forget the past completely. Wake up from your slumber. Don't think that I say all this merely in reply to one suggestion by you and feel hurt. That suggestion reveals your attitude of mind. It is a dangerous one and that is why I caution you against it.

There is Miss Schlesin entertaining beautiful dreams about you, and you are thinking of filthy Durban. You must have sufficient pride in you to be determined that, if you cannot bring glory to your father's legacy, you will at any rate not disgrace it. Do you know the objects of Phœnix, or have you forgotten them as well? Read them again.

Miss Schlesin's suggestion is certainly admirable. But I don't think you will be able to act upon it. Kallenbach will not agree to meet the expenses of a visit to America, and you will not be able to get the money from any other source. And I also think it difficult, if not impossible, that *I. O.* can be kept up meanwhile. Even if you go to America and return after getting trained, I don't think patients from all communities will come to Phœ-

nix for nature-cure treatment. All the same, if you have self-confidence and if everything can be arranged, I would certainly like you to act upon the suggestion, for the aim behind it is noble.

I hope Sita has completely recovered now. Take the utmost care of your health.

Read this letter three or four times and then decide your future course. Think over the following questions:

(1) What is the aim in life of you both?

(2) Do you wish to live up to the ideals of Phœnix? Do you have the necessary strength for it?

(3) Can *I. O.* be made self-supporting?

You may take one thing as certain: We don't wish to run Phœnix while abandoning its ideals, and *I. O.* must not be shifted to any other place.

Please don't take this letter as a rebuke to you. I have written to wake up both of you. Indecision is a very bad thing.

We are quite well. The letter has become too long and I have no time either. So I cannot give any news about things here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4806

481. LETTER TO SUSHILABEHN GANDHI

April 15, 1933

CHI. SUSHILA,

Since the letter[1] to Manilal is intended for you both, what more can I write in this letter?

You may teach Sita only as much as you can while playing with her and without scolding or beating her. She will imbibe very little from what both of you tell her, but she will certainly follow the example which you set.

Ramdas has not been released yet. He will be released in the beginning of May.

The only change in my diet is that I do not at present take bread and vegetables. Fruit and milk suffice for me. I do not

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

heat the milk. The pain in the elbow persists, but it seems to be only a sign of old age.

I get letters from Ba. She keeps fairly good health.

Of course I have plenty of work every day. I get up at 3 o'clock daily. To make up, I take a nap during the day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4807

482. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

April 15, 1933

BHAI MUNSHI,

You seem to have decided to write by turns.

How can a Gujarati who does not know about Narmadashankar[1] be called a Gujarati? It was as early as in my childhood that I first came to know about him. I am never tired of singing his poem: "The bugles blow: Let us all go to battle and victory." The fascination which began then deepened in South Africa. I had by then become a devoted lover of the *Gita*. Narmadashankar's preface to his translation of the *Gita* deepened my love for it and increased my respect for him. My only regret is that my numerous activities did not permit me to acquire as much knowledge of a writer and poet like Narmadashankar as I should have liked to do.

I hope you don't expect from me more than this just now. Even this little I have been able to write to you because I got up at 3 o'clock in the morning.

To dedicate one's life to the service of Harijans is indeed difficult; it is still more difficult to become fit to die for them. How demanding is Satyanarayana[2]! How finicky He is. He would have spotlessly pure sheep, the very best pumpkin, the heads of sinless men, and how are we to get them for Him? For, He would reject one for a single impure thought that might cross one's mind ! ! Still it is impossible to leave Him. So jealous is that Poet of poets that He simply would not let me worship any other poet. To whom may I complain about this?

[1] (1833-88); a Gujarati poet
[2] The Lord in the form of Truth

I assume that your pain has completely disappeared.

I hope Jagadish is improving.

Now about the Kabibai Trust.[1] I have gone through all the papers relating to it. My reading of it is that there can be no objection to taking in Harijans if room is left after the so-called "high class" Hindus have been fully provided for. The Trust does not exclude Harijans. However, if all you lawyers so interpret the terms that Harijans should have no place at all even if pupils from "high-class" Hindus do not seek admission to the school in sufficient number and some benches or seats are left vacant, I have nothing to say.

The next issue is a purely educational question. On what type of education is the Trust money to be spent? This is not a subject which can be discussed through letters. I have not been able to convince many people of the correctness of my views on education. On the one hand I want selfless teachers of the type dreamt of by Gokhale and, on the other, a system of education from which the dying villagers can derive benefit. This country cannot afford to imitate any other country, and so we have got to think independently about our educational problem and devise a plan of our own. However for the present all this is only a fond dream of mine. And you also have no time just now to think about this subject.

I am progressing in your books only at a snail's pace. But I have kept up my reading. Have you seen the tiny cart driven by the tiny Ahmedabad bullock? The speed of that bullock would put the Aga Khan's race horse to shame, and it is at that speed that Sardar has been reading your books. Let me admit that we have a motive behind all this, as we wish to take plenty of services from both of you. Shouldn't we fully know those from whom we expect so much?

You can know from this that we often think and talk about you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7528. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 194-5.

483. INTERVIEW TO KIKABHAI AND DUDABHAI[1]

[On or before *April 16, 1933*][2]

I will fast again if the Hindu community does not do justice to you.[3] As you are backward in education, you might avail [yourselves] of any school including Government which is open to you.

After long discussion of several subjects Gandhiji concluded by saying that after all untouchability was fast disappearing, and would be a thing of the past shortly.

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-4-1933

484. TWO SAMPLES

Shri Chhotalal Pandit, representative of the Harijan Sevak Sangh of Kadi area, writes:[4]

There is also another letter of this type. Its writer is a public worker but is not at present connected with Harijan work. I give the following extract from his letter:[5]

These two are but samples of the letters I receive from British Gujarat. I get accounts of similar experiences from Kathiawar too. After returning from her tour of Kathiawar, Smt. Vijayalakshmibehn[6] called on me and gave me an account of

[1] Harijan leaders of Ahmedabad

[2] The newspaper report carries the date April 16.

[3] The interviewer had suggested that Gandhiji should not again fast unto death as it reflected discredit on Harijans.

[4] & [5] The letters are not translated here. The first correspondent had stated that sometimes the activities of Harijan workers themselves resulted in hardships to the Harijans. For example three Harijan children were admitted to a school for caste Hindus, on the correspondent's initiative. For this the caste Hindus took the Harijans to task and made them give an undertaking that they would not thereafter send their children to such schools, and the teacher who had admitted the *Antyaja* children was fined.

The second correspondent had said that despite all the efforts of Gandhiji and the Servants of Untouchables Society, little progress was made in the removal of untouchability.

[6] Vijayalakshmi Pandit

her experiences. These too had the dark side in good measure. She could do some work because of her ability. But there was no end of difficulties. Nobody, therefore, should believe that the foregoing letters are exceptions. Gujaratis alone will read the *Harijanbandhu*, hence, apart from a handful of Gujaratis outside Gujarat, the rest of the country will believe that the description given in the two letters is mild compared to the true position.

Nevertheless, I refuse to believe that these pictures are without a silver-lining. God never created a cloud without a silver-lining. Darkness only means absence of life. In a vast, clear, diamond-studded sky, the clouds are no bigger than an atom as it were. And yet these clouds almost spell death to creatures extremely smaller than themselves living below on the earth. This is the condition of Harijan work at present. It seems that the clouds of their bitter experiences fill Harijan workers with despair. But says Narasinh Mehta:

> When the gods were in trouble,
> They remembered Him who dwells in us all,
> Shri Krishna came to their rescue,
> Narasinh Mehta's Lord.

This also is a statment of experience. All who read this *bhajan* can see that the poet did not write this simply to make a good song, but that he could not help singing the truth which he wished to describe. Moreover, such experience was not Narasinh's alone. It has been the experience of all the world's saints. That is why one of the descriptions of God is *Bhidabhanjan*[1]. This is a fight for dharma. We have staked our very lives on it. Hence the first thing I want to say is that workers should not lose heart but rest confident that at the critical moment God will definitely help them.

But this faith should not be weak or ignorant. Out of it must spring tremendous energy. Where a thinking man's reason is paralysed, he who has faith can see the path through it. Where others' eyes see nothing, the eyes of faith see as clearly as in daylight. Such a person never admits defeat, and even his resting will be for strength. It will be a sign that he will resume work with much greater energy than before. His fast will not be an expression of despair, but a sacred means of being able to live more fruitfully.

Hence my request to all men and women workers is this: Do not get angry with sanatanists and do not goad frightened

[1] One who saves his devotees from insurmountable difficulties

Harijans. Fire-fighters do not direct water at a house which they think cannot be saved but they direct it at neighbouring buildings within the range of the flames so as to prevent the fire from spreading and thus to check its fury. It cannot live on without food from the neighbourhood, and so as soon as the area around is rendered safe, the fire dies out by itself. Similarly where the Harijans have some strength at least and are ready to accept direct help they should be given such help. One should not work where they are not so ready, but should work in nearby areas where the Harijans are more or less ready. The work done among them cannot but have effect in the other place where the Harijans seem to have no life in them.

Even in that place, however, one should certainly try to plead with the sanatanists. There will hardly be a single village which will not have even one person who loves Harijans. One can establish contact with that village through him.

Let us take the case of the school mentioned above. That the Harijan children left it, does not worry me. It was necessary that they should have joined it. If their parents are willing to entrust the children to us, we should take charge of them and educate them elsewhere. If the teacher is courageous, he should face boycott, if beaten he should put up with the beating, and bring back the Harijan children at the first opportunity. He should reason with the sanatanists. If the teacher has regard for his dharma, he should lay down his life for the sake of those three children who were under his charge. But supposing the teacher does not have so much spirit, then Shri Chhotalal should keep this village in mind and seek opportunities of once again establishing good relations with its sanatanists or Harijans or both. Those opportunities should be sought through service of both. He should seek out their friends and make use of those who carry weight with the respective parties, to awaken the sense of justice of one and removing the fear of the other. In short, while serving in other places, he should not forget either those three children or that village. He should make it his chief aim to protect the former.

Two points emerge from these letters. We have very few men and women workers who are sincere, single-minded and ready even to lay down their lives. A person who has dedicated himself to one task may be said to have dedicated himself to all. He who addresses himself to all tasks is not dedicated even to one. His condition is like that of a man living with a woman without marrying her. We have not properly understood this great

truth. If we understand it, much of our work would become easy. Without dedicated workers who are ready to sacrifice their all for the cause of Harijans the blot of untouchability cannot be removed.

The second point is this. I must do what I ask others to do. That is in my nature. I started serving the country by serving Gujarat. I make no distinction among Gujarat, India, and the world. I live my life on the principle that by paying single-minded attention to one we pay attention to all. Non-violent work cannot be opposed to public good. That is the point of view from which this *yajna* of removal of untouchability is being carried on. When I recount the errors of the sanatanists, they are mine too. I do not regard myself as separate from them. I am impatient to do atonement, but impatience will not help. If I have in me the required purity for such atonement, God will certainly command me to undertake it. I daily pray to God to grant me such purity and the strength to obey His command.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 16-4-1933

485. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 16, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter.

Send Ramabehn to Baroda to be examined by Manekrao. If he undertakes to treat her, let him. If Manekrao does not know what to do in her case, she should come to Poona. There is a vaid here who is a specialist about diseases affecting bones. I will get Ramabehn examined by him and do whatever is necessary. Even ordinary medical help will be available here. If ultimately an operation is found necessary, I will consider whether it should be performed in Ahmedabad or at some other place. It will be better if the children remain there. If they cannot, they may accompany her. Najuklal[1] and others are there in Baroda and I believe that they will look after them. I don't know what facilities he has in his house. She will be able to stay even at Abbas Saheb's house. The place is not full just now. I don't know

[1] Najuklal Choksi, son-in-law of Lakshmidas P. Asar

whether Deshpande Saheb's house has sufficient accommodation. Ramabehn should go to Baroda after you have written to Manekrao and received his reply. If he is not in Baroda or if he is not ready to undertake the case, she may come to Poona. Here in Poona Prof. Trivedi's house is open to every visitor. Don't mind if our debt to him goes on mounting. He likes to be troubled. His house does not seem to be full just now.

My opinion is definitely in favour of giving the machine to Keshu. I haven't thought about how much he should be charged. You and Keshu alone can know that. I think that breakages and other charges also should be debited.

Madhavji's letter is excellent. He, too, has written to Calcutta and asked them to send the children to the Ashram.

I follow what you say regarding Jeki's sons. I have got the impression that they are well-behaved.

And now your problem. Our ideal is Rama. There were people who criticized him too. How, then, can you or I hope to be spared? We should learn from the criticism. Chhaganlal's criticism and suggestions are enclosed with this. Most of the suggestions are old. If you think Premabehn will be able to read without being upset what he has written about her, let her read it.

I think that his suggestion about . . .[1] is improper. Nobody can tell a father how he should treat his daughter. I have sent Chhaganlal's criticism as it is without making any corrections because I thought it would be better for you to know what is in his mind. There are other things which seem to me to need correction but the letter would become too long if I did so. I did not know Chhaganlal outside jail as closely as I have come to know him here. I am sure that he is a man of transparent sincerity and tries to cultivate the spirit of renunciation, but he is a child. His intellect is not well developed. His power of observation is very imperfect, he does not possess a methodical mind, his memory, too, is weak, and his mind wanders after too many things so that his capacity for concentration is limited. And he is not aware of all these limitations of his. All the same, he is very eager to improve himself and to grow. He has no ill-will against anybody, but because of an imperfectly developed intellect his conclusions are one-sided and erroneous. I don't think this analysis is mine only, though I have not discussed these impressions with anybody, except a little with Kaka. I have not told Chhaganlal

[1] The name has been omitted.

what I think about him. He will know that for the first time from this letter. It became necessary to say it today because I don't want you to form a wrong opinion about him. You may detect ill will in his remarks. But if you can you may trust that my observation of him is correct. If you do so, you will be able to see something in his criticism and suggestions which is worth accepting. In any case do give me your replies to his criticisms and suggestions. If you wish to show them to other co-workers, I will not object, though I don't see any need for that.

You are working as a secretary because I believe that you possess many of the virtues, and possess them in good measure, which you would like to have. I am not in the least dissatisfied with your work. My opinion about you remains unchanged, and I would be surprised if others have not formed the same impression that I have. N. says in his letter that he has not. Chhaganlal thinks that others, too, have not. But nobody has complained to me.

However, as I write this, I think of Bhagwanji. His complaint had produced no effect on me. I know his nature very well. But we should listen to persons on whom we have produced an unfavourable impression. We may find it easy to secure the co-operation of those who think well of us, but we learn nothing from them. Only our critics serve us as sentinels. You may, therefore, learn as much from N. as you wish to.

If you think it proper, you may show . . . 's[1] and . . . 's[2] letters to Totaramji, Panditji, Narahari, Lakshmidas and Mathuradas, and hear them if they have anything to say. If Totaramji and Panditji offer to take charge, hand it over to them and, if they wish, work under them and look after the accounts. I look upon Totaramji as the fittest person to be regarded as father of the Ashram. We need somebody as a father. We regard the Ashram as a family. If I stayed there, I would consider myself as father of the Ashram. Even if Totaramji does not accept that place, I would not think it improper at all to treat him as one and unhesitatingly follow his advice whenever a difficult problem arises. Lakshmidas possesses all the virtues necessary in a secretary of the Ashram, but I do not know whether at present he can live there. Narahari certainly cannot do so, since he is not free, so far as I know. Chimanlal's health is much too poor for the task. Mathuradas has still to acquire experience. These

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

are my views about all the co-workers whom I can think of. Vinoba cannot be shifted from Wardha. His responsibility is confined to Wardha. In fact he has left even Wardha and lives in a hamlet of Harijans.[1] He had my full consent for doing that. He may ultimately go and live in a hamlet still more exclusively inhabited by Harijans. You must, therefore, carry on as you are.

I have written all this merely for you to think over. In entrusting the welfare of the Ashram to your care when leaving it, I did not offer you a place of authority but burdened you with responsibility, and the position is still the same. I have observed nothing to persuade me to take away the responsibility from you. Nor can you give it up. You should, therefore, implement only those suggestions of mine which you find acceptable, having due regard to your responsibility. I cannot express any definite opinion from here. Whatever happens to the Ashram, good or ill, you will be the means. We should be thankful that I am permitted to write to you. If I was not permitted, wouldn't you act according to your own judgment? Therefore always do what seems best to you, regarding my letters and views as of no consequence. My duty is over when I have put before you what I hear and think. I want you to remain unaffected in the midst of all this, in the sense explained in the *Gita*.

Let this period not be one of worries for you, though it is certainly a time of test for equanimity. See that you never lose it.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8356. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] In 1932 he had shifted to Nalwadi about 1 mile from Wardha.

CWMG - IIV

486. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

April 16, 1933

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter. I do not have much faith in Homoeopathy. But for that you should not postpone your going to a hill-station. I like your idea of going to Almora. There is a good Homoeopath even there. For your ailment, other than the mountain air, milk, butter, fruit, wheat *roti* and vegetables, you will hardly need any medicine. Having gone to Almora, you should not get involved with too much work. Take Chhotalal if he can come. I will try for that Harijan friend.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 108

487. LETTER TO ASHRAM BOYS AND GIRLS

April 16, 1933

BOYS AND GIRLS,

You have of late become irregular in writing to me. You must by now have learnt everything or something about . . .[1]. You must know something. Did you learn any lesson from it?

All the persons living in the Ashram are like blood brothers and sisters. If anyone feels even slightly lustful they should immediately confess before their elders. They should take all necessary steps to get rid of the passion.

No one should have any secrets. No one should live in privacy. No one should dress himself up. One should be simple in body and mind as far as possible. No one should cross the bounds in any way. Only limited liberties should be taken with each other.

[1] The name has been omitted.

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I would be glad if you would all write to me your opinions on these things. There is no harm if I have already written this before. It is good to have the memory of such things kept fresh.

BAPU

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

488. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 16, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I dispatched a letter to you this morning. I have heard from Gaur Gopal. As he got my letter late, he has decided to go to Puri. I have written to him again and asked him to go to Almora.

I have had no letter at all from Prabhudas. Hasn't he written to you also? Where is he at present?

Mahadev tells me that Poore's book is in Maganlal's collection. I suppose you know that all those books belong to the Ashram. If you find Poore's book among them, send it to me. The book was also included in the list sent by Purushottam.

If Purushottam has not left for Rajkot and if he can stay on, ask him to do so. Jamna's treatment is not over and Amina also may need his advice. But you will be better able to decide about this.

Though I did write to you this morning and sent you Chhaganlal's criticism, I did all that with some hesitation. I felt that your, Chhaganlal's, mine and the Ashram's good required that. I thought it desirable that you should know even Chhaganlal's views in their naked truth, and also that you should know my view of how his intellect works. The verse[1] in the *Ishopanishad* which tells us that the face of Truth is hidden by a golden lid echoes in my ears all the time. I feel its truth every moment of my life. We must open that lid. Anyone who can bear that being done will be affected by little else. What anyone believes about us is absolute truth to him. We must have the strength to understand it and face it. This is a form of non-violence.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8357. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] 15

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489. LETTER TO VIDYA HINGORANI

April 16, 1933

CHI. VIDYA,

What an innocent girl you are! Because you have Mahadev now you do not write out of pity for me.

I hope Anand is well. Ask him to write to me. Now he will be able to write in Hindi, won't he? Tell him to make the effort.

I do feel that Mahadev will feel much better if he is given ten drops of castor-oil every day. If you have tried olive oil you may continue that. I hope you are keeping well.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

490. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

April 16, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

I got your letter. I have written[1] to Narandas in detail. I have written to him to consult Prof. Manekrao immediately and, if that is not possible, to send you to Poona. There is a bone-setter here too. If he does not succeed, we shall see later about an operation. There is no cause for worry. If it is convenient, you may keep the children in the Ashram, otherwise you may take them with you. We will find some remedy to help Dhiru to grow. I hope there is no burden of work or study on him. Have you ever considered that he may be suffering from . . .?[2]

As regards your expenses, Narandas says that, excluding the expenditure on travelling, they work out at the rate of Rs.16 per month. Probably you do not even know this fact. Eleven rupees are credited to everybody, and there is generally no ground

[1] *Vide* pp. 427-30.
[2] The rest of the sentence has been omitted.

CWMG - IIV

for increasing that figure in a particular case. I see that the expenses of some inmates like you are borne by the Ashram, whether they come to eleven rupees or twenty-one rupees. You are, therefore, not concerned with the figure of eleven. It only reminds us that it is our aim not to exceed it. If you need more ghee or anything else and do not get it, you would certainly be justified in complaining about that. I would, however, request you not to keep back anything but complain frankly to anybody whom you regard as a friend. You will have to deal with Narandas till the end of your life. How can you have reserves with him? We wish to cultivate unity of heart with the whole world. Shall we, then, live with reserves among ourselves who are but a small band?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5348

491. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 16, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

I have already written one letter to you. While things on every side are getting confused, I often think of you. I don't wish to advise you, nor have I the courage now to argue with you. My condition is like that of the Elephant King. Only a little portion of the trunk is now left above the water. If that also sinks, I would be choked to death. I can, therefore, do nothing but pray for all those about whom I keep worrying. But to whom should I pray? He who is ever awake, who never rests even for a moment, who is nearer to us even than our nails and who bears and sees everything, already knows what my prayers are.

My trust in Him still keeps the little portion of the trunk above the water. He may do as He wills, keep me in what condition He wills.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10341. Also C.W. 6780. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

492. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

April 16, 1933

CHI. NARAHARI,

I got both your letter and the postcard on the same day (yesterday). It was of course good that you got the tonsils of both your son and daughter removed; but we should realize from this what care we should take of children to keep them healthy. They need:

fresh air as much as possible;
correct *pranayam* exercises;
regular and moderate exercise;
clean teeth and gums;
for food, chiefly milk, curds, fruit, vegetables and bread in right quantities;
exclusion, at least, of rice, pulses and sugar.

Many bodily troubles result from want of care in these respects.

I have followed what you write about Narandas. Let me know, in a separately enclosed letter if you like, the shortcomings which you have observed in Narandas. I would even advise you to tell him about them. If you don't wish to do that, it is your duty at any rate to place them before me. I find it unbearable that there should be estrangement among the handful of co-workers I have. Kaka has gone up to Sinhagad. We hope that his health will improve there.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I think it is better to allow children an hour's sleep during the day rather than permit them to sleep at a stretch for 9 hours. In England they regularly put children to sleep [during day-time.]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9060

CWMG LIV

493. LETTER TO TOTARAM SANADHYA

April 16, 1933

BHAI TOTARAMJI,

I liked your description[1], as also the *bhajan* you sent for Mahadev; and the combination of the two was even more to my liking. Every act of ours should be the glorification of God.

I shall re-read the account. My desire is that we should produce enough fruit and vegetables to meet our needs. If we can also produce fodder for the cows and grain for the Ashram we shall achieve the highest ideal of farming. Even if this involves some increases in expenditure I shall regard it as justified. But I am aware that this is merely fool's babbling. I have worked the least at farming and talked the most about it. What to do? Farming is one of those things that I thought of doing when half my life was over.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2526

494. LETTER TO S. DHAVLE

April 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your postcard of the 13th April. I have had no letter before this regarding your activity. Surely you need no message from me.[2] Your work must be your message. It is

[1] Of his farming activities. Gandhiji had asked for this in his letter of January 5, 1933; *vide* Vol. LII.

[2] The addressee had asked for a message for the opening ceremony of the "Navajivan Library and Reading Room" and amalgamation of "Navajivan Pustakalaya" with it for the special benefit of Harijans.

CWMG - LIV

wrong for workers to ask for messages for their new ventures. They should seek to justify them by reason of substantial service.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. S. DHAVLE
134 HARRISON ROAD
CALCUTTA

From a microfilm: S.N. 20986

495. LETTER TO KRISHNA CHANDRA MUKHERJI

April 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. The problem you have raised is not new, and because we are surrounded by death and destruction on all sides we have the positive word "*himsa*", and yet every religion that is known to mankind insists upon life as the law, but conduct prescribed has been designated by a negative word, that is, "ahimsa" or non-violence. That can only exist for a bodied life as an ideal to be reached, not to be realized in action in physical existence. Nevertheless if we recognize the law of ahimsa we would always shape our conduct so as to approach it as near as possible and therefore we would resort to as little violence as it is humanly possible, whereas if *himsa* was the law of our being, we would naturally do as much destruction as we could and rejoice in it. But we do not find many people rejoicing in doing violence, whereas we do find many people apologizing for what violence they did. To say that there is double law working, namely, violence and non-violence, would be to argue that two contrary laws can co-exist. This is hardly the right thing.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. KRISHNA CHANDRA MUKHERJI
MAGURA P. O. (JESSORE)
BENGAL

From a microfilm: S.N. 20982

CWMG-IIV

496. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

April 18, 1933

MY DEAR C. R.,

I have your letter after long waiting. Of course I saw what Natarajan had written. Have not seen what Kodanda Rao has written. I do not know that anything can be done beyond writing to these friends. I often do with more or less success. I commend the prescription to you. Try it with Natarajan to commence with. He is slow to perceive flaws in his argument, but he is always open to conviction. I therefore never regard him as hopeless.

Jamnalalji will be going to a hill-station for his own treatment. I do not know whom he will be taking with him. In his latest letter he was thinking of going to Almora.

I would advise you to send Narasinham[1] and Papa[2] by themselves to a quiet place so that they would be sure of perfect rest, that is to say, if Narasinham is able to take care of himself and Papa. Why not take them yourself to Nandi? And if you don't want to stay there the whole of the time, you may come away earlier. You can still have at least five weeks there. But of course you know better. It may be that they will profit most by being with Jamnalalji.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 20972

497. LETTER TO G. RAMACHANDRAN

April 18, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRAN,

I had your telegram. You will find my note[3] in the *Harijan* on the Nattar-Harijan conflict, and you will report to me what is being done to bring the two together.

[1] Addressee's son
[2] Addressee's daughter
[3] *Vide* "What it Means to be a Harijan", 22-4-1933.

I have a letter from P. N. Sankaranarayana Iyer in which he tells me that before the 10th of February he wrote offering the services and co-operation of his institution on behalf of the cause, but he tells me he received no reply.[1] I do not know whether he wrote to someone in Madras. Perhaps you know this gentleman. His address is: No. 1, 3rd Street, Gopalapuram, Cathedral Post, Madras, and he and his sister, G. Visalakshi, are connected with slum work in Madras.

I sent to Dr. Rajan some time ago a letter[2] enclosing Rao Bahadur Rajah's letter to me asking for help for a Harijan Library. I have not had any reply to that letter. Please enquire and see what has happened.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20971

498. LETTER TO N.

April 18, 1933

MY DEAR N.,

I have your letter and I had a letter from Sjt. B. K. Ramachandra Rao, and I came to the conclusion that there was no use your living there. Neither R.[3] nor G.[4] can be of any use there. You have broken with the past altogether and I wish you will not recall it on any account whatsoever. If you have not therefore left, I would strongly advise you to leave for Poona at once, and if R.[5] will not give you enough for bringing yourself and S.[6] to Poona, I have asked Sjt. Ramachandra Rao to advance 3rd class fare for you and S. You will telegraph to me and I shall arrange about your lodgings.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20984

[1] For Gandhiji's reply to Sankaranarayana Iyer's letter, *vide* pp. 445-6.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Dr. T. S. S. Rajan", p. 155.
[3], [4], [5] & [6] The names have been omitted.

CWMG-IIV

499. LETTER TO B. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

April 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

It was good of you to have seen N. and to have written to me about her. I heard from her also at the same time that I heard from you and I decided at once to ask her to come away to Poona. I can see that she won't be able to do the Harijan service there all alone. The companions[1] whom you name cannot be called in to help her. Perhaps you do not know all about her life. Her past life has not been quite straight. She has turned over, I hope, a new leaf. She is under that definite promise. It is therefore better for her not to have any of her old companions, however good workers they might have been. There is nothing secret about this. She has owned up her past to all who should have known it. Probably she will have left by the time this reaches you. If she has not, you will kindly hand the accompanying letter[2] to her, and, if she will leave for Poona, but R.[3] cannot and does not advance 3rd class fare for her and her boy, you will kindly do it for me and I will see that you are repaid the loan.

Yours sincerely,

B. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO
PLEADER
CHITALDRUG

From a microfilm: S.N. 20983

500. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

April 18, 1933

DEAR MOTIBABU,

I have your letter and I am glad you have written to me so exhaustively.

[1] Two former co-workers of N.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.
[3] The name has been omitted.

In thinking of temple-entry, we must not think of what the Harijans want, but what is due by us to them and what was promised so solemnly at the Bombay meeting[1] under the Presidentship of Malaviyaji. Temple-entry was there promised and that promise has to be fulfilled at the sacrifice of life itself. Remember the words of the *Mahabharata*, "Truth in one scale and all the other sacrifices in the opposite scale: the scale holding Truth will outweigh the other scale." Breach of promise to the Harijans and to God is unthinkable. We may be as patient as possible with the sanatanists, but those who have any regard for that solemn promise must ceaselessly pursue temple-entry. I do not therefore need to examine the other part of your argument about temple-entry. Of course education has to be an active programme. Education in the widest sense of the term is wanted, not merely for the Harijans but also for the *savarna* Hindus. What we are today suffering from is not so much the want of education as too much of mis-education. Irreligion and hypocrisy has been taught us in the place of religion and honesty, superstition in the place of true knowledge, intolerance in the place of charity, incontinence in the place of chastity, distortion of the Shastras in the place of a true and simple interpretation thereof woven round the central truth.

I note what you say about the activities of the Sangh, and I hope that your efforts will be crowned with full success. If you will keep the central fact of hand-spinning intact, you will not yield to the temptation of taking the fine yarn from the indigenous mills. I do not know whether you have traced the history of Harijans being driven from weaving to scavenging simply because the natural cord between hand-spun and hand-woven has been broken. If you will have fine cloth, you should teach the men and women how to spin fine yarn. Out of good slivers I spin 70 counts. Mahadev has gone as much as 110 counts. This is finer than the finest spun by any mill in India, and you will be surprised to learn that a Harijan weaver at the Ashram has woven Mahadev's 40 counts. Finer than 40 we began to spin only during this incarceration, but I have no doubt that when our stock of fine yarn can be given for spinning, the same weaver will be able to handle it. We must face the difficulty, cost what it may, in this movement of regeneration.

Much as I would like to discuss the question of my coming out for the sake of the Harijan cause, prison restrictions would not admit of any such discussion.

[1] Held on September 25, 1932. For the text of the resolution, *vide* p. 17.

I did not know that Arun had purposely sent the *Message and Mission* of the Prabartak Sangh for my opinion. I must now look it up if I can lay my hands on it and read it critically.

I think that your medical adviser is quite right. Your eyes need rest.[1] With all the devoted workers that surround you, why should you use your eyes at all? I do not know whether you know that there is in vogue a new and strikingly convincing method of treating the eyesight. It is called Bates's method, and there is a physician in India who knows this method. His name and address are: Dr. Agrawal [Ram Eye Hospital, Bulandshahr].

I do not know the gentleman at all. He corresponded with me and brought this method first to my notice. Since then American friends have written to me and sent literature also.[2] If you at all feel like it, you should correspond with Dr. Agrawal.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20968

501. LETTER TO CHAVALI SATYANARAYANA

April 18, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter marked 30th (?) February has lain with me all this long time. I was unable to reach it earlier. I went through your letter but I am sorry to have to say that I found no argument to appeal to me. Untouchability is in my opinion undoubtedly indefensible, nevertheless I have found better, though unconvincing, argument than what you have led.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. CHAVALI SATYANARAYANA
KOTHAPETA
GUNTUR

From a microfilm: S.N. 20978

[1] The addressee was suffering from glaucoma.
[2] *Vide* "Letter to Dr. Harry J. Ehrlich", p. 177.

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502. LETTER TO N. V. THADANI

April 18, 1933

MY DEAR THADANI,

I had time today to go through the correspondence[1] between yourself and the Jagatguru and I was delighted with your terse, firm but restrained and courteous letters and I was filled with humiliation, sorrow and disappointment over the rambling, utterly illogical and undignified letters of the Jagatguru. I have therefore resisted the temptation of referring to this correspondence in the columns of the *Harijan*. If I do I should have to criticize the Jagatguru. This I do not want to do. It cannot help the struggle in any way, yet I do not want to miss your argument. Therefore I would like you to write a letter[2] to the *Harijan*, putting your case in the briefest manner possible and asking the readers of the *Harijan* to point out, if they can, from the Vedas any reference to the fifth caste. You know exactly what I mean.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20979

503. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

[*April 18, 1933*][3]

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. The book on milk-diet lays great stress on rest. If, therefore, Dinshawji also insists on that, follow his advice and take complete rest. You should build a completely new body. The author forbids even reading, etc. Maruti and Lakshmi came and saw me. I hope Karsandas has met you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] *Vide* "Letter to N. V. Thadani", p. 344.
[2] This appeared in *Harijan*, 13-5-1933.
[3] From the postmark

[PS.]

Give my blessings to Allabehn. I am waiting for a letter from Dinshawji.

SHRI KAKASAHEB
C/O DR. DINSHAW MEHTA
SINHAGAD
NEAR POONA

From Gujarati: C.W. 9497. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

504. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

April 18, 1933

You should immediately leave for Deolali or whatever other place you have selected.[1] You may be sure that you will teach Dilip better than any school can.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 119

505. TELEGRAM TO DR. PURUSHOTTAM PATEL

[*April 19, 1933*][2]

DR. PATEL
POLYCLINIC
BOMBAY

PLEASE WIRE VITHALBHAI'S CONDITION AND VIENNA ADDRESS.[3]

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 20028

[1] The addressee had not been keeping good health and Gandhiji had advised him to go to some hill station.

[2] *Vide* p. 448.

[3] In his reply dated April 20, the addressee said: "Vithalbhai has abdominal complaint. No anxiety. Cable address Travenex Vienna."

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506. LETTER TO RASH BEHARY CHATTERJEE

April 19, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your long letter which I have read carefully. I do not know what I can do, placed as I am, but I would suggest your seeing Satisbabu and being guided by him. I would love to help you. I simply do not know how I can do it.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. RASH BEHARY CHATTERJEE
P. O. BARINPOOR
VILL. SHASON
(DIST. 24 PARAGANAS)

From a microfilm: S.N. 20987

507. LETTER TO P. N. SANKARANARAYANA IYER

April 19, 1933

MY DEAR SANKARANARAYANA,

You will please forgive me for not attending to your pamphlet before this. I was helpless. As soon as I had a few moments to spare I took up your pamphlet.

You have asked me to offer remarks, suggestions, guidance and to give you my blessings. Blessings you have if you deserve them. Whether you do or not I cannot judge, because I have no personal knowledge of your activity. But I can certainly see your earnestness in your report.[1]

I have gone through all the passages that you have specially marked. It is difficult for me to offer useful criticism.

Your hit at the turmoil of the temple-entry movement and at the great national leaders betrays somewhere irritation, impatience and ignorance of facts. If you had simply said that the Harijans that have come under your notice do not care for temple-entry, that would have been quite a fair statement to make;

[1] His activities were mentioned in *Harijan*, 29-4-1933.

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but to belittle a great religious movement without even studying it was not right. Just see what it is. In September last, representative Hindus in a public meeting entered into a solemn pledge that among other things temples should be thrown open to Harijans. From that moment it became their duty to strain every nerve to secure the opening of Hindu temples to Harijans. It is irrelevant whether Harijans want to make use of these temples or not, just as it would be irrelevant to the question of opening public schools, public wells and giving them all the other rights hitherto denied to them whether they want or do not want these rights. It is the simple duty of the suppressors to remove the weight of suppression from the heads of the suppressed. The suppressed may have become so stunted that in spite of the lifting of the weight they might not even appreciate the fact that it was lifted. But that would be no excuse for the suppressors to continue the suppression.

If you admit the justice of the argument you should have no hesitation in owning your mistake. More than this I think I need not say. Every little thing done for the sake of Harijans cannot but be welcome to me, and I think that the field of service is so vast that workers can well afford to do that service without criticizing or belittling the efforts of others except of course where the other effort is mischievous, immoral or selfish.

In the 6th paragraph of your letter you tell me that you wrote to the local Seva Sangh offering your co-operation and service but that you had received no reply. I have now written[1] to them.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. P. N. SANKARANARAYANA IYER
No. 1 3RD STREET, GOPALAPURAM
CATHEDRAL POST
MADRAS

From a microfilm: S.N. 20969. Also C.W. 9677. Courtesy: P. N. Sankaranarayana Iyer

[1] *Vide* "Letter to G. Ramachandran", pp. 438-9.

508. LETTER TO NEPAUL CHANDRA

April 19, 1933

DEAR NEPAUL BABU,

We have at the Ashram a lad brought up from infancy. He has a passion for painting, not that he knows much or perhaps anything of the art, but he cannot think of anything else. We have found him to be a straight, hard-working boy, amenable to discipline. But he has a grievance against the Ashram that he is not being given facilities for developing the special faculty that he has. I have therefore offered to send him to Santiniketan for the purpose of receiving training in painting. Will you please tell me whether this young man (Dhirendra[1] is his name) can be admitted. He is a strict vegetarian. I believe that he will pick up Bengali without difficulty. Gujarati is his mother tongue. He knows Hindi fairly well. He is an expert spinner. If he can be taken, please tell me whether he has to fill in a form of admission, when he could be sent there, what would be the fees. Please let me have any further instructions and guidance that you may think necessary. I do not know whether you are the right person to approach. If you are not, you will perhaps pass this on to the responsible authority with the request on my behalf that this letter may receive early attention.

I hope you are keeping well. My regards to all the friends.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 20994

[1] Son of Vrajlal Gandhi

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509. LETTER TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

April 19, 1933

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT
HOME DEPARTMENT
BOMBAY

DEAR SIR,

The enclosed cable[1] was sent by me on the 13th instant to the Superintendent for despatch. On the 17th I learnt on inquiry that it was sent to the Inspector-General. On the same day I complained to the Superintendent about the delay in sending the message. I have now at 2.20 p.m. 19th instant learnt that orders have been received that "there is no objection to the despatch of the cable".

Happily Sjt. V. J. Patel seems to be in no immediate danger. I have no desire to send the cable now as it is. Nor have I got the patient's address in Vienna where he has been sent for treatment. I am inquiring about the address.[2]

But I cannot help protesting against the delay in a matter involving the life of a human being, this time not a prisoner. One matter of delay in the case of a prisoner whose life is in danger is pending before Government.

Cables such as the one to Sjt. V. J. Patel, the Government will admit, are of use only if they are sent in time. I have known such cables to have given great consolation to their receivers. I cannot allow myself to think that in such a matter the Government have no regard for the feelings of persons in their custody. Was it necessary to detain the cable for seven days? I should like to have my position defined. If I have the liberty to send such cables, the Government should empower the authority in immediate custody to handle them. I venture to suggest that the present procedure is unfair and unnecessary. I need hardly point out that the cable was meant to be as well from Sardar Vallabh-

[1] *Vide* "Cable to Vithalbhai J. Patel", p. 400.
[2] *Vide* "Telegram to Dr. Purushottam Patel", p. 444.

bhai Patel, the patient's brother, as from me.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, 329; also G.N. 3889

510. LETTER TO DR. HIRALAL SHARMA

April 19, 1933

DEAR DR. SHARMA,

I like your letter very much.[1] It does you great credit. You have pictured to me the ideal physician. Yes, by all means wash Amtussalaam's clothes, if necessary. Though in the Ashram, she is solely under your care. Do please insist on her taking proper rest and the prescribed diet.

I would like you critically to examine everything in the Ashram and give me your impressions. Study the health of every inmate who will let you examine him or her. Of course you will frankly tell me of cases that may be beyond your skill. I would like you to examine Kusumbehn. She is today under Dr. Talwalkar's treatment. But I would like you to tell [me] what you would have her to do, if she puts herself under you. Then there is Jamnabehn. She is a chronic asthmatic. She can be treated by you now if she will put herself under your care. Then there is Ramabehn. She has an enlarged shoulder-bone. I do not yet visualize her trouble. Possibly her case is beyond your province. If it is not, please tell me what you would have her do. Lastly, there is Anandi who has just had an operation for appendicitis. She is having my treatment only, as the others do more or less. These are the special cases I would like you to see as soon as you can and tell me all about them. There are others, too, who require attention.

Now about yourself. While I would like you to throw yourself into the Ashram routine, you must not go beyond your strength and [you] will take everything easy. Have your special needs supplied. I would feel deeply hurt if, for want of care, your own health was endangered. You will make me feel at ease, if you will treat the Ashram as your home and express your needs.

[1] The addressee had written to Gandhiji on reaching the Ashram.

I would like you to accompany Bhagwanji once and see Harijan quarters and examine the ailing ones there and their sanitation.

I wish your children had both accompanied you. But that now later, if all goes well.

Yours,
BAPU

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh, pp. 30-2

511. LETTER TO JAMNABEHN GANDHI

April 19, 1933

CHI. JAMNA,

I have your letter. One does not have to worry about a person who, though her weight be 69 lb., can joke.

Yes, I remember very well the letters concerning enema, etc. I have an impression that I had replied to the questions in a letter to Purushottam. But it is also likely that I forgot to do so.

You can eat tomatoes, . . .[1], salt and papaw. But according to the system followed in the institution where Purushottam learnt the science, nothing but unboiled milk is permitted. Besides, you have to take bed-rest. However, Dr. Sharma is there now. Get yourself examined by him, and follow his advice if it is fully compatible with what you are doing now. I am writing to him. I don't know him personally. I have known him only through correspondence. He does seem to have had experience in his field. Now that Purushottam, who was your vaid, has left, I will write to you more regularly. You must increase your weight.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 876. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] A word is illegible.

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512. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

April 19, 1933

CHI. RAMA,

I have your letter. I have already written to you and explained what to do regarding the arm. The arrival of Dr. Sharma makes no difference to my advice. If he can understand the real nature of the trouble and is ready to treat it, by all means let him try. Otherwise you should adhere to the line I have suggested. You should do no work which causes pain to the arm. You may give it only such exercise as will cause no pain. But now there will be no need for me to give any advice. He, to whose care you must leave the arm, will put everything right.

Amina seems to be in a bad plight. Give her courage and sustain her faith. If she is not careful about food, she will again harm her health.

BAPU

[PS.]

An increase of five pounds in your weight is certainly good. But it seems to have had no effect on the condition of the arm.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5349

513. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

April 19, 1933

CHI. PREMA,

Why did you beat that girl? A teacher does not lose her self-respect by apologizing to her pupil. On the contrary, it is enhanced. The pupils also will love her better. If, therefore, you have not already apologized and if you think that it was wrong on your part to have beaten her, you should apologize to her. You may be sure that will be for your good.

Your diet is all right. If you continue it your throat is bound to improve. Consult Dr. Sharma. If he can think of anything, he will suggest it.

Why do you get impatient in your work? If you are content with what you can do slowly, the work will be faster and the

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result will be neater. I have had this experience thousands of times.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10337. Also C.W. 6777. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

514. LETTER TO P. N. RAJBHOJ

April 19, 1933

BHAI RAJBHOJ,

Your Hindi letter is extremely good.

I trust you are comfortable in the Ashram.

I shall make an effort to answer your questions in the *Harijan Sevak*.[1] Nevertheless I may state this.

Here is one way of eliminating caste distinctions among Harijans—the caste considered higher should establish all social relations with the castes considered lower.

Wherever underground drainage is installed the Harijans should master the craft of weaving. There is no harm in seeking the assistance of the police wherever Harijans are prevented from using the *palki*. There are other ways also which I shall mention in the *Harijan Sevak*.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 784

515. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 19, 1933

DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

It is good that you have returned to the Ashram. As regards coming here you should do only what Dr. Sharma permits. No one has any business to say anything about you now that he is there. The doctor writes that you are to take complete rest. If he allows, you may come on Saturday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 284

[1] *Vide* Vol. LV, "A Harijan's Questions", 5-5-1933.

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516. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 19, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your big packet. It is really big this time.

Nobody should copy my bad habits. I can even give reasons to excuse them. All the same everybody should know that they are bad habits and avoid them.

1. Nobody should read a book or a newspaper while eating. The best thing is to have in one serving as much as one wants and to eat the meal in complete silence. If one cannot do this, one may talk to one's neighbour in whispers. It is a bad habit to do two things simultaneously.

2. Nobody should do any other work while spinning, should neither dictate letters nor teach as I do.

3. It is a bad habit to read in the lavatory.

4. It is unbearable to clean the teeth in the lavatory. The habit is unhygienic and dirty. I have never been guilty of this bad habit.

But I do the first three things. However, a person's bad habits should not be copied. I never defend these habits as good. Moreover, I live in complete privacy. I have a separate room for lavatory and can keep books in that room. I may die any time, and cannot overcome the temptation to do as much work as I can while I live. I am not eager to overcome it either. I have these and many other reasons or excuses. But nobody else should use them to defend his bad habits. Show this to all the inmates. All these habits are also responsible for constipation and other troubles. We attach great importance to bodily labour and work in the Ashram. But there should be no impatience or excessive eagerness in doing even these. Whenever anybody feels that his work is too heavy, he should reduce it. Nobody is required to work beyond his capacity. The inmates of the Ashram do not live in it under compulsion. Nobody, therefore, should feel the burden of work there.

Read my letter to Dr. Sharma. Talk to him. Do also give him whatever facilities he wants. Let him examine all the patients I have mentioned and others who may be ill. Let me know the results and your views. You will find in my letter to him that I

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have written at sufficient length, and I, therefore, don't repeat all that here.

With all my efforts I could not find Valji's article. But he came and gave me a copy.

Did I give you the address to which the Gandiva spinning-wheels should be despatched? There is a slight change in it now: Shri Haribhau Phatak, Pioneer Dyeing Works, Sadashiv Peth, Poona City.

Lakshmibehn, Narmada, Bhuskute and Amtussalaam—the last if she is permitted by Dr. Sharma and if she is very keen—may come next Saturday. I am sending a wire[1] today, for you may not get this letter in time.

Ramji has asked for permission to put his grievances before Rajbhoj. If you think it desirable, you yourself may talk to the latter. He is a man of a suspicious nature and may misinterpret even your doing that. In view of this possibility, think independently and do what seems best to you.

BAPU

[PS.]

I was forgetting one thing. You have heard about N. She came and saw me some time ago. She has a son who lives with her. I had heard reports against her and so had invited her here. She was doing Harijan work in Bangalore. She is a capable lady, and is an American married to a Greek. Her father was a theatre designer. She herself can act and knows dancing, etc. You must have read about three years ago that she had become a Hindu in Kashmir and was thinking of coming to the Ashram. The report was true. But she was also living an ignorant life. She has freely led an immoral life and even accepted money from people. When she came to me, she confessed to me all her errors one after another and gave her solemn word that she would devote the rest of her life to Harijan work. She says she is 24 years old. She left the hotel where she was staying and went to live among Harijans. At present she is living in a Harijan hamlet at some distance from Bangalore. She writes to me from time to time. I think she has changed and is on the right path now. I have wired to her and asked her to come here. I intend to send her ultimately to the Ashram. I don't see any risk in taking her in. She will stay if she can observe the rules. Let all of you think about this and then communicate your view to me. If you wish to ask me

[1] *Vide* the following item.

anything more, you may do so. You need not send Poore's book to her just now. She has not yet arrived here.

BAPU

[PS.]

[Letters for] Sharma, Chhotubhai, Kusum, Rama, Anand, Lilavati, Mani, Dhiru, Jamna, Rajbhoj, Amtul, Prema, Amina, Dhananjaybabu.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8358. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

517. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 19, 1933

ASHRAM
SABARMATI

LAKSHMIBEHN, NARMADA, DOCTOR PERMITTING AMTUSSALAAM, MAY COME SATURDAY ONE O'CLOCK.

BAPU

From a microfilm: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8400. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

518. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[After *April 19, 1933*][1]

DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I had sent a telegram regarding your coming but it was good that the doctor did not allow you to leave. Travelling in a feeble condition is not advisable. Do what the doctor says. God will make you well. Do not worry about serving. There shall be occasion enough for service when you are all right again.

Blessings from

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 282

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", p. 452.

519. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

April 20, 1933

Begun at 3 finished at 4 a.m.

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter containing your views of the conduct of the Ashram came in yesterday, i.e., Wednesday.

There is a difference in our ideal[s] perhaps. I contemplate a composite society at any rate for some long time to come. The ideal should be what it is. Some will reach it more and some less. You will find that the only ideal that can be fully reached according to the definition is that of Truth. For Truth is what everyone for the moment feels it to be as such, there being no room left for deception. It will always be non-physical, whereas every other vow has its direct physical aspect and therefore necessarily has grades. Take ahimsa. One person will be satisfied with its mere observance with the non-killing of man and beast. Another will extend it to the insect life, yet others to the vegetable and so on. We do not consider it an unpardonable crime to kill a snake or a scorpion. Take non-possession. Even you and I have no common line. I may possess a fountain pen, you may discard it. I may possess ten yards of khadi, you may have twenty. There is no such thing as full and equal observance of these other vows which admit of a physical expression. They subserve the one and only grand purpose and ideal, Truth. Kusum lying on her deathbed (maybe) and requiring hundreds of things I may not want, as fully lives up to the Ashram ideal as I, if both of us think, speak and act truthfully.

If you have followed me hitherto, you must at once perceive that we do not need, we must not have bifurcation. Living the composite life, each must grow to his or her full height. If I cannot even at the age of 64 live up to the life of *brahmacharya*, I must humbly own it and retire from the Ashram without the finger of scorn being pointed at me. I must get credit for having courage to think, speak and act the truth. There is then hope for my *brahmacharya* but none for say . . .[1] if he has outwardly quite

[1] The name has been omitted.

correctly lived a life of physical *brahmacharya* but has lusted after a girl or girls. . . .[1] has disgraced the Ashram, not I.

Therefore if we will practise charity and Truth we can only have one institution wherein you must have the fullest scope for your growth and Kusum the invalid for hers or . . .[2] the butterfly for hers, provided that none of you deceives for one single moment and each believes in and strives to reach the Ashram ideal.

Now comes in, in a different or modified form, your proposal. A separate institution or institutions. There is one at Wardha with Vinoba at its head. He is part of the parent institution and is working out the ideals to the best of his capacity. Did I tell you that with my full consent, he had run away from Wardha and settled in a Harijan village hardly two miles from Wardha? He may leave a landmark there and go fifty miles or more away from any railway line with or without a companion still in fulfilment of the ideal of the parent [institution] and being an integral part of it. He is in no way superior to . . . [3], assuming always that . . . [4] is as truthful as Vinoba and is as much carrying out the Ashram ideal as Vinoba. Are you able to perceive this fully?

There is another branch shooting out in Almora far away from the haunts of men and a long way from a railway line. Struggling Prabhudas is today in physical charge of it. But how ultimately it will shape, I do not know. It may become a sanatorium for the invalids or may become a retreat, permanent or temporary, for those who want isolation for their growth. And if we succeed in continually throwing out untruth from the Ashram and learn to live only truth and for it and nothing else, we may have a million branches, none superior, none inferior, all being an expression of the hardy parent and required for it. I do not know whether I have expressed myself so as to enable you to understand me. Follow it up as much as you like. No letter going to Ba this week.

Love from us all to all.

BAPU

[PS.]

Last week's post was handed in on Friday and sacred cards were sent by registered book packet.

C.W. 9675. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1], [2], [3] & [4] The names have been omitted.

520. LETTER TO P. H. GADRE

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter and your notes on the Harijan quarters in Nasik.[1]

What help do you want from Seth Mathuradas Vasanji? If I knew definitely, I might be able to do something.

I note what you say about the quotations from the other saints.[2]

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. H. GADRE
PLEADER
NASIK

From a microfilm: S.N. 20997

521. LETTER TO D. G. JADHAV

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of the 17th instant.[3] I think that the Mahar friends who are boycotted should stick to their resolve without entering into any argument or quarrel with the Mahar Panchayat that has excommunicated them and if they suffer in dignified silence you will find that the excommunication will be ineffective. The very reason why educated Mahars are not under the ban of excommunication shows that there is no strength in it. I think that you should quietly and persistently work in their midst and try to serve those who are instrumental in excommunicating the

[1] Gandhiji had invited from the addressee a report on the Bhangis and Mahars of Nasik; *vide* p. 296.

[2] As the addressee had been busy with the preparation of the report, he was unable to send Gandhiji further quotations on Harijans from the saints of Maharashtra.

[3] The addressee had informed Gandhiji that many Mahars were excommunicated for taking tea in the company of Mangs, a supposedly inferior community. He, however, being an educated man was exempted.

reformers and if you will continue to serve both the parties you might form the connecting link between the two.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. DAULAT GULAJI JADHAV
VAGHLI
CHALISGAON (E. KHANDESH)

From a microfilm: S.N. 21003

522. LETTER TO KAMALA DEVI

April 20, 1933

DEAR KAMALA DEVI,

I have your letter. Do please come on Monday next at 2 o'clock.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21008

523. LETTER TO R. MAGUDESWARAN

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your postcard. You can see me on Monday, the 1st of May, at 3 p.m. You will please not take more than half an hour at the outside. But I would dissuade you from coming all the way from the South unless you have some definite and very important questions about untouchability.[1]

Yours sincerely,

SJT. R. MAGUDESWARAN
C/O RAJANGA SWAMINATHA AIYAR
TIRUVADI
(TANJORE DIST.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 21001

[1] The addressee had some doubts concerning the problem of untouchability which could in his opinion be resolved only by a discussion with Gandhiji.

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524. LETTER TO G. V. MODAK

April 20, 1933

DEAR CAPT. MODAK,

I have your letter. Your book[1] has been kept by the Superintendent, for, in his opinion, it is not contemplated that such books should be given to me. Unless therefore you get the permission from the Government, the book cannot be delivered to me.

Yours sincerely,

CAPT. G. V. MODAK
C/O S. I. SOCIETY
POONA

From a microfilm: S.N. 21007

525. LETTER TO NARAYANA[2]

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Whether you have an idol or whether you are in a temple or a church or a mosque or out in the open air, you pray only to one God who is in everything and who is all-eyes and all-ears.

The wearing of the yellow robe I do not consider to be at all necessary for a *brahmachari*. In ancient times it was undoubtedly a symbol that distinguished the *brahmachari* from the householder, and members of a particular institution may, if they wish to, adopt a particular costume for themselves.

I think that you did well in not observing any distinction

[1] About the Royal Indian Army

[2] The addressee, a youth, had four years earlier joined a residential institution the aim of which was rural reconstruction and free medical relief. An account was published in *Harijan*, 22-4-1933.

between your fellow-students or workers, whether Harijans or others, at the time of *shraddha* ceremony[1].

Yours sincerely,

DR. NARAYANA
GURUKULA SEVA SANGH
P.O. KENGERI
BANGALORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20995

526. LETTER TO DR. M. A. NARAYANA

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I must not be expected to decide upon the private character of people whom I do not know. The method of working out the programme of untouchability is before the public. It is generally known now that only those with pure character and a religious spirit should enter upon this service, and no others.

Yours sincerely,

DR. M. A. NARAYANA
C/O THE NEW PHARMACY
23 44TH STREET
RANGOON

From a microfilm: S.N. 21005

527. LETTER TO T. PRAKASAM

April 20, 1933

MY DEAR PRAKASAM,

I sent the enclosed papers[2] to the Provincial Board of the S.U.S.[3] They have returned the papers saying that the matter is outside their jurisdiction and that I should forward them to you, and so you have the papers and you will tell me what you can do in the matter.

[1] Of his father
[2] These are not available.
[3] Servants of Untouchables Society

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I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21004

528. LETTER TO M. SESHAGIRI RAO

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. It is wrong for you to ask the detailed questions that you have, and it would be wrong on my part, because it would be presumptuous, to answer all those questions. Having known the broad principle that truth must be followed at all costs, the details must be worked out by everyone for himself, regard being had to one's own capacity for following out the principle.

From your letter it does appear to me that you are a weak man, not sure of yourself, and it may be just as well for you to remain under your father's roof and make sure of your own personal purity and personal honesty. It may be that if you succeed in doing this your father himself will be converted.

As to your wife, I think that you are quite wrong in sitting in judgment upon her. If you are wiser than she is, you would become her teacher and lead her gently on to the right way.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. M. SESHAGIRI RAO
C/O B. SURYANARAYANA
POSTMAN
TEKKALI (GANJAM DT.)

From a microfilm: S.N. 21006

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529. LETTER TO S. SWAMINATHAN

April 20, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter.[1] All I can do is to commend to your attention the weekly *Harijan* and you will find in the issues my position clearly stated. There is no question whatsoever of compulsion in connection with temple-entry.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. S. SWAMINATHAN
1146 ANDIAPILLAI AGRAHARAM
KARUNATTAMKUDI
TANJORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 20996

530. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

[*April 20, 1933*][2]

CHI. NARANDAS,

Some of the points in your letter in the big mail received yesterday require immediate reply, and I am, therefore, writing this letter today without delay.

I am glad that Lakshmibehn has agreed to go[3] for one year. I will now get into correspondence with the people concerned. I think whatever is done will be done after Jamnalalji's release. Probably it will not be necessary for two women to go at the same time.

[1] The addressee had supported the caste system and said in his letter that the temple-entry of the Harijans would hurt the feelings of the caste Hindus.

[2] *Bapuna Patro–9 : Shri Narandas Gandhine*, Pt. II, gives ' about April 22 ' as the date of this letter which however does not appear to be correct. In his letter of April 22 to the addressee, Gandhiji complains of not having received any letters for three days "after the big packet". Gandhiji wrote this letter the day following the receipt of the big packet, which must have been on the 19th and hence presumably this letter was written on the 20th.

[3] As matron of the women's Ashram at Wardha

What shall we do if Chimanlal loses heart?

After reading Dr. Talwalkar's letter, I feel that it will be best for Kusum to remain under his treatment.

Keep the letter for Pannalal with you and give it to him at the appropriate time.

The changes which you have made seem to be all right. The burden of work on Prema ought to be reduced. If she does not stop speaking for the present, I see a grave risk. Be strict with her in this matter.

Let Parachure Shastri conduct as many classes as he can. If people can be taught to recite the *Gita* verses with correct pronunciation, I will regard that as a great thing.

Do give him all the books which we have. I have explained in my letter how they should be used. Kaka tells me that the other four books which he requires are there in the Vidyapith. If Panditji asks for them or if Narahari Parikh permits, we may have them transferred to the Ashram.

We have, in any case, to ask for the transfer of some manuscripts. It is only a question of time. Ask Shastri to be patient.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8360. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

531. LETTER TO RAMESHWARLAL BAJAJ

April 20, 1933

BHAI RAMESHWARLAL,

I got a letter from you after so many months. You do not write how your business is going on. Describe how you live. I hope your mind is at peace. What happened about your establishment in London? One can solve all problems if one is patient.

Rukmini[1] is in Deolali at present. She is all right.

We are all well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9064

[1] Addressee's daughter-in-law and Maganlal Gandhi's daughter

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532. LETTER TO FULCHAND B. SHAH

April 20, 1933

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

At last I got a letter from you after waiting for one for a long time. All of us were wondering why there was no letter and were, therefore, very much pleased when we got it.

I cannot understand what happened to my letter. My attitude in the matter is that we should write what we wish to, and not worry whether or not the letter reaches the addressee.

Our life goes on from day to day.

We often think about your enlarged family there, but feel sure that, since you are quite a few veterans there, things are going on without friction. If an accident occurs to a railway train, a good many people will die. If, on the other hand, anything happens to an old-fashioned cart, at the most the riders feel a jerk. They do a few repairs to the cart and jump on to it again. Before the age of the railway, the pace of things was slow. But we rarely find this from reading history. But we do hear about the increase in accidents and lunatic asylums. However, sanatanist friends argue that I have no right at all to talk about these things, since, though I write against trains, doctors, etc., I am eager enough to travel by train whenever I get an opportunity and a bicycle runs down to Dr. Kanuga's dispensary the moment I have an inflammation in one of the eyes. This is quite true. But poor sanatanists, do they know that during the last fifteen months I have not stepped into a train even once nor sent anybody bicycling to Dr. Kanuga?

Tell Surendra that to get cough and low fever is against the rules of the Ashram. How did he get them? He should write to me in detail or someone else should, whose turn it may be to write. Darbari may not have used many of his turns; if so, let him use one of them for writing to me. I hope Surendra gets regulation food for a sick prisoner. I suppose Vithal knows that his father and sisters have returned to the Ashram.

I have one golden suggestion for safeguarding health. Anybody who finds that a certain item of food does not agree with him should leave it. Nobody dies for remaining hungry, whereas it can be proved that 999 people out of a thousand fall ill through

over-eating or eating wrong things. I can say much else, but it will serve no purpose.

If you or any other friends wish to discuss with me any questions in connection with the movement against untouchability, you will be permitted to see me. Of course you should not ask for such permission if you have nothing to discuss with me about that subject.

And now the replies to the questions asked by Mohanlal, the school-teacher from Bavla:

1. By *abhyasa*[1] the *Gita* means regular reading of something which is worth pondering over, though one may not feel interested in it. Such regular study enables one to maintain the current of one's thoughts in the right direction. The Lord has coupled *vairagya*[2] with *abhyasa*. But the two things are practically the same. Fixing one's mind in *abhyasa* necessarily means withdrawing it from other things, and that is *vairagya*.

2. *Prasad* may be described as serene contentment. We feel contented when we get the things of the world which we desire, but such contentment is useless and springs from the satisfaction of the senses. Since the goods of the world are short-lived, the contentment which they bring is also short-lived. The goods of spiritual life are eternal possessions, and so the contentment produced by them is also abiding. It is an experience beyond the grasp of the senses, an experience of the mind and the heart. One can, therefore, feel true contentment only when one becomes indifferent to the happiness of the senses. This is the contentment that the *Gita* talks about.

Regards from us all to everybody there. I got Raojibhai's letter. I will reply to him by and by.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9651. Courtesy: Chandrakant F. Shah

[1] Practice
[2] Renunciation

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533. CABLE TO VITHALBHAI J. PATEL

[On or after *April 20, 1933*][1]

PATEL
CARE TRAVENEX
VIENNA

MAY GOD SPARE YOU. WIRE PROGRESS.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 21000

534. HOW DOES THE STREAM OF BHAKTI FLOW?

[*April 21, 1933*][2]

A lover of the Bhagavata dharma writes:[3]

The stream of *bhakti* does not flow from the pen. It is not a matter pertaining to the intellect. That stream can only flow from the cavern of the heart; and when it does flow, no power will be able to stop its current. Who can stop the current of the Ganga?

I am indeed trying for such *bhakti* but the effort cannot succeed through any verbal grandeur. The only way to it is karmayoga. A total indifference towards the result is necessary for that yoga. Karmayoga is but another name for action which is wholly devoid of any desire for results.

Hence, I do not see the need to write any article specially in order to make the stream of devotion flow. If every word of the *Harijan*—whether it is in English, Hindi or Gujarati—is an echo of the devotion which is within, it will automatically make an impression.

I have grasped the intention of the lover of the Bhagavata dharma. If there is devotion within me, and, to the extent that it

[1] This cable was drafted on a telegram received on April 20, 1933 from Dr. Purushottam Patel in reply to Gandhiji's to him dated April 19, 1933; *vide* p. 444.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Viyogi Hari", pp. 480-1.

[3] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had requested Gandhiji to write one article on *bhakti* in each *Harijan* issue so that people would not indulge in unnecessary discussions but follow the path of pure *bhakti*. It was his firm belief that only Gandhiji could do this in an age of atheism.

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is there, that devotion will not fail to touch others. This is because I believe that a change of heart can be brought about through the Bhagavata dharma alone. That dharma is contagious. Once it is revealed, it does not leave anyone untouched. When it is truly revealed in any of us, the Harijans and the sanatanists will automatically become aware of it. This at least I can say for myself that all my actions—writing, speaking, walking—are undertaken with the object of generating devotion within me. It is my confirmed belief that if Hinduism is to be saved, there is no other way to do so.

Religion has never been, and can never be, saved through hooliganism or hypocrisy, through rhetoric or beautiful articles. Religion can be saved only through the purification and penance of those professing it. And, the author of the *Bhagavata* has clearly stated that in this age the path of *bhakti* alone can be pursued without difficulty; perhaps it is the sole path.

The question may then arise why I write or speak. The answer is contained in what I have stated above regarding my actions. That activity itself shows that even if there has been any flowering of the Bhagavata dharma in me, it can in no way be said to have attained perfection; and my activity in that direction is for that very development. And, if that is really so, others will catch a glimpse of devotion in one or the other of these activities.

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 30-4-1933

535. FIVE QUESTIONS ON VARNADHARMA

A gentleman has sent me the following questions:

1. What work should the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra do to earn their livelihood?
2. In what way should the four varnas serve?
3. Can work for livelihood be the same as work for service? Or are the two different?
4. You have written that "in order to revive varnashrama it is necessary that all should voluntarily become Shudras". If the other three varnas (the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya) embrace the Shudra varna, will they not be guilty of the sin of giving up their dharma and adopting another?
5. You have written, "A small varna aspiring to *Brahmajnana* fortunately

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exists today through which sanatana dharma will again shine in its purity and show the world the path to happiness." What is that varna?

I seek to prevent no one from asking questions. But I must say that if my writings were read carefully many questions that are asked would be answered of themselves. An article in which questions raised in it are not answered is considered useless. Articles treating of moral questions should not be read only once. If such an article is read over and over again with concentration, then the questions included in them solve themselves easily. I should therefore request the correspondent to reread my article on varnashrama. He will then find that what I am going to say here is already contained in it. I address this suggestion to the readers in general. Let not the correspondent think that it applies only to him. The habit of reading is increasing in us, but the habit of pondering is diminishing and therefore we have become somewhat helpless. On everything we want to know another's opinion. We have lost the power of original thinking which comes from constant pondering. It is truly pitiable that things have come to such a pass. Once a principle is understood we should have the capacity to understand its corollaries. With just a little practice this power can be developed.

I shall now answer the questions:

1. The Brahmin will impart to society knowledge of the Brahman. The Kshatriya will protect the country. The Vaishya will earn wealth through trade and commerce. The Shudra will do service. All these will earn their livelihood each by doing the work of his own varna. That will be enough.

2. Varna, strictly speaking, is a duty not a right. Hence the existence of varna can only be for service, not for self. For this reason there is no one high and no one low. A man who considers himself above others, is worse than a fool despite all his wisdom. Because of his arrogance or superiority he falls from varna. Here, it is also necessary to understand that there is nothing in varnashrama to prevent a Shudra from acquiring learning or defending his country; yes, the Shudra may not barter his knowledge or take to defending his country for purposes of livelihood. It is also not enjoined that the Brahmin or the Kshatriya may not do menial work. But they must not earn their livelihood from such work. If this simple dharma were scrupulously followed, all the disorders that face society today, all the jealousies and rivalries that are rampant, all this craze to amass wealth, all the falsehood that is prevalent, all this production of weapons of war would vanish.

Whether the whole world follows this principle or not, whether all Hindus do so or not, even if some follow this, the world will gain by so much. My faith that the salvation of the world lies in following varnadharma grows stronger each day. The true meaning of varnadharma is service. Whatever is done should be done in the spirit of service. Where is bargaining in service?

Now comes the question of manual labour. As far as I understand the *Gita*, it mentions many kinds of *yajnas*. One of them is manual labour. It is the duty of all the castes to do manual labour as *yajna* for the preservation of the world. No one can escape this *yajna*. Without body labour the journey of life itself is impossible. He who does not perform this *yajna* of labour is truly a thief. To say that manual labour is meant for Shudras only shows ignorance of dharma. Work of service does not necessarily mean manual work. He who washes his own dishes is doing manual work but not work of service. A watchman who earns his livelihood by standing at the gate does no manual work; but he certainly does work of service.

3. There is no need now to answer this question.

4. In asking this question, my correspondent has perhaps forgotten that in my opinion varnadharma today is all but destroyed. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas have long since given up their varna duties and arrogated rights. The sin has been committed. Now the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, who have fallen from varnadharma can by voluntarily embracing Shudradharma absolve themselves of the sin. They never had any right to treat the Shudras as low-born.

5. Those who follow the Bhagavata dharma and, for love of God, barely earning their livelihood, always serve their fellow-beings, impart divine knowledge to the world. There is no doubt about this. There are among them men of learning as well as without learning. They do not make a show of their work. I do not know them all by their names. But I know that there are such people even though their number is very small.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 21-4-1933

CWMG - IIV

536. *HOW CAN THE BIRTHLESS BE BORN?*

The teacher with whose conundrums relating to temples I dealt in an earlier article[1] again writes:[2]

There are many principles in Hinduism which are comprehensible to reason and many others that transcend reason. The doctrine of incarnation is a matter of reason as well as of faith. In so far as it is a matter of faith, I do not think that there will be books explaining it as there are books explaining material things. There are some books on this subject in English, but even they do not fully satisfy the mind. Possibly there are works on this subject in Sanskrit but I do not know about them. I owe my faith in incarnation to Tulsidas. I would advise seekers after truth like this teacher to study the works of Tulsidas. If anyone knows any work on this subject, I would request him to inform me about it, so that I can write to the teacher. But what is needed in matters such as incarnation is not books so much as reflection.

Now let us consider the matter on the plane of reason. Whatever qualities are attributed to God, are also attributed to the *atman*. Just as God is unborn, unageing and undying, so is the *atman*. The *atman* is an eternal part of God, and that is why it possesses the attributes of God. The *atman* is birthless and yet is born in body and therefore it must be considered as a partial incarnation of God. If we take this view, there should be no difficulty in considering one in whom many qualities of God are present, an incarnation of God. Full incarnation cannot be understood through the intellect. This is a matter of imagination as well as of faith. The Hindu, from the circumstances of his past births and his present birth, will consider Rama, Krishna and others as incarnations of God. One who sees God in the whole universe, should be accepted as an incarnation of God. Just as we see a mass of water as the sea, in the same way why can we not see the world of living things as an incarnation of God? Whether we call this an incarnation or not is a different matter.

[1] *Vide* "Posers", pp. 111-2.

[2] The extract quoted is not translated here. The correspondent had questioned the doctrine of incarnation, calling it un-Vedic and asked: "How can One birthless and deathless be born?"

We are not concerned with name. This world is pervaded by God. Wherever we look there is only God. That which has name and form is an incarnation of God; so much should be clear to the eyes of faith. If we can but have this much of faith in our hearts, it is very possible that we would keep clear of sins. Knowing well that God dwells in every heart, why should we follow the path of falsehood and why should we sin?

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 21-4-1933

537. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 21, 1933

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your long letter giving me your views about the proposed visit to British Guiana, South Africa, etc. I think that these outposts have come to abide with you. I do not need any elaborate argument to convince me of it. Now and again you are bound to receive a call from them and it is best to respond to such calls. You should therefore undoubtedly go to British Guiana, and then to South Africa, then to East Africa and return *via* India. That will give you mental satisfaction, keep you up to date with the things for which you have qualified yourself and it will give satisfaction to the people concerned, and the work that you can do in these several parts, you alone can do. It does not matter a bit whether it appears today substantial or insubstantial, and whilst you are absent on duty from England you will believe, I shall certainly believe, that it will not suffer because you will be absent, not for your pleasure, but on duty.

I hope that the care about your brother has not proved too great for you and that his removal to a hospital has benefited him.

Love from us all.

MOHAN

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 313; also G.N. 1303

CWMG-II-IV

538. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 21, 1933

MY DEAR GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have your letter. Copies of the *Harijan* will be sent to the six gentlemen named by you.[1] The first copy will go under a covering letter from Sastri. Lord Reading and Lothian are being sent a copy of *Harijan* under instruction from Agatha Harrison.

I had a surprise visit from your father.[2] It gave me great joy to meet him with his Shastri. We had a long and interesting discussion on untouchability. He told me that he was meeting you in Gwalior. I do hope that your daughter-in-law has already gone to Sinhagad. Of course I will see your son when he comes. I did not know that he also was not keeping good health.

I shall take note of the two donations[3] in the *Harijan*. Viyogi Hari also writes to me expressing the hope that *Harijan Sevak* will be self-supporting within a short time. I see you have ceased to write for it altogether. That's wrong. You ought to make it a point to send something every week.

I hope you will undergo the necessary operation[4] at Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,

From a photostat: S.N. 21011

[1] These were: Private Secretary to Governor of Bengal, Sir Edward Benthall, Calcutta, Sir Walter Layton, Sir Henry Strackosch, Lord Reading and Lord Lothian, London.

[2] Raja Baldevdas Birla visited Gandhiji in jail on April 18, 1933.

[3] From Kamlapat Singhania and Rameshwar Prasad Bagla of Kanpur; *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", pp. 400-1.

[4] Of the nose

CWMG - LIV

539. LETTER TO K. ISWARA DUTTA[1]

April 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Apart from the fact that I have not a moment to spare for the article you will want me to write for you, I may not contribute such articles under the restrictions governing my incarceration.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. ISWARA DUTT
"THE SWADESH BHAGTA"
ALLAHABAD

From a microfilm: S.N. 21027

540. LETTER TO GOSWAMI SATRADHIKAR OF GARAMUR

April 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am quite sure that those who are excommunicated for doing Harijan service should bear the suffering meekly and you will find that the opposition will subside.[2] I have already dealt with the subject fairly fully in the pages of the *Harijan* which you should read.

Yours sincerely,

HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI GOSWAMI
SATRADHIKAR OF GARAMUR
CAMP, NORTH GAUHATI, ASSAM

From a microfilm: S.N. 21021

[1] The addressee, an assistant editor of *The Leader*, was to edit the annual number of *The Swadeshi Bhagta*, an illustrated monthly in English and Hindi. He wanted an article on the ways in which Harijans could advance the cause of swadeshi and *vice versa*.

[2] The addressee was the president of the Assam Servants of Untouchables Society and had asked for guidance in the face of a social boycott.

541. LETTER TO E. HILLIARD

April 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 18th instant. I have glanced through the interesting article[1] you have sent me. The quotations given in it are very appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

E. HILLIARD, ESQ
4 HARRIS ROAD
BENSON TOWN, BANGALORE

From a microfilm: S.N. 21026

542. LETTER TO D. C. PARVATE[2]

April 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter.[3] Do please tell Deshdas Paisa Fund Ranade that so far as my views are concerned, they are well known. I am wholly against coercive satyagraha for anything whatsoever, least of all for temple-entry. So far, therefore, as I am concerned, I will certainly discountenance any method of coercion and our friend should know that I have successfully prevented people from offering coercive satyagraha for temple-entry. I do hope that the Deshdas is doing well. I suppose it is no use my even suggesting the dropping of a fast undertaken with a sacred determination. I hope that at the end of it he will not be over-weak.

Yours sincerely,

D. C. PARVATE
POONA

From a microfilm: S.N. 21019

[1] "Examining the Universe". The addressee had sent it on learning of Gandhiji's active interest in astronomy.

[2] A worker of the Govardhak Sangh

[3] The addressee had said in it that Deshdas Ranade who had gone on fast along with Gandhiji in September 1932 had again undertaken a fast to protest against the use of satyagraha for obtaining temple-entry for the Harijans as it amounted to coercion.

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543. LETTER TO JHAMATMAL RAMCHAND

April 21, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. It is difficult to know whether there were or there were not quarrels of some kind or other in respect of temple-entry in the days of Buddha and Guru Nanak.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. JHAMATMAL RAMCHAND
C/O R. HASSARAM & SONS
145 MAIN STREET, COLOMBO

From a microfilm: S.N. 21018

544. LETTER TO RAMACHANDRA

April 21, 1933

MY DEAR RAMACHANDRA[1],

I have your letter of the 18th April. After full consideration and a knowledge of how utterly neglected N. is by R. , I have come to the conclusion that she should come over to Poona. There is plenty of Harijan work for her in this part of the country. I have therefore telegraphed to her to come. I have not heard from her. I wrote[2] to a local pleader in Chitaldrug who had commenced correspondence with me to advance the necessary fare to her if R. did not give it to her. I have undertaken to refund the fare. I am now waiting to see what N. does. I shall deal with your question about the Hindu temple. Your previous letter had escaped me.

I am glad you had a visit from the Yuvaraja and a donation[3] and that you had a donation from Shri Purushottamdas Thakurdas also.

[1] Joint Secretary, The Mysore State Anti-Untouchability League, Bangalore

[2] *Vide* "Letter to B. K. Ramachandra Rao", p. 440.

[3] Yuvaraja of Mysore had visited the Deena Sangh schools and had given a donation of Rs. 500. A full report by the addressee was published in *Harijan*, 13-5-1933.

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I had a letter from Brother Narayana himself. I have already written to him.

In due course I shall receive from Delhi a copy of your detailed report which I shall read with attention, and I shall glance through the report of the Gurukul Seva Sangh also.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21015

545. LETTER TO DR. ARTHUR SAUNDERS

April 21, 1933

DEAR DR. SAUNDERS,

I thank you for your prompt reply to my letter[1] about Mira Bai. It gives me great relief.

Yours sincerely,

DR. ARTHUR SAUNDERS
37 HARLEY STREET
LONDON W.1

From a microfilm: S.N. 21025

546. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

April 21, 1933

MY DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

I have your several letters. I had seen Chintamani's caution about the Pact.

The Bengal Census Report I shall send for and see at once and let you know the impression the reading of the portion referred to by you leaves on me.

As to the Nattar-Harijan conflict, you will see my article in this week's *Harijan*.[2] I have now your additional report[3]. I shall keep it in my file, but I am not going to deal with it next week. I shall watch developments and deal with the situation as occasion may arise.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1119; also S.N. 21022

[1] *Vide* Vol. LIII, p. 473.
[2] *Vide* "What It Means To Be A Harijan", pp. 483-5.
[3] On conflict in Ramnad District

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547. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

April 21, 1933

MY DEAR THAKKAR BAPA,

I have your letter of 17th instant enclosing the bill from Kodanda Rao. You can check the bill far better than I can. I can only say that he came promptly whenever I sent him a message to come during the days when I used to issue statements, and I suppose that is what you want me to state. The dates given by him I have no doubt are in perfect order.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21023

548. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

April 21, 1933

CHI. KAKA,

I got your letter after three days of waiting. It seems that you are able to digest milk well. I need not, therefore, say anything more, though that book on milk diet lays great stress on rest and on hip-bath in hot water. Get as strong as a horse and bring the *Autobiography* up to date. To expect me to do that will be a vain hope.

I did learn that Anandi had fever for a day, but I did not know about the x-ray photograph. However cheap such photographs may become, it will never be possible for the tens of millions of our countrymen to have the benefit, and I feel, therefore, that we should not go in for them. But I know quite well that such ideas of mine cannot be put into practice. How much can a broken vessel, which is me, contain? And can one offer anything from a vessel that is empty?

I did not know anything about Gangabehn. Please send me Khambhatta's address. I shall try to spot Mercury. I had just looked a little into Golikere's book when the book on milk diet arrived. I am glad that Bal came and saw you. Has Ghanshyamdas's daughter-in-law arrived?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9499. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

549. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

April 21, 1933

CHI. KAKA,

I got your letter.

There is no harm in your keeping the book. You should read only that which is good. Learn the eye exercises from Allabehn and straightway start doing them. If you can dispense with the glasses, nothing like it.

Observe fully all the rules regarding milk diet. What more could we desire if it improves our health permanently? We shall also be able to know more about Dinshaw's treatment.

You should not ask me anything further about . . .[1]. You may now do as you think fit.

I got your questions about *Harijan*. I will reply to them.

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 9498. Courtesy: D. B. Kalelkar

550. LETTER TO NARAYAN M. KHARE

April 21, 1933

CHI. PANDITJI,

I got your letter.

We should not give up the struggle against the Chharas. Don't mind if they have cut some babul trees. We should go on reasoning with them without making them shy. If our work for them is sincere, it will bear fruit some day. Somebody must go among them regularly.

I understand what you say about Dattatreya. You may write to me whenever necessary.

Keep Mathuri[2] there only if you are sure that you can take care of her and if she herself is willing to stay. For the sake of music, remove the other restriction from her. She can learn some music even with Balkrishna's help. We should, however, carry

[1] The name was scored out by the jail authorities.

[2] Addressee's daughter

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out whatever decision Lakshmibehn[1] arrives at. I will discuss the matter with her when I meet her tomorrow. But it seems from your letter that she will not be able to come tomorrow. If so, I think we shall be able to meet next week.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 246. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

551. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

April 21, 1933

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

I have your letter and also the old articles which will be returned. It appears that with the cessation of intensive propaganda activity the work on the eradication of untouchability has slackened. But I like it. This work does not require rushing, there should be no rush in religious matters. Only what is done in a calm manner proves to be true and solid work. I think it is necessary to take a consensus of opinion, but I have some doubt about its being performed in a true spirit. Discuss this with Thakkar Bapa and Ghanshyamdas and then let me know. Only a truly religious person can take up the responsibility of this job. Have you any such person in mind?

I would prefer that even others devoted to Harijan service do not enter the temples where Harijans are not allowed. This is more difficult than the former undertaking, it may involve breach of peace and some propaganda ought to precede picketing. Talk over this matter too and write to me again. Also, who can organize this work? We must first have a picture of it before I start writing about it in the papers.

As regards the article on *bhakti*, one is being sent with this letter.[2] The second article is based on some questions asked by a Harijan.[3]

Kakasaheb is at Sinhagad taking nature-cure treatment for his digestion trouble. If possible, I shall certainly get him to write something when he comes down.

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] *Vide* "How Does the Stream of *Bhakti* Flow", pp. 467-8.

[3] *Vide* Vol. LV, "A Harijan's Questions", 5-5-1933 and also "Letter to P. N. Rajbhoj", p. 452.

It is gratifying that the number of subscribers to *Harijan Sevak* is increasing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1074

552. TELEGRAM TO B. R. AMBEDKAR

[On or before *April 22, 1933*][1]

YOURS. COME SUNDAY BETWEEN NINE TEN.[2]

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 20993

553. REMEMBER 30TH APRIL[3]

Those who would organize a proper concentrated programme for 30th instant, the day fixed as Harijan Day, would do well to take time by the forelock and make all preparations in a methodical manner. Every Committee is free to add to or subtract from the items I have suggested.

I hope it is clearly understood that, where no other work is at all possible, there will be at least substantial collections made. I know that collectors often despise copper collections. Let me remind them of the English proverb: "Take care of your pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves." And let me give a tit-bit from my own experience as an expert collector. Among the masses I remember having collected not pice, i.e., quarter-anna pieces, but pies, in Orissa, and when the collections were counted, the total was a respectable amount. We are a country of many millions and, therefore, in my opinion, the copper pies of the millions have, when put together, an infinitely greater value than the rupees of a few thousand middle-class men or a few lakhs from half a dozen millionaires. If the collectors will have

[1] This telegram was in reply to Ambedkar's letter of April 19, 1933 and they met on Sunday, April 23, 1933. This telegram, therefore, must have been sent on or before April 22.

[2] Ambedkar discussed with Gandhiji the possibilities of the revision of the Poona Pact and particularly the panel system.

[3] This appeared under the heading "Notes".

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faith in themselves, in their cause and in the masses, they will go from door to door and collect whatever coppers are given. A pie given with a full heart will be to me a token that the giver wants untouchability to go and that he or she has contributed his or her mite towards the movement. If the Committees will make a faithful report of the results of their collections and show not only how much they have collected but also from how many people, it will give one a fair index of the strength of the movement. Needless to say, the work must be done quietly and as gently as possible, and when it is done without fuss by door-to-door visits, there need be no opposition from any quarter. Where householders are unwilling to give anything, there should be no argument with them, no ill will shown towards them. The donations must be free-will offerings.

One thing I would suggest to the medical fraternity. I have just had a report from the schoolmaster whose doings I am noting in these columns from time to time, showing the need Harijans have of medical assistance. In the case I have in mind, a physician, immediately a case of pneumonia was reported to him, went free of charge to the Harijan quarters and not only gave relief in this particular case, but, much to the delight of the Harijans, examined the other cases and offered to go freely whenever his assistance was needed. It will be a striking demonstration if the medical men in every part of India met together and appointed visitors from among themselves to go to the Harijan quarters, speak to the inmates on the necessity of observing the laws of hygiene and sanitation and offer medical relief wherever it was required. Naturally, this work to be done on an ambitious scale can only be done without expectation of any fees. No organization can undertake the task of rewarding the services that the medical men might render to Harijans; whereas, if the medical men took this burden upon themselves, there are so many now in India that by a judicious distribution of work no pressure will be felt by any single physician.

The third thing that occurs to me is for the women workers all over the country to combine in order to do away with the inhuman practice of giving to Harijans the leavings of food. I have a letter[1] from a Harijan in Karachi who asks in piteous terms that the women might at least shoulder the burden of having this reform accomplished at once. He says that they think nothing of giving to Harijans food that is rotten and unfit for human

[1] *Vide* Vol. LV, "Complaint against Women", 23-4-1933.

consumption, food that is stinking, that is dirty beyond description, and this too, lest they might be polluted, they throw from their balconies or from their verandahs into the laps of debased Harijans; and he adds in agony, "The pity of it is that the Harijans would feel it a deprivation if these leavings were not given to them." It would certainly be a grand thing if earnest women all over banded themselves together and made it a point of seeing their sisters and weaning them from the practice. I have every hope that in this mission of mercy and humanity even the sanatanists will co-operate; but whether they do or not, the duty before the women who realize the abomination of the practice is to bestir themselves and quicken the conscience of their sisters who do not even perhaps know that they are offending humanity by making themselves responsible for the degradation of those who are, after all, their own kith and kin. And in this connection, I would invite the attention of workers to the concrete suggestions I made the other day in answer to a Dehra Dun student.[1]

Harijan, 22-4-1933

554. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HARIJAN

Elsewhere[2] the reader will find how the Harijans fare in the city of Allahabad in the north, known to the millions of Hindus as Prayag, one of the most noted among the places of Hindu pilgrimage and situated at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna.

Let him turn also to the extreme south. There he will find a cluster of villages inhabited by the land-owning ryots known as Nattars and their landless 'semi-slaves', the Harijans. There was a conflict between these two during May, June and July last year. There was also a resolution in the Madras Council, carried by 44 votes against 22, recommending to the Government the appointment of a committee to inquire into and report on the alleged atrocities committed by the Nattars on the Harijans. Nothing is said as yet to have been done by the Government on the recommendation.

Sjt. Amritlal Thakkar has, however, sent me a fairly full report. The subject is still topical, inasmuch as the trouble is by no means over and may burst forth any moment. The two sections are living, as it were, in a state of armed neutrality. The inquiry

[1] *Vide* "Students and Vacation", pp. 264-6.

[2] *Vide* the following item.

was conducted by Sjt. A. Rangaswami Iyengar, Advocate, and President of the District Harijan Committee, Sjt. Lakshmiratan Bharati, Advocate, and Secretary of the District Committee, Sjt. V. E. Eapen, Advocate, and Sjt. Ramachandran, the Secretary of the Tamilnad Board, S.U.S. They visited Devakottah, Pavanakottah, Paramakkudi, Eluvankottah and Chittanur. The trouble began during the temple festival at Eluvankottah. The Harijans "till recently had to work for the Nattars on conditions prescribed by the latter".

> During the trouble the Nattars raided the village (Pavanakottah) and looted the Harijan houses. They tied some of the Harijans, who wanted to resist, to a tree. . . . The little schoolhouse in the Harijan quarter was burnt down. The little granaries made of cow-dung and hay in front of most Harijan houses were broken to bits and the grain looted. These granaries look more like huge jars than like rooms. We saw the ruins of a schoolhouse and the grain jars.

The report proceeds:

> The Harijans themselves include two divisions—Pallas and Pariahs. The Pallas ran away at the first sign of trouble to Devakottah, leaving their women and children in the village, who were considerably harassed by the raiders. Quite a number of these Pallas were Christians even before. The Pariahs met with more trouble. The Christian pastor who did the conversion now pays a weekly visit for prayer meetings and general propaganda. He has also consented to give them a new school of their own. The Pallas returned to their homes earlier and the Pariahs a little later.
>
> Four families consisting of 14 members embraced Christianity 3 months ago. It is expected more families will follow suit. As far as we could ascertain, there is no trouble between the converts and the Harijans. In answer to our questions, one of the converted men said that they had become Christians because the missionaries promised them protection and care.

The Harijans told the Committee:

> The Nattars want us to observe exactly old customs and manners. They do not like our men to wear shirts or upper clothes as we like, or our women to put on frocks and saris. The old custom was that our clothes should not go below the knee and any upper cloth should be tied round the loins only. The women were not allowed to cover their bodies above the waist, except with their hands. In the old times, in religious processions, we had to go doing a particular dance. Even today, the Harijans on meeting a Nattar has to say "*sevakam*" meaning "at your service". They do not allow us to work where we like or for whom we

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like. We have to work for them for what wages they give and wherever they order. They do not like us to use brass vessels and are angry when our women put on ornaments. Only two weeks ago, in a near village, Paramakkudi, a woman who went with a frock was spat upon by a Nattar and asked not to be arrogant in the Nattar street.

A Nattar Headman stated as follows:

We have no quarrel with the Harijans. Only we do not want him to go against old customs and conventions. He now refuses to work for us. He asks for high wages. We don't much mind his putting on shirt or his women having ornaments or frocks in his own village. We only object to his parading them in our village and during the temple festival, when there are large crowds of all kinds of people. If their men and women dress as the rest of us, how can we differentiate them among the festival crowds? This results in a general mix-up and consequent pollution. We have no objection to their dress, as they want it, but our difficulty is: how are we to distinguish them in a crowd? We don't object to their going to schools, but if they come to a common school, they must sit separate. We know very well that they cannot remain exactly where they were in old times. But we are bound to resist arrogance and revolt.

The agony need not be protracted. Instances elsewhere of resentment of and assault on Harijans dressing well or Harijan brides and bridegrooms carried in palanquins in their marriage procession have come to light.[1] It is up to sanatanists to join hands with reformers and put an end to the arrogation of superiority by one caste over another in the name of religion.

The reader will be glad to know that the Committee do not propose to be satisfied with the mere investigation they have made, important as it is. They have followed it up by a visit to the sub-collector, who has promised protection, should there be trouble, which is said to be impending in a village called Uruvatti during a coming festival. The members are also seeking the assistance of influential Nattars and other well-known men living in the neighbourhood in bringing about honourable peace between the Nattars and the Harijans.

They feel, too, that "nothing but education will finally solve the difficulty". They have, therefore, proposed that a string of schools should be opened throughout the districts, both day and night schools. Let us wish success to the laudable efforts of the Committee in both the directions.

Harijan, 22-4-1933

[1] *Vide* "What Harijans Think", p. 108.

CWMG-IIV

555. *IMMEDIATE DUTY*

The Allahabad branch of the Servants of Untouchables Society (U.P. Provincial Board) had appointed a committee consisting of Sjts. P. N. Sapru, Bisheshwar Prasad and Ramnath Dar to report upon the condition of the Harijans of that city and to recommend measures for its amelioration. The Committee has presented an elaborate report covering fifty-eight pages of typed matter, excluding appendices. The Committee is to be congratulated on its production. One misses in the report the number of the Harijan population. The city excluding the cantonment has a population of only 1,73,895.

I do not propose to deal with the whole of this important document. Those who would study it should procure a copy from the Allahabad Office.

The Mehtars and the Doms are by far the most ill-treated and uncared for, not only by the *savarna* Hindus but also by all the citizens represented by the cosmopolitan municipality.

This is what the Committee says about their condition:

> The very approach to depressed-class quarters has a most depressing effect upon one's mind. Some of the quarters in which they live, particularly those in the heart of the city, are literally unfit for human habitation. The houses are dark, dreary and damp. They do not look like places of human habitation. Their houses generally consist of one room of 5 square yards, in which a whole family of four to six has to live. There is no light and air in these houses, no verandah or open space in front and no arrangement for latrine, kitchen or bath. The lanes in front of these houses are extremely narrow, kutcha, muddy, without any drain or light. The whole atmosphere of these localities is foul; there are hardly any arrangements for sanitation; and the sights one sees there are disgusting and loathsome. Not much can be expected of human beings who have to live not more than seven feet from scandalously dirty public lavatories. We have found taps attached to these lavatories for the domestic and bathing purposes of the sweepers living in the vicinity. One is filled with shame and horror at the discovery that there are places (in the twentieth century) in a city, which claims to be the capital of a big Province and which has a developed public life, where large groups of men, women and children lead a paralysed existence in the midst of all this filth and dirt. Who can belittle the importance of physical surroundings upon

man's character? Little wonder, then, that the "untouchable" is now lost to all sense of the clean and the beautiful in life. The tyranny of society sits tight upon him; he has little initiative and less independence left. It is hard to write with restraint about the conditions in which the Mehtar is compelled to live, and we would request earnestly all those who are interested in social welfare work to verify for themselves the accuracy of our statements by visits to, say, the Phul Talab, Bhainsa Godown or the Kali Mai-ka-Than in Allahabad.

Of Kali Mai-ka-Than the report says:

> According to Municipal estimates, 1192 men and 1220 women visit these latrines daily. There is no light in these latrines, with the result that men have to ease themselves in the evening in the open space outside. The inmates of the houses facing the latrine use the space between the latrines and their houses as their courtyard and playground for their children. There is no wall round the latrine, with the result that the lower part of the person using them can be seen from the houses of sweepers. There are separate blocks for men and women in this latrine, but the wall dividing the blocks is low and a man who stands on the *khuddi* can see the women on the other side. There is only one tap and that, too, near the latrine and quite close to a cesspool. The water supply is irregular and wholly inadequate. The tap is used both for cleaning the latrines and bathing and domestic purposes. The cesspools attached to the latrines often overflow with urine and are in a most insanitary condition. Sweepers have to go down into the cesspools barefooted for the purpose of cleaning them thoroughly. Both the land lying about the locality and the main lane are kutcha and get muddy in the rainy season. There is no platform for transferring night-soil from the public and private latrines into the night-soil carts. Sweepers have to mount the cart with heavy loads of dirt in order to place the night-soil into the carts. Most of the receptacles in the latrines are in a damaged condition. Being also small, they get filled up soon and filth overflows them and passes along with urine and water into the cesspools.
>
> The number of night-soil carts is four only. We have seen sweepers throwing the contents of their *tokras* containing human excreta on the ground on account of the carts being too full. We claim that the facts stated above cannot be challenged.

In my estimation, everything else in the report pales into insignificance compared to this. That the other cities, if there was the same investigation as at Allahabad, are likely to show the same woeful state of things or that the latter has gone on for years would be no excuse for continuing the condition revealed by the report. When a snake is discovered in a house, one does not delay

its removal because it is also discovered that it had been there for years. The plague spot of Allahabad is worse than the imagined snake in the imagined house. I hope that the members of the Committee and the Allahabad Branch of the Society will not rest nor give rest to the Municipality of Allahabad, till the disgraceful condition is radically altered and these most useful members of society are decently housed in a decent spot. I know a case in which fifteen hundred inhabitants of a plague spot were removed within twenty-four hours of the outbreak of plague in their midst and housed in tents till permanent quarters were found elsewhere.[1] This case demands no less summary measures. And if Allahabad leads the way, I have little doubt that the other cities will follow.

Harijan, 22-4-1933

556. A HARIJAN SEVAK'S DIFFICULTY

A Harijan sevak writes:

> You know that the anti-untouchability worker has to suffer at the hands of the orthodox priests. They refuse to officiate at religious ceremonies at the homes of such workers. You have stated[2] in the *Harijan* No. 4 that the reformers should learn to dispense with the outward form. Will you not dispense with the priest altogether? The latter works only for money. Many priests to my knowledge do not even pronounce the *mantras* accurately; still fewer know their meaning. They trade on the gullibility of the public. What merit can such officiating carry with it? Such humbug is more rampant at places of pilgrimage than elsewhere. I am myself a Brahmin. The *upanayanam* ceremony was performed upon me when I was 13 years old. At the end of the ceremony, the priest said I was a Shudra up to the time that I was without the sacred thread, but that, having put on the sacred thread, I became a Brahmin. I had to repeat this formula before my parents when I went to make obeisance to them. Here the idea given to me was that after having taken the sacred thread I had risen to a higher status. How do you reconcile this with your claim that there is no high-and-low status in Hinduism?

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 236.
[2] *Vide* Vol. LIII, pp. 461-2.

CWMG - LIV

I want to tell you another thing. When I was at school, our class had a debate on untouchability. An orthodox teacher presided on the occasion. I remember his having said something like this : Our womenfolk become untouchable every month and are treated like any other untouchable. Then, why should we not observe such untouchability regarding those who are called untouchables?

I have considerably abridged what is a long letter from this correspondent. What he says about the ignorance of many priests and the show that they make of learning is unfortunately only too true. The remedy for it is a general levelling up of the character of the people and the spread of the right stamp of education, including a workable knowledge of Sanskrit. I believe in the great power which Vivekananda used to ascribe to Sanskrit. We are unnecessarily frightened by the difficulty of learning Sanskrit. For a persevering student it is no more difficult than any of the other languages. I do not mean that we can easily gain a knowledge of Sanskrit that would enable us to understand the intricacies of ancient texts, but I do suggest that to gain a workable knowledge of Sanskrit, to acquire the correct pronunciation, so as to be able to know whether the priest is performing his task correctly or whether a pandit is misleading us, is not a difficult task, certainly not one-tenth as difficult as it is to acquire an equivalent knowledge of English. And then it must not be forgotten that such a knowledge of Sanskrit gives one a master-key to the knowledge of the majority of Indian languages, not excluding the Southern group.

But I must not stray away from my subject. Till this happy day arrives, we have to do the best we can with the tools at our disposal. And if we cannot get a trustworthy Brahmin priest to officiate, the *Bhagavata* and the later saints have supplied us with an incredibly simple solution. At every ceremony, whether it is in connection with marriage, birth or death or any other religious function, the uttering of the sacred name from the heart is enough to ensure the presence and benediction of God at the ceremony. The fact is that God is there all the time, only we do not realize it. The recitation of the sacred name, hallowed by the practice of an unbroken line of saints, wakes us from our ignorance and works as infallibly as an electric spark, and immediately makes the presence of God felt in our midst. I say this only for those who have faith. Those who have none should dismiss it from their minds altogether. For them, even the presence of the orthodox priest is a mere mechanical act, an ignorant obedience to custom.

They derive no advantage, no merit from the act. An honest orthodox priest has a place in the Hindu family. He is fast losing it by his own folly. He may be safe if he sheds his laziness, his ignorance, and, what is worse, his dishonesty. The present movement is indirectly intended to effect that reform. Seeing that the movement is one of internal purification, we shall never achieve it, unless there is a general sweeping up of all that is evil. Who can make the real beginning, if not he who calls himself a Brahmin?

As for the *upanayanam* ceremony, though I have discarded it myself, it has, there is no doubt, a deep meaning. The sacred thread is a sign of new birth, a regeneration. Before the adoption of the thread, there is but one birth, that is the physical. The adoption of the thread is a sign of the second birth, that is the spiritual. It is a sign of initiation—of a new life of dedication to God. It is, therefore, a higher life in the sense of greater responsibility in relation to oneself, but it gives one no greater status in relation to his neighbour. Indeed, at the time of initiation, there ought to be a definite realization that from that date one becomes a servant of the poorest and the lowliest. And to my mind, the thought that all are Shudras till the ceremony of initiation and dedication is a beautiful and ennobling thought. Unfortunately, these rites which were intended to emphasize human duties have been abused for the sake of exploitation and usurpation.

As to the comparison of the untouchability of the womenfolk with the untouchability that we observe today in respect of nearly 40 million human beings, it is a violence done to truth. The temporary untouchability of the womenfolk attaches to a temporary condition of the body. The untouchability of the untouchable millions is a hallmark of suppressed humanity and it attaches to birth, irrespective of a change in their condition. The one has in its reasonable form a rational basis for it, the other is wholly irrational and based upon an ignorant and selfish interpretation of the Shastras.

Harijan, 22-4-1933

557. A FRIEND'S WARNING[1]

When you embarked on the great struggle for the liberation of the suppressed classes, I was exhilarated for the time being, but my difficulty began soon after. All these days I

[1] A Gujarati article on this subject appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 23-4-1933; *vide* also Vol. LV, "Warning to Me", 23-4-1933.

was debating whether to write you or not, but now the thing haunts me during my sleep and disturbs my meals. Hence this letter.

Years ago my friends and I began work for the untouchables in the hope that they and we and all would forget the very name 'untouchable'. We dreamt that we would do away with separate schools, separate wells, separate sports and the like. When, therefore, you began your crusade, I was elated with hope that untouchability would be banished from India and that untouchables would be absorbed in the Hindu mass.

But I am stunned by what you and others are doing now. It is bound to widen the gulf—separate schools, separate scholarships, everything separate for Harijans—and you seem to delight in these things. They pain me. The 5 crores of Harijans will now become 10 crores. Some so-called sadhus or sannyasis will become their high-priests and there will come into being a new sect in a century or two hence. You will be regarded as the founder of that sect. Statues will be erected in your memory and it will be said of you that you had separated the Harijans from the Hindus. From the way things are going, it would look as if you were making them feel that they were a class apart. For they fancy that they gain by being separated from the rest of the Hindus. You have made the path of Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan easy and you have strengthened their hands. They will not be absorbed in Hinduism, but there will be cries of "Long live untouchables", "Long live Harijans".

I have not said all these things thoughtlessly, but what I see happening around me pains me. You have been trapped and if you do not courageously come out of it, you will harm the very cause for which you were prepared to lay down your life. You had intended one thing, quite the contrary has happened, let alone getting them considered as part and parcel of Hinduism. You have, instead of saving them, differentiated them by giving them a tempting name. They are not going to be Hindus by such temptation. Selfish and self-seeking preceptors will establish a new religion, a new sect, and you will be their instrument. Today Hindus, Mussalmans and Sikhs are fighting against one another. You will have added one more unit to the fighting forces. They have separate temples and more will be built, and even now different sects are fighting with one another to take possession of these. But the burden of my sorrow is this: All that

in your name, with "*Mahatma Gandhiki Jai*" on their lips! Oh, the pity of it!!

Thus writes in effect an esteemed friend and fellow-worker. The original is in Gujarati. He is one among the very best of India's servants. He is spending himself in her service. There is no mistaking the laceration of his heart, but I believe that his affection for me has led him astray and coloured his judgment. If untouchables are not absorbed in the Hindu mass and do not become one with the rest of the Hindus, the responsibility will not lie on my shoulders. It will lie on those of the so-called high-class Hindus who are resisting the absorption. According to them, the so-called untouchable classes have been untouchable from the beginning of time, and will, if they can help it, remain so to the end of time. Some of them have gone so far as to say that they will sacrifice themselves in the attempt to perpetuate this untouchability. What I have done is not merely to unfurl the banner of revolt against the perpetuation of what I hold to be a monstrous wrong, but I am constantly praying that I may be considered a fit sacrifice for the cause of liberation. I am inviting others to join in the prayer that they might also be deemed worthy to offer themselves as a sacrifice in this sacred cause. If, therefore, untouchability remains, it will do so, not because of what I have done, but in spite of what I have done and am doing. But that will be no new experience. Do we not know that God often upsets the plans of human beings? And it may be that His purpose demands that the so-called high-caste Hindus should harden their hearts, that they should refuse to listen to dictates of reason and justice and that Hinduism should become an extinct religion. For, refusal on the part of high-caste Hindus to regard the Harijans in every sense as equal members with the other Hindus will not now mean perpetuation of untouchability. I am quite clear in my mind that untouchability is gone. The untouchables will not remain slaves for ever. Thank God, they are being surely, if slowly, awakened. The pace is daily increasing. There are limits even to the patience of God Almighty. He gives a long rope to untruth and irreligion. But in the end, only Truth remains and nothing else. Hence Hinduism can only live minus untouchability, which is an untruth.

Whilst, therefore, I am thankful to this true friend for his warning voice and whilst I promise that I shall be more and more on the alert, I feel quite sure that the struggle was not begun a moment too soon and that it must go on against all odds.

Harijan, 22-4-1933

558. CABLE TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

April 22, 1933

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI
ADEN

GOD SPARE YOU. WIRE CONDITION.

GANDHI
VALLABHBHAI

From a photostat: G.N. 5929. Also C.W. 3245. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

559. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 22, 1933

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have had no letter from you for three days, that is, after the big packet and that makes me feel a little worried.

Kaka has heard that Anandi is having fever. Is that true? How is Kusum? I have sent a wire to you in regard to Lakshmi-behn. I had a letter here from Narmada. I can't tell whether anybody will come today. Probably I shall get a letter today. I am writing this before the prayer.

I worry about you also. I always send you others' views about you. I do hope that they do not upset you. Anybody who undertakes an important responsibility should expect to be criticized. He will benefit by the criticism if he can hear it without being upset, but it would kill him if he takes it to heart. We have in the Ashram a *bhajan* about "Nindakababa"[1]. I would not say that it is a very good one. That is, the author has not treated the detractor with generosity. But the lesson which it teaches is right. Anyway, whether you are calm or upset, I shall not feel worried if I regularly hear from you. For some time, therefore, you should drop me a postcard every day.

I have asked for your opinion regarding N. She will arrive there today. Her self-sacrifice seems just now to be as great as her former self-indulgence. On my suggesting to her to get

[1] Literally, 'detractor'

her hair cut in order to save expense on soap and hair oil, she did so. I have had many such experiences, but I have no time just now to write about them.

I am enclosing a letter from Kanumurti Ramamurti. He seems to have written to you about something. He wants to join the Ashram and has expressed his desire to see me. Till now I tried to dissuade him, but I will permit him now to come and see me. Meanwhile, if you have had any experience about him, let me know.

I have received an angry letter from Sitla Sahay. I have had a letter from Prabhudas too. Nothing is certain about his engagement.

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8359. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

560. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN

April 22, 1933

MY DEAR KELAPPAN,

I have your letter. That the paper is being regularly sent to you, there is absolutely no doubt. How it miscarries I do not know. The change of address was made as per your instructions. I will enquire again. You must get the paper regularly. Several others in Calicut are getting the paper. Therefore I hope that you have at least read all the numbers of the *Harijan*.

I have gone through the names of the Committee. I hope that it is not over-manned[1], and it will not be over-manned if everyone is a worker. You do not want any ornaments, you want useful workers, everyone having his work allotted to him.

Remember that Guruvayur is still the goal. It is not abandoned, it is merely extended. You will keep me in touch with your movement from time to time.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21036

[1] The addressee had given a list of 16 members.

561. LETTER TO A. G. MULGAOKER

April 22, 1933

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. I have not yet got the papers[1] you refer to. As soon as I do, I shall try to find a little time to look at them, and if there is anything useful I can say about them I shall certainly write to you.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. A. G. MULGAOKER
JT. HON. SECRETARY
THE ALL-INDIA H. L. R. & R. A.
POPATWADI, KALBADEVI ROAD, BOMBAY

From a microfilm: S.N. 21029

562. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

April 22, 1933

MY DEAR C. R.,

Your letter of 11th April was received by me only yesterday. Unfortunate, but there it is.

There is a delicacy about writing on the fate of the Bills.[2] I would be prepared to write to the Viceroy and also to the Secretary of State, if you think it worth while, but I do not feel inclined to write about them publicly. It is hardly a dignified spectacle, a prisoner publicly criticizing a Government holding him under its custody. You will observe that I have scrupulously steered clear of any public criticism of the Government and I think that I should retain that detachment.

[1] Literature of the All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association of which the addressee was the Joint Secretary

[2] The addressee had informed Gandhiji that the Government had by an executive order rejected Shri Harbilas Sarda's request to circulate the untouchability abolition and temple-entry Bills or to allot an additional non-official day in the current session of the Assembly for a discussion on them.

CWMG-IIV

I would love to put Narasimhan under Dinshaw Mehta's care, but I know that you do not believe, as much as I do, if at all, in nature-cure. Kaka is taking that cure at Sinhagad at present and Sinhagad is a very fine secluded sanatorium. It is only a few miles from Poona. If you will not send him to Sinhagad you should send him to the Mysore sanatorium.

Papa was bound to improve on your reaching there. I have made my suggestion about her also.

I make one more suggestion. It is quite likely that the Bjerrums[1] have gone to a hill-station. They are very fine people and they will gladly take Papa. Papa knows sufficient English to be able to make herself at home with the Bjerrums. Of course you know that they are stationed at Pudukottah. If you want me to, I would gladly write to them.

Love from us all.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

Bombay Secret Abstracts, Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(3), Pt. IV, p. 373; also S.N. 21037

563. LETTER TO N.

April [*22*][2], *1933*

MY DEAR N.,

Shastri has been going to the station every morning since Wednesday and returning disappointed. Such was my anxiety about you. I am glad you have come at last and I hope that you are better. You will go straight to the Servants of India Society's guest house and be there and come at the latest with Shastri, the editor, or 'Harijan Shastri' as he is called. If you do not feel hungry, you will not take even milk but simply fruit juice. If you do not feel like taking anything at all, drink only water, and come here and have the fruit juice I may provide for you. You do exactly as you feel before coming to me. It will be best not to take anything beyond fruit and milk. I hope you will be in a fit condition to come to me. If medical assistance is required before then, Shastri will see to its being procured. To S. you will give whatever food is available at the Society's place.

[1] Formerly of Technological College, Bangalore

[2] The source has "21", which seems to be a slip. The addressee arrived in Poona on April 22; *vide* the following item.

You will bring him with you when you come. Of course you cannot expose your bare head just now. I think I told you that you will have to tie a wet rag just as I do, and you will find that it is perfectly comfortable.

I got today your letter of 18th instant. The letter of the 17th I have not yet received.

Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 21024

564. LETTER TO P. S. RUDRAMUNI

April 22, 1933

MY DEAR RUDRAMUNI,

N. arrived safely with S. this morning. I thank you for the telegram. I have not met them as yet.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. P. S. RUDRAMUNI
CHITALDRUG

From a microfilm: S.N. 21028

565. LETTER TO K. C. SURYANARAYANA

April 22, 1933

MY DEAR SURYANARAYANA,

I have your letter, but I am wholly unable to help you. You should write to the Secretary, A.I.S.A., and put all your arguments before him.

Yours sincerely,

SJT. K. C. SURYANARAYANA
KHADDAR MERCHANT
PITHAPURAM

From a microfilm: S.N. 21030

566. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM D. SARAIYA

April 22, 1933

CHI. KAKU,

I hope you understand why your marriage is taking place at such a time. All will be well if you and Lakshmi[1] have understood that not enjoyment but self-sacrifice is the aim of marriage. After the marriage both of you should do public service with redoubled zeal, and be more vigilant in doing your duty. Both of you should perform on the marriage day the five *yajnas* that we have been performing.

May you both live long and be good servants of the country.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I do not remember to have received any letter from you. A letter received by me seldom remains unanswered.

From Gujarati : C.W. 2815. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

567. LETTER TO LAKSHMI JERAJANI

April 22, 1933

CHI. LAKSHMI,

The letter[2] that I have written to Kaku is intended for you also. See that I do not lose you. You started the correspondence of your own free will, so do not stop now. Strengthen your qualities of self-sacrifice, simplicity, etc. Husband and wife are one another's friends. The duty of friends is to help each other to rise higher and to cure each other's weaknesses. You should protect Kaku's purity and Kaku should protect yours. Go on rising with one another's help in this manner. Live long and serve well. Write to me regularly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2816. Courtesy: Purushottam D. Saraiya

[1] Niece of Vithaldas Jerajani, a khadi worker of Bombay
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

568. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

April 22, 1933

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter.

You have asked my blessings for Kaku and Lakshmi, but do you know that you have not given the date of the wedding? But Chandrashankar[1] has given it. I, therefore, send the letters with this.

Kaka tells me in his letter that you fasted for three days. What was the cause? If anything happens for which you should think it necessary to fast, you should inform me about it.

. . .[2] obtained five rupees to buy a Gandiva spinning-wheel, from which he gave three to . . .[3] and the latter gave them to you. What is this story? Let me know. It is your duty to write to me even about such small things.

You have not said anything in your letter about your sister. I have not got even one letter from Kaku.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: *G. S. Gangabehnne*, pp. 71-2. Also C.W. 8801. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

569. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

April 22, 1933

CHI. SHARDA,

How do you spend your day? What medicine do you take? What do you eat and drink? Who are your friends? How far is the sea from the house? Is it possible to go for a walk there? Do you go there? Who accompanies you? Do you write at the Ashram? To whom do you write? Answer these questions.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9963. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] Chandrashankar Pranshankar Shukla, then editor of *Harijanbandhu*
[2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

570. LETTER TO VISHVAMBHAR SAHAY

April 22, 1933

BHAI VISHVAMBHAR SAHAY,

I have your letter. What more can I write on untouchability than what I am writing in the *Harijan*? And how shall I find the time? It is not a religious duty for anyone to eat with anyone in particular but it would be irreligious to hold that one must avoid accepting foodstuffs touched by someone on the ground of his belonging to a certain caste. But we may certainly refrain from drinking water offered by an unclean person.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Do send me the address to which I should send the article I have written.

From Hindi: C.W. 9667. Courtesy: Parashuram Mehrotra

CWMG - LIV

APPENDIX

EXTRACTS FROM DR. G. V. DESHMUKH'S LETTER TO GANDHIJI[1]

Between carrion of an healthy animal and slaughtered meat there is no chemical or physiological difference. . . .

In the slaughter of animals, the animal bleeds and nearly all the blood being drained away, the slaughtered meat contains less blood. In the case of carrion, all the blood remains in the tissues of the animal and consequently the meat contains more blood.

Decomposition sets in in every dead animal, whether killed or dead naturally. This decomposition is liable to set in earlier in moist tissues and tissues containing more blood. Carrion, therefore, is liable to decompose earlier than slaughtered meat. . . .

You might possibly think that meat, when it starts decomposing, is universally rejected by human beings as food. It is not only the depressed classes of our country who partake of decomposing meat, but this practice is not uncommon in other parts of the world. Gypsies in Europe have been known to be fond of this practice; they go to the extent of even disinterring the dead carcasses of buried animals for food purposes. Decomposing fish is estimated to be an article of diet of more than three hundred millions of human beings in the world. . . .

DISEASED MEAT : But all this is in the case of healthy animals. This cannot hold good in the case of diseased animals. Many epidemics of meat poisoning have occurred in the West which have been proved to be due to eating of meat from diseased animals, and the diseases in animals which lead to poisoning are not the prominent diseases in cattle which kill them, such as Anthrax and Glanders, but common, pus-producing diseases which do not attract so much attention in life. Hence the necessity of meat inspection in all civilized countries. In Indian villages where this practice of eating carcasses is more common, it will be seen how dangerous this practice is likely to be, on account of animals dying of diseases to which no importance is attached but which are particularly dangerous to human beings. . . .

The meat of poisoned cattle is not poisonous to eat. . . . Poison is used by the Red Indians of America, also the Akas Tribe near Brahmaputra, in hunting for food with poisoned arrows, but the meat of this poisoned animal is eaten by them without any detriment to health.

[1] *Vide* pp. 324–5.

Probably the poison used in India is strychnine (*kuchala*) for killing cattle, but the meat of the dead animal is not poisonous to eat. Experiments have been carried on animals, such as dogs, by feeding them on poisoned meat of the animals killed by vegetable poison such as strychnine, escerine, pilocarpine, veratrine and mineral poisons such as arsenic and antimony; and meat in all these cases has proved to be harmless. The explanation is that, although the poison is strong enough to kill the animal, the poison is further oxidised into a harmless product and the meat, therefore, remains harmless. In the case of mineral poisons and caustics, very little is absorbed into the system of animals and the meat, therefore, contains very little of the mineral poison. Meat of poisoned animals, therefore, is harmless for eating purposes.

Harijan, 8-4-1933

CWMG - LIV

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CHRONOLOGY

(*March 6, 1933—April 22, 1933*)

March 6 : C. Rajagopalachari, Devdas Gandhi and, Shankerlal Banker met Gandhiji in Yeravda Central Prison.

March 8 : Gandhiji sent message on wedding of Lakshmi—a Harijan girl brought up by Gandhiji—and Maruti.

March 9 : Prepared Draft Constitution of Harijan Sevak Sangh.

March 12 : First issue of Gujarati *Harijanbandhu* was released from Poona.

March 17 : White Paper on Indian Constitutional Reforms was issued.

March 18 : Gandhiji wrote to Home Secretary, Bombay Government, to reconsider decision to withhold his telegram advising Poonamchand Ranka to break his fast.

March 23 : Again wrote to Home Secretary, Bombay Government, requesting revision of decision and release of telegram to fasting prisoner on humanitarian grounds as was the practice since 1922.

March 25 : Polak visited Gandhiji.

March 27 : Gandhiji in interview with Associated Press emphasized need for opening temples to Harijans.

March 28 : Wrote again to Home Secretary for permission to establish communication with Poonamchand Ranka.
Was interviewed by Associated Press.

April 1 : Twenty-seventh session of Indian National Congress was held in Calcutta in defiance of Government orders and 600 delegates were arrested.
Gandhiji thanked Home Secretary, Bombay Government, for permission to establish contact with Poonamchand Ranka, but regretted Government's decision to depart from old policy of permitting him to communicate with other prisoners and carry on humanitarian work.
Anne Marie Petersen visited Gandhiji.

April 2 : B. R. Ambedkar consulted Gandhiji in jail regarding revision of Poona Pact.

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April 10 : Gandhiji wired to Poonamchand Ranka to break his fast as it was not proper for satyagrahi to resort to fasting for getting more comforts.

April 12 : Wrote to Home Secretary, Bombay Government, regretting Government's decision not to permit him to communicate directly with other prisoners for humanitarian work.

On or before *April 16 :* Harijan leaders of Ahmedabad met Gandhiji in jail.

April 18 : Gandhiji issued appeal for the observance of Harijan Day on April 30.

April 22 : Gandhiji in Yeravda Central Prison.

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363 Item 413	*April 10, 1933*	*August 10, 1933*

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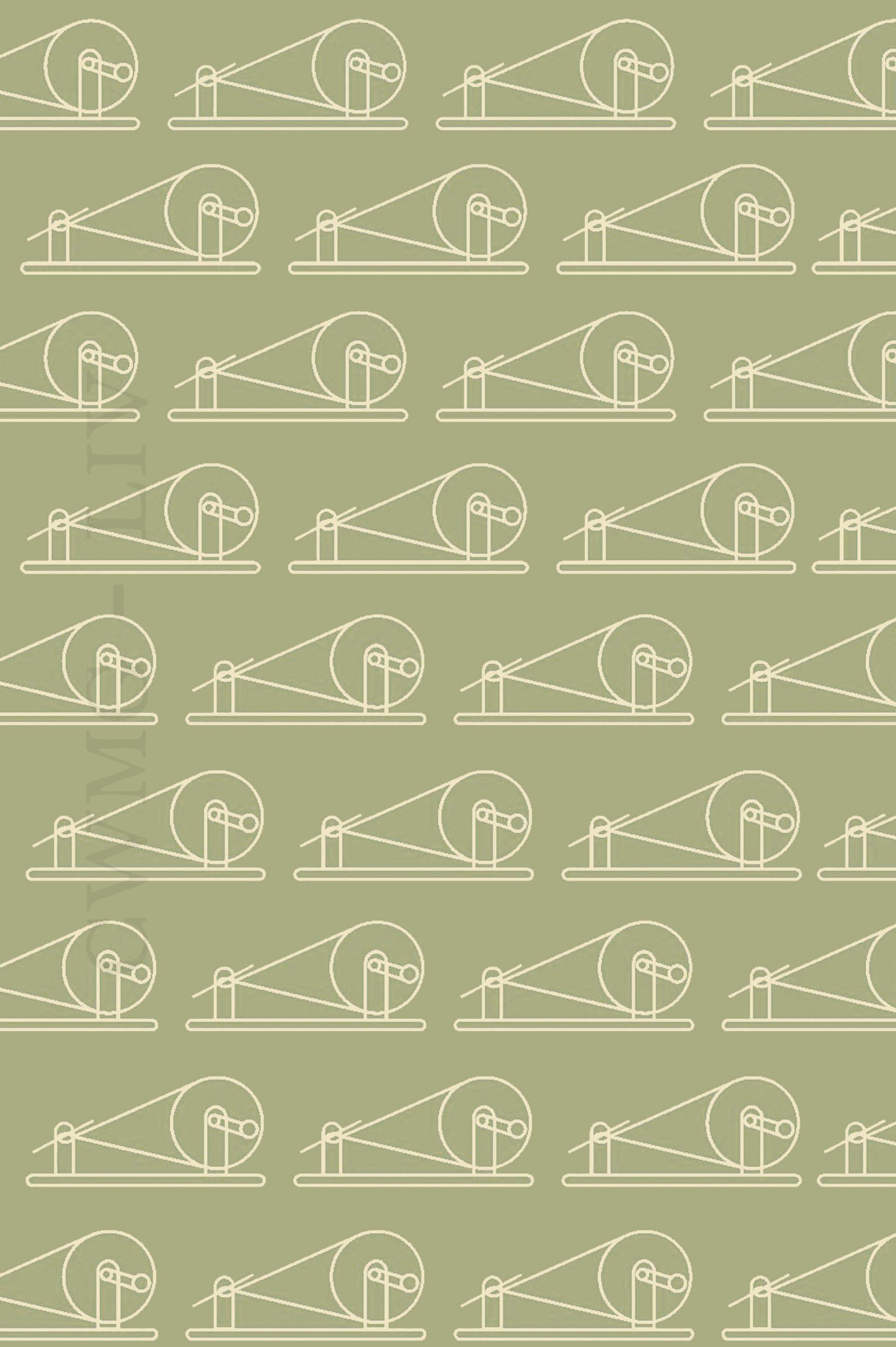
ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
28 * Line 22	give	gave
201 * Line 4	had a very	had very
343 * Line 4-5 from bottom	extremist	extremest
414 Line 2 from bottom	wreckless	reckless
426 * Line 3 from bottom	addressee	addresses
439 * Item 498, source line	S.N. 29084	S.N. 20984
449 * Item 510, line 5	on taking	on her taking
459 * Item 521, source line	S.N. 21093	S.N. 21003
468 * Line 13-4	penance professing it	penance of those professing it
468 * Line 15-6	pursued of those without	pursued without

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